


WOMEN IN THE JUDICIARY IN AFRICA: JUSTICE SOLUTIONS FOR EQUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT

#CSW68 side event | online via Zoom

 20 March 2024

 10:00 - 11:30 EST



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BACKGROUND

Access to justice is a fundamental human right, a cornerstone of the rule of law and good governance. It is a pre-requisite for achieving gender equality and realizing other human rights. Equal access to justice is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

At the same time, the compounding effects of climate change, conflicts, economic downturns and COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the justice gap for women. According to the [2023 World Justice Project Index](#), women face greater barriers to justice than men in nearly 70 percent of countries surveyed. In many places, formal justice systems are geographically inaccessible, expensive and/or fail to respond to the justice needs of women. This gap signifies a troubling trend given that access to justice is intrinsically linked to poverty, access to resources, financial independence, access to healthcare and education.

To meet and respond to the needs of women, justice systems have to be transparent, accessible, inclusive and accountable. And women need to be actively present in these systems. Equal and effective participation of women in the judiciary enhances gender equality in justice systems and makes justice more accessible to women, as well as to marginalized and/or vulnerable groups.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW) recommends increased women's participation in judicial systems as professionals within all bodies and levels of judicial and quasi-judicial systems and providers of justice-related services.

With their different perspectives and experiences, women leaders in justice can challenge gender stereotypes, reshape narratives about women's roles in society under an intersectional approach and enable better responses to address gender-based violence and inequality.

UNDP AND UN WOMEN STUDY ON WOMEN IN JUSTICE IN AFRICA

In Africa, despite numerous challenges, inspiring initiatives showcase the transformative role of women in the judiciary. Women's participation has an impact on closing the justice gap, facilitate better access to justice for all and instill trust in justices systems.

Through the [Gender Justice Platform partnership](#), UNDP and UN Women conducted a regional study of women judges in 14 African countries. The research helped to understand the situation with women's representation in justice, identify what prevents women from entering the system and moving up in the hierarchy. The study provides recommendations and demonstrates best practices to support and strengthen gender-responsive justice institutions.



THE EVENT

Organizers:

The event is organized through the [Gender Justice Platform](#), a partnership framework between UNDP and UN Women to advance gender equality and close the global gender justice gap.

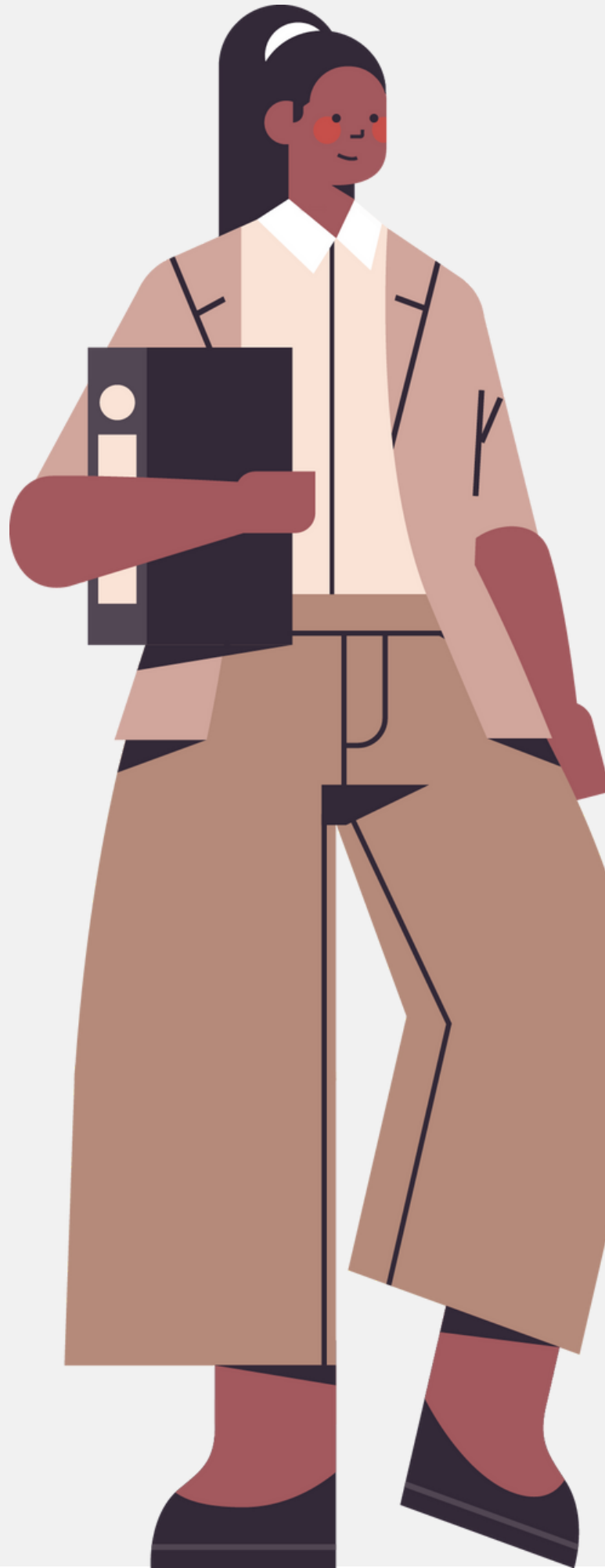
Co-hosts:

Permanent Missions of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Kenya, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations.

UNDP and UN Women will present their regional study of women judges in 14 African countries to showcase good practices and opportunities for women to champion justice responses. The objective of this event is to underscore the crucial contribution of women judges to advancing gender equality and facilitating access to justice for women in their communities and countries.

The event will provide expert insights and practical tools to achieve and sustain progress on gender equality in justice, including through strategic programming interventions that can bring transformative change.

Fostering women's leadership in the justice system contributes to a more inclusive and gender-responsive legal environment. The event is a call for the international community and national partners to amplify efforts and advocate stronger for gender-responsive justice institutions and to provide strategic solutions for women's access to justice, reduction of poverty, social cohesion and, ultimately, development.



AGENDA

10:00 Welcome and opening remarks



Katy Thompson

*Head of Rule of Law,
Security and Human
Rights, Crisis Bureau,
UNDP*



Raquel Lagunas

*Head of Gender Team,
Crisis Bureau, UNDP*

Moderator

10:10 Keynote remarks



Bärbel Kofler

*Parliamentary State
Secretary to the Federal
Minister for Economic
Cooperation and
Development of Germany
(video statement)*



Monica
Mutsvangwa

*Hon. Minister of Women
Affairs, Community, Small
and Medium Enterprise
Development, Government
of Zimbabwe*

10:20 Key messages and reflections of the report “Women in justice in Africa: A study of women judges in 14 countries



Lucianna Thuo

*Researcher who
worked on the report,
electoral law and
governance specialist,
Kenya*

10:30 - 11:15 Conversation with judges and national actors on challenges and recommendations for women's leadership in justice



Hon. Judge
Atila Ferreira

*National Supreme Court
of Guinea-Bissau*



Hon. Judge
Sehel Barke

*Justice of Court of Appeal
of Tanzania and
chairperson of Tanzania
Women Judges
Association (TAWJA)*



Hon. Judge
Roli Harriman

*International Association
of Women Judges of
Nigeria*



Hon. Judge
Harrison Barasa

*Senior Principal Magistrate
at the Engineering Law
Courts of Kenya*

11:15 Reflections, questions and answers

11:25 Closing remarks



Hodan Addou

*UN Women Country
Representative in
Tanzania*



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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN