



ECA/ACGD/AGDI.REP/2002/1

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**AFRICAN CENTRE FOR GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

**REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE  
AFRICAN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT INDEX (AGDI)  
WORKING GROUP**

**5- 6 JUNE, 2002  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**BY  
THOKOZILE RUZVIDZO  
JUNE 2002**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report presents proceedings at a meeting organized by the African Centre for Gender (ACGD) to review the African Gender Development Index Draft Paper. The purpose of the Meeting was:

- to subject the various components of the paper to critical debate, and capture the views of participants;
- to review the draft document towards the development of an African Gender and Development Index;
- to review the gender index made up of;
  - the Gender Status Index
  - an African Women's Progress Scoreboard

The draft paper presented at the meeting was then to be reviewed in the light of comments by participants.

The Meeting was organized along the following lines:

- Introduction of members of the group
- Welcoming remarks and Background information on AWR/AGDI
- Objectives of the meeting
- Why the AGDI?
- Review of existing indices
- Why the Africanness of the AGDI?
- The need for monitoring
- Presentation of the AGDI
- Review of the AGDI
- Recap of issues from previous day and emerging issues
- The African Women Report-2002/2003
- Recommendations and conclusions

Detailed comments on each of the presentations and comments made are documented in this report. Also attached to the document are the written comments submitted by members of the Working Group.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report documents the summary of presentations and places emphasis on the observations and comments made by participants in two days of deliberations. The report captures the comments made by participants, especially the ones relevant to the development of the African Gender Development Index (AGDI). The aim of this report is to produce a concise reference document for use in reviewing the draft document on the AGDI.

### 1.1 Background<sup>1</sup>

The development of the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) is an input into the 2002/2003 African Women's Report. *The African Women's Report (AWR)* is one of ECA's four flagship publications and the only publication dedicated to gender issues at the continental level. The AWR is a strategic information and communication tool that provides for Gender analysis of national, sub-regional and regional policy frameworks and also follows up and records progress, best practices and new priorities on the status of women in Africa.

The African Women's Report (AWR) for 2002/2003 will for the first time introduce an index to measure the progress in addressing the inequalities that exist between men and women and therefore allow for a more objective way to measure the achievements and limitations of the progress.

An African Gender and Development Index will be developed to measure progress made in addressing gender equality and equity within specific themes as per the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action. The AGDI will consist of a Gender Status Index and an African Women's Progress Scoreboard.

The working group and a panel of advisors have been introduced as part of the methodology of developing the AGDI and producing the AWR to ensure transparency and quality control of both the AGDI and the AWR. Whilst the working group is a hands on group assisting in defining the index, the panel of advisors validate the index and the AWR. Both groups are made up of external people as well as representatives from the Divisions in ECA.

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<sup>1</sup> Background information was culled from the "Terms of Reference for the African Gender and Development Index Working Group"

## **2.0 THE MEETING**

### **2.1 Objectives of the Meeting**

- To review the draft document towards the development of an African Gender and Development Index;
- Review the components of the gender index which are the;
  - the Gender Status Index
  - an African Women's Progress Scoreboard
- To analyse AGDI in the context of the following
  - the scope of the index;
  - relevance of the Gender Status Index and the Scoreboard in measuring progress in addressing gender inequalities in Africa;
  - relevance of the Gender Status Index and the Scoreboard in looking at factors that are specific to Africa;
  - the technical competence of the Gender Status Index and the Scoreboard;
  - the robustness and applicability of the Gender Status Index and the Scoreboard globally;
  - the choice of indicators and whether they incorporate all the fundamental variables to measure gender inequality in Africa as defined within the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action.

### **2.2 Meeting Methodology**

The methodology was based on short presentations by each of the consultants, followed by discussions.

### **2.3 Participation**

The meeting brought together four members of the working group, the Executive Secretary of the ECA, representatives from the Divisions in ECA and staff members of the ACGD. Two member of the working group could not attend the meeting; their comments were to be submitted in writing.

## **3.0 PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING**

### **3.1 Opening**

Mrs. Joséphine Ouedraogo, Director of African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) formally opened the Meeting. She gave a summary of the major strategic areas of the ACGD and the role of the AGDI in the Centre's work. She highlighted the following as some of the strategic areas of ACGD:

- a) To monitor and evaluate the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action;
- b) To build the capacity of ECA to mainstream gender into policies and;

- c) To strengthen policy analysis, advocacy and gender mainstreaming within instruments such as National budgets and accounting.

The Director also spoke about the need for an AGDI. Amongst other things the AGDI is intended to challenge member states in Africa to promote gender equality and equity. The overall objective is to develop an index that is scientifically valid and effectively used in the continent. She welcomed the participants and introduced the Executive Secretary of the ECA, Mr. K. Y. Amoako.

### 3.2 Remarks By Task Manager

The Task Manager of the project, Thokozile Ruzvidzo, also re-iterated the need for an AGDI. She highlighted the why the need of an AGDI as follows:

- To monitor and report on progress in addressing gender inequalities and inequities that exist between men and women.
- To monitor and report on progress made on women's empowerment and advancement.
- To provide African policy makers, gender planners and politicians with an appropriate tool to measure the extent of the advancement in implementing programmes aimed at addressing gender inequalities and strengthening women's empowerment.
- Monitor the action being taken in implementing conventions that African countries have ratified.
- To democratize statistics and monitoring tools by providing not only gender planners but also NGO's with a monitoring tool that is effective and easy to use.
- To provide a tool that is not only able to measure progress in quantitative ways, but also in qualitative terms.

### 3.3 Presentations by Consultants (Saskia Wieringar and Jacques Charmes)

Saskia Wieringar, one of the lead consultants who drafted the AGDI paper, introduced the concepts of gender, power, and equality. She summarized gender as a social relationship between two groups and a relationship of power. Gender also operates between the material and the ideological, and operates by symbols.

Furthermore, she defined power as a complex concept that can operate in a neutral sense. It also operates at different levels including (power as oppression/coercion, power as a creative process and power as challenge). She noted that power can be oppressive but latent and what the AGDI could do is to bring the latent to the manifest.

Finally, she concluded that gender equality should not be equated to sameness but rather seen as equality of opportunity, rights, education, and voice. This background information was followed by an overview of existing gender indices.



Ms Geske Dijkstra also highlighted some of the limitations she had found in her work on the Standardized Index of Gender Equality,

### **3.3.1 Review of Existing Gender Indices**

#### **Strengths and Weaknesses of other Frameworks**

The draft paper on the AGDI provides an in depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing gender indices. An overview of the strengths and weaknesses of three of the existing frameworks are given below.

The Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are two major global instruments that measure gender gap in socio-economic and political development. The GDI measures gaps in relation to health, education and income whilst the GEM measures political participation, share in professional, technical and management positions, and share in earned income.

Although these two indices provide a policy tool for analyzing gender gaps, they have a number of weaknesses inherent in them. The weaknesses include the narrow range or conceptualization of gender concerns, excessive dependence on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the use of international data which sometimes leaves out a bulk of statistics available at the national level, and the use of income indicators which can sometimes be very problematic.

The Consultants went on to review the Standardized Index of Gender Equality which measures Relative female/male access to education, Relative longevity, Relative labour market participation, female share in technical, professional and management positions, and share in parliament. This Index also shares a number of weaknesses with the GEM and GDI.

The weaknesses in the existing framework necessitated an Africa Gender and Development Index made up of a) A gender status index-measuring gender equality and b) an African women's scoreboard-scoring progress of women's empowerment in the political, social and economic area. It is important to mention that the strengths in the existing indices also inform the development of the AGDI.

### **3.4 Mr. K. Y. Amoako's Remarks**

Mr. Amoako observed that in the context of the vision of the ECA, the AGDI would be a significant advocacy tool that would assist the Commission to track performance and progress towards clearly defined objectives. It will also help countries to identify gender gaps. He commended the Centre for this groundbreaking work because of its value to the ongoing work at the Commission

### 3.5 General Discussions/Comments following the Presentations

The following comments/suggestions/observations emerged from the discussions.

