EMPOWERING AFRICAN WOMEN
A Digital Business Tutelage For Women
Empowerment In Africa Initiative

Announcing a New Thematic Series:

African Women: A Rising Voice for the Continent

Call for Articles

Volume 1: Beijing +25: Repositioning the African Woman for UN 2030 Goals

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In celebration of the 25th Anniversary of The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women's empowerment adopted at the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women (United Nations, 1995), Empowering African Women (EAW) is commissioning the first volume of a thematic series titled *"Beijing +25: Repositioning the African Woman for UN 2030 Goals",* scheduled for publication in the first quarter of 2020. EAW is a project of the Digital Business Tutelage for Women Empowerment in Africa Initiative, a non-governmental organisation in Nigeria which commenced operations in 2017 through the Ignition Award of Alliance Manchester Business School, UK (Empowering African Women, 2018).

Rationale:

"Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world." Hillary Clinton

"*Women hold up half the sky.*" Mao Zedong

*"The most common way people give up their power
is by thinking they don't have any."* Alice Walker

Gender disparity adversely affects socio-economic development across the globe (Anyanwu & Augustine, 2013). The challenges faced by women in politics, employment, and human dignity are indeed ubiquitous. Increased awareness of this injustice has galvanized advocacy efforts in support of gender equality and empowerment of women. In recent years, women in Africa have become vocal in their demand for enforcement of basic human rights by big corporations (Adeola & Adeola, 2018), yet their contributions to their communities have not been fully recognised.

The United Nations has sponsored four international conferences to establish a framework for gender equality around the world (United Nations, 2019). The first UN Conference on Women was held in 1975 in Mexico City with 133 nations in attendance. The second, held in 1980 in Copenhagen, Denmark and attended by 145 member states, focused on creation and implementation of policies related to education, health, and employment. At the third Conference on Women, held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985, 157 member nations sought to establish measures that would overcome the challenges facing the mandates and goals of the 1975 and 1980 conferences. At that Nairobi conference, strategies for achieving gender equality at the national level, overcoming cultural challenges, and promoting women's participation in peace and development efforts were adopted.

Failure to achieve the goals related to international gender equality across economic, social, and political lines became the focus of the fourth UN Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in September 1995. The title of the eleven-day conference captured the intent of the meeting: *Action for Equality, Development and Peace.* In an unprecedented turn-around in the global agenda to address gender inequality, the 189 countries attending the Beijing conference released a declaration and plan of action (hereinafter, the Beijing Declarations) with the goal of empowering women. To achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, twelve critical areas were identified:

Women and poverty

Education and training of women

Women and health

Violence against women

Women and armed conflict

Women and the economy

Women in power and decision-making

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Human rights of women

Women and the media

Women and the environment

The girl-child

As we approach 2020, the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declarations, research continues to show a wide gender gap in Africa's social and economic life (International Labour Office, 2017). Over the years, the United Nations has introduced various measures to ensure socio-economic development of nations, key among them is the inclusion of gender equality in the agreement signed in September 2000 by 191 UN member nations. That agreement – The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – named eight developmental goals to be achieved by the year 2015[1]. MDG 3 focused on promoting gender equality and empowering women. Over time it was found that the MDGs did not effectively combat environmental and socio-economic problems that were becoming evident through development.

[1] 1. eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2. achieve universal primary education; 3. promote gender equality and empower women; 4. reduce child mortality; 5. improve maternal health; 6. combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; 7. ensure environmental sustainability; and 8. develop a global partnership for development.

In addition, the MDGs had little impact in Africa, especially on issues related to gender and livelihood (United Nations, 2015). In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro established Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to serve as proactive and reactive measures to combat current and future global challenges. The SDGs proposed a vision to be achieved by 2030 with focus on seventeen key areas[2], gender equality being identified in SDGs 5 and 10.

The 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declarations will be observed in March 2020 when the UN Commission on the Status of Women gathers at UN headquarters in New York City. The African Women Series will propose suggestions that can enhance discussions at the event.

