



Evaluating Gender Responsiveness of the African Union Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Policy Framework for Africa

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ABSTRACT

The African Union (AU) plays a central role in shaping the policies that guide the continent's development agenda and has made notable strides in integrating gender considerations into its policy frameworks. However, despite these efforts, gender disparities remain a significant challenge in agriculture and trade, which underscores the need for a critical gender mainstreaming review of AU policies and frameworks. This paper evaluates the gender responsiveness of the 2019-2024 AU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) policy framework using the AU Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) strategy. The paper examines how this framework addresses systemic gender disparities in agriculture and trade. Although the AU-SPS policy framework mentions gender mainstreaming, it lacks explicit gender-targeted initiatives and fails to integrate gender-sensitive mechanisms effectively. The AU-SPS policy framework primarily focuses on technical aspects of agriculture and trade with limited consideration for systemic barriers faced by women. Gender-sensitive policies are essential for achieving equality and empowerment for women, and fostering inclusive and sustainable development across the continent. By incorporating gender perspectives into regional policies like the AU-SPS policy framework, the AU can address systemic inequalities, unlock economic potential, and promote sustainable development for all.

Keywords: African Union, gender mainstreaming, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) policy framework

RÉSUMÉ

L'Union africaine (UA) joue un rôle central dans l'élaboration des politiques guidant l'agenda de développement du continent et a réalisé des progrès notables dans l'intégration des considérations de genre dans ses cadres politiques. Toutefois, malgré ces efforts, les disparités entre les sexes demeurent un défi important dans les domaines de l'agriculture et du commerce, ce qui souligne la nécessité d'un examen critique de l'intégration du genre dans les politiques et cadres de l'UA. Cet article évalue la sensibilité au genre du cadre politique sanitaire et phytosanitaire (SPS) de l'UA 2019-2024, en s'appuyant sur la stratégie de l'UA pour l'égalité des sexes et l'autonomisation des femmes (GEWE). L'article examine comment ce

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cadre aborde les disparités systémiques entre les sexes dans l'agriculture et le commerce. Bien que le cadre SPS de l'UA mentionne l'intégration du genre, il manque d'initiatives explicitement ciblées sur le genre et n'intègre pas efficacement de mécanismes sensibles au genre. Le cadre SPS de l'UA se concentre principalement sur les aspects techniques de l'agriculture et du commerce, avec peu de considération pour les obstacles systémiques auxquels sont confrontées les femmes. Des politiques sensibles au genre sont essentielles pour atteindre l'égalité et l'autonomisation des femmes, et promouvoir un développement inclusif et durable à travers le continent. En intégrant des perspectives de genre dans les politiques régionales comme le cadre SPS de l'UA, l'UA peut s'attaquer aux inégalités systémiques, libérer le potentiel économique et favoriser un développement durable pour tous.

Mots clés : Union africaine, intégration du genre, cadre politique sanitaire et phytosanitaire (SPS)

BACKGROUND

Established in 2001, the African Union (AU) serves as a platform for intergovernmental collaboration among its 55 member states. Guided by its long-term vision, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, the AU aims to foster inclusive growth, drive economic integration, and promote sustainable development across the continent. Agriculture is recognized as a central pillar for Africa's transformation, particularly in ensuring food security and trade expansion (African Union. 2014). The AU's policies often set benchmarks for member states, encouraging them to adopt harmonized strategies to address shared challenges. The AU looks to agriculture as the engine for Africa's transformation as outlined in Agenda 2063.

The AU-SPS policy framework was developed to harmonise sanitary and phytosanitary measures across the continent, facilitating agricultural trade while protecting human, animal, and plant health. Despite the importance of this framework, gender inclusivity remains insufficiently addressed. It is mentioned only in passing: AU-SPS Policy Framework refers to "inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformation" just once, and that too in the Foreword, quoting the broader aims of the AfCFTA. Women make up

approximately 70% of Africa's agricultural workforce, yet they face a range of interrelated challenges. Limited land ownership often results in financial exclusion and restricted access to SPS training programs, which in turn hinders their ability to meet compliance standards. When any part of this chain is broken, SPS requirements can effectively become a de facto trade barrier for women. Given these disparities, evaluating the gender responsiveness of the AU-SPS policy framework is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable agricultural development.