#### *Comments on Working Paper/Draft Document*

- There was not much information on the contextual discussion of Africa today in relation to such issues as gender mainstreaming and other conceptual frameworks.
- There should be more discussion on African women's movement in the draft paper.
- There should also be an elaborate discussion on gender empowerment approaches that have been used in Africa.
- The report does not look at causal relationships between variables. It focuses on variables as if they are the same. For example, the causal relationships between power and gender inequality are not sufficiently dealt with. There is the need to put all these into a wider context.
- Gender mainstreaming is mentioned in the paper; however, it is not discussed in detail. The participants proposed that it is a contested concept and should therefore be discussed in depth.

#### *Relevant information for the African Women's Report*

- There should be background information on a) globalization and b) SAP and how it relates to gender.
- The Report should clearly state that indices are important but they do not solve all the problems relating to gender.
- The Report should also indicate the values used in the report as well as the limitations of the values.

#### *Indicators*

- The selection of indicators is important and the team must take cognisance of the elements of subjectivity. There is the need to focus on what is feasible and doable when selecting indicators.
- It is important to make more explicit the value of any indicator selected because the AGDI does two things; it measures progress and compares countries.

#### *Standardization*

AGDI should standardize variations so that we do not have a situation where the largest variation is dominant over others.

### *Social Polarization*

The Human Development Index uses education in static way. For example, the HDI does not take into consideration the quality of education or dual systems of education. In countries such as Egypt, the public schools are for the poor and the private schools for the rich. The working group suggested that the AGDI should look critically at the following:

- Quality of Education;
- Duality of Education;
- Non-attendance.

However, it was emphasized that some of these variables cannot be measured as no data has been collected in member states.

### *Access to resources*

- It is important to examine cultural specificities when dealing with the issue of access to resources.
- It is also significant to note that records do not always reflect changes in society. A typical example was given of Kenya where records on land ownership have not changed although there have been some fundamental changes in the society.

### *Income*

- Proxy ways of looking at income that women control could include (a) access to resources b) enterprises that women find themselves in.

### *Measurability and Comparability*

- One strategy that could be employed when dealing with measurability and comparability is to focus on objective verifiable indicators versus the means of verification.
- The cultural milieu of Africa is diverse and therefore the cultural specificities must be taken into consideration when comparing different countries.

## **3.6 Specific Issues related to the GSI and the Scoreboard**

The following highlights of the GSI and the Scoreboard were presented.

### **Strengths of the AGDI**

- The idea of having both the GSI and the Scoreboard is significant because it expands the scope and also deals with both outcomes and policy issues.
- The economic, social and political blocks in the GSI are adequate.

## Weakness

- The indicators under political power do not reflect the totality of women's political power. It does not focus on informal politics such as the role of women in political parties.

## Issues of Concern

Although a number of these issues were dealt with subsequently, they have been included in the report for future reference.

- Should all indicators have the same weight in each sector and each block? Is it right? Is it applicable to the African situation? How relevant is it to the work?
- The actual meaning of the GSI. The name is not quite consistent with the content. It seems like other indices are better named than the GSI.
- Do we allow for compensation in the GSI?
- How do we score the points? Should we for example give 5 out of 10? What exactly would be used to give the points? Will it influence how people to perceive the Scoreboard?
- The term "Conflict prevention" is restrictive because conflict prevention focuses on the pre-conflict situation. There are issues about governance, human rights and poverty. How are these going to be measured? How do we capture the management, resolution, and post-conflict stages?
- What earnings are we going to use in the informal sector because earnings in the informal sector are not usually recorded?
- Should we have an indicator that shows the position of women in the private sector?

## 4.0 In-depth discussions on the AGDI (Second Day of the Meeting)

The AGDI comprises the Gender Status Index and the African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS). The GSI has three blocks; social power, economic power, and political power.

### 4.1 Social Power

The first block, social power, consists of two variables, education and health. These two were accepted as adequate.

#### a. Education

#### *Drop out Rates*

- There is the need to keep drop out rates for primary and secondary schools separate.

- Include in the report some case studies about why people drop out from schools.

### *Adult literacy*

- How do we define adult literacy? Should it include the ability to participate in decision-making processes? How do we measure it and how do we weight it?
- Another problem envisaged is that adult literacy rates are not available each year?
- The general consensus was that indicator for adult literacy should be i) Ability to read and write (This can be obtained from population census) and ii) Completion of primary school or adult literacy classes (this information could be obtained from household surveys).

### *School Enrolment*

- There was constructive debate on whether or not to use adjusted or gross rates, and if standards were going to be set for the adjusted rates.

### *Quality of Education*

- The working group concluded that it was going to be difficult to measure the quality of education because of the subjective elements, and the complication involved. However, the Report should mention that quality of education is important but it is a very difficult area to capture.

It was concluded that all the elements comprising the education block should be weighted equally. However, a member of the working group suggested that the trials would determine which areas should be weighted over others.

## **b. Health**

The indicators for health are HIV, Life expectancy, Time use for leisure and sleep, and stunting, malnutrition and infant mortality.

### *Life Expectancy*

- The working group concluded that life expectancy should be included as one of the indicators.
- There is the need to use national unadjusted figures for life expectancy. In such a case the medium figures should be used.

### *HIV/AIDS*

- There was a general discussion on whether countries have reliable statistics on HIV or standardized ways of collecting statistics. This issue arose because often it is not clear when death is recorded as being HIV/AIDS related or not.

Members agreed to focus on the more important issue of the gender differentials in the figures.

#### **4.2            Economic Power**

The second block covers economic power and includes indicators on income, labour force, time use, and access to resources.

The following indicators were agreed on:

**Income will include:**

- Wages in agriculture
- Wages in civil service
- Wages in formal sector (public and/or private)
- Wages in informal sector
- Income from informal enterprise

**Time-use or employment will include:**

- Time spent in market economic activities (as paid employee, own-account or employer)
- Time spent in non-market economic activities or as unpaid family worker in market economic activities
- Time spent in domestic non-economic activities
- Or: Share of paid employment, own-account and employer in total employment

**Access to resources**

- Ownership of urban plots/houses or land
- Access to credit
- Freedom to dispose of own income

**Management this would cover:**

- Employers
- High civil servants (class A)
- Members of professional syndicates
- Administrative, scientific and technical

#### **4.3            Political Power**

After an intense and animated discussion it was agreed that the political power should include both the formal and informal power as a lot of decisions and power games are played at the informal level. The informal level to include political parties, trade unions and professional syndicates. The formal level should include Members of parliament, Cabinet ministers, higher courts judges, Members of local councils and higher positions in civil service, as these are key to decision making.

## 5. African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS)

A few changes and additions were made to the Scoreboard. The highlights are given below:

### Changes

- "Action" was replaced with "Activities" because participants argued that all the other elements in the Scoreboard such as Law and Policy commitment could be categorised under "Action".
- "Harmful Traditional Practices" was also replaced with "Harmful Social Practices". The harmful social practices would include ritual slavery, widowhood rites, female and genital mutilation. The participants concluded that there are different practices in different parts of Africa, and therefore, the national research offices that the ACGD will be working with will identify the practice that is dominant in that country.

### Additions

- Violence against women was expanded to include a) Sexual harassment; b) Domestic Violence; and c) Rape.
- Beijing Plus Five was also elaborated to include the Girl-Child which will focus on early marriages, child trafficking and domestic labour.

### Key Constraint

- One important unresolved issue was how to award points. Do we for instance give individual points within CEDAW or one point for CEDAW as a whole? Is it sufficient to give points to a country that has national laws? What if those laws are not being implemented? Is it possible to state exactly what countries are doing? Can we give partial scores? Do we set up a maximum score? How do we determine the maximum score? Do we just give a tick for yes, no, or not applicable? Is it right to do that?

### Additional Comments/Observations

- There is an overlap between time use and labour force participation. It was concluded that labour force participation should be used as a proxy where time use survey is not available.
- The type of measurement used in time use surveys should be taken into consideration
- There were issues about how to measure labour force participation. Participants did not conclude on whether to use a) share of paid employment in total female employment compared to share of paid employment in total male employment or b) share of women in total paid employment over share of men in total paid employment. The first is however preferred over the second.

