



CHANGING THE NARRATIVE:

THE NEXUS BETWEEN GOVERNANCE, GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA



PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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ABOUT

THE APRM

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was created in 2003 by the Committee of Heads of State and Government responsible for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a voluntary self-assessment instrument for the performance of Member States in terms of governance. It aims to systematically assess and review governance at the level of peer Heads of State in order to promote political stability, the acceleration of sub-regional and continental economic integration, economic growth and sustainable development.

In light of its mandate, the APRM has undertaken reviews of countries' governance policies and practices, working with civil society, the private sector and state institutions to diagnose governance challenges and provide sustainable solutions that

form part of governments' priority action plans and development targets.

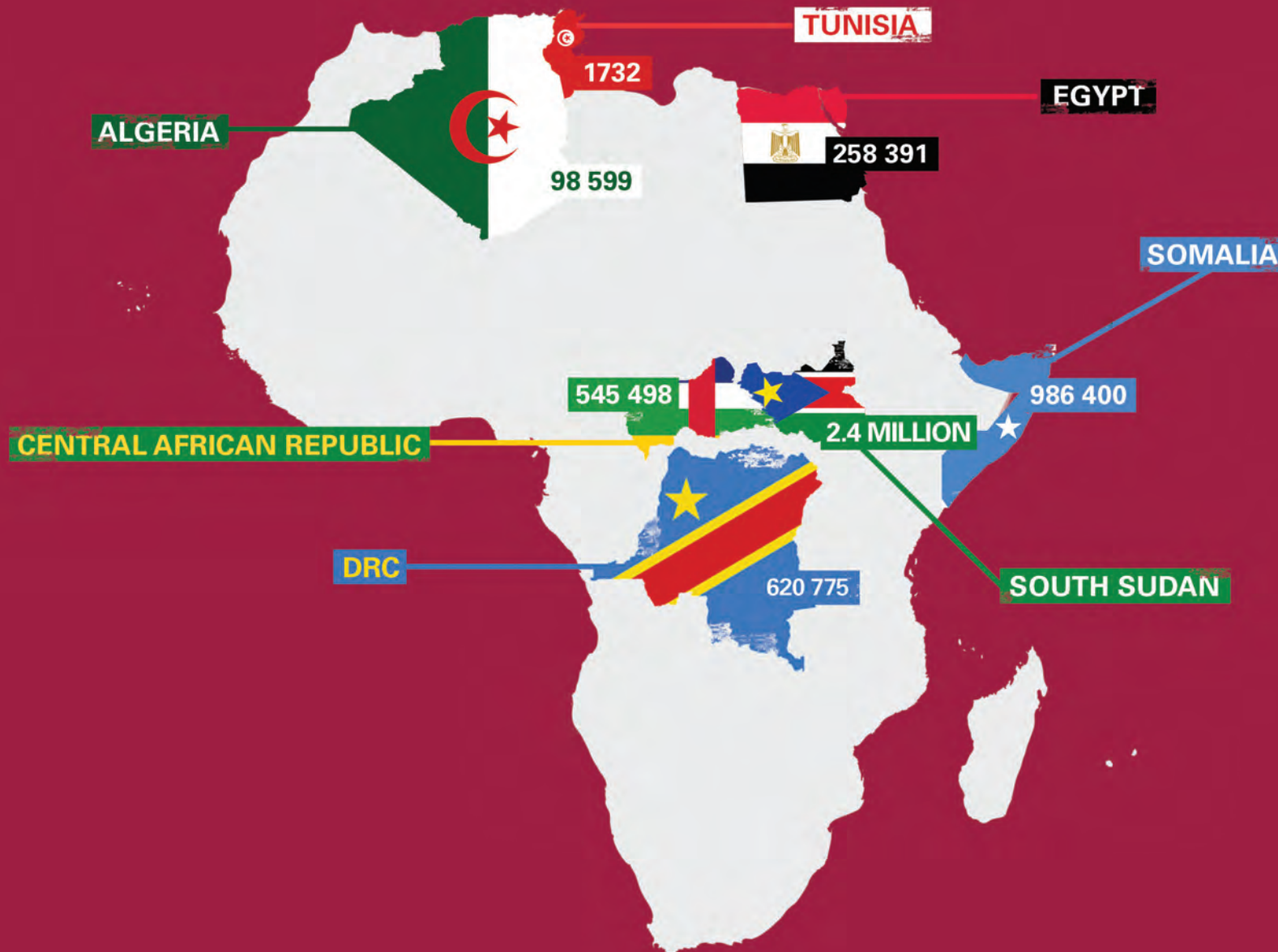
One of APRM's key concerns is to achieve good governance by guaranteeing gender equality and women's empowerment. The APRM received funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)' to support the implementation of the APRM Gender Mainstreaming strategy within its processes, structures and system. The Gender mainstreaming strategy aims at strengthening governance structures by integrating gender equality and women's rights as a key pillar for good governance and sustainable development.