Improved implementation and harmonization of SPS systems such as quick transposition of international standards with equivalence and recognition procedures, science and risk based decision making, conformity assessment infrastructure and transparency etc is critical to ensure that any agricultural trade protects human, animal and plant health. The AU SPS policy framework lays out a roadmap to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of SPS systems on the continent to enhance and protect animals, plants and human health. The policy aims to protect human, animal, and plant health while facilitating intra-African trade in agricultural products by harmonizing SPS systems and aligning them with international standards set by the International Plant Protection

Convention (IPPC) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). The policy is a roadmap to improve food safety, animal, and plant health standards to enhance agricultural productivity and trade within the continent (AU, 2024). The AU has made notable strides in integrating gender considerations into its policy frameworks. Its commitment to gender equality is reflected in the adoption of the strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and its inclusion of women's empowerment as a key priority in Agenda 2063 (AU 2020). For example, the AU declared 2010–2020 as the "African Women's Decade," highlighting its dedication to advancing gender equality on the continent. However, despite these efforts, gender disparities remain a significant challenge. Women account for 70% of Africa's agricultural labor force yet they own less than 20% of the land (Chidiebere, 2022). Similarly, while women entrepreneurs contribute approximately 40% of Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), they face barriers such as limited access to finance and markets (Gibson, 2019). These statistics underscore the need for robust gender mainstreaming in AU policies like the AU-SPS policy framework to ensure equitable outcomes for all. By evaluating gender responsiveness of the AU-SPS policy framework for Africa using the GEWE strategy, the effectiveness of the policy in addressing gender disparities and empowering women across the continent was assessed.

Gender mainstreaming is the process of integrating gender perspectives into policies, programs, and practices to ensure that the concerns and needs of both women and men are addressed equitably. (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997). In the context of Africa's regional policies, gender mainstreaming is critical to achieving inclusive and sustainable development across economic, social, and political dimensions. Despite significant progress in gender equality, Africa remains one of the most

gender unequal regions in the world. Women account for over 50% of Africa's population and contribute significantly to the continent's development, yet they face persistent inequalities in access to education, healthcare, employment, and political participation. For example, women make up nearly 70% of the agricultural labour force but own less than 20% of the land due to discriminatory property laws and cultural norms. Similarly, women entrepreneurs contribute 40% of Africa's GDP, yet they receive only 10% of available credit. Regional policies that fail to address these disparities risk perpetuating the structural barriers that hinder women's full participation in development. Gender mainstreaming ensures that policies are designed to reduce these inequalities, empowering women to contribute more effectively to economic growth and social progress.

The objective of this paper was to critically evaluate the gender responsiveness of the AU-SPS policy framework for Africa with the goal of highlighting the importance of gender-sensitive policies in fostering inclusive economic growth, social equity, and sustainable development in line with the African Union's broader vision articulated in the Agenda 2063.

METHODOLOGY

The gender responsiveness of the AU-SPS policy framework for Africa was evaluated using the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), which provides a comprehensive guide for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across Africa. The analytical approach comprised the following steps: 1) Assessing the policy alignment with the four pillars of the GEWE strategy: including i) economic empowerment ii) social and human development iii) leadership and governance and iv) women, peace, and security; 2) Identifying strengths, gaps, and challenges in integrating gender considerations into the policies and activities of these frameworks;

and 3) Providing actionable recommendations to enhance gender inclusivity, ensuring that this policy framework contributes meaningfully to reducing gender disparities and empowering women across Africa.