## 6. The African Women's Report

The working group made suggestions on how the Report should be organized. The Report could include some of the following:

- Introduction
- Context - Contextual gender issues in Africa today.
  - Elaboration of problems specific to African women which cannot be included in the AGDI.
  - Gender and Development (GAD) approaches – successes and limitations
- Justification for the AGDI – what it can do.
  - What it cannot do.
- Chapter introducing the Index. This could include be titled “Introducing the AGDI”
  - should include problems of measurement.
  - Explain the methodology and process
  - Explain the trials
- Statistical appendices could be used for the countries.
- To included are the challenges that member states need to address to improve their scores.
- Report to include case studies to substantiate some of the Data

## 7.0 Conclusions

After two days of deliberations it was the unanimous view of the participants that the presentations, and the discussions they inspired provided critical inputs for use in reviewing the AGDI. The consultants generally agreed to use the views and concerns expressed at the Meeting to revise their document after which it would be developed into a user-friendly volume.

The following questions remained unresolved and their documentation below is to provide a basis for future resolution:

- 1) Can the AGDI meet the challenge of lobbying public policymakers to integrate gender into all policies, plans and programmes?
- 2) Can the AGDI be able to capture all the critical areas in Africa considering the socio-economic and political diversities?

Finally, it is important to conclude that:

- Gender gaps are wide in Africa and therefore, policy interventions and action are needed to address the problem. The AGDI will create awareness and a tool to address such gaps.
- The ACGD would work together with the consultants on the revision of the AGDI after which it will go through a series of stages before it is validated.



**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON AWR/AGDI**

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## ANNEXES - WRITTEN COMMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP

## THE AFRICAN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Grace Bediako

It would be useful if the list of abbreviations were more exhaustive and included for example NEPAD, ICPD, as well as names of organizations referred to in the document.

Women's empowerment matrix (page 21). The discussion of the matrix is somewhat confusing. It is not consistent with the tabular presentation that it follows. The format should be explained further (following the first sentence) before the interconnections within the rows.

Shortcomings in the exercise of preparing global indices (pages 24-26). The explanation of the second shortcoming should be carefully reviewed. Some of the points made are contentious, for example, page 25, paragraph that starts as "This argument leads us to the second shortcoming ....", second sentence. If as the paper says "the world report *necessarily* privileges the international data base .. " a more balanced view must be presented (reflecting difficulties in compiling data at the international level, and gaps in these data bases.

In this regard, the report should devote a section on the how the data that will go into the AGDI will be obtained, bearing in mind that countries are already overburdened by the current data collection demands at the international and regional levels. Moreover, a major disadvantage of the AGDI is what appears to be its strength (a lot of indicators being combined, and thus the need to deal with missing values in data series – if countries are dropped for lack of one or more indicators, we should quickly run out of countries when the whole set of indicators are being combined).

Page 26 – paragraph before 4.1.1 – it is not clear what “.. if there is a wide variance means..”

Page 27 – Elaborate on “A third issue concerns the reliability of the indicators.” What does this really imply?

Page 34 - 4.1.4 – There are more recent data available from the latest version of Wistat database, which was used for *The Worlds Women 2000*.

On SIGE (page 34) – care needs to be taken in the use of access (if what is represented by the indicator is participation).

Page 35 – paragraph before 4.1.5 – The sentence “SIGE clearly reflects countries whose GDI ....” is not clear. Also, what does “It also skirts the problem of measuring qualitative data” mean? The use of “validity” in the last sentence needs to be elaborated (explained).

Page 40 – **Components of the Gender Status Index**

The information presented here are not highly accessible. In the presentation of the sets of indicators, a summary table showing the blocks, variables, and the indicators should be presented. Moreover in the presentation of the indicators in the text, the block headings should be used and highlighted as are the indicators themselves.

There is need for a more realistic assessment of the availability of data, as the very optimistic picture given for some of the indicators may be off (e.g., dropout ratios). Perhaps, at some point

the technical notes about each of the indicators need to be developed (or references to other sources for definitions, sources and quality of data be made).

With respect to the statement “All indicators only measure gender differentials.” - the way gender differentials are measured should be stated up front. (Also on terminology – perhaps sex-differential may be the actual measure represented by the calculation rather than gender differential?) It is not sufficient to include “dropout ratios” because they are interesting. There needs to be more substantive justification for the inclusion of the indicators.

Under adult literacy rate - the census should be qualified as the primary source not just “The Source for ...”. The sentence that begins with “Other household surveys (demographic, health or living conditions)...” needs further discussion.

The secondary school enrolment ratio – It is not clear who is expected to be doing the calculations; and what the ratio represents (ratio of girls to boys enrolled) or ratio of girls’ to boys’ enrolment ratios. In the last sentence of the paragraph the use of gross and net would be preferable (given the definitions being attempted).

Dropout ratios – need to be defined.

**Stunting/Underweight of children under 5 or 3** – the choice of age cutoff will need to be addressed.

**HIV Infection** – For this and even all the indicators, there is need to have serious discussion about the availability and quality of data.

**On economic power** – Given that there are also employees in the informal sector (even though majority in the sector are self-employed), it might be preferable to use income/earnings and not one or the other.

The statement “The labour force participation rates are given for both the formal, informal ....” Is not accurate since rates would need a different set of denominators than what the implied calculations would have. These indicators have to be expressed in a way that would make the formula clear (i.e., give their definitions).

For what is within the SNA boundary (it should be clarified that minor repairs to own house/living quarters is not part of the SNA – if such repairs are considered construction activities).

Page 44 – The paragraph that starts as “Lastly, most female activities in agriculture ...”. It is not clear the context in which the contribution of the unpaid family workers is being estimated (and by whom?)

The use of **non-market economic activities** here is in a more limited sense than it is in the SNA (which would include non-market activities of government), so this particular usage needs to be defined.

The paragraph “For market activities and non economic activities.... Therefore, it is the ratio of males to females which will be used.” Appears to be arbitrary. Is the ratio going to be inverted each time (for whichever indicator ratio and/or country for which a 100 value is expected?).

There needs to be a more substantive discussion of why any ratio is either entered as females/males or males/females.

It needs to be noted that depending on the definition of the informal sector that is used, “unpaid family workers” and “own account worker & employers” may be equal to employment in the informal sector. What does that do to the proposed approach to combining all these into an index?

Page 45 – instead of engendered compilation use “compilation of sex-disaggregated data”.

Page 45 – last sentence – “However it is proposed to adopt the same solution...” It is best to restate the solution in this specific context and have an opportunity to give substantive justification of why this solution applies to this case as well.

The compilation of the contribution of informal sector (page 46), is probably not strictly the production approach. The assumptions inherent in this estimation procedure should be reviewed and discussed.

**Freedom to dispose of own income** – Is the table being referred to I C? For table, I B is not the demographic surveys but the living standards survey.

Is the terminology “senior ministers” what pertains or just “ministers” and at the next level below they are referred to as “deputy ministers”?

Page 48 – The discussion of how the Gender Status Index is calculated may need to come before the discussion of what indicators go into the calculation. By “the gap” do we mean the sex difference?

The paragraph beginning “The required data will be collected...” – It is not clear what exactly is being proposed as the years for the compilation. This should be discussed in the context of data collection cycles, if any, such as for example the census rounds.

Esoteric versus simple arithmetic is not really the issue – for in either case, the output has no direct intuitive meaning to either the technical or non-technical person. Once the ADGI has been calculated – what does it really represent? How is it to be interpreted?

The real dilemma is what value an index brings – how do we measure progress? How are time series monitored? What margin of change/difference is to be considered trivial or substantial?

### **The African Women’s progress scoreboard**

For discussion of harmful tradition practices –last sentence – does it make a difference how this practice is being justified?

School dropout ratios – the last sentence require some substantiating

Land rights – explanation refers to the “majority of African women are farmers” but the GSI looks only at ownership of land in urban areas? If prevention of “soil erosion” is a particular relevant concern linked to land rights, further elaboration is needed.

The discussion under **ICPD plus Five** might be more accessible if presented in bullet format. It is also not clear what the indicators/or scoring basis is.

The use of “+” and “-“ does not lend itself to tracking changes in some of the scores (particular those that reflect some numerical changes).

Last paragraph – need to define or explain further “subjectivity and identity”.

#### **General**

There is need to define (state clearly) what indicators are being proposed. This can be done in the form of an expression of formula if even just worded. As it is, readers may have different views on what indicators are being proposed.

