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WEBINAR

AFRICN WOMEN AND GIRLS LEADING A CONTINENT

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Moderators:

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Panelists:

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Former Opposition Leader
Parliament of Uganda

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P R O C E E D I N G S

GENERAL ALLEN: Well good morning ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon and good evening to our dear friends coming to us from Africa. My name is John Allen, I'm the president of the Brookings Institution and I'm really pleased to welcome you all to this important and timely discussion, following as it does, International Women's Day.

At the beginning of each year the Brookings Africa Growth Initiative publishes its flagship report, Foresight Africa, which provides insights and policy proposals to decision makers on key topics that are likely to impact growth and development in Africa in the year ahead.

Foresight Africa seeks to draw global focus for its critical African issues through research and analysis as well as the engagement of high-level participants to highlight the priorities on the Continent in the coming year.

While gender has been highlighted as an important issue in past editions, this year the Africa Growth Initiative has dedicated an entire chapter specifically focused on the challenges and the opportunities facing women and girls on the African continent. And it's appropriate that we should reflect on these themes in our distinguished Foresight authors as they explore this week and as we celebrate International Women's Day.

Notably women's leadership in Africa is not a new phenomenon. Over the past few decades African women and girls have demonstrated their capacities to be leaders on the local, national, and global stages.

The Africa Growth Initiative's own distinguished fellow, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala now serves as the director general of the World Trade Organization. Another of the initiative's distinguished fellows, Vera Songwe, is the executive secretary of the United Nation's Economic Commission for Africa.

And it's worth noting that many African countries have or have had female heads of state, and we are hoping for many more in the future.

Africa's young girls continue to pave the way for the rest of the world too. Fighting for social justice, campaigning against climate change, and leading protests for equality and peace.

Indeed the framing essay on gender in the Foresight Report this year was written Madam

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former president of Liberia, who's a good friend of Brookings.

Other notable women leaders who contributed to this year's edition include the Honorable Winnie Kiiza, former opposition leader in the parliament in Uganda, who joins us today on the panel. And Madam Jeanune Mabunda Lioko, who's the member of parliament and former president of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Congo. And Mrs. Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, who's the mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone. She also contributed viewpoints on this year on climate change.

So I am really delighted that Foresight Africa and the report continues to attract voices of Africa's youth, including Drs. Rebecca Afuya (phonetic), and Claga (phonetic) and Adefunke Ekine, who are participants in the 2013 Echidna Scholars program at the Center for Universal Education here at Brookings.

So Brookings is proud to have the opportunity to feature these impressive women, both the Foresight authors and our panelists today, and to showcase their leadership. Especially because, unfortunately, recent events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have led to reversals in the gains on women's and girls' education and health and livelihood. Equality between the genders in Africa and around the world has yet to be truly achieved.

So at the same time antidotes of how Africa's women and girls have played vital roles in driving the region's economic recovery. Serving as caretakers and doctors and nurses and sewing masks and managing to support their families in times of lockdowns, among other achievements, abound. And they deserve our attention. And we should be spotlighting and highlighting these.

So I hope today's events and the important conversation it provokes elevates, and hopefully accelerates, progress for girls and women in Africa.

I'll now turn the floor over to the Africa Growth Initiative director, Aloysius Ordu, and Nonresident Senior Fellow Jeni Klugman to lead this important conversation amongst our imminent panelists.

So again, congratulations on the report, congratulations on the great work of the Africa Growth Initiative, and we couldn't do it without the partnership of the women and the girls of Africa who are participating today.

So with that, again, it's a pleasure to be with you. Aloysius, over to you.

MR. ORDU: Thank you very much, John, for making the time to be with us this morning. We greatly appreciate your time. Thank you. Thank you very much.

As John mentioned, my partner for today's moderation of this event will be Jeni Klugman, who is a nonresident senior fellow with us at the Africa Growth Initiative. I'm particularly delighted to welcome her to this.

Viewers who are interested in submitting questions to us, to our panel today, are welcome to email us at Events@Brookings.edu or via Twitter at BrookingsGlobal. Let's now get started with our distinguished panel.

I'm particularly delighted that Jamie Cooper, chairman of Big Win Philanthropy is here with us today. Honorable Kiiza, former opposition leader of the Republic of Uganda is also with us. Fiona Tregenna, professor of economics, University of Johannesburg is with us. And Michelle Williams, dean of the faculty and professor, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Harvard Kennedy School is also with us. Distinguished panelists, I bid you all a warm welcome.