The intent of this volume – *Beijing +25: Repositioning the African Woman for UN 2030 Goals* – is to document how far Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries have come in their efforts to accomplish the 2030 SDGs particularly as relates to the 1995 Beijing Declarations and how Africa has made efforts to meet the goals that address gender equality and development.

Beijing +25 will seek to provide answers to three fundamental questions:

1. Considering the goals identified by the Beijing Declarations, 12 of which address gender equity, what challenges do African women continue to face and what strategies have been successful in overcoming those challenges?

2. How can Beijing Declaration challenges be addressed in a way that will position Sub-Saharan nations to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals identified at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro?

3. What innovative strategies can be introduced or put in place to empower African women for greater success?

Contributions from researchers, academicians, policymakers, social change advocates, and practitioners will add to the body of knowledge on how women can effectively participate and make a difference in the SSA socio-economic terrain. Contributors are encouraged to provide theoretical or empirical insights with

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[2] 1: End Poverty; 2: End Hunger; 3: Ensure Health Care and Well-being; 4: Provide Quality Education; 5: Assure Gender Equality; 6: Provide Sustainable Clean Water and Sanitation; 7: Provide Clean, Affordable Energy; 8: Promote Economic Development and Decent Work for All; 9: Promote Industry, Innovation and Build Resilient Infrastructure; 10: Reduce Inequality Within and Among Countries; 11: Ensure Safe and Sustainable Cities and Communities; 12: Safeguard Responsible Consumption and Production; 13: Combat Threats to the Climate; 14: Conserve and Protect Water Resources; 15: Conserve and Protect Land-based Ecosystems; 16: Strive for Peaceful societies, Justice for All, and Accountable Institutions; 17: Revitalize Global Partnerships to Assure Sustainable Development.

the use of primary and/or secondary data into how identified SSA countries have fared in their attempts to resolve gender-related inequities.

Objectives and scope of the Series

This volume seeks to document the progress made by Sub-Saharan African countries and examine the challenges faced in the accomplishment of the 1995 Beijing Declarations. The volume aims to provide a foundation for evaluating the success of the post-1995 agreement and for positioning Africa for achievement of the 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs). Some consideration will also be given to the African Union's Agenda 2063 – the blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future (African Union, 2013).

SECTION TOPICS

Part 1
Beijing Women's Conference in Context

Introduction

This introductory section (Section 1) will highlight the social factors that led to the 1995 Beijing Conference. It will also present Sub-Saharan Africa's current state in relation to the Beijing Declarations as well as efforts being made over the last 25 years by different organisations and stakeholders to implement the core directives of the Declarations with a focus on 2030 SDGs. Can African women position themselves to make meaningful contributions to the challenges confronting the continent? The section will briefly introduce the vision of the African Union's Agenda 2063 – *The Africa We Want.*

Part 2
Beijing at 25: Assessing its Impact in Africa

Sections 2a to 2l will evaluate the progress made since the 1995 Beijing Declarations and link it with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Authors, however, are free to include other SDG goals considered relevant to the section. Since existing policies in developing countries are gender-neutral and do not effectively address gender-related issues and women's rights protections (World Health Organization, 2014), authors are therefore required to advocate for meaningful strategies to address gender issues, taking into consideration political, economic, social, and cultural realities within Africa.

(a)   African women, poverty and achieving zero hunger

This section will apply current research evidence to document the link between gender and poverty. It will also provide the rate and trajectory of poverty in relation to gender disparities on the continent. The section will apply current data to identify factors associated with the increase or decrease of poverty among women in Africa. The section will stress how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 – *No Poverty and Zero Hunger* –can be achieved by 2030.