For more information visit
<https://www.aprm-au.org/>



Sustainable solutions require women to be their spokespersons and to articulate their concerns and issues within formal governance platforms and peace processes
 APRM, 2019

NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN HOST COUNTRIES



Source: World Bank, 2019 & UNHCR, 2019

The issue of gender equality is one which Africa and the world has been proactively engaging in earnest, in particular over the past two decades. The African Peer Review Mechanism, as a self-assessment instrument of the AU with an extended mandate to monitor and evaluate the AU's Agenda 2063 and SDGs 2030, is also expected to implement and supervise the main areas of governance in Africa.

For the APRM, conducting the research on the issue of gender equality and governance revealed the challenges women continue to face in terms of inclusion and empowerment. And the issue of women who are refugees and displaced persons, further supports the need for action. As a result, the Mechanism encourages Member States to adopt policies that strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment.

In 2019, the APRM produced two research papers to this affect:

Women in Northern Africa: the nexus between governance, gender and peacebuilding, and
Governance, Gender and Peacebuilding: strengthening the nexus

Both papers explore the issues of governance, gender and peacebuilding, with a focus on realising durable solutions for women refugees, internally displaced individuals (IDPs) and returnees.

Africa hosts about 37% percent of the world's 19.6 million refugees and 39.1 million internally displaced people. This makes Africa the continent with the second largest number of displaced persons in the world, majority of whom are women.

Although countries, through the APRM, have undertaken reviews of areas relevant to women and governance, there is need for more concerted focus on the women, peace and security agenda within existing governance frameworks at the national and regional levels.

This brochure, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), is meant to raise awareness around these pertinent issues and present some of the solutions to address the gender equality challenges the continent faces. At face value some of these challenges may be overwhelming, this brochure should assist individuals, organisations and countries to clearly see the role they can plan to address these amalgamated issues of governance, gender and peacebuilding.



Women's human rights are recognized as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights. No development, whatever its nature, which aims to be sustainable and fair, can be conceived outside the consecration of women's rights.

APRM, 2019

GENDER



The World Health Organisation describes gender as referring to “the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed.

This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.”

The APRM further states that with gender being a concept which refers to the social relationships between women and men, these are also inherently power relationships. The social relations between men and women are the basis of the gender analysis of governance and peacebuilding issues.



Equality between men and women is still illusory.
APRM, 2019

The notion of equality refers to that of power, it must be noted that decision-making power is also unequally distributed and the disparities in participation in the political and economic domain lead to an inequitable enjoyment of advantages to the detriment of women.



APRM Recommendation: Governments to have budgets to mainstream gender.

Gender budgeting is a critical tool of analysis, planning and resource allocation in mainstreaming women, peace and security goals. Governments’ capacities to undertake gender analyses and mainstream gender across the various sectors requires boosting.

In all societies, equality between men and women is unfortunately still illusory, whether in the field of education, work, professional career, politics or access to economic resources.

Over the past decades, women’s rights activists have drawn attention to these facts and emphasized the need to take note of them in formulating policies and programs.

The role of the APRM today is fundamental as a tool for improving State governance, particularly in its method, which promotes transparent and inclusive public processes for decision-making, promoting the values of the rule of law. It also facilitates countries to put in place policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability and therefore to economic growth and sustainable development in Africa.