The quality of data is generally an issue, but more so for some of the proposed variables/indicators. A more realistic assessment of availability and quality of the data inputs would be necessary, especially as the international compilations are strongly criticized earlier.

Serious consideration needs to be given to how these statistics are to be compiled, how they are to be compared between countries, etc.

There is also a serious need to consider the statistical capacity within countries and how the work on developing AGDI can, not only be started, but also be sustained over a long period.

It needs to be emphasized that the underlying data should always be presented and analysed to give proper context to the indices that are compiled from them.

How do we deal with missing values? How is the coverage of countries affected by the missing values in the indicator sets/blocks?

Finally, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the limitations of composite indexes of this kind, and the literature is replete on this; and it should be clearly explained why this is certainly the way to go. The method of combining the indicator sets needs to be carefully reviewed and justified. To give a snapshot of how many indicators are being combined a summary table should be presented (as explained earlier).

**Comments on**  
**The African Gender And Development Index Document**  
**By Shahida El-Baz, Consultant**  
**Member, The Working Group on AWR/AGDI**  
**ECA, 5-6-2002**

The document is theoretically solid, well structured and informative both in a panoramic and thorough ways. Thus, it is bound to stimulate the reader and raises different theoretical and practical issues.

**The following comments are responses to some issues:**

- 1- Introducing the AGDI initiative, the document follows, albeit critically, the UNDP/HDR in its GDI and GEM. However, a major critique of the HDR was omitted i.e. its silent bias in selecting human development indicators which mystifies the reality of different society, especially the developing countries of the South. In this respect, the HDR does not pay any attention to the phenomenon of globalization and its major impact on all world societies which renders the human development indicators used in the report insignificant and useless. For example, the report uses enrollment rates to reflect the development in education without paying due attention to the negative changes in the quality of the education system. The change is a response to social polarization, exclusion and marginalization of certain social groups pertinent to globalization, which is embodied on the national level in structural adjustments policies adopted by different developing countries. A new pattern of dual education has dominated. The first is the private education connected with the consumers financial ability and which provides modern teachings and skills preparing the rich students for a globalized labour market. The second is the government public education, for the impoverished majority, falls short of qualifying them for the globalized labour market. Those who struggle and succeed in finishing public education join the army of the unemployed or accept any menial type of job for bare

survival. In this context, what do the enrollment rates tell us about real human development?

The same duality applies to the health services and any other social services affected by the reduction of public expenditure as part of the structural adjustment policies. However, the statistics of the HDR does not reflect any of these features. Needless to say that this social reality, ignored by the HDR, has a more devastating effect on women and girls who are increasingly becoming an apparent component of phenomena such as, child labour and street children who are out of the education system altogether.

**My point here is that to have an AGDI reflecting African reality we should take into consideration all the national social dynamics pertinent to the global restructuring of the world.**

**If possible, enrollment rates could be collected for government Schools and private paid-for schools separately. This data could be acquired from Ministries of Education in different countries.**

- 2- The report reviewed the different documents and declaration supporting gender equality. Among these was the NEPAD declaration which advocates a new policy to help Africa to integrate into the globalization process. Although the declaration referred to the empowerment of women but, as the document states, it did not give enough attention to gender issues in Africa. Irrespective of any substantial critique of the NEPAD initiative (this is not the place for it), it is very important that any new policy launched by African governments should be scrutinized and studied from a gender and development perspective. First, because African women should have a say in policies' formulating and restructuring their societies. Second, African Women's Practical and Strategic interests should not be sacrificed for the sake of gender blind, and possibly developmentally unsound, political declarations.

In this context, it might be important to pay attention to different development strategies and analyze their structural elements, which could lead to gender in equality or inequality (El-Baz, 2001). Further, it should be noted that gender



equality is structurally connected to other forms of social inequality within the same society and this what makes the struggle for gender equality a political transformative process. **This point is relevant to the AGDI in as far as we are trying to sharpen the indicators for gender political power.**

- 3- Regarding the review of existing gender frameworks, my observation is that they all describe how gender hierarchy / inequality has become (the differences are stressed and then hierarchized creating. Gender regimes, p.15), without telling us why and how these regimes were developed, and that what are the interacting factors and related mechanisms underlying the production of different forms of gender inequality at different socio- economic/ historical junctures. This omission tends to mystify the structural mechanisms of gender inequality and thus, makes it difficult to tackle the root causes of the problem or even determine priorities in the struggle. **This issue is relevant to the AGDI as it relates to difficulties of giving different weights to different indicators which might have priorities over others in different societies at different historical moments. Moreover, deconstructing gender inequality can only be achieved if we know it's underlying and dialectically constructing factors.**

In this context only the structural relationship between gender equality and development is validated and the struggle for gender equality becomes a struggle for building a just and democratic society.

- 4- Regarding the eight dimensions of the Gender Equality Index (GEI), the first three dimensions need to be clearly defined in order to determine their cultural suitability to each specific society which is a condition for getting reliable and quantifiable data.

Although these three dimensions could be a subject of intellectual discussions in Africa Arab- Islamic societies, using them as indicators would clash heavily with dominant cultural and religious codes. The gender identity and the autonomy of the body dimensions would certainly fall into this context.

Autonomy within the household should be well defined in relation to economic and decision-making rights within the household without undermining the assumed social value of sharing and co-operation which are expected from all household members. This point is important especially that all Arab/Islamic (including Christian minorities) stipulate constitutionally, legally and ideologically that the family is the society's basic unit. While this assumption leads to gender blind policies, which sustains gender inequality, efforts should be made to emphasize measures which secure equal access to resources and decision-making within the household.

- 5- Time using is a useful indicator for gender gap. The common denominator should be whether the activity in which the time is being used has an exchange value or only a use value i.e. economically valued by the specific society or not. In as much as time use is a culturally sensitive dimension its gender manifestation will differ for each society. Since our concern is gender empowerment, it is not the type of activity time is used for, but how the activity is economically valued for each gender in different societies.

**This dimension would be ultimately functional in promoting the recognition of the economic value of women's unpaid productive, and also domestic, activities, which are consistently ignored and contribute to gender inequality.** Time use would include the number of hours of women's activities so as to measure their being overburdened.

- 6- The standardized Index of Gender Equality (SIGE) does not seem to add much to GDI and GEM. Especially, that the document rightly points out at the difficulties related to measuring labour-market participation rates due to the labour different definitions for different societies. The main advantage is SIGE freedom from the influence of the income variable, which leads to GDI and GEM bias.
- 7- AGDI plus: combining the quantitative Gender status Index (GDI) and the qualitative African Women Progress Scoreboard is a good idea as it will widen

the scope of the AGDI beyond other existing reports. The three components of GSI would cover most attainable data.

Regarding education data, it should be collected for primary, secondary and tertiary levels separately as the gender gap widens progressively.

Reference should be made to the different reasons for girls and boys drop-outs.

Reference should also be made to the impact of globalization on education as a human development indicator in socially polarized African societies. **This could reveal what might be referred to as empowering and disempowering education systems.**

In relation to health indicators the document does not include maternal mortality because it is not a gender issue since it relates to women only. However, it is clearly a gender-related issue. It is closely connected to women's lack of access to health services because of gender discrimination and gender blind health policies.

Moreover, women, being dependent and insecure in their marriage tend to tie down the husband through having too many children which could ultimately cause maternal mortality. In addition, husbands' preference to male-children and their ignorance that they are responsible for the baby's sex, lead them to threaten the wives to marry another wife to bare him the baby male, which exerts a lot of pressure on the wife to give too many births.

**In this respect, including maternal mortality in the AWPS is in place.**

- 8- Regarding the economic power component, it is very important to think of ways of getting data on women's employment in the private sector, especially within the context of increasing privatization and the usual hostility and gender discriminating attitudes towards women in the private sector. This might be an issue for future AWRs.

Gender gap in unemployment is also a significant indicator for gender empowerment. This issue should also be taken up for future AWRs.

- 9- Political power should consider gender participation in formal as well as in informal politics so as to have a full picture of African reality where the state tends to control formal political processes. In this respect gender participation in political parties, professional syndicates, trade unions and civil society organizations. The participation could include the level of ordinary membership as well as membership in decision-making bodies.