So let's get started. What we'll do right away is each of our panelists will share with us two actions they have seen basically pay off, in practice, to accelerate gender equity on the African Continent. Starting with you first, Honorable Winnie Kiiza.

MS. KIIZA: I would like to thank you, moderator and all the other panelists and Brookings in general.

Agenda 2030 for sustainable development is hinged on a central transformative promise of leaving no one behind. And with this for us we finally take the experience of Uganda, the aspect has been on ensuring that we don't escape the international relations, the international declaration, the conversation on the initial of all forms of discrimination against women, and of course the Maputo Declaration.

And with this being demonstrated in our constitution, many of the women have found avenues of giving each other a shoulder to lean on. A lot of mentorship growth, inter-generalization mentorship, is one thing that I've seen paying off in the emancipation of women. And I know that those

who are great today have been held on the shoulders of those who are greater than they were and therefore the inter-generalization membership is one aspect.

But also a team of women that have dedicated themselves to ensuring that they create awareness amongst the men and women of this country, amongst the young and old of this country, to ensure that they espouse the values and aspects of empowering women and in terms of leadership. And therefore acceleration the emancipation and the gender equity in the country.

As we speak right now there are a lot of regulations that have followed to accept and give women a fair hearing, fair representation, and this is what gives us the 35 percent representation in Parliament because of the quota system and affirmative action that was given through the constitution and the equality status Section 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

So these are some of the aspects that have seen the women participate in nurturing young girls, in espousing the aspects of true leadership of women and increasing the representative of women. They are issues that have possibly benefitted from a member of Parliament because I was in Parliament for 15 years and this quota system. And this quota system has provided for in the constitution, and like many of the other African countries, where my sisters cannot but sit in leadership because of the cultural norms and stereotypes.

Our constitution equally provided for a section in the constitution that talks about redressing the cultural imbalances and historical injustices that were committed against the women, to ensure that women are accorded equal dignity of men on the constitution. And this has given us a leverage in seeing men and women taking up the leadership positions in the party level and at national level. And I think this is a practice that I would encourage other African countries to really benchmark and make sure that they put in practice for the growth of our economies and for the development of our nation.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you very much, Honorable Winnie. Thank you. Jamie, over to you, two minutes on your thoughts, the same topic.

MS. COOPER: Thank you, Aloysius. And I also want to congratulate you on the Report. It's a really good read and very engaging and very encompassing I think on the issue in a really special

and unique way.

You know, I come at this very much like Winnie does, you know, people in power set priorities. And so for me it's the progress that's happened in that area, as slow and painful as it seems to some of us. Like the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Center for Women is a Presidential center for women who will next month release their first take on a dashboard. It is only at this point for West Africa but on where we've gotten to in terms of gender equity in public leadership. And I think all you have to do is see that dashboard to know where we need to get to.

You know there are countries like Nigeria that I think most of us see as really, you know, strong, dynamic places, and then you look at, you know, in many countries in West Africa there have been really magnificent appointments of women in the cabinets. In the parliament there are seven women out of 109 in the senate. There are 22 out of 360 in the house. I find that shocking.

So for me it is the presidents who have at least made 50 percent of their cabinets women, and to my knowledge that's Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa, but others that are moving in that direction. I think they've set a bar for everybody, everybody's paying attention. So that I think is really meaningful.

And, you know, I also am really excited where AMAJA, the program of the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center to help accelerate the progression of women into those top positions is heading. And really hope we're going to see great things come from that.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you very much, Jamie. Could we switch over to Fiona please?

MS. TREGENNA: Greetings from Johannesburg. And delighted to be here and part of this auspicious panel.

In my comments I think I'll move down from the very broad and overarching issues which my two colleagues have spoken to so eloquently and perhaps to focus on two particular policy demands out of many which are obviously important. Which I think can contribute to accelerating gender equality.

The first of these is targeted employment creation. And this can be through various channels, from public works programs to various other tools of employment promotion. I think that having

independent employment on a large scale for women is important. And this is not to romanticize paid employment as some sort necessarily liberating force. Of course it can come with its own equations and exploitations and particularly that becomes a burden on top of women continuing with unpaid domestic labor.

The quality of employment also matters. So having decent work, protected in the workplace, and a living wage. But I think even with the caveats that I've recognized that employment in itself is not a solution, financial dependence through lack of employment can be a factor in the difficulties of escaping the occasions of gender-based violence, in trafficking, in perpetuating gender stereotypes and so on.

So I think employment creation on a large scale for women with decent jobs can be one of the many elements towards gender equality.

And the second sort of policy domain which I would want to highlight as I guess an obvious one, that around education. But taking a multi-faceted approach to the importance of using this as a tool in many different ways. From the ECD level, Early Childhood Development, which has been shown to be particularly important for the girl child, as well as for mothers. And the interventions at that stage do have significant returns ranging to promotion of STEM subjects and STEM opportunities for the girl child ranging to the provision of sanitary products for school going girls up to the high education level. So obviously it's a wide set of interventions but I think we can't avoid talking about the education domain as one of the key ones for advancing gender equality

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you very much, Fiona. Then, Michelle, are you there?

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Thank you. And congratulations again on really an exquisite Report.

Let me add the public health framing to this wonderful conversation that my fellow panelists have added. I'd like to speak specifically to bolstering public health in Africa, and more specifically about the crucial leadership roles that women are playing.

Let me begin with the global objective, and that is to prepare for the next pandemic. To respond to the current one and to prepare for the next one. And to do that we have to strengthen the

public health infrastructure and build a healthcare workforce worldwide that is equitable, robust, and well empowered to achieve the goals ahead.

This is going to be particularly true for the African Continent where the health systems are currently struggling to keep pace with the demands of the COVID crisis and the demands pre-COVID. And it's also in the context for example where 40 percent of African countries are reporting massive disruptions in reproductive maternal and child health and adolescence health services, according to the WHO.

That's what we're facing now. So let's step back a little bit and look at where we were in 2016 to highlight what an effective response could look like. In Liberia when President Sirleaf, who is the first democratically elected woman. She rebuilt that country that had been engulfed in 14 years of a civil war. And then she was faced with the deadliest health crisis of the 21st Century, the Ebola outbreak in 2014, 2016.

And she writes in the essay that is just so potent a narrative in the Foresight Africa. President Sirleaf responded to the Ebola crisis by lifting up community health workers. A population largely predominately almost 100 percent women. And she listened to their advice on calming the crisis and she empowered them to act locally.

The result? The results were benefits that were accrued by the entire world. The result was an inclusive, a more sustainable path of hope, action, and a solution to a global health threat.

So the point I want to make here is as we put a fine line on the workforce, think about enabling, empowering, and allowing for the professional maturation of a large workforce that has been undervalued, underseen, and under invested in.

I think the Liberia success story also tells us a lot that we can build on as we work our way out of the COVID-19 pandemic and position ourselves for future health threats.

Just one additional point that I'd like to make. We have to invest in a workforce, and doing so is good for everyone. And we know this from the State of World's Nursing Report. From that Report I just want to share with you, 5.9 million more nurses are needed to meet the global demand. So we have a lot of work to do ahead of us.

I also want to say that we have nearly a 90 percent of the shortage in nursing leadership and nursing expertise. Effects low- and middle-income countries with the largest gaps existing in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Mediterranean WHO Regions.

So to address this we really do have to invest. We have to invest strategically in building a workforce that is heavily populated by women. And doing so I think solves local as well as global issues.

So I'll turn that over to you now again.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you all very much for your kind remarks. Jeni, over to you.

MS. KLUGMAN: Thanks, Aloysius, and I think that was a great opening. And now we have the opportunity to dig deeper on several of these dimensions.

And I'd like to turn back to Honorable Winnie Kiiza and probe more deeply on the political front where you've already remarked on the importance of quotas. In the Foresight Report, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf also underlines the importance of political parties as gatekeepers who can either constrain or promote women's participation in government.

And I was wondering whether you could share your thoughts about how political parties have played this role in Uganda and what more is needed. Thank you.

MS. KIIZA: Thank you so much. In the case of Uganda we are fortunate to have a constitution that mandates political parties to respect the quota system even at political party level. And therefore the political parties are compulsory obligated under Article 71 of the constitution to provide for 30 percent amongst the leadership of the party.

All political parties are guided by this article. The only problem that we still find is that a further look at fulfilling the 30 percent provision without necessarily looking at the real positions of influence. So we have woman who are in power, who are in leadership, but without the real power. You will find the chairperson of the political party or the leader of the political party is a man. Maybe even the vice chairperson may be a man. Then you will find places of women representatives and other small, small positions that may not necessarily give women the power.

Yes, it is true that I just concur with Madam Sirleaf that political parties as they get deeper to the involvement of women or the possibility of women involvement in political participation. Why? Because we realize that in these cases most especially in Africa, there is heavy commercialization in politics and elections. And if women are not given any of what is expected of them, and this can only be done at (audio skip), have been guided by the constitution, which also derives its mandate from the international legislations, the (inaudible), the Maputo protocol, which we have done (inaudible) anyway. And there is no way they can run away from this because there is also a Political Parties Organization Act that compulsory guides the political parties on how they should run the affairs as political parties.

