



Ten quick facts about the African Union Gender Parity Project 2025

*"It is not just about
the numbers, it is making
the numbers matter"*



What is the definition of gender?

Gender refers to the socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women, boys and girls, which give them unequal value, opportunities and life chances (Kabeer, 2003). It also refers to typically masculine and feminine characteristics, abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in society. These characters are time bound and changeable.

What is the difference between gender equity, equality and parity?

Gender equality is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex and where women and men are accorded equal opportunities, the allocation of resources and benefits, or access to services.

Gender equity refers to the fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes.

Gender Parity refers to the statistical measure that provides a numerical value of men-to-women ratio.



What does the Gender Parity Project 2025 by the African Union entail?

The overall goal of the Gender parity project by the African Union is to achieve gender equality in the institutions and organs of the AU, through creating conditions of inclusivity and genuine support for women's empowerment within the organization. The project seeks to have a 50/50 representation of women and men's representation and also to have 35% of youth (between 15 and 35 years) in the staff component of the African Union by 2025.

The project is born out of a decision by the African Union Heads of State and Government in 2001 and thereafter, reiterated in 2018. The project is also in line with articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which makes it mandatory for the AU to function according to the principle of gender equality and to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making, especially in the economic, political and socio-cultural arenas.

The Gender Parity Principle is also embedded in several key legal and policy frameworks of the African Union such as the:

- The Modalities of Elections of Officials,
- The Staff Regulations and Rules,
- The 2009 Gender Policy,
- The Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections,
- The Maputo Protocol and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

Correlated, the African Heads of State and Government declared year 2015 as the "Year of women's empowerment and development towards Agenda 2063" and year 2016 as the "Year of human rights with a particular focus on the rights of women." The Declarations were a powerful message and a call for greater action to securing and protecting women's rights.





What is the significance of Gender Parity at the African Union?

Gender Parity is a pre-condition for achieving the vision that underscores the African Union framework, Agenda 2063. Aspiration 6 of the framework seeks “An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.” One of the goals therein is gender equality in all spheres of life and the strengthening the role of Africa’s women through ensuring gender equality and parity in all spheres of life (political, economic and social); eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

The decision provides a unique opportunity to positively and gradually shift the African Union to become a preferred employer for African women and families. Its immediate objectives are to achieve gender parity in all functional positions in the institution and organs of the Union through a multi-stage process which include immediate, short, medium and long term actions, the project focused on the five interdependent pillars as key drivers of the project

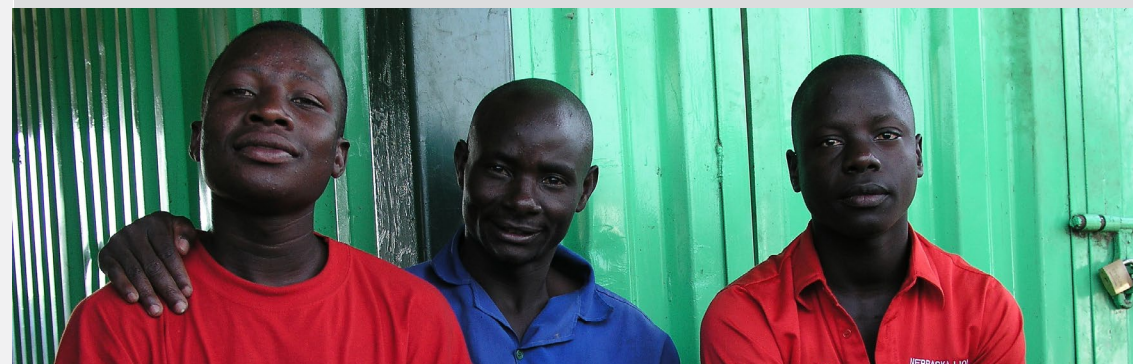
- Recruitment and Promotion;
- Talent Development;
- Policy review, upgrading and development;
- Sustainability;
- Information communication.

The pillars give impetus to, and provide clear timelines towards the effective achievement of equal representation of women and men in employment and decision making, within the organs and institutions of the Union and in Member States.

What are the milestones realized in the implementation of the project?

The African Union has made commendable progress in the implementation of the decision by the Heads of State and Government. Though the gender gap still remains, as at January 2020, the following provisions have been made:

- The African Union Staff Regulations and Rules adopted in July 2010, give priority to the less represented gender provided that candidates hold equal qualifications (Rule 27.5 and 28.g).
- The AU Staff Regulations and Rules also provide for the Women’s Gender and Development Directorate to be part of the Joint Advisory Committee on Administrative Policies and of the Appointment, Promotion and Recruitment Board (APROB).
- The African Union has also strengthened the Office of Ethics by including female staff working in ethics office to help fast track investigations into allegations of sexual harassment, abuse of power, nepotism and insubordination.
- The AU has neutralized gender biased language in job advertisements by including a statement on gender equality and a pledge to gender equality in all job descriptions.



Are men included in the Gender parity project?

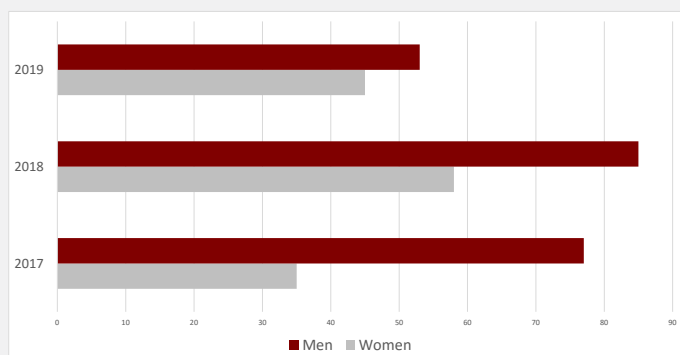
In the implementation of the African Union gender parity project does not place women and men in an unhealthy competition. Men are accorded the same rights to equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination and harassment as the women. Men are considered an important actor in supporting the full implementation of the project.