Overview of the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)

The AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) is a comprehensive framework designed to promote gender equality and empower women across the African continent. Adopted in 2018, the GEWE strategy aligns with the AU's vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, as outlined in Agenda 2063. It serves as a roadmap for addressing the systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation in political, social, and economic development. The GEWE strategy is built on the recognition that gender equality is essential for achieving sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, and social justice. It underscores the AU's commitment to global frameworks such as the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. At its core, the GEWE strategy provides a structured approach to mainstreaming gender across all AU organs, member states, and policy initiatives. It calls for member states to adopt gender-sensitive policies, allocate resources for gender equality initiatives, and strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and accountability.

The GEWE strategy is implemented through collaboration between the AU commission, member states, and regional organisations. It includes mechanisms for monitoring progress, such as the gender scorecard, which evaluates the performance of AU member states on key gender indicators. By providing a structured framework for action, the GEWE strategy seeks to eliminate gender based

discrimination, ensure equal opportunities for all, and promote the empowerment of women as key agents of change in Africa's development.

The Four Pillars of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Strategy. The GEWE strategy is anchored on four interconnected pillars, which provide a holistic framework for achieving gender equality. The four pillars are;

1) Economic empowerment focusing on increasing women's access to economic resources, including land ownership, financial services, and market opportunities. It promotes women's inclusion in trade and entrepreneurship, addressing the barriers faced by women in accessing regional and international markets.

2) Social and human development. Aiming to improve access to quality education, healthcare, and social protection for women and girls. It also seeks to address gender disparities in literacy, maternal health, and poverty, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as rural women and young girls.

3) Leadership and governance. Advocating for increased representation of women in political and decision-making processes at all levels. Also, it promotes capacity-building initiatives to support women leaders and strengthen gender-responsive governance structures, and

4) women, peace, and security that addresses the disproportionate impact of conflict and insecurity on women and girls. Also, it emphasises the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Analysis of gender responsiveness of the AU-SPS policy framework for Africa

Before examining how the AU will turn these four pillars into real gains for women, it is important to understand the framework that facilitates the strategy. Translating ambitious goals on economic empowerment, social development, leadership, and peace & security into measurable progress requires

clear institutional roles, dedicated resources, and tools that can track results across 55 Member States. The following section therefore shifts from what the GEWE strategy aims to achieve to how it is implemented, financed, and monitored—spotlighting the scorecards, collaborative platforms, and accountability processes that convert policy into impact.

The framework focuses on 1) Improving agricultural productivity by reducing the risks posed by pests and diseases and supports sustainable agricultural practices; 2) Facilitating trade: the harmonization of SPS measures is designed to remove technical barriers to trade, enabling African countries to export agricultural products more competitively; 3) Capacity building: the framework includes training programs and technical support to strengthen national SPS systems; and 4) Regional cooperation, where it encourages collaboration among member states in sharing knowledge, technologies, and resources to address SPS challenges. By addressing these areas, the AU-SPS framework plays a crucial role in improving agricultural value chains, reducing food insecurity, and supporting economic growth across the continent.

Assessment of how gender considerations are integrated. Despite its significant contributions to agricultural and trade development, the AU-SPS policy framework has notable gaps in gender inclusivity. Women play a dominant role in African agriculture, comprising approximately 70% of the agricultural labour force and producing around 80% of the food for household consumption. (FAO 1995, p. 3; McAuslan, 2006, p. 33) However, their contributions are often undervalued.

The key observations on gender integration are;

1) Lack of Gender-specific provisions. The body of the framework outlines four objectives harmonised SPS systems, trade facilitation, technical capacity and

political/financial support and none of the accompanying strategies, actions, indicators or budgets target women or gender gaps;

2) The AU-SPS framework does not explicitly address the unique challenges faced by women in meeting SPS standards or participating in formal trade;

3) Access to Resources- Women farmers and traders are less likely to benefit from capacity building initiatives due to systemic inequalities, such as lower levels of education and restricted access to extension services; and 4). Market participation -Women, who dominate informal cross-border trade, often lack the resources and information needed to meet SPS compliance requirements, limiting their ability to access formal markets. These gaps highlight the need for targeted interventions to ensure that women are not left behind in the implementation of the AU-SPS framework.

