



POLICY BRIEF



# GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES IN AFRICA

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## CONTEXT

The recent large-scale discovery of valuable extractive resources – oil, gas and minerals – in Eastern and Southern Africa presents great potential for shared economic growth and could drastically reduce poverty levels in these countries. However, if the extractive industry (EI) sector is not managed in a transparent and equitable manner, there are risks of severe negative consequences, including environmental degradation, economic disturbance, population displacement, and accelerated levels of inequality and poverty.

Salient evidence suggests a gender bias in the distribution of the risks, costs and benefits within the EI sector that, if unaddressed, could further widen the gender gaps in access to resources and resource-related opportunities.

Indeed, it appears that men mostly benefit from EI, while women bear most of the costs, such as family or social disruption and environmental degradation which leads to the loss of employment and income in agriculture. Furthermore, women face disproportionate risks in their engagements with EI operations and the communities that surround them: harassment, gender-based violence, HIV, and extreme levels of violence in resource-based conflicts<sup>i</sup>. These gender disparities have been accentuated by the absence of strong political and economic institutions that could integrate gender issues into the EI sector.

In view of the rapid evolution of the EI sector in Africa, this policy brief highlights the urgent need for integrating gender dimensions into the EI sector on the continent, to ensure that resource-led development is transparent and the benefits from the sector are equitably shared.

## EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES IN AFRICA

Largely driven by the extractive industries, gross domestic product (GDP) growth within certain African economies continues to rank among the world's highest; the continent possesses 10 percent of the world's oil reserves, 40 percent of its gold ore, and no less than 95 percent of platinum group metals. Extractive resources account for almost one quarter of Africa's GDP<sup>ii</sup> (see Box 1).

Africa's resource wealth, however, has also been associated with "poverty, conflict and corruption"<sup>iii</sup>, as resources have not always translated into higher levels of household income. Several countries in sub-Saharan Africa have gained substantial wealth from their resources, but more efforts are required to address the contribution of this wealth to inclusive growth, equitable poverty reduction and gender equality.

For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, when comparing the development indices of resource-rich countries and those with limited resources, the resource-rich countries rank comparatively higher on the income index; yet the countries with few resources have higher scores on human development and education indices<sup>iv</sup>. This indicates that in resource-rich sub-Saharan African countries, income is not being translated into equitable growth. It is vital that advocacy and capacity development work in resource-rich developing countries focuses not only on issues of transparency, progressive taxation and equitable distribution of resource wealth, but also on the full integration of gender perspectives into these activities through, for example, the appropriate allocation of resources and tax income to women's empowerment programmes and initiatives.

BOX 1

Country growth statistics

	% GDP growth rate in 2012 <sup>v</sup>	% contribution of mining to GDP in 2011 <sup>vi</sup>
Mozambique	7.4	1.4
DRC	7.2	3.6
Zambia	7.3	1.3
Ghana	7.1	2.0
Tanzania	6.9	3.6
Angola	6.8	69.1
Botswana	5.6	29.1
Zimbabwe	4.4	5.7
South Africa	2.5	9.1
Malawi	7.0	10.8

## GENDER ISSUES IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR

The oil, gas and mineral value chains have important opportunities and considerations for women’s engagement, which are currently not being fully realized. Throughout the chain of exploration, contracting and licensing, operations and extraction, value addition, tax and royalty collection, and revenue distribution and management, women and men face different needs and opportunities. For example, in the initial stages of impact assessment and consultation during exploration, efforts must be made to capture women’s concerns and include them when disseminating the findings. This means that the timings, location and information provided take into consideration the literacy levels and technical knowledge of women, as well as their ability to attend the meetings (with regard to location, working hours and gender group hierarchies). Similarly, when vocational and skill development trainings are offered to EI communities, issues relating to gender inequalities and the diverse skill sets of men and women must be integrated into the training design.

As it stands, women are at a disadvantage due to their exclusion from the value chain and their limited capacity to take advantage of productive opportunities within it. This is due to the lack of legal frameworks, policies and programmes that consider their needs and protect their rights; limited access to resources; lack of a political voice; and disproportionate power relations between the genders in households and communities.