However, we still find women complaining of being sidelined when it comes to being given positions that would open their eyes up, that would lead them to participate in real decision-making. There is also cultural stereotypes that people still subject women to in this political parties that a woman may not be (audio skip).

So we have seen some other political parties, all this talks about redressing the (audio skip) culture and outlawing any cultural practices that may make it hard for women to participate in governing.

Breaking the cultural stereotypes is not easy. (audio skip) political party level women are (audio skip) to fully express their potential. Women are not given what they need, the momentum to put them to where they are supposed to go. Even (audio skip) do not want to give women the opportunity to the quota system which all women must go to and so political parties at sometimes constrain the women at stations in the sense that they always want to block them in a quota system or a sub-position for women, which has also not enabled men and more women to come on board.

And that is why currently in Uganda we are advocating for gender parity, consisting where there will be a man and a woman running the same constituents at the same time, going beyond the quota system that has been provided. Yes, we acknowledge it, we are grateful for it because it has enabled us to have a 35 percent presence of women in parliament and around 24 percent at cabinet level. We are so grateful to this because it has enabled us to move a distance, it has enabled us to move for miles. So political parties are mandated by the constitution, there is no way that they can run away

from our constitution provisions unless if they don't have the women to fill up the quota provision.

So as a political practice you find that they have only just the bare minimum for the satisfaction while others have gone up from the 30 percent process. Others have had the deputies and national coordinators as women, like the Alliance for National Transformation of Political Parties. Their national coordinator is a woman and I just want to thank them.

The National Unity Platform has two women as Deputy Presidents, and I think they are doing a great job in this house, seeing the results of good governance and ensuring that women are getting into the positions of decision making.

I really would want to pray that while we wait, we advocate for either a quota system in countries where they are not yet realized that quotas have become very important, a tool to enable women to get into positions of influence. Studies have indicated that countries that espouses the quota system are at 49 percent representation, while those that have not espoused the quota system are at 16 percent.

This gives us a challenge as leaders and legislators, and possibly those who are in positions of influence to go further, to continue advocating for women involvement because I know that countries that have more women in their programs and in their leadership positions, have invested massively in terms of developing (audio skip) the women themselves. That's increasing all the economic growth and political participation. So Uganda seems to be celebrating these achievements because of the constitution of (audio skip) and say we can't continue denying this by the international argument, to which we are a signatory of our country.

So indeed I concur with Madam Sirleaf that political parties can chose (audio skip) given to this political party all of the gender equality to put a lot of energy on educating political parties, let them (audio skip).

MR. ORDU: Winnie. Winnie, I think you're coming in and out. We really can't, you know, hear everything you're saying. Winnie, I think we're going to move over to another panelist now, we're having problems hearing you.

MS. KIIZA: Sure.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you very much. Jeni, over to you.

MS. KLUGMAN: Thanks so much, Winnie, and I think you very importantly underlined the importance of trying to use norms and stereotypes as well as reforms in law. But some important lessons from Uganda.

I'd like to turn now to Professor Tregenna, who's already underlined women's economic opportunities and education as being key. I was wondering if you could draw on your work on economic and industrial development and the role of public policies and how these policies are in fact accounting for gender gaps. And what we've seen in terms of economic and industrial policies which have enabled women's fuller participation in the economy.

I know these are big topics and probably warrant very deep discussion, but if you could share some thoughts on this over the next few minutes, that would be very much valued. Thank you.

MS. TREGENNA: Thanks, Jeni. Well I guess it's a very uneven picture across different policy domains and across different countries within Africa, given the foster heterogeneity in the Continent. I think the key point which I would want to underscore is that no policy, whether it be economic policy or in any other sphere, implicitly or automatically accounts for gender gaps. And this is solely advances gender equality with us specifically taking measures which are directed at that.

So any kind of economy policy, you know, think about the area of my own expertise. Whether we think about trade policy, labor market policy, technology and innovation policy, industrial policy, macroeconomic policy and so on. And all of these policies have heterogeneous effects on women and on men. And even if a policy can be regarded as kind of progressive or proper in general, it doesn't necessarily advance gender equality.

So I think per the level of policy designs and of implementation in any area of economy policy and going beyond the economic policy for that matter, needs to take into account how that policy differentially effects women and men, as well as of course some other dimensions which will be of concern to policymakers, youths, spacial and so on, but obviously our particular lens today is on the gender dimension.