The practical implication of this situation is that current implementation plans, training modules, capacity building initiatives, and monitoring frameworks do not incorporate a requirement to gather sex disaggregated data. This oversight leads to the absence of gender responsive training programs and fails to allocate specific resources for enterprises led by women. The framework demonstrates a significant lack of consideration for gender issues; it does not identify the unique challenges that women face in complying with sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulations, nor does it suggest any targeted solutions to address these barriers.

Alignment with the Four GEWE Pillars.

The AU-SPS policy framework aligns with some aspects of the four pillars of the GEWE strategy, as indicated below. However, there is room for improvement.

1) Economic Empowerment. The framework indirectly supports economic empowerment by improving agricultural productivity and market access. However, it does not include specific measures to empower women farmers or traders, who are key contributors to the agricultural sector;

- 2) Social and human development. The focus on food safety and public health by the AU-SPS policy framework contributes to better social outcomes for communities. However, the framework does not address women's access to training or education on SPS standards, which is crucial for human development;
- 3) Leadership and governance. The framework promotes regional cooperation, but there is limited emphasis on involving women in decision-making processes related to SPS policies; and
- 4) Women, peace, and security. This pillar is not explicitly addressed in the AU-SPS framework, but improved food security can contribute to social stability. The framework does not consider how gender disparities in agriculture and trade can exacerbate vulnerabilities in conflict-affected regions.

Strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the implementation of gender-sensitive policies

The AU-SPS Policy Framework provides critical support for agricultural productivity, which indirectly benefits women, who form most of the agricultural labour force and, promotes regional cooperation in addressing food safety and trade challenges.

2) Weaknesses in the AU-SPS Policy Framework

- 1) Lacks gender-specific provisions and mechanisms for monitoring the impact on women; and
- 2) Fails to address the unique challenges faced by women in agriculture and trade, such as access to resources and market opportunities; 3) Gaps. The AU-SPS Policy Framework has limited alignment with the GEWE strategy, particularly in areas such as leadership, governance, and women's economic empowerment. Also, there is absence of gender-disaggregated data for tracking progress. The AU-SPS Policy Framework, despite its potential impact on women in agriculture, has yet to integrate gender considerations meaningfully into its policies. Strengthening gender-mainstreaming efforts in the AU-SPS policy

framework is essential to achieve the African Union's vision of inclusive and sustainable development.

Summary of Key Findings. This paper evaluated the gender mainstreaming efforts within the AU-SPS Policy Framework, assessing their alignment with the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). The analysis revealed that while the AU-SPS policy acknowledges the role of women in driving Africa's development, there is considerable room for improvement in integrating gender considerations into their policies.

The AU-SPS Policy Framework lacks explicit gender-targeted initiatives and fails to integrate gender-sensitive mechanisms effectively. Its primary focus is on technical standards for agriculture and trade, with minimal attention to the specific needs of women in these sectors.

Although the SPS-policy framework demonstrates some level of commitment to gender equality, success in achieving meaningful gender mainstreaming is hindered by gaps in implementation, monitoring, and resource allocation.

DISCUSSION

The Importance of Agriculture and the contribution of women in agricultural workforce in Africa. Agriculture accounts for nearly 23% of sub-Saharan Africa's GDP and employs over 60% of the continent's workforce, making it a cornerstone of economic growth and food security. However, challenges such as pest outbreaks, foodborne diseases, and poor enforcement of standards have hindered the sector's potential. The AU-SPS Policy Framework addresses these challenges by promoting capacity building, information sharing, and the adoption of best practices among member states. Despite its progress, the AU-SPS framework faces limitations in its gender inclusivity. Women, who represent approximately 70% of the agricultural

workforce, often lack access to training and resources related to SPS standards. This gender gap highlights the need for mainstreaming gender equality within the framework to ensure that women benefit equally from improved agricultural practices and market opportunities.