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
United Nations 2015

However, disparities are observed at the highest level of countries’ policies, continents and even at the international level. Although many frameworks and mechanisms, international and regional (often signed and ratified by Member States) have been put in place to promote gender equality, they still do very little to truly empower women, especially in the public sphere.

The discrepancies between policies and their implementation indicate a required need for the renegotiation of power between men and women. Deliberately actioning policies on gender equality and supporting women empowerment, and working with the concept of gender, is a source of social criticism. This will mean that working for greater social justice, which takes into account the needs, interests, priorities, values and rights of each and every one, in diversity, is the objective of a renegotiation of powers.



The establishment of peace, at the local, national, regional and global levels, is possible and it is inseparable from the advancement of women, because they are a key driver of initiatives, conflict resolution and promotion of lasting peace at all levels.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995.



APRM Recommendation: Countries should implement and monitor SDGs 5 and 16.

This will help fully realise women's equal rights to economic resources, access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, as well as inheritance and natural resources. These rights should be secured in accordance with national laws and where these laws are lacking, legal reforms should be encouraged.

Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue and the gaps are still too great between the affirmed will of the States, through their international and continental commitments, and the observations on the ground. It is therefore not enough not to deny a resource to women. Women must have access to it and control it.

Mentalities, habits and customs are still alive and influence the lives of citizens. Patriarchy is still very strong and modulates the behaviour of men and women at the lowest level of society, communities and families. Governments can address this through the strengthening of policies and diligent implementation.



APRM Recommendation: Governments to ensure inclusive economic policies.

Economic policies, frameworks and programmes that take into account Agenda 2016 and SDG's emphasis on equitable and inclusive growth and development are the best model for delivery of services and welfare as a peace building strategy. In the recovery phase, economic reconstruction should entail policies to take into account participation and inclusion of men and women.

Economic policies and frameworks that integrate gender responsive economic empowerment are important, more so doing economic reconstruction phases. Strategies that promote women's effective participation in the informal sector are important. While many women working and providing for their families, oftentimes their economic participation is limited or not recognised. Whether employed or contracted in the corporate, public or informal sectors, women require more support and inclusive environments. With women making up the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons, they often fall victim to acts of violence, emotionally, physically and sexually. States are making impressive efforts in the fight against GBV, discrimination and the state of women subordination. Women continue to face gender based challenges at the personal level, in the family and community

sphere. Women who remain in conflict areas during the outbreak of violent conflict may suffer some or all of the risks and violations faced by women in forced displacement. Many conflicts have resulted in women in their countries being forcefully abducted and turned into sex slaves, combatants or victims of trafficking.

The African Union Gender Strategy (2018-2028) raises the dilemma of women affected by forced migration due to conflict, who are at risk of not only of rape and violence but also being trafficked. One dimensional, heterogenous portrayals of gender priorities during and after conflict cannot respond to the complex layers of vulnerabilities that women face nor the value they add in post conflict recovery.



APRM Recommendation: Governments, companies and communities should create inclusive environments.

Key governance structures should adopt programmes that enable women, including rural women, to access production inputs, labour and financial markets on an equal footing with men.



APRM Recommendation: Zero tolerance for perpetrators of sexual violence. It is important to infuse gender goals in national laws and in public service recruitment policies. Screening processes to ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence are not recycled into the security forces is key when undertaking security reforms. Involving parliament and civil society to monitor the robustness of these practices adds an extra layer of vigilance.

FULL GENDER EQUALITY IN ALL SPHERES OF LIFE



MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES, OUTCOMES AND E-TECH DIVIDENDS



DIGNITY, SECURITY AND RESILIENCE



EFFECTIVE LAWS, POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS



LEADERSHIP, VOICE AND VISIBILITY

SOURCE: STRATEGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, AFRICAN UNION (2018)



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GOVERNANCE



According to the Africa Governance Report (2019), “the concept of governance is traditionally linked to ruling and control, specifically the manner of exercise of power.