(b)   African women, training and achieving the goal of quality education

This section will focus on education and training of African women, including information on the influence of gender on access to education for women in Africa. The section should identify factors that inhibit the education and training of African women and how the resolution of this barrier can contribute to the development of African nations. Evidence from cultural and religious perspectives should be considered. Also, the section should document how far Africa has come in its efforts to meet SDG 4 – *Quality Education* – 2030, how quality education can end extreme poverty, and how universal access to education can achieve SDG 5 – *Gender Equality.*

(c)   Women, health and achieving quality well-being

Despite global advancements in healthcare, African women remain disadvantaged. This section will focus on the physical, mental, social, and psychological health of the African woman. Issues such as Africa's maternal mortality rate, health vulnerability of women, and access to sound health care systems will also be covered. The section will provide current statistics to present the state of women and health in Africa and offer strategies for ways to resolve verifiable challenges. The section should provide information on how far Africa has come in ensuring quality healthcare service for women and what can be done to achieve SDG 3 – *Good Health and Well-Being.* Other SDGs should be included as they relate to providing preventive measures and generally raising living standards of women in Africa in recognition of the adage, *Health is Wealth.*

(d)   Violence against women, peace, justice and strong institutions

This section will document issues of social and domestic violence against women in Africa (including sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical abuse, verbal abuse, and emotional abuse) and provide practical recommendations to contain such challenges. Although eradicating violence against women

has been considered a herculean task facing developing nations, this section will discuss how African States have taken steps to prevent or enhance violence against women and move towards its eradication. The section will also discuss how Africa can position itself to achieve SDG 16 – *Peace and Justice and Strong Institutions* – by 2030. Also important is SDG 11 – *Sustainable Cities and Communities* – which focuses on access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation, amongst others.

(e)   Women, armed conflict, sustainable cities and communities

Recent events have shown that women are the most vulnerable during wartime, and the rate of losses during such conflicts is enormous. Due to the social, physical, political, economic, and cultural characteristics of the African continent, wartime predisposes women to poverty due to loss of income, shelter, sustenance, and assets. This section will examine how women have been or could be adequately protected during the social, political, and economic crises that plague African nations. The section should provide evidence of how Africa can position itself to achieve the 2030 goals of SDG 11 – *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 6 – *Clean Water and Sanitation,* and SDG 2 – *Zero Hunger*.

(f)   Women, the economy, decent work and industrial innovation.

This section will focus on the extent of women's participation in economic activities in both formal and informal (e.g., entrepreneurial, small and medium scale businesses) sectors and efforts to reduce employment gender gaps. The section will focus on gender equality in employment, the challenges experienced so far, and how equality in employment-related issues can be achieved through equality in employment and decent work for all, particularly in the era of technological innovation. The section should describe Africa's efforts to meet 2030 goals as described in SDG 8 – *Decent Work & Economic Growth;* SDG 9 – investment in *Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure*; and SDG 4 – *Quality Education*, essential to assure a sustainable future.

(g)   Women in power, decision-making and reduced inequality

Women are historically under-represented in positions of power and decision-making in Africa despite the agitation and policies for equal opportunity. This section will focus on women, power, and decision-making with emphasis on factors hindering women's participation in politics and positions of power across all sectors, including business. Recommendations for influencing policies that are favourable to the female gender across Africa should be included, with attention paid

to disadvantaged and marginalised populations. The section should share ways Africa can position itself to achieve by 2030 SDG 5 – *Gender Equality*, SDG 10 – *Reduced Inequality,* and SDG 4 – *Quality Education.*

(h) **Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women**

This section should propose an institutional mechanism in Africa that would be instrumental in the promotion of women and gender equality. Such institutions would serve as social and economic forces charged with providing essential checks and balances to prevent gender discrimination in Africa. The section should first identify, and critique current structures charged with such responsibilities, then recommend ways to meet the 2030 vision of strong institutions and partnerships, as stated in SDG 16 – *Peace, Justice & Strong Institution,* and SDG 17 – *Partnerships to Achieve the Goal* of sustainable development.

(i) **Human rights of women**

This section would examine to what extent Africa has internalised and promoted the statement of human rights of women enshrined by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the preamble of which includes this statement:

> Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, … Now, therefore the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

The section should examine the establishment of all rights included in the UN Declaration, the Beijing Declarations, as well as the challenges experienced in putting them into practice. Recommendations for continuing the pursuit of these ideals will be contained in explication of SDG 10 – *Reduced Inequalities*; SDG 5 – *Gender Equality*; and Goal 3 – *Good Health and Well-Being.* Other SDGs may apply.