The impacts and opportunities for women in the EI sector should be considered for both large and small-scale operations.

[Large-scale extractive operations](#) involve, among other things, laying pipelines and building refineries. These activities create displacement, often at the expense of income-generating activities such as farming, which is the mainstay of African women’s economic activities and household livelihoods. In addition, when compensation is awarded, it is heads of households – typically men – who are the recipients, with women having little or no voice in accessing the benefits or making spending decisions. This loss of income has been shown to make women turn to alternative employment, including commercial sex work. Furthermore, the changes in social dynamics that mining operations bring about have been shown to increase community conflict and introduce social and health concerns, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse and harassment, alcoholism, and increased rates of HIV and AIDS, thus raising security concerns for women and children in communities<sup>vii</sup>.

Furthermore, the low level of participation of women within these large-scale operations can largely be attributed to the industry’s gender stereotypes and traditional masculine image, the lack of technical expertise among women (spurred by non-existent or inappropriate training opportunities), assignment to lower-level jobs, gender-biased recruitment and employment policies, and restricted career development opportunities for women.

Increasingly, however, organizations involved in the EI sector are seeking to mitigate and address the negative impacts of their operations through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes. However, few companies have mainstreamed gender perspectives into their community engagement policies, and more work remains to be done to increase the awareness, capacity and willingness of the private sector to meaningfully integrate gender perspectives into their CSR work and corporate policies and throughout their value chains.

Contrary to large-scale operations, women in Africa make up between 40 and 100 percent of the workforce in [artisanal and small-scale mining \(ASM\)](#) operations<sup>viii</sup>. However, the roles of men and women differ in this sector. Whereas men are largely engaged in the mining itself, women serve as labourers, providers of goods and services, and workers responsible for household chores. Furthermore, women in ASM operations are mostly part-time workers and are relegated to secondary, labour-intensive processing activities (often carried out in the home), with direct exposure to dangerous substances such as mercury. ASM is indeed typified by inefficiency, poor health and safety standards, and negative environmental impacts, and rarely falls under formal and legal regulations.

For this reason, there is increasing attention being paid to the formalization of ASM operations; however, the integration of and opportunities for women in this process is largely overlooked (see Box 2).

#### BOX 2

#### Women's catalytic role in the transformation of artisanal mining<sup>ix</sup>

Practical considerations for improving women's benefit from Artisanal Mining could include the following:

- Enhancement of complementary skills such as management and accounting
- Development of appropriate financial packages which suit women's needs
- Introducing appropriate, labour-saving and safe technologies
- Support for the acquisition of mineral titles
- Inclusion of women in the development of regulations and policies
- Increased recognition of health and safety issues affecting women in ASM – including the impacts on their children
- The challenging of social norms that prevent women from participating in and benefitting from ASM

In discussing the formalisation of the ASM sector, it is also important to recognize the fact that such formalization may hinder economic activities amongst certain women artisanal miners. Indeed such conflicting interests further highlight the need for listening, understanding and fully acknowledging the voices of women in this sector.

With the above in mind, it is clear that the integration of gender equality into the EI sector is a pressing matter; there is currently little or no integration of gender issues into regional and national policies and regulatory frameworks within the sector. There is a need for policies that address the social, cultural, economic and political barriers women and young girls face in the EI sector, as well as the opportunities that the sector avails them. To facilitate this, both women and men need to be involved in the identification of issues to be addressed in planning and managing natural resource revenues, at all levels.

## OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES: BRINGING WOMEN TO THE HEART OF AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

The extractive industries present a catalytic [opportunity for women's economic empowerment through enterprise development in and around the sector](#). This will contribute greatly to more equitable growth in several African countries. This opportunity can be realized through the integration of gender equality into the policies, regulatory frameworks, programmes and discourse in both the public and private branches of the EI sectors.