The Importance of gender sensitive policies for sustainable development in Africa. Gender sensitive policies are crucial for Africa's sustainable development as they address the structural inequalities that limit women's access to economic, social, and political opportunities. Women make up a significant portion of the workforce in agriculture, trade, and informal sectors across Africa. For instance, women account for 60-80% of the agricultural labour force in sub-Saharan Africa, yet they face barriers in accessing land, credit, technology, and markets. Incorporating gender-sensitive policies into the AU-SPS policy framework could directly contribute to reducing poverty, promoting inclusive growth, and enhancing food security. Gender equality is not just a human rights issue but also an economic imperative—empowering women boosts productivity, enhances economic resilience, and drives more sustainable and equitable growth across the continent. Incorporating gender mainstreaming into the frameworks is aligned with Agenda 2063's goals of promoting inclusive growth, sustainable development, and improved livelihoods for all Africans. Additionally, it supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Empowering women through gender-sensitive policies has a direct impact on enhancing economic growth and development. Studies show that closing the gender gap in labour force participation could add up to \$316 billion to Africa's GDP by 2025. Policies such as the AU-SPS Policy Framework can significantly enhance these outcomes by addressing the specific

challenges faced by women in trade, agriculture, and entrepreneurship. For instance, supporting women traders in the informal sector, who account for more than 70% of cross-border trade, could improve economic outcomes for households and

communities. Also, gender mainstreaming aligns with global frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5, which focuses on achieving gender equality. It is also consistent with the African Union's Agenda 2063, which prioritises women's empowerment as a key driver of development. By embedding gender considerations in the AU SPS policy framework, African nations can fulfil their commitments to these frameworks while fostering inclusive and equitable growth. Gender mainstreaming also fosters social equity and inclusion by ensuring that all members of society have equal access to opportunities and resources. This is particularly important in Africa, where poverty, illiteracy, and health issues disproportionately affect women and girls. For example, 60% of Africa's illiterate population are women, and maternal mortality rates in some regions remain alarmingly high. Regional policies that integrate gender perspectives can help address these disparities by improving access to education, healthcare, and social protection for women and girls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The AU-SPS Policy Framework is a valuable tool for improving agricultural practices and trade in Africa. However, its limited integration of gender considerations undermines its potential to achieve truly inclusive development. Addressing these gaps by aligning the framework more closely with the four GEWE pillars can enhance its impact, particularly for women, who are critical to Africa's agricultural and trade sectors. To ensure the AU-SPS Policy Framework achieves its full potential in fostering gender equality and empowering

women, the following recommendations are proposed. These focus on addressing gaps in gender mainstreaming and the framework with the African Union's GEWE Strategy:

- 1) Establish gender specific provisions. For the AU-SPS policy framework, introduce explicit gender-specific measures to address the unique challenges faced by women in agriculture, such as limited access to land, financing, and agricultural extension services. Develop programs targeting women farmers to enhance their capacity to meet SPS compliance standards, thereby increasing their market participation;
- 2) Expand and accelerate the adoption of the Protocol on women and youth in trade, currently under development by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), with clear implementation guidelines and gender-disaggregated data tracking;
- 3) Capacity building and training. The framework should establish gender targeted training programs that address the specific needs of women. For instance, the AU-SPS, could include training women farmers in food safety standards, pest control, and export requirements;
- 4) Access to Finance. Strengthen financial inclusion for women by creating opportunities for partnerships with financial institutions;
- 5) Improve data collection and monitoring. Mandate the collection of gender-disaggregated data within the framework to measure the participation and impact on women. Develop monitoring tools to track progress on gender mainstreaming, such as scorecards aligned with the GEWE strategy's four pillars; and
- 6) Support for the informal sector. Formalize informal trade and agricultural practices through simplified procedures, affordable compliance mechanisms, and accessible information. Establish gender-sensitive trade facilitation centres at borders to support women traders, ensuring they benefit from the AU SPS policy framework.

Strategies to Align Policies More Effectively with the GEWE Strategy

1) Economic empowerment. The framework should integrate initiatives aimed at reducing structural barriers to women's economic participation. The AU-SPS should provide technical support for women farmers to meet international trade standards.