(j)   Women in the media

Women are said to be stereotyped and voiceless in the entertainment and media industry. An article by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women reported that 46 percent of news found on electronic and non-electronic media upholds gender stereotypes and 73 percent of media management positions are held by men (UN Women, n.d.). With women representing half of the world's population, it should be expected that they would have a greater role in the media industry. This section would examine the challenges African women face in the media industry and how barriers can be removed. The section should examine factors related to access to the industry, noting successes and failures in meeting challenges to entry into the industry. Relevant goal references will be SDG 10 – *Reduced Inequalities*; SDG 5 – *Gender Equality;* SDG 4 – *Quality Education;* and SDG 8 – *Decent Work and Economic Growth*.

(k)   Women and the environment

Environmental sustainability is sacrosanct to the UN 2030 goals, and the Beijing Declarations provide a foundation for its accomplishment. Women are most affected by environmental degradation, and at the same time play important roles in managing natural resources. This section would discuss ways women can contribute to and protect a green environment drawing strength from political and economic policies as well as social priorities. It should also highlight how women can be protected during natural disasters. Cases can be used to buttress arguments in this section. This section should emphasise ways Sub-Saharan Africa can position itself to achieve by 2030 SDGs 12, 13, 14, and 15 – *Responsible Consumption & Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life On Land*.

(l)   The girl-child

The girl-child is said to be one of the most vulnerable stages of the female gender in developing countries. At a tender age, she engages in domestic responsibilities and suffers from child labour from parents who use her as an asset to ameliorate their poverty. This informs why it is considered one of the key interests of the Beijing Declaration and the UN 2030 SDGs. This section should also examine how Africa has been able to protect the rights of the girl-child as enshrined in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Girl-Child (UNICEF, n.d.). The current situation in Africa, challenges to observing these rights, solutions designed to ensure desired changes, and ways Africa can position herself to achieve SDG 3 *Good Health & Well-Being* – by

promoting healthy living and well-being for all ages; and SDG 5 – *Gender Equality* – achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls. Also, to be considered in this section is SDG 8 – *Decent Work and Economic Growth* – which requires the provision of appropriate jobs for the girl-child. The section will also consider how the next generation of African leaders can be empowered and mentored to make an impact in crucial areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Part 3
Repositioning the African Woman for
UN 2030 Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063

Connecting UN 2030 Goals with African Union Agenda 2063

Section 3 will link the SDG 2030 goals with African Union Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 is the African Union's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future – *The Africa We Want.* Agenda 2063 details the continent's strategies for inclusive and sustainable development.

Part 4
Conclusion and Way Forward

This final section (Section 4) will provide a concluding discussion that will take a retrospective approach based on all that has been discussed in the series sections and will offer suggestions on how Africa can achieve gender equality based on the Beijing Declarations and SDG 2030 goals. The challenges and solutions from each theme will be summarised, and ways Africa can position itself to accomplish the SDGs will be enumerated. The section will discuss the crucial link between SDG 2030 goals and the African Union Agenda 2063 to truly envision and actualise *The Africa We Want.*

Author's Guidelines

Proposed word length:

1) The Series will be about 50,000 words.

2) Each section will be between 2,500 to 3,000 words.

Submission Procedure

Academicians, researchers, policymakers, social change advocates, and practitioners are invited to submit a proposal of not more than 500 words describing the section they are interested in writing. **Perspectives of both male and female writers are encouraged.** The proposal should contain:

1. Name(s) affiliation(s) and email contact(s) of author(s)

2. The topic specially related to the themes as described and the section it falls under.

3. An abstract which sets out in broad terms what the section will cover in line with the indicated themes. This will describe the content of the section, including relevant literature adhering to APA 6th edition referencing style.

Proposals should be emailed as a Microsoft Word attachment to **eawvision@gmail.com**

Selected contributors will be awarded honorariums by EAW, upon publication.

Important Dates:

November 08, 2019:	Proposal Submission Deadline
November 15, 2019:	Notification of Abstract Acceptance
January 16, 2020:	Full Article Submission
January 29, 2020:	Revised Article Submission
February 06, 2020:	Notification of Article Acceptance
February 17, 2020:	Publication of Thematic Series

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