Governance refers to the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels.”

Our lives and the world we live in are governed by negotiations with and between a set of governance institutions where decisions are made. These decisions have a huge impact on the way women and men lead their lives, the rules they are expected to follow, and the structures that determine where and how they work and live.

Other levels of governance exist and have a definite impact on the implementation of their objectives, particularly with regard to gender sensitivity. At the local level, governance is not only located in local government offices, but also within community and family decision-making processes.

The gender imbalance in decision-making remains, despite favourable provisions for the participation of women at national and local governments’ level, notably in the form of electoral quota systems and the establishment of ministries of feminine condition. As a result, women are still a large minority in decision-making positions at global, national and local levels of governance, including at the “micro” levels of the community and household.



APRM Recommendation: Participation of women at all levels of governance processes. Governance processes that promote women’s participation at all levels of governance in the realms of the executive, legislature and judicature are critical.



APRM Recommendation: Governance structures should engage in the redistribution of power and decision-making. The processes through which decisions are made, particularly through elective and appointment office, need to be targeted for redistribution of power and decision making. Women’s appointments to the judiciary and other public office on an equal or affirmative action basis improves their participation in a decision making processes.

Governance institutions do not take into account the double workload of women. The organization of work in governance institutions is often rigid, making it difficult for women to cope with their work and the additional responsibilities associated with their reproductive role that they continue to assume. Institutions are frequently subject to influences linked to entrenched and ever-present social norms.



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Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance
Kofi Annan, former Secretary General, United Nations

Governance policies do little to combat gender inequalities and do not take into account the different needs of men and women. Access to and control over resources take little account of existing gender inequalities in decision-making, in particular by analysing their origins (cultural, social) and women's aspirations for change.

APRM Recommendation: Women rights should be protected. Laws should be made that take into account women's transformed gender roles to protect the rights of women and girls, widows and female headed households in the area of land, property, business and succession rights.

Governance plays a key role in preventing, mitigating or triggering violent conflict which has such a deleterious effect on human lives, including women and girls.

The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (also known as the Kampala Convention) is a treaty that addresses internal displacement caused by armed conflict, natural disasters and large-scale development projects in Africa.

The term 'harmful practices' highlighted in the Kampala Convention encompasses all behaviour, attitudes and/or practices which negatively affect the fundamental rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), including their right to life, health, dignity, education, mental and physical integrity and education. In utilising this term in the context of internal

displacement, the AU offers greater protections for women despite their religious, cultural or social backgrounds.

Making women more visible in decision-making positions or in corporate creation would certainly be examples of good practices, capable of changing mentalities. The issue of migrants is linked to those of human dignity and hospitality. States are committed to addressing this issue at the highest level. The plans and strategies implemented in several countries, as presented in the study, are proof of this.

The processes through which decisions are made, particularly through elective and appointment office, need to be targeted for redistribution of power and decision making. It is essential that governance systems integrate conflict management in their structures, policies and processes through democratic principles of inclusive participation. This requires the capacities of government to appropriately respond to these exigencies. Africa should transcend the mould of women being cast as merely victims to endow women with agency and leadership to make decisions around conflict prevention, peacebuilding and conflict resolution.



APRM Recommendation: Women must take a stand. Women too must assert themselves, trust each other and dare to undertake, because they too express doubts about their capacities, which they nevertheless possess.

PEACEBUILDING



Peacebuilding refers to the ideas, strategies and resources applied towards sustainable peace outcomes.

It revolves around the processes of identifying structural and immediate causes of structural violence and preventing managing or resolving conflict.

Africa has spent decades working for inclusive peace, individual security and sustainable development. The role of women in war and the promotion of peace, was recognized with the risk of becoming victims of war violence, but above all with the potential for women to be actors in peace processes. The role of women and gender issues, in all areas of peace and international security, has gradually gained in importance.

Durable solutions to addressing conflict from a preventative, management and recovery dimension require the involvement and meaningful participation of both men and women.



APRM Recommendation: Inclusion of women in peace processes.