So to take into account what those deferential effects are and what sort of measures in

those policies can particularly advance women and gender equality.

So I think my approach is one of not characterizing this as kind of women's issues, women's policies, gender policies. Of course there's a particular role for those and policies and ministries and departments which have that as their primary mandate. But at the same time it's important for the gender lens to be integrated across the board, whether it be in terms of fiscal policy and budget choices, whether it be in terms of trade policy and taking into account how any trade policy and tariff policy and so on would differentially effect the sectors in which women tend to be concentrated in a particular country at a particular point of time. Similarly, beyond economic policy, whether it be criminal justice or whatever.

So I think any of these policy domains does have the potential to advance gender equality but that it's not a given. So if I think about industrial policy, and perhaps this will be my last point on my particular area of specialization. Simply industrializing may or may not assist women or move towards gender equality. Depends on what types of industries are being promoted and whether it's a kind of, even if women are being employed in large numbers, but if it's kind of a race to the bottom of really exploitative conditions and so on, it might look good on the employment numbers but it's not advancing gender equality in any fundamental way.

So I think for me the key point is about integrating that gender lens systematically throughout public policy formulation or if it comes to the fore more in certain domains than in others. And monitoring those differential effects on the girl child, on women, and adapting policies where needed so really to ensure that this is an integral part of the packet policy agenda.

MS. KLUGMAN: Great. Thank you. Very important points, I think particularly around, you know, understanding the fragile impacts and the importance of gender analysis and of course the tracking impacts in practice.

I was going to turn now to Professor Williams. And you've already put the public health framing at the forefront here. And of course it's front and center on everyone's minds over the past two years with the pandemic. Which in many ways brought up or to the fore some of these perennial constraints. Like the underpayment of frontline workers who are of course disproportionately women. So I guess I wanted to see whether you could share some more, if you like, promising or optimistic stories

about the ways in which some of these underlying disparities in the health sector workforce have been addressed. And whether you can share this with the panel and the audience today. Thank you.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you, Jeni. This gives me an opportunity to really share with you something that I'm excited about and is highly collaborative and I think will begin to help empower nursing, midwives, and community health workers' leadership.

We, you know, we are very aware, as Winnie said, of the importance of having women leadership, having that seat at the table. But having that seat at the table is just the first step. There then has to be, those women leaders have to be empowered, enabled, and equipped to engage across multiple sectors in addressing global health leadership issues across sectors of finance, agriculture, interior, you name it. And nursing leaders, chief nursing officers as an example, have that seat at the table but are not always engaged in the decision making and the priority setting and the agenda implementation.

So with several partners, including the Africa CDC, Harvard University came together across three of our schools, the Kennedy School, which I know Jeni, you are familiar with as an alumni, the School of Public Health, and the Graduate School of Education. And we said that we were going to commit ourselves in focusing our attention on enabling, empowering, and equipping women leaders from the nursing, midwifery, and community health sectors with the kinds of skillsets that they would need to be active, robust, vocal, and capable leaders when they get to that table.

And we don't just mean that clinical nursing leadership program of the past that is just based on managing inside health systems. We are recognizing that many of the threats and challenges on a population global health scale involve systems outside of the traditional healthcare system in communities.

And so the goal here, the promising aspect of this educational program is to train up, empower, and enable nursing leaders in Africa, starting in Africa, with digital health transformation skills. Understanding the use of digital technology for managing population health.

Jamie mentioned the importance of data dashboards. We have to democratize the analytical skills, the interpretive skills, of data information and evidence so that nursing leaders,

community health workers and others can use data to inform decisions, set priorities, and evaluate impact.

So training in these non-traditional skills that nursing leaders would have, finance, financial technology, regulatory sciences, all of the skills that we would be training our male counterparts in health management that we haven't traditionally addressed in training nursing leadership.

So I'm excited about that. And if we are able to do this, Jeni, we will get closer to meeting the goals that were established even before the pandemic. And I speak specifically to the health security agenda that is going to require more nursing, midwife, and community health worker engagement.

And one of Dr. Tedros' biggest agenda items was universal health coverage. And we cannot achieve that goal even in peacetime, peacetime being non-pandemic time, without upskilling, training nursing leadership and building that workforce.

So I think there's promise there. The Africa CDC as an anchor institution represents a very important organization that can make this a continental wide activity.

MS. KLUGMAN: Thanks so much for sharing. That sounds both innovative and indeed very promising. So it will be interesting to see how it evolves.