**Comments to AGDF Draft document**  
**Geske Dijkstra**  
**5 June 2002**

**General**

1. I think it is very good to have a combination of a quantitative index and a scoreboard that can monitor more qualitative data.
2. The draft document is well written. It is good to begin with background information and a review of existing indices.
3. I see clear advantages in using national data: more recent data available, possibly also more data, and the more intensive promotion of data gathering than if international data sources are used. But perhaps the report is too optimistic on the comparability of these national data. Also, it seems that for many variables suggested for the index data are only available for a few countries.
4. The three blocks in the GSI are well chosen. Within the three blocks I sometimes prefer other variables and indicators. In general, I think it would be good to have fewer variables and indicators for the GSI. The lower number, the better. In particular, there are some variables that are measuring (almost) the same concept (time use and labour market participation).
5. The number of indicators must also be seen in relation to the weighting (see also p. 48-49). Equal weighting is good if each variable measures another aspect of the block, and if each indicator measures another aspect of the variable. If the indicators (partly) overlap in their meaning (for example in health), or if some indicators are more important than others (for example, if they measure outputs instead of inputs, see under education) then there is a reason for giving unequal weights.
6. In addition, indicators with a larger variance (spread) than others have a larger weight in the overall index. This variance of the different indicators should at least be checked. Standardization is a possible solution for diverging variances (see Dijkstra 2002).
7. I think the disadvantages of stock indicators (as opposed to flow indicators) are stressed too much. As stock indicators they do not change rapidly, but they are good for comparing countries. (comment also to p. 38.)
8. It is important to include the tables for GSI and Scoreboard in the text. In the GSI table, it would be helpful to add a column saying how the indicator is measured: as female share or as ratio female/male achievement. In some cases (dropout rates, HIV) it is necessary to take male/female "achievement". It is important to include this information in table, because it will force you to think about it for all indicators. For

some (labour market participation, for instance), it is not clear yet what you are going to use: a ratio, or a share. Then, if shares are chosen, they should be multiplied by 2 before taking the average.

9. It would be good to also add a column in the tables on data availability by indicator (see last remark on annexes).
10. The GSI is supposed to apply more simple arithmetics than GDI and GEM. But the complicated arithmetics in GDI and GEM is only due to the fact that UNDP wants to combine a relative measure of inequality with a measure of absolute achievements.
11. The Scoreboard needs to be elaborated. For example, what particular aspects of CEDAW are you focusing on? And it would be helpful to indicate what intersections with the horizontal axis can be filled in the table.
12. Why is it necessary to have a maximum possible score that varies by country (p. 39)? For most items, a plus or a yes would be that maximum. I hope it is possible to have the same maximum score for each country.

#### **More detailed comments to the draft document:**

13. Acronyms: many more must be added. CEDAW etc.
14. p. 4. In the objectives, it is important to state that the AGDI should allow for comparisons between countries on the extent of gender equality, and should also be able to capture changes over time. These two objectives may conflict (see below), but both are important.
15. p. 15 "... it is gender analysis that addresses those similarities (Imam 97)" ? Only similarities, not also differences? Or only differences?
16. p. 17 "power relations ... have three dimensions: ... " I don't understand these dimensions. Later (p. 19-20), there are the three dimensions of power by Lukes, which seem to make more sense. I do understand that these are dimensions of the process of empowerment (as in next sentence on p. 17), but that is something different.
17. p. 19 Why does the exchange of sex for money "... stimulate men to control the access to cashcrops and wages.."? I suppose the latter is a phenomenon within households, the former is outside households, so what is relationship? And what comes first?
18. p. 19, next sentence: women may also desert their families under economic stress.
19. p. 19. "The force relations operating at different levels are in eternal conflict". Why?

20. p. 21. The WEM is very useful, but the matrix does not capture all relationships. According to the text, there are not only interconnections *between* spheres and levels, but also *among* spheres (and, not in text, but most likely also among levels!). For the interconnections between spheres another matrix would be needed, with the same spheres on both axes.
21. Another (minor) issue: text speaks about “socio-economic issue” (care), but “socio-economic is not in matrix. And are various *levels* integrated in care (as in text), or various *spheres*? Or both?
22. p. 25 below. If Ministries of Education do not use official population figures for enrolment ratios then it seems better to use international data?
23. p. 27 As far as I know, I do not provide a critique of the epsilon in Dijkstra (2002). The critique is that GDI (by taking the harmonic mean of two scores) is no measure of gender inequality but mixes it up with average achievements, so absolute levels of income, education and health.
24. Point of critique to GDI that is missing (and should be mentioned before last para on this page): by using simple average of the three variables, the variable with the largest variation weighs most heavily in the total index. This is income (see Bardhan and Klasen 1999, and Dijkstra 2002).
25. p. 27 last sentence. The sentence that “GDI is modeled after HDI” is a bit vague. There are two reasons for the close relationship between GDP and GDI (only the first of these is in Dijkstra and Hanmer): 1) absolute levels of income weigh heavily in the GDI (and even more after the correction made on the basis of Bardhan and Klasen), and that 2) income variable is dominant in the GDI (see above, additional point of critique).
26. p. 28 “Countries with high incomes ... are penalized more severely”. This is what Bardhan and Klasen argue, but I show in Dijkstra (2002: 310-311) that it is not true. Countries with same gender income gap but with different levels of income, had exactly the same penalty for inequality in their GDI.
27. p. 29. I don’t understand the critique by Hirway and Mahadevia. Why would this be so?
28. p. 29, last para. I think GDI and GEM do attempt to include freedom from hunger: income would provide that.
29. p. 30 “Dijkstra criticizes..” You could add to this sentence: because it reduces the penalty for inequality at higher average levels of income, while these penalties were equal under the old computation.

GSI:

40. p. 38 “we propose to use simple arithmetic averages ..”. No: that would not measure inequality at all. You mean we use simple ratios of female and male scores, or shares of total where applicable?
41. p. 38. Simple averages of variables: see general comment (no. 6) at the beginning on the implicit weighting that could be the result. There is also reason to think on weighting for other reasons (no.5).
42. p. 38. Population weighting is only needed if you aim at having a measure of absolute wellbeing. For a relative measure as you have now, it is not necessary.
43. p. 39 SIGE also is a relative measure and independent of GDP.
44. p. 41. “enrollment ration is calculated gross..” this is the enrolment figure, not the ratio? Or what is the denominator in this ratio if it is regardless of age?
45. Is tertiary education (if available) such an important indicator for Africa? I tend to think that women still lag behind in secondary education, and perhaps also primary. As it is proposed, tertiary education gets double weight as compared to (combined) primary and secondary education. If using national data, all three could be taken separately.
46. Furthermore, is enrolment such an important variable that it has 2 out of 4 (or 3 out of 5)? It is only an input variable.
47. What dropout rates are taken? Primary, secondary or tertiary? Reliable figures available?
48. I doubt about equal weight within education, as it is now.

p. 42 Health:

49. I think life expectancy is very important to include. Current indicators, except for the HIV/AIDS, which is a rather specific one, only apply to children and do not capture access to health of adult women as compared to adult men, maternal risks, and possible heavier lives for women (less leisure and sleep). This would mean the GSI would measure female relative health and access to health services (almost) only by looking at young children.
50. The reasons given during first day of workshop for not including life expectancy are not convincing. Only data from census once in 10 years, and estimates thereafter: this holds for many indicators. And war etc. argument is addressed above.
51. I would suggest to also use time use data as indicator for health (see below, no. 64)



52. Stunting is separate but also included in malnutrition? Not clear what the indicators are here. Height for age is third indicator for malnutrition, but not mentioned later on. In table it is clear, but the second should not be called malnourished since the first is it, too.
53. p. 42. Top of page: child mortality, bottom: infant mortality. What is it?
54. p. 43. HIV/AIDS: the measure should be reversed: a higher male/female ratio would point to more gender equality. And are data reliable?
- p. 43 Economic power.
55. In general it must be worked out better which indicators really measure gender inequality. Formal sector may be good or bad for women as compared to informal sector, then including relative participation does not add much. Same goes for agriculture.
56. (detail) There is no difference between "income" and "earnings" (in informal sector). Both are neutral as to whether it is wage income or not. Are income data available for the informal sector?
57. (By the way, GDI and GEM reflect absolute levels not only of income, but also of the other variables).
58. p. 43, below: Definition of non-market is here subsistence production?
59. More definitions are necessary on what is or should be a contribution to GDP: is cooking also work (is this processing of agricultural production, p. 44?), or cleaning your own house? If it is done by somebody else who receives an income, it adds to GDP! Or taking care of children (same)? There is also the problem of joint production. How to account for this work? Possibilities are: Minimum wage, average salary in childcare, cooking etc., or opportunity costs of the person who does it (so then it depends on education etc. of person who does it). A lot of work has been done on these issues already. The pioneer is Marilyn Waring, *If women counted*. (1988).
60. p. 44 Unpaid family workers, "... so contribution estimated on the basis of minimum wages ..."? Why? (see above – there are many possibilities)
61. p. 44. What is the "production boundary" (see also above)? What are "non-economic activities"? Care of others, personal care, leisure?
62. p. 44/45: Time use: is good, but I think it measures to a large extent the same as (some of the items within) labour market participation.
63. Time use in "unpaid economic sector" = subsistence activities, plus unpaid family worker? Again, more definitions needed!