2) Social and human development. Incorporate measures to address social determinants of inequality, such as access to education, healthcare, and childcare, particularly for rural women and cross-border traders; and allocate resources to empower women through literacy and numeracy programs to enhance their ability to participate effectively in trade and agriculture.

3) Leadership and governance. Encourage the inclusion of women in decision-making processes at all levels within the frameworks' governing bodies and establish gender parity targets for leadership roles, ensuring women have a voice in policy formulation and implementation.

4) Women, peace, and security. Acknowledge and address the vulnerabilities of women in conflict-affected regions; For the AU-SPS, support women farmers in rebuilding agricultural practices disrupted by conflict.

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

1) Adopt gender-responsive budgeting. Allocate a specific percentage of the budgets for both frameworks to gender-focused initiatives, ensuring that financial resources are directed towards addressing women's needs

2) Foster partnerships. Collaborate with international organisations, civil society groups, and the private sector to pool resources and expertise for advancing gender mainstreaming. For example, partnerships with UN Women or the African women's development fund could accelerate gender-focused initiatives

3) Awareness Campaigns. Conduct awareness campaigns to educate stakeholders, including policymakers, traders, and farmers, on the importance of gender mainstreaming and its role in sustainable development.

By implementing these recommendations, the AU-SPS Policy Framework can become more inclusive, equitable, and aligned with the GEWE strategy. This will not only empower women but also contribute to achieving the broader objectives of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Call for Further Research and Policy Reforms. While this paper has highlighted the need for greater gender mainstreaming within the AU-Policy framework, there is a need for ongoing research to better understand the challenges women face in these frameworks and how they can be overcome. Future research should focus on 1) The impact of gender-sensitive policies on the economic empowerment of women, particularly in trade and agriculture; 2) Comparative analyses of gender mainstreaming efforts across different regional frameworks in Africa to identify best practices and lessons learned; and 3) Longitudinal studies on the effectiveness of the AU Strategy for gender equality and women's empowerment provisions in improving women's economic participation and representation in trade.

Additionally, policy reforms are essential to strengthen the gender focus in the framework. There is an urgent need for:

- 1) Setting clear gender targets and monitoring mechanisms to assess progress on gender equality in the AU-SPS;
- 2) Capacity-building initiatives aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs and small-scale farmers to take full advantage of the opportunities these frameworks provide and
- 3) Increased representation of women in leadership roles within decision-making bodies associated with the framework, ensuring that women's voices are included in the development of trade and policy strategies.

CONCLUSION

The AU-SPS policy framework is often portrayed as the hinge on which Africa's agri-food trade and food safety ambitions rotate. That judgment deserves scrutiny. A closer look suggests that both the policy text and its strategy have blind spots that perpetuate gender inequities, and that simply executing may not deliver the transformation promised. The framework's gender language is mostly aspirational and legally non-binding. By focusing on women in generic terms, the text glosses over realities such as age, informal status, or cross-border trader identity that often shape who benefits from SPS reform.

A question to think about is whether recognising women's roles achieves gender equity. It is likely not. Capacity building funds are channelled toward export oriented firms, because export competitiveness, not gender equity, is the measurement on which many donor programmes are evaluated. Unless that incentive structure shifts, funds will keep following the same path. More so, reporting compliance is low because AU monitoring remains toothless; Member States face few reputational or financial costs for inaction.

While gender responsive SPS systems can widen participation, their macro level growth effect depends on complementary factors such as market infrastructure, credit access, macro stability that lie outside the ambit of the framework.

The AU-SPS policy framework requires a complete overhaul than a minor tweak. Clear gender targets should be established, countries tracking results by sex and allocate budget resources for women's initiatives. There should be a rewards and penalties system based on truthful reporting, releasing AU and donor funds only when projects benefit women led enterprises and informal traders. Immediate improvements at busy border points are crucial, including onsite childcare. Align AU standards with social compliance rules of major retailers to ensure neglecting women's issues leads to market consequences. Finally, treat the framework as

a dynamic document, reviewing it every five years to address design flaws and achieve meaningful advancements for women.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this paper

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