So the final round in the first question, last but not least, is to Jamie Cooper, who has already mentioned the AMAJA Leader's Initiative, which is an initiative in partnership with the Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center.

I know that you're excited about this, I wanted to give you the opportunity to tell us about the missions and goals of this initiative, what progress has been made so far, and where you see this going. Thanks, Jamie.

MS. COOPER: Thanks, Jeni. I am excited about the initiative. It is a little bit different than much of the work that we do. The way Big Win Philanthropy generally works is that we get behind public leaders, ministers, mayors, presidents, and work with them to ensure that their transformational agendas for their countries get realized and whatever that means in terms of support.

So I was very lucky to work with President Sirleaf during her presidency. And after that

she came to me and said “I have a Big Win for my post-presidency. And what I want to do is I want to spend the bulk of my time reaching behind me to vet the next group of women who are going to run to be President. And I’ve got a problem. I turned around and there’s no one there. So we need to do something about this because that’s going to be my legacy.”

And so I guess two and a half years ago the Center launched what is called AMAJA, which is a true word in Liberian language that means we’re going up. And it is a program or initiative that takes women. The first class was not by applications, now open as well by application, but who were seen as the young, potential, could be President, of my country one day, and who were recommended. So these were women and are women who have already gotten themselves, you know, like Winnie, you know, on the ladder of leadership. So some of them are ministers, some of them are mayors, some of them are, you know, the woman who started the Bring our Girls Back in Nigeria. They are a range of very, very dynamic impressive women with high integrity.

And the point of the program is that for many of these women they reached these positions very organically. They worked really hard, they care about something passionately, and they cared so much that they ran for an office or they were so good at what they were doing they were noticed and they were put to run a ministry.

But the program is about getting to that very highest level and being deliberate about it and having the ambition and imaging how you could change your country or the continent if you were to step into those shoes of power.

And so, you know, you’ve asked about the success of the class. The first cohort I think was a little bit blindsided by what they were walking into. There were 15 of them, one of them was pretty clear on her ambition working, but all of them were quite proud of what they had achieved so far. You know, at the end of that first conversation with, you know, not only Madam but I mean Mohammad and Negosi and Joyce Bandon, people like that, we think these women recognized how scary it would be to reach for these highest reigns. But at the end of a four-day forum six of the 15 committed that they were going to put themselves in a position to be a credible candidate for President within the next two terms. All of them had a next step in line that they were going to position themselves for.

The second cohort came in much more, you know, eyes wide open. We're recruiting for a third cohort right now. But what's been amazing and is the sort of yin and yang of the challenges is as these women have come together they have been very supportive cohort to cohort. And you already see the importance of having that continental depth.

So within the first year of the first AMAJA cohort three of them were arrested, one of them was physically beaten up, several of them were, you know, things were said in the press like they slept their way to that job, you know, that just weren't true. And the rest of them and their coaches, you know, both one on one about how they handled this, who helped them through this kind of crisis, you know, they have gathered around for each other, they have made sure the truth go out, that people are paying attention to what happens to them. You know, they have really been there for each other, they have been enormously supportive as a number of them have gotten neat appointments and gains. One of them did, in her particular country, did a lot of just ran at the top of her party and they didn't win, but she put herself out there, you know. And others are following suit, learning about how you get into a mainstream party, how you work yourself to the top of it.

So I am really, you know, I'm much more aware myself of what we are asking of these women, you know, what they are having to put themselves through without, you know, the kinds of quotas, especially in some countries that Winnie was talking about and how important those kinds of things, you know, why countries need role models and women in cabinets. It is a big thing that we are asking these women to do, to be the ones who break the ceiling.

But it's also incredibly exciting and inspiring to be in a room and see they're not a needle in a haystack, they are amazing, amazing, ready visionary, you know, career competent women sitting there, you know, that will get there.

MS. KLUGMAN: That's great. Thank you for sharing that. Maybe we can share the link to the initiative as well because I know that we have a lot of participation from the Continent and we may have some potential applicants for your fourth cohort on the line.

But let me turn now to Aloysius for the next round of questions. Thank you.

MR. ORDU: Thank you very much, Jeni, that was pretty impressive. I just got in around

the world, and in Africa in particular, please join us by emailing if you have questions

Events@Brookings.edu or via Twitter at BrookingsGlobal.

Let me turn to Winnie first. In your opener you did indeed talk about the quotas and the Uganda situation, which we heard you earlier. Earlier this year something, Jamie also alluded to, the Nigerian Senate rejected a constitutional amendment to create special seats for women in the national and state assemblies. Yet 47 percent of registered voters in Nigeria in the 2019 election were women. Yet they occupy only 6.5 percent of the national assembly.