64. However, time use data are also a relevant indicator for *health*. So total hours in household work and other work (including child care, cooking, etc) or, alternatively, the remainder: hours for leisure and sleep. This is a very relevant indicator, but not for economic power.
65. p. 45. Labour force participation by sector: why is this important? It says very little on inequality. And it is not clear yet how these six are measured: shares? Ratios of female participation relative to male participation? Are the different indicators averaged? There is overlap! You could take, for example, the female share in the sum of workers in paid employment plus own account workers and employers, and the male share in unpaid family workers. If there are reasons to assume that work in the formal sector is, on average, better than work in the informal sector (and data are available), you could also take female share in formal sector. But this overlaps partly with the above.
66. Why a separate indicator for agricultural sector? This is partly paid labour, partly own account, partly subsistence and partly unpaid family worker.
67. p. 46 Income: measuring in this alternative way (the production method) ignores the f/m wage or income gap within sectors. So the assumption that "value added per head is not different" is strange: this is exactly what we want to know! In addition, the production method does not add information as compared to the figures for labour market participation (and time use).
68. The income approach is better, but then income gap in informal sector (if those data are available) is assumed to exist also for formal sector. To have an overall figure for income gap, incomes in formal/informal sector should be weighted with share in labour force f/m of formal/informal sector. This would be the ideal indicator for income.
69. On the basis of discussion of first day of workshop: Jacques suggested the comparison of production and income methods would reveal underestimation of contribution of women in income method. But 1) there is little need for us to compare production and income method. Many other studies have computed the contribution of women to GDP if you include subsistence production and caring tasks etc.. 2) The income method (if data available) says something about what women actually earn. This is important in itself for our inequality measure. Women may contribute to GDP via subsistence or production of care, but they don't get remunerated for it. This should be brought out by the income indicator.
70. p. 47 what is the "household institutional sector"?

Access to resources:

71. "Employers" are also in table as indicator for access to resources, not in text. I am not convinced that this is a good indicator since it does not say much in itself: employers

may have little or much power, and they may be poor or rich. In addition, it is already included in labour market participation.

72. Access to credit would be another indicator under this variable, but difficult to get data?

Political power:

73. p. 48. Why only the share of women in professionals? Not administrative/management, and technical and professional positions? This would at least say something about relative f/m income.

### Scoreboard

74. Lacking: An item on the right to marry and the right to divorce could be added.
75. p. 51: power in precolonial times: What is the aspect to monitor or measure?
76. Why include policies to improve girls school attendance? If this enrolment is already in GSI, it is not necessary to include it in Scoreboard. It is also difficult to score: what is exactly a policy to promote education of girls? This will lead to endless debates with states.
77. ILO 100. This is about ratification and implementation? Monitoring the implementation would automatically follow from showing this in the Scorecard table.

### Annexes

78. The annexes are good, but it would be better if we would get information on data availability by indicator. It would be ideal if the two tables (on GSI and Scoreboard) would include another column with the data source (DHS, census, etc) and an indication of this data availability. Or perhaps at least the number of countries for which this indicator is actually available could be mentioned in the table. Now it is very difficult to get that information out of the text plus appendix tables.

## REPORT ON THE GENDER STATUS INDEX AND THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S PROGRESS SCOREBOARD

By Dzodzi Tsikata

### A. General Comments

1. The concept paper is clearly written and accessible and does a good critique of other indices such as the GDI and the GEM as well as UNIFEM's Progress of the World's Women. This and the discussion of efforts such as WEM and the GEI as a basis for the GSI and the AWPS (AGDI Plus) are helpful.
2. The combination of qualitative with quantitative data to assess different areas of progress is a very useful device. In addition, some quantitative indicators need to be supplemented with qualitative data and vice versa. For example, the education indicators do not tell us much about the quality of education, subject choice biases etc. It also remains an issue how to ensure that both types of data have the same status in the AGDI Plus. This is because quantitative data is generally privileged in reports of this nature.
3. One of the major weaknesses of the concept paper is that the section now titled the africaness of the AGDI which is to lay the context for the whole enterprise is not complete. This is not a simple omission that can be remedied by including the missing parts. This is because taken together with the critique of past indices, it would have provided the justification for as well as the bases for assessing the instruments, variables and indicators being proposed. As the paper stands, it is difficult not to conclude that variables and indicators have been selected because it is customary to see education, membership of parliament etc. as the indices for women's progress. This makes a full assessment of the instruments difficult and turns the process for designing instruments on its head. A full account of the context should include an analysis of gender relations in Africa taking into account the areas identified in the women's empowerment matrix (p. 21). It should also discuss policy approaches to gender and development over the years paying special attention to gender mainstreaming, which the paper now only mentions only in passing. These approaches should be discussed within the context of the overarching development approaches within which they are conceived and implemented e.g. SAPs etc. The contextual section should also discuss the work of the African women's movement from the colonial period through local and national political process to UN conferences to the present. This would then demonstrate what is only now simply asserted in the paper that "although opponents to feminism tend to portray it as a western phenomenon, it is important to insist on the African connotations of this social movement" (p.16). This section could then end by identifying some of the important gender equality issues facing African women today. Such a contextual section would then ground the paper and form the basis for the choice of instruments, variables and indicators. In the same vein it makes an assessment more meaningful.
4. Section 2 of the paper needs clarification and restructuring. Its purpose in the paper is not too clear at the moment although that can be deduced. If the point is to establish that influential institutions recognize the importance of attention to gender issues and have tried to push these in various ways, that there have been regional and international processes which have established some benchmarks etc. then this should be clearly set

out. It is not clear what NEPAD is doing in this section. Perhaps it belongs in the African context discussion. There is no mention of the Social Summit and the Social Summit +5 commitments and the millennium goals.

5. The discussion of gender and power are refreshing and move away from the superficial discussions of gender which lay the concept open to cooptation. However, it needs to be taken one step further. The way gender has been used and understood in policy processes in Africa and the "depoliticisation process" the concept has undergone needs to be part of the discussion here.
6. If the empowerment approaches are key to this enterprise (on p. 14, it says that the AGDI is based on the empowerment approaches), then they have to be discussed less perfunctorily. To create space to discuss the empowerment approaches more thoroughly, the exposition of the GRF, SRF and TRF can be shortened substantially. This is because it has been difficult to understand, not just from this paper but from other expositions of the empowerment approaches how different they are from some of basic tenets of 2<sup>nd</sup> wave feminism and when an approach can be described as the empowerment approach. Is it if its proponents say so or must it have some particular features. This is an issue because some countries and institutions have claimed that this is their approach to gender and development issues and it is not clear what their various approaches have in common. As discussed on p. 17 of the concept paper, "it encompasses all aspects of women's lives", critiques the inter-linkages between power and development" "does not mean reversing existing hierarchies.....but help change society towards more egalitarian relations...". "implies the political mobilization of women and consciousness raising...". It seems to me to be a restatement of some of the dearly held beliefs of sections of the women's movement which includes influences such as the "the women and autonomy" approach of sections of European feminism, the insistence of feminists from developing countries that a critique of development and the implications of class, race, ethnicity be central to gender analysis and policy approaches. As the concept paper points out, there is no consensus among those who advocate the empowerment of women (p. 17). Therefore its meaning and applications cannot be taken for granted. Therefore I suggest that rather than speaking of empowerment approaches as a response to the lack of agreement among empowerment discussions, we examine the commonalities and differences and clarify which of the approaches is being adopted here.
7. Related to the above is the absence of a discussion of policy approaches to gender and development in Africa. As I understand it, these are connected to, but not the same as the analytical frameworks. Therefore the GRF, SRF et.c. are largely gender analytical frameworks which have informed the different policy approaches which have been identified in some of the literature as welfare, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment approaches. In Africa, these approaches together with commitments from UN Conferences have informed the use of particular instruments for gender equity work- e.g. affirmative action, legislative reform, women's projects, national machinery, gender mainstreaming et.c. In addition to measuring progress, it would be interesting to discuss (qualitatively) what kinds of instruments have been/are being used and how effective they have been/are. For example, the concern about poverty and the particular analysis of gender and poverty which is dominant around Africa has had implications for the thrust of gender equity work. As well, the adoption of gender mainstreaming as the preferred policy approach has had implications.