Governments and regulatory bodies have the complex responsibility of ensuring that existing governance and accountability conditions offer incentives for investors in the EI sector (to develop the industry), but also that the same conditions result in benefits to citizens. It is crucial to ensure that this balance between incentivizing investment and ensuring development outcomes from the EI sector is also cognizant of the [key role of women and gender equality in regulatory frameworks, policies, operations and programmes](#).

By removing discriminatory employment practices, increasing access to capacity building and financing initiatives, and engaging women in community consultations and decision-making positions, [women will be better equipped to actively participate in and exploit the economic potential within the various EI value chains](#) (see Boxes 2, 3a and 3b).



Indeed, recent evidence forcibly demonstrates that equality between women and men is smart economics, smart business and an essential ingredient in poverty reduction (see Box 4). Therefore, [the private sector can contribute to gender mainstreaming in the EI sector](#), not only through gender-sensitive CSR initiatives, but also through the revision of corporate policies, operations and investment strategies.

#### BOX 3A

##### Case study<sup>x</sup>

In 2001, the Association of Zambian Women in Mining was recognized for its first international gemstone exchange of 135 kg of emeralds. Through consortiums, individual women miners are better able to supply larger volumes for more lucrative rewards, which in turn facilitate larger operations and hence job creation. Such success stories, however, depend heavily on environments conducive to the advancement of women miners.

Despite these opportunities, however, there is currently a lack of robust data and knowledge on the gender dimensions of specific EI value chains, which has hampered evidence-based policy dialogue on the gender equality

#### BOX 3B

##### Case study<sup>xi</sup>

In 2007, women had a seat at the negotiation table for revised compensation agreements at the OK Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea. The results are seen as a benchmark case for women's involvement. Through their involvement, they secured an agreement giving them 10 percent of all compensation, 50 percent of all scholarships, cash payments into family bank accounts (to which many women are co-signatories), and mandated seats on the governing bodies implementing the agreement (including future reviews of the agreement). What is more, women's entitlements became legally enforceable rights in agreements signed by the state and the developer. Such an arrangement was – and remains – unprecedented anywhere in the world.

impacts of EI projects. This includes the opportunities for women's economic empowerment through value addition within the industry, as well as spin-off economies resulting from EI activities and linkages to other sectors. As a result of this lack of evidence, key actors within government, industry and civil society have not been adequately sensitized on the topic.

## UN WOMEN'S APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

UN Women has begun to accelerate its actions to integrate gender perspectives into the EI sector in sub-Saharan Africa (Box 5). The agency intends to contribute to the realization of the needed transformation of the sector through the robust integration of gender into programmatic, policy and

#### BOX 4

##### Women's Economic Empowerment - accelerating economic growth with equality

Women make up the majority of the world's poor and thus meeting poverty-reduction goals requires addressing women and their economic empowerment.

- Discrimination against women is economically inefficient; annually, the gender gap in labour participation and education creates economic losses across the African continent of between US\$159 billion and US\$255 billion<sup>xii</sup>.
- Economic empowerment is one of the most powerful routes for women to achieve their potential and advance their rights. This contributes to more representative decision making; more peaceful, more democratic and healthier governance; and better prospects for future generations.
- Women's economic empowerment links to sustainable livelihoods, as women's incomes and earnings translate into improved children's education and health and food security in households<sup>xiii</sup>.

corporate responses, as well as sharing knowledge about effective approaches.

The UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) will use its core competency in knowledge, expertise and advocacy to advance gender equality and

#### BOX 5

### Current and potential gender-responsive actions in the extractive industries in Africa

Regional initiatives have highlighted the need for sustainable and equitable growth from the extractive industries, and [it is vital that such frameworks incorporate gender issues in order to advance more gender responsive EI in Africa:](#)

- The African Union’s Africa Mining Vision (2009)
- The African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, which adopted a resolution on the need for a human rights-based approach to natural resource governance
- The Southern African Development Community Protocol on Mining (1997)
- The assessment methodology for member countries of the African Peer Review Mechanism, which was recently reviewed to include a comprehensive section on extractive industries