Including more women in formal peace processes provides states an opportunity to address wider societal issues around gender discrimination and empowerment that may have been pervasive before the conflict. Strong women's lobbies in some countries have utilised peace negotiations as an opportunity to renegotiate power, leading to greater gains for women's representation and participation in public life and transitional justice mechanism activated.

Regardless of women's critical contributions to peacebuilding, particularly at the grassroots and community level, the majority of decision-making in governance and formal peace processes are male-led and dominated.

When qualifications for participation in peace negotiations and mediations are characterised by military, defence and diplomatic experience, women are treated as ineligible as these are predominantly male dominated fields. The well-developed skills that women in peacebuilding have built in communication, dialogue, networking, mediation, conflict resolution and strategic engagement are discounted as soft skills.

Women working in peacebuilding at the grassroots face limited recognition and support for their leadership roles and inadequate funding to undertake the critical work of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Despite this, women activists, civil society actors/organisations and grassroots movements of peacebuilders have displayed initiative, leadership and commitment to building peace movements, advocacy and action. All over the continent, the remarkable efforts of these actors in generating research, building capacity for mediation, reconciliation, monitoring and lobbying for peace is evident. Their effort, skills, information and commitment constitutes a strategic resource to be harnessed for the enhancement of women's decision-making in formal peacebuilding processes.

35
PERCENT
REPRESENTATION
AT ALL LEVELS
OF GOVERNANCE



INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN PEACE PROCESSES.

In the South Sudan country's revitalized peace agreement signed in Addis Ababa in September 2018, women have been allotted 35% representation at all levels of governance through affirmative action.

Source: United Nations Peace Keeping 'Juba forum explores ways to advance the status of women in South Sudan'. 24 May 2019

The outbreak of violent conflict emboldens the further oppression and targeting of women as a social group, and post conflict recovery initiatives that do not link these occurrences further entrench women's marginalisation and suffering. While women as a social group may not automatically resort to violence to protest structural exclusion, they can take sides in conflicts, driven by dissatisfaction over gender discrimination and broader governance injustices.

Enabling laws that allow civil society to operate should be enacted and those that restrict freedoms required for peacebuilding activism removed. Women as individuals and as a collective have a legitimate and legal claim to work in grassroots and community peace building initiatives, participate in preventative diplomacy, influence peace negotiations and mediations and to be included as signatories to peace agreements.



APRM Recommendation: Increased oversight to prevent local and transnational crime. Increased oversight over proliferation and trading in arms, transnational crime can help to combat these crimes through sharing of cooperation security and jurisdiction powers. The African Union Gender Strategy (2018-2028) raises the dilemma of women affected by forced migration due to conflict, who are at risk of not only of rape and violence but also being trafficked.

State-society dialogue platforms for peacebuilding should be encouraged as good practices of strategic engagement. For example, Uganda has a National Peace Platform and a national Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation policy is being developed which involves CSOs working on women, peace and security.

States should provide opportunities for CSOs and peacebuilders to access information, engage in lobbying and advocacy and networking and where possible, access resources and joint programme implementation. CSOs monitor government performance of peace and security targets and when provided accreditation to the processes of intergovernmental frameworks



This choice of our organization is linked not only to the leading role of African women in the conquest of independence and the promotion of the continent's socio-economic development, but also to the recognition by all that Africa's future is intimately linked to our ability to fully exploit the immense potential that women represent.
Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson, African Union Commission

Increasingly attention is being paid to the manner in which conflict, especially violent or armed conflict affects women and men. The narrative of victimhood of women is shifting to view more broadly women's experiences as a heterogenous group. The experiences of women as peacebuilders, survivors, combatants and returnees require a reconfiguration of societal constructions.

states to join the APRM governance mechanisms and undertake reviews with a view to converging on governance standards.



APRM Recommendation: Capacitated and vibrant Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Capacitating CSOs at local, national and continental levels in conflict prevention and peace building will assist the organisations to continue their work in implementation and monitoring of NAPs. The state's role in facilitating society dialogues around peacebuilding and reconstruction should continue and provide the basis for a renewed vision of peace for Africa's citizens.



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