8. The critique that various indices neglect human rights, ecology, care, compassion and love raises interesting questions of what we have the tools to assess and measure. In the case of human rights, if we agree that women's rights are human rights, then some of that is addressed if not completely in the variables being proposed even if it is not couched in the HR discourse. In relation the "care, love and compassion" critique, there are some issues to clarify. What precisely is being measured- is it time use, is it the measure of these values and qualities in various sectors? The concept paper makes an auto critique that the AGDI does not address these issues as well as some issues of body politics and sexuality. Perhaps it signals more the limits of indices as a way of assessing women's progress in society than the weaknesses of any one index. It may be useful for the concept paper to signal the limitations of indices in general and their value as a complementary tool in the struggle for more equitable gender relations.

#### B: Specific Comments on the Instruments

9. The dimensions of women's life identified by the GEI (p. 33) which have influenced the AGDI are comprehensive and useful. The only modification I would suggest is of 3- which I think should be autonomy within the household and other spaces. This is also in keeping with the WEM which indicates that women's lives are played out at different levels. This theoretically allows the assessment of various institutions and their practices too. Of course this can only be done if the data exists, but it could be one of the areas of qualitative data collection. It is not clear to me what dimension 1- gender identity means. Would it for example include gender ideologies? What else would be considered a gender identity issue?
10. Why the name Gender Status Index? I understand that the name tries to differentiate it from other indices, but its meaning is ambiguous. Is it to measure the status of gender issues or the gender equality /equity status of countries? What is being measured needs to be captured more clearly.
11. The suitability of the AGDI in terms of scope, relevance and applicability seems to be reasonably demonstrated, but the choice of variables and indicators needs more justification in terms of the situation in Africa. In relation to the GDI, many of the variables and indicators do not depart much from those which have been used by other indices so it can be argued that they are tried and tested. However, there should be an effort to justify even the seemingly self obvious variables such as education and health. Such an exercise even if it throws up the same variables and indicators may provide a stronger justification for their use, but may well result in some new ways of seeing progress towards gender equality. Having said this, I would like to make the following suggestions on the assumption that these variables will be considered useful even after being interrogated:
  - a. In relation to the economic power, the time use variable and its indicators are also acceptable. In relation to domestic activities, are social reproductive activities such as funerals, church, visits, play et.c. included or excluded(p. 45)?
  - b. In relation to labour force participation, own account work needs to be treated differently from employers if the statistics can be found (p. 45).

- c. Under political power, the national local government is an important addition. Other indicators to consider might be the leadership of political parties e.g. national executive committees (p. 48). Again, under associations of professionals, trade unions, teachers and nurses associations are also important (p. 48).
- d. The term "harmful traditional practices" misrepresents what are essentially social control mechanisms which are also linked to violence against women. This allows a broad range of seemingly innocuous practices to be considered. Also the issue of women's power in pre-colonial times especially as it relates to queens chiefs et.c. needs careful treatment. The power of some elite women over other women is not necessarily beneficial for the majority of women.
- e. Land rights are important without the controversial statements about tillers and ownership which have been challenged by recent studies on land titling in Africa (p. 51).

### C. Matters Arising

- 12. To realize the democratic aspirations of the AGDI, a guide to its use has to be an integral part of it. Also, governments and civil society groups have to be trained in its use as well as sensitized to its benefits. As well, efforts have to be made to help governments improve their collection of gender disaggregated data in various areas in order to expand the scope of the Index in the future.

## COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT OF THE AFRICAN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT INDEX (AGDI)

Professor Okore

It is important that, from the outset, character and the social, economic and political contexts of power relations between the sexes is circumscribed by a social ideology of status that is largely determined by the culture and institutions that govern the lives of the people. In the circumstance, the behaviour of almost all women, especially in rural areas, is controlled by an ideology whereby functional leadership tends to be held by the men and status differences are manifested through role differences. Components of the culture which affect gender relations include polygyny, processes of decision-making, intra-familial communication, access to property, control and ownership of land. These and others constitute instruments of discrimination against the womenfolk. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women defines discrimination as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, in the political, economic, social and cultural field. (Article 1). It then calls on countries to take "all appropriate measures (including legislation) to ensure full development and advancement of women for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men". (Article 3).

Given that the behaviour of men and women in Africa is culturally inspired, it becomes imperative to take account of both qualitative and quantitative components in the construction of an African Gender and Development Index.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MATRIX (WEM): The matrix attempts to demonstrate how physical, sociocultural, religious, political, legal and economic considerations operate at personal, household, community, state, regional and global levels to influence the status of women. Although some of the interconnections may not be too obvious at first sight, yet the components of the matrix do highlight the major sociocultural, economic and political factors that affect the status of women

THE REVIEW OF GDI, GEM, GEL, HDI AND SIGE: The review of these existing indices and measures and their shortcomings constitutes a useful basis for the selection of appropriate indices for Africa. It is however important to link objectively verifiable indices (OVIs) to the means of verifying them (MOVIs). This way, it would then be possible to isolate those other variables which also impact on women's status but which can be described qualitatively.

PRESENTATION OF AGDI PLUS: The proposal to have two components of AGDI namely The Gender Status Index (GSI) and The African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS) is pertinent since they respectively represent both the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of AGDI. However, with regard to the components of GSI, the following observations are pertinent: -

- (1) Enrolment at primary level of education draws attention to the relative opportunities chances of school-age male and female children being in school while enrolments at secondary and tertiary levels point to the rate of transition from one educational level to the next higher one.
- (2) Dropout ratios may have to be specifically related to cause in order to isolate those causes that directly relate to gender inequality from more general causes relating to performance, for example.



- (3) For those variables that have to do with Economic Power, we have to be careful that in dealing with Income and Labour Force Participation, we do not get entangled with the problem of unavailability or inadequacy of data for the informal sector vis-à-vis the formal sector or paid work vis-à-vis own-account work.
- (4) With regard to Time Use, we have to worry about the availability of reliable time use data across African countries. This is particularly important since time use data are not very easy to collect; they are based on follow-up or longitudinal rather than cross-sectional surveys; they are too involving to be conducted on a national scale.
- (5) With regard to political power, indices such as Senior Ministers and Supreme Court Judges are not necessarily dependent on women's own efforts but may be determined by administrative fiat.
- (6) Information on actual or potential professionals can be enriched through classification and presentation of data on output of graduates in various professional courses at the tertiary level of education according to sex.

The table on the AFRICAN WOMEN'S PROGRESS SCOREBOARD seems to be adequate in demonstrating the extent to which governments are committed to the implementation of agreements reached at international meetings on the agenda for either eliminating discriminatory practices against women or empowering them to live rewarding and fulfilled lives. There is however any to specify those practices which have been identified to require action.

In conclusion, the indices developed under GSI have to be comparable across countries; they have to be verifiable (i.e. quantitatively) and they have to be easy to understand. This should also not be based on complex mathematical constructs that users may find difficult to comprehend.