The creation of women’s mining and advocacy bodies such as the Southern African Development Community Women in Mining Trust and the South African, Tanzanian and Zambian women miners associations – SAWIMA, TAWOMA and AZWM respectively – has focused attention on the key issues facing women in mining. [Support continues to be needed for collective efforts on the part of women and their organizations to advance women’s rights concerns in the EI sector and bring about change.](#)

A number of private sector and non-governmental organizations have begun to develop tools and guidelines to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in the EI sector. [There is a need to audit and assess the impact of such initiatives for lessons and knowledge sharing.](#)

women’s empowerment in the EI agenda. This initiative is part and parcel of the UN Women ESARO Women’s Economic Empowerment Programme, which provides a pathway for 2 million women and youth to wealth creation and asset building through an accelerated economic development approach. Through strategic partnerships, research and diagnostic work, UN Women will advocate for women’s rights and gender equality within EI in African countries.

UN Women’s unique access to women’s networks and experts will inform the integration of gender perspectives into regulatory EI frameworks and EI-related initiatives (for example, research and programme development), as well as strengthen community capital and women’s collective action to participate and claim their rights to development benefits.

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At the country level, strategies for EI engagement have been or are being developed in line with the regional strategy. Planned work includes research, policy dialogue and capacity development for stakeholders (government, civil society organizations and the private sector). This will be done by contributing to the development of policies and programmes that will be responsive to women’s rights and contribute to their empowerment in local communities, both from an economic point of view and a governance/decision-making perspective (Box 6). There is a need to ensure that policies and frameworks are harmonized and gender responsive throughout.

UN Women ESARO’s direct link to 13 country programmes enables it to generate programmatic and policy experiences to feed into the regional agenda. Likewise, as country programmes inform the regional agenda, regional experiences also feed into country programming. Box 6 outlines a number of UN Women’s engagements in the EI sector in Africa.

In 2012, UN Women ESARO hosted an initial dialogue on gender in the extractive industries, which was attended by government, civil society and UN agencies. This marked the first collaboration with Publish What You Pay – a global group of civil society organizations that advocate for transparency and accountability in the EI sector. Through

this partnership, the two bodies have created a gender-responsive version of the group's Chain for Change, a tool used to map the extractive value chain from the view of civil society.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent consultations with experts on gender equality in EI have allowed for the identification of key initiatives, challenges and opportunities for engagement in the sector. As a result, UN Women ESARO has developed a road map for UN Women's regional and country-level engagement within the EI sector in the Eastern and Southern Africa region; also, a knowledge group on gender equality in the extractive industries has been established. Furthermore, Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in Extractive Industry Policy are forthcoming- these were informed by regional and country-level experiences of policy engagement.

UN Women is engaging with the African Union and the Africa Mining Development Centre on possibilities for collaboration to ensure that the Africa Mining Vision's (2009)

#### BOX 6

#### UN Women's country-level extractive industry initiatives in Eastern and Southern Africa.

- UN Women Malawi has drafted an extractives strategy and held preliminary meetings with the Principal Secretary of Mines and Women in Mining to promote women's entrepreneurship in artisanal and small-scale mining in Malawi.
- UN Women Mozambique is conducting research with the Cabo Delgado provincial department of the national women's machinery on the social impacts of the EI sector on women.
- UN Women Tanzania has contributed to the integration of gender equality into the development of CSR policies and guidelines for the EI sector. A comprehensive mapping of the barriers and opportunities for women's engagement in the EI sector is forthcoming.
- UN Women Zimbabwe has worked with civil society organizations to provide policy recommendations on the creation of legal and policy environments that are conducive to women's enhanced participation in mining in Zimbabwe.

Action Plan is gender responsive in order to promote the advancement of women's rights, women's economic empowerment and sustainable economic growth and development in Africa. UN Women ESARO is also in dialogue with United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on regional research collaboration on the impacts of the EI sector on women.

Engagement with private sector actors in the industry is being pursued in order to firmly establish what the existing activities, best practices and gaps are in mainstreaming gender in private sector activities – this will inform strategic entry points for UN Women's engagement.

