

# Gendering Structural Change and Green Transition in Africa: Implications of Transformative Policies

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The relationship between economic development and gender (dis)parity in labor markets has long been an area of economic inquiry. Although extant literature on this relationship is expansive, the gender disparity implications of economic development do not only lie in their direct relationship but also in the implicit mechanism that drives the disparity. One such mechanism is structural transformation. This paper, therefore, investigates the gender-based employment implications of structural transformation in Africa, exploring how policies tailored to gender considerations can foster gender employment balance on the continent.

**The paper considers two distinct patterns of structural transformation. First, it considers structural transformation through the lens of compositional shifts in the sectoral structure of an economy, which is simply known as structural change.** Relying on panel econometrics method on a sample comprising 48 African countries from 1992–2019, findings from the analysis revealed a negative association between structural change and gender employment balance in Africa. Whereas this indicates that the prevailing pattern of structural change in the region exacerbates gender employment disparities, further analysis in the paper showed that countries implementing policies to boost women’s economic opportunities and societal standing have effectively countered the adverse effect of structural change on gender employment balance. **Second, the paper considers structural transformation through the lens of green energy systems and transition technologies (GETT).** Through a comprehensive literature review, the paper documents that while GETT presents numerous opportunities for achieving gender-balanced employment, entrenched gendered social inequalities pose a significant challenge.

To develop policies that subvert gendered inequalities, the paper further examines the alignment of existing GETT-related policies in tackling this challenge, with Ghana and South Africa serving as case studies. Key informant interviews were also conducted in these countries to garner in-depth qualitative insights on government’s policy efforts to foster inclusion and participation of women in GETT sectors including the progress and challenges to date. The findings suggest that these countries have gendered GETT-related policies with diverse degree of gender mainstreaming and consciousness in the transition to green energy and just energy systems. However, these policies simply follow the status quo and lack the ability to generate the needed inclusive outcomes in the new industrial era.

**The paper concludes by developing a gender-transformative policy framework as a toolkit to identify necessary policy shifts for gender-transformative change, particularly in the context of the evolving industrial landscape.** The framework identifies three gender-interrelated dimensions: blind spots, bottlenecks, and external environment. A reflection on the framework based on the key informant interviews in Ghana and South Africa suggests that there is an overemphasis on resolving structural bottlenecks in the green transition, neglecting other key dimensions. Accordingly, the paper reiterates the importance of adopting a gendered-transformative policy perspective for achieving gender-inclusive transformation post-transition in Africa.



## Gender Equality

ACET's Gender Equality program aims to influence African governments to adopt a gender lens when developing and implementing policies for economic transformation and to ensure gender analysis is incorporated in all aspects of economic policymaking. Our research and analysis examines the binding constraints to gender equity and equality and charts the most effective ways to address them in partnership with a wide network of stakeholders.

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