Austin Okore  
4/6/2002

Economy	National poverty lines								International poverty lines				
	Survey year	Population below the poverty line (%)			Survey year	Population below the poverty line (%)			Survey year	Population below \$1 a day %	Poverty gap at \$1 a day %	Population below \$2 a day %	Poverty gap at \$2 a day %
		Rural	Urban	National		Rural	Urban	National					
Albania	1988	16.6	7.3	12.2	1995	30.3	14.7	22.6	1995	<2	<0.5	15.1	3.6
Angola		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Argentina	1991	..	..	25.5	1993	..	..	17.6		..	..	..	..
Armenia		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Australia		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Austria		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Azerbaijan	1995	..	..	68.1		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	1991-92	46.0	23.3	42.7	1995-96	39.8	14.3	35.6	1996	29.1	5.9	77.8	31.8
Belarus	1995	..	..	22.5		..	..	..	1998	<2	<0.5	<2	0.1
Belgium		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Benin	1995	..	..	33.0		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Bolivia	1993	..	29.3	..	1995	79.1	..	..	1990	11.3	2.2	38.6	13.5
Botswana		..	..	..		..	..	..	1985-85	33.3	12.5	61.4	30.7
Brazil	1990	32.6	13.1	17.4		..	..	..	1997	5.1	1.3	17.4	6.3
Bulgaria		..	..	..		..	..	..	1995	<2	<0.5	7.8	1.6
Burkina Faso		..	..	..		..	..	..	1994	61.2	25.5	85.8	50.9
Burundi	1990	..	..	36.2		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Cambodia	1993-94	43.1	24.8	39.0	1997	40.1	21.1	36.1		..	..	..	..
Cameroon	1984	32.4	44.4	40.0		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Canada		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Central African Republic		..	..	..		..	..	..	1993	66.6	38.1	84.0	58.4
Chad	1995-96	67.0	63.0	64.0		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Chile	1992	..	..	21.6	1994	..	..	20.5	1994	4.2	0.7	20.3	5.8
China	1996	7.9	<2	6.0	1998	4.6	<2	4.6	1998	18.5	4.2	53.7	21.0
Hong Kong, China		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Colombia	1991	29.0	7.8	16.9	1992	31.2	8.0	17.7	1996	11.0	3.2	28.7	11.6
Congo, Dem. Rep.		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Congo, Rep.		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Costa Rica		..	..	..		..	..	..	1996	9.6	3.2	26.3	10.1
Côte d'Ivoire		..	..	..		..	..	..	1995	12.3	2.4	49.4	16.8
Croatia		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Czech Republic		..	..	..		..	..	..	1993	<2	<0.5	<2	<0.5
Denmark		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Dominican Republic	1989	27.4	23.3	24.5	1992	29.8	10.9	20.6	1996	3.2	0.7	16.0	5.0
Ecuador	1994	47.0	25.0	35.0		..	..	..	1995	20.2	5.8	52.3	21.2
Egypt, Arab Rep.	1995-96	23.3	22.5	22.9		..	..	..	1995	3.1	0.3	52.7	11.4
El Salvador													

## PEOPLE

Economy	National poverty lines								International poverty lines				
	Survey year	Population below the poverty line (%)			Survey year	Population below the poverty line (%)			Survey year	Population below \$1 a day	Poverty gap at \$1 a day	Population below \$2 a day	Poverty gap at \$2 a day
		Rural	Urban	National		Rural	Urban	National		%	%	%	%
Mali		..	..	..		..	..	..	1994	72.8	37.4	90.6	60.5
Mauritania	1989-90	..	..	57.0		..	..	..	1995	3.8	1.0	22.1	6.6
Mexico	1988	..	..	10.1		..	..	..	1995	17.9	6.1	42.5	18.1
Moldova	1997	26.7	..	23.3		..	..	..	1992	7.3	1.3	31.9	10.2
Mongolia	1995	33.1	38.5	36.3		..	..	..	1995	13.9	3.1	50.0	17.5
Morocco	1990-91	18.0	7.6	13.1	1998-99	27.2	12.0	19.0	1990-91	<2	<0.5	7.5	1.3
Mozambique		..	..	..		..	..	..	1996	37.9	12.0	78.4	36.8
Myanmar		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Namibia		..	..	..		..	..	..	1993	34.9	14.0	55.8	30.4
Nepal	1995-96	44.0	23.0	42.0		..	..	..	1995	37.7	9.7	82.5	37.5
Netherlands		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
New Zealand		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Nicaragua	1993	76.1	31.9	50.3		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Niger	1989-93	66.0	52.0	63.0		..	..	..	1995	61.4	33.9	85.3	54.8
Nigeria	1985	49.5	31.7	43.0	1992-93	36.4	30.4	34.1	1997	70.2	34.9	90.8	59.0
Norway		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Pakistan	1991	36.9	28.0	34.0		..	..	..	1996	31.0	6.2	84.7	35.0
Panama	1997	64.9	15.3	37.3		..	..	..	1997	10.3	3.2	25.1	10.2
Papua New Guinea		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Paraguay	1991	28.5	19.7	21.8		..	..	..	1995	19.4	8.3	38.5	18.8
Peru	1994	67.0	46.1	53.5	1997	64.7	40.4	49.0	1996	15.5	5.4	41.4	17.1
Philippines	1994	53.1	28.0	40.6	1997	51.2	22.5	40.6		..	..	..	..
Poland	1993	..	..	23.8		..	..	..	1993	5.4	4.3	10.5	6.0
Portugal		..	..	..		..	..	..	1994	<2	<0.5	<2	<0.5
Romania	1994	27.9	20.4	21.5		..	..	..	1994	2.8	0.8	27.5	6.9
Russian Federation	1994	..	..	30.9		..	..	..	1998	7.1	1.4	25.1	8.7
Rwanda	1993	..	..	51.2		..	..	..	1983-85	35.7	7.7	84.6	36.7
Saudi Arabia		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Senegal		..	..	..		..	..	..	1995	26.3	7.0	67.8	28.2
Sierra Leone	1989	76.0	53.0	68.0		..	..	..	1989	57.0	39.5	74.5	51.8
Singapore		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Slovak Republic		..	..	..		..	..	..	1992	<2	<0.5	<2	<0.5
Slovenia		..	..	..		..	..	..	1993	<2	<0.5	<2	<0.5
South Africa		..	..	..		..	..	..	1993	11.5	1.8	35.8	13.4
Spain		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Sri Lanka	1985-86	45.5	26.8	40.6	1990-91	38.1	28.4	35.3	1995	6.6	1.0	45.4	13.5
Sweden		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Switzerland		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Syrian Arab Republic		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Tajikistan		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Tanzania	1991	..	..	51.1		..	..	..	1993	19.9	4.8	59.7	23.0
Thailand	1990	..	..	18.0	1992	15.5	10.2	13.1	1998	<2	<0.5	28.2	7.1
Togo	1987-89	..	..	32.3		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Tunisia	1985	29.2	12.0	19.9	1990	21.6	8.9	14.1	1990	<2	<0.5	11.6	2.9
Turkey		..	..	..		..	..	..	1994	2.4	0.5	18.0	5.0
Turkmenistan		..	..	..		..	..	..	1993	20.9	5.7	59.0	23.3
Uganda	1993	..	..	55.0		..	..	..	1992	36.7	11.4	77.2	35.8
Ukraine	1995	..	..	31.7		..	..	..	1996	<2	<0.5	23.7	4.4
United Kingdom		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
United States		..	..	..		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Uruguay		..	..	..		..	..	..	1989	<2	<0.5	6.6	1.9
Uzbekistan		..	..	..		..	..	..	1993	3.3	0.5	26.5	7.3
Venezuela, RB	1989	..	..	31.3		..	..	..	1996	14.7	5.6	36.4	15.7
Vietnam	1993	57.2	25.9	50.9		..	..	..		..	..	..	..
Yemen, Rep.	1992	19.2	18.6	19.1		..	..	..	1998	5.1	0.9	35.5	10.1
Zambia	1991	88.0	46.0	68.0	1993	..	..	86.0	1996	72.6	37.7	91.7	61.2
Zimbabwe	1990-91	31.0	10.0	25.5		..	..	..	1990-91	36.0	9.6	64.2	29.4

Note: For data comparability and coverage, see the Technical Notes. Figures in italics are for years other than those specified.