What is the numerical progress of the ration of men to women at the African Union?

While gender gaps remain in most of the Organs, as of March 2020, the AUC Commissioners has a 50/50 representation at the Commission level. NEPAD, similarly, has a 50/50 representation just as the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) with 53% of the staff population are female each. Though at partly 35% of the total staff population, this information demonstrates some improvements in equality and empowerment of women.



Between 2017 and 2019 there has been a slight increase in the recruitment of women. The



overall recruitment status is as follows:

There has been a rise in women recruited at General Service's level from 30% to 58% while there has been a stagnation from 46% in 2016 to 40% in 2019 (at 40% at Professional Staff level for females both in 2018 and 2019).

Regarding the Youth quota, 28 Youths were recruited in 2019 as compared to 41 in 2018. However it should be noted that the number of female Directors at the Headquarters remain the same 29% in 2013 and 29% in 2019 which is attributed to the moratorium on recruitment.

Who is responsible for implementation of the project?

The implementation of the project on gender parity is the responsibility of the African Union as a whole. The Commission has therefore adopted an inter-departmental approach, engaging a broad range of actors to accelerate the full implementation of the project. Each actor is tasked with the availing of either resources in the various capacities such as advisory, financial and technical. These include; the Bureau of the Chairperson and that of the Deputy Chairperson; the Women's Gender and Development Directorate; the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources Management; Directorate for Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, International Cooperation and Resource Mobilization; Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting Directorate; the Directorate of Information and Communication. All these are

Is the gender parity project replicated at the continental level?

Recognizing the persistent gender inequality and discriminatory practices against women in the continent, the African Union Assembly, on July 11, 2003, adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in Maputo, Mozambique, giving it its name – the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights. The Maputo Protocol came into force on November 25, 2005. With the adoption of the Protocol, the Union declared its commitment to eliminate discrimination against women and promote their rights by adopting and effectively implementing legislative, policy and administrative measures. As of January 2020, forty two (42) Member States had ratified the protocol. Forty-nine (49) member states have signed while only three (3) member states have neither signed nor ratified the protocol.

Additionally, AU Member States adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) in July 2004, committing to sign and ratify the Maputo Protocol by the end of 2004 to pave the way for the domestication and implementation of the Protocol alongside other national, regional and international instruments on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). In 2009, the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) was also adopted and committed AU Member States to universal ratification, full domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol by 2020. In February 2020, the Assembly adopted the second phase of the African Women' Decade (2020-2030) on Women's Economic and Financial inclusion.

What is the projection for the full implementation of the project?



The African Union remains keen on the full implementation of the gender parity project to ensure the full participation of women in the delivery of the vision of Agenda 2063.

In its implementation roadmap, the AU Commission envisions the completion of the following activities:

- Fully mainstreaming of the gender parity into the AU Staff Rules and Regulations and Code of Ethics to ensure specific measures for gender parity are included. This would ensure there are gender workplace guidelines.
- Enforce administrative and punitive measures to address work place harassment.
- Ensure gender supportive administrative systems are in place that allow for capacity development for women. This would also include targeted human resources processes and to develop a gender sensitive quota system for the African Union.
- Engage in targeted outreach to encourage more women to apply for the opportunities at the African Union.
- Develop a concept to operationalize a mentoring system, especially for young women
- Employing an effective resource mobilization mechanism and results-based planning.
- Ensure a functional monitoring and evaluation system that would also document reasons for departure and refusal to take AU positions.
- Establish a platform/roaster of women willing to assist new women employees settle in Addis on arrival
- Develop and make available an expatriate Guide to Ethiopia, where to go and where to find what
- Evaluate elements of the host country agreement which would limit women's ability to join the AU

Specific normative frameworks and policies that refer to gender parity.

- **Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063:** An Africa where development is people driven, unleashing the potential of women and the youth
- **Modalities of the elections of the AU elected officials** which stipulate an equal representation of men and women in all such positions.
- **Article 9 of the Maputo Protocol:** States will ensure an equal representation and participation of women in all decision-making structures.
- **Provision 5 of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa:** Expand and promote the gender parity principle that we have adopted regarding the Commission of the African Union to all the other organs of the African Union, including its NEPAD programme, to the Regional Economic Communities, and to the national and local levels in collaboration with political parties and the National parliaments in our countries.
- **Commitment 1 of the AU Gender Policy:** Enforce AU 50/50 Gender Parity and representation in all structures, operational policies and practices, ensure gender parity targets are met and gender perspectives incorporated within strategic thinking-vision and mission of the AU. Achieve full parity by 2015.
- **AU Staff Regulations and Rules: Regulations 6.4** (a,b,d- criteria for recruitment) and Rules 27.5 (condition of employment) & 28 (1,2 & 8- recruitment & 8) and 54 (f) (Composition of Joint Advisory Committees on Administrative Committees), Rule 20.5 (housing allowance), 22.1 & 22.5 (spousal allowance), 29.1 (status following marriage with a staff member), 39.2 & 39.3 (eligibility for leave travel), 40.2 (compassionate leave), 41.4 (paternity leave), 49.2 (travel for eligible dependents), rule 50.2 (travel expenses in case of death).
- **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance:** Articles 2 (11), 3 (6), 8 (1), 21 (2) and 29 (3) of the Charter promote gender equality, gender parity as well as the full and active participation of women in governance and development processes and in private and public institutions.

For more information visit www.au.int



African Union Headquarters
P.O. Box 3243, Roosevelt Street W21K19
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 551 77 00
Fax: +251 11 551 78 44
<https://au.int/en/wgd>