In the coming three years, UN Women ESARO will partner with others to address gender-related programmatic and policy gaps in EI within both the economic and government/leadership realms. This will include the following activities:

- **Research and knowledge management:** *Conducting gender-responsive seminal research to enable evidence-based interventions and advocacy for gender equality in the EI sector*
- **Capacity building:** *Raising awareness among women and men to enable women's representation and participation in the development of regulatory frameworks and policymaking processes in the EI sector, while strengthening capacities among policymakers in this area*
- **Policy work:** *Support for gender-responsive planning, processes and budgeting to ensure government policies, revenues and budgets reflect women's specific concerns, include women and youth in policy formulation as early as possible, and seek other ways to integrate gender into sector policies*
- **Advocacy and partnerships:** *Partnerships with organizations and institutions to ensure that women and youth are informed and able to engage with and access productive assets and economic opportunities along the EI value chains*
- *Continuing to invest in community capital and strengthen the capacities of women's organizations to enable them to respond to emerging issues for women in EI communities and to claim their rights*
- **Gender integration into the private sector value chain:** *Working with and advising organizations working in*

<sup>1</sup> see [www.africa.unwomen.org](http://www.africa.unwomen.org)

*the EI sector to integrate gender into their corporate policies, strategies and CSR programmes.*

The activities will contribute to a Regional Knowledge Management Hub, which will serve countries and a wider audience in developing and sharing experiences, best practices, tools, guidelines and methodologies for advancing gender equality in EI.

UN Women's regional and country-level initiatives will seek to ensure that the potential gains and benefits from the EI sector are equally beneficial for women and men; ensuring that the growth generated is equitably shared, while at the same time strengthening women's opportunities within their challenging situations.

<sup>i</sup> World Bank, *Fact Sheet: Women and the Extractive Industries*, [www.worldbank.org/eigender](http://www.worldbank.org/eigender)

UNEP, UN Women, UNDP and PBSO, *Women and Natural Resources: Unlocking the Peacebuilding Potential* (2013)

<sup>ii</sup> Ernst & Young, *African Mining Investment Environment Survey 2011*

<sup>iii</sup> Revenue Watch Institute, *Transforming Resource Wealth into Well-Being*, New York, page 4, 2010

<sup>iv</sup> Data from Human Development Report online database: <http://hdr.undp.org/en>

<sup>v</sup> African Development Bank Group, African Union, Economic Commission for Africa, 2013 *African Statistical Yearbook*

<sup>vi</sup> Ernst & Young, *African Mining Investment Environment Survey 2011*

<sup>vii</sup> Laite, J. A., 'Historical Perspectives on Industrial Development, Mining, and Prostitution', in *The Historical Journal* 52(3), 2009

<sup>viii</sup> Hinton, Jennifer J., M. Veiga, and C. Beinhoff, 'Women and Artisanal Mining: Gender Roles and the Road Ahead', Chapter 11, in *The Socio-Economic Impacts of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Developing Countries*, G. Hilson, ed., published by A. A. Balkema, Swets Publishers, Netherlands, page 18-19, 2003

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid.

<sup>x</sup> 'First Big Gemstone Exchange for Zambian Women', accessible at: <http://www.miningreview.com/node/20207>

<sup>xi</sup> 'We Want What the OK Tedi Women Have!', accessible at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/17091/724410Revisedool7olssue20902012web.pdf?sequence=1>

<sup>xii</sup> Centre for the Study of African Economies, March 2012

<sup>xiii</sup> Golla, Anne Marie, Anju Malhotra, Priya Nanda, and Rekha Mehra, *Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Definition, Framework and Indicators*, International Centre for Research on Women, page 3, 2011

## Helpful References and Resources

- Africa Mining Vision: [www.africaminingvision.org](http://www.africaminingvision.org)
- Publish What You Pay : [www.publishwhatyoupay.org](http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org)
- WoMin: African Women Unite Against Destructive Resource Extraction: [www.womin.org.za](http://www.womin.org.za)
- <http://extractingequality.wordpress.com/>

*UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.*

*The UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) focuses on women's economic empowerment and women's participation in decision-making and leadership. These are key areas to advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and put women at the heart of Africa's development.*

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