So how can we possibly make progress for women in political leadership in Africa when a heavy weight on the Continent if they cannot back us just articulately?

MS. KIIZA: Just like you have stated, Aloysius, the African Continent is still held back by the cultural stereotype and the cultural norms that we view as power. And the cultures have not encouraged us to continue advocating for the inclusion of women in positions of leadership.

It's so sad that the Nigerian population could not think of involving the 49 percent of its population in true leadership. In many of the African countries women form the majority. Coming to my country for example, is a condition of approximately 45.7 million, women account for 50.7 percent of that population. But you will still find that we are only the 35 percent only in representation, and this courtesy of the quota that I talked about.

So the Nigerian leadership needed to understand that involving women in leadership is not just practical, but part of the legislation and the international protocols that we have attended our signature to as nations of Africa and as a people. And they needed to be aware that it's not only women that feel the negative effects of failure to invest in women at this level means investing even in their leadership capabilities. Investing in women means involving them economically to generate issues that concern them.

My sister over there was talking about the issues that they have involved in their country with regard the aspect of providing sanitary towels for the young girls and ensuring that they bring core assistance for the girls. And I can attest to this, how it did miracles in my country when there was, and still is, a quota system for girls going forward. This was an issue that was advocating for by the women

who were in Parliament.

So it's really so sad that the Nigerian people, and this I speak to the President of Nigeria, President Buhari, he needed to know as truth that empowering women and investing in women is a thing that lives today in the investment in even the welfare of the children. And it leads to combatting of poverty and driving economic growth of the country.

So we need other people to look out possibly for similar members of the African Continent, women like Madam Sirleaf, other women that we know of of higher standing in our society, to begin a journey of speaking to these presidents who are still laid back by traditions and norms and cultural practices and do not look at the investment of women as advancing their economic growth and countries as a whole.

And for that I would like to really thank the Sirleaf Center with their many projects that is nurturing women who are having higher visions. How I wish some of these women would go on a mission to talk to leaders like the leadership in Nigeria and other African countries that have not valued the participation of women in leadership, and we can see if it can have a change. However I am excited that they have started this transition.

MR. ORDU: Thank you.

MS. KIIZA: Starting is always not easy. Now that the conversation has started, I know there is some milestone that they have achieved in only having begun. Next we shall be breaking the failing and ensuring that women at least have a voice.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you very, very much. I think as Jamie alluded earlier in her remarks, progress is being made but it's slow and painful. I think we all need to focus on that to continue to push the frontier. Thank you.

Let me turn to Fiona. What role, if any, do you see for development partners in addressing the underlying drivers of gender inequity in Africa and promoting progress in this front?

MS. TREGENNA: Well I think there is an important role, the emphasis is on the partners and partnership which you mentioned in your question.

So I think the role, to be effective, is one which rests primarily on working with and

supporting local movements and initiatives. So it could be NGOs and social movements, community based organizations, tradesmen working on gender issues, women organizations, and so on.

I think kind of gender push from development partners is seen as being imposed and with a kind of an unwelcome requirement from northern donors if it's undocumented to bring fundamental changes, it's more likely to be kind of a box to king approach where there's a feeling, okay, we need to do this just to get these donor funds of whatever.

So to really about I think understanding and the specificities of local conditions which are different across the different countries and regions of Africa. And in every country in Africa there are local movements pushing for gender equality, different strengths, and taking different forms and so on. And I think there's an important role in terms of supporting those, identifying, you know, what are the pressing issues in particular contexts and the most feasible strategies toward unlocking those constraints.

I think linked to that it's important to have an evidence base for what is effective in particular contexts and what can be upscaled. Of course this is something where we're talking about kind of economic support interventions or issues aimed at political representation or in healthcare and so on.

But to really look at what has proved to be effective and where it has been proved to be effective, where can that be up scaled while avoiding kind of generalizations which don't take account of specificities of local context and so on. But we need building on those experiences.

So I think it's about listening, supporting, and where things are working, building on those.

MR. ORDU: All right. Thank you. Development partners certainly have the fire power and obviously in pushing harder in terms of gender equity, as you say, is in evidence in their projects.

Let me turn to Michelle. In her brilliant essay in our Foresight this year, Dr. Rebecca Clegg emphasized that female students are more likely to enroll in graduate studies when they encounter successful women role models.

The question for you is, if you can share with us, what has been your own experience as a role model and mentor to many?

MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, that's such an important question and it comes back to this

exciting initiative that Jamie spoke about. You know, if you can see it you can dream it, you know. It's cliché but it's so real.

And, you know, what we tend to underestimate and underappreciate is those students or leaders who are the first, the first ever dean of faculty at Harvard or the first, you know, democratically elected president, there is a moment of first celebrating the accomplishment, but then also reflecting on the fact that there are others who probably should have been the first but because of this gender discrimination or other inequities, you're not the first. So sort of reckoning with what the personal accomplishment means in the context of the surround of that accomplish is something that I think requires significant fellowship. And I'm excited about the AMAJA initiative because it recognizes that. It recognizes the inherent loneliness, isolation, and need for fellowship to think about doing something bold. And having role models in that space is very important.

I would also say that, you know, when you think about women in particular ascending into leadership roles, that network doesn't always exist and so it's even more important for mentors and people in position, men and women, to recognize that a leadership journey doesn't happen on one's own, that it does take some intentionality in bringing forward a group of people who would enable, encourage, and support a new leader's journey into the role of leadership.

And then, you know, as I've been trying to share about the Harvard Global Nursing Leadership Program, it's an example where there are new skillsets that domain experts will need to bring on board.

So for example if you are a senior nursing, country level chief nursing health officer, you know, what are the leadership technical skills in the toolkit that needs to be added. Is it in the area of finance, is it in the area of global health diplomacy, is it in health communication or crisis communication management? And I think the role mentors can play is to listen to young leaders, people ascending into leadership roles, hear where there might be opportunities for engaging in fellowship or continuing education, and that's what I would say.

But mentors play a very big role, mentors can and should be proactive in offering but also proactive in listening deeply and intently, and being there for the entire journey because, you know, I'm

listening to Jamie talk about the first and the second cohort. And, Jamie, I can't help but think about the work that you've been doing for, is it over a decade now with the Ministerial Leadership Program. And how the intangible cohort building that happens and the return on the investment of bringing cohorts of leaders, ministers, together are far exceeding I think the initial vision. It allows for collaboration, it allows for personal growth, and I think it allows for baking in a sustainability that is fundamentally important, especially for encouraging and enabling women leadership.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you very much. It's a good segue to Jeni as well. Because we know in addition to the Havat (phonetic) Program, the AMAJA you just alluded to, we know also that your work emphasizes the role of, you know, youths and girls and civil society across Africa.

One theme emphasized in our report this year is the need for gender justice. Would you share with us your thoughts on the roles that youths are playing to accelerate change through gender justice in Africa?

MS. KLUGMAN: Actually I have to say I have a little giggle on Michelle on role models because she is the role model for my daughter who can't believe that I know Michelle in person. So I know what they do for girls who are science brained and want to go into public health.

So in terms of your question on gender parity and why, you know, we're so interested on the Continent. We first started looking -- so Africa, I think most people know is going through a huge demographic transition and a dramatically growing population. And that presents an opportunity for a demographic dividend. Every country at some point has gone through this evolution where they have had a very high up bulge essentially, where the birth dynamics change and you have an opportunity to transition to a very high productive working population and a lower population of dependence. And that sets your economic projector for decades to come if you do that well, if that productive population is truly productive.

And so one of the things as we looked at supporting leaders in Africa was to understand which policies, what is it that you need to do to get this productive population to be super production so that you get that economic win in the end. And we had David Broome from Harvard come in running us through a lot of the data and he showed us, you know, if you have a healthy population, if you have an

educated population. And what he did with all of these was he would show us two countries that had had the same per capita economic trend for a period of time. So he put them China and India neck to neck. And then he would show exactly when one started investing heavily in health and one didn't, and what happened to those countries and, you know, how it went.

One of the divergences that he highlighted was Egypt and Mexico. And one country put a lot of emphasis on girls' equity, making sure that they were in school, that there are opportunities for jobs, you know, to assume that they were going to work, that their health, that they were very gender equity conscientious, and the other wasn't. And that was where you saw that tremendous split.

I think it's common sense that if you're looking for a productive population and the girls/women are all dependents and not productive, you know, if you lose 50 percent, you know, that's not a good outcome. So that's, for us, why this focus on gender and why, you know, also we believe so strongly that the youth voices have to be part of this dialogue and discussion. And to be really honest, you know, I think there is a waking up to it but right now, you know, again if you were to look at in Egypt I think youth really did change and make their voices heard very clearly. But it wasn't in a constructive way. And I think that's what African countries need to work through is you don't want to have a lot of angry voices and that the only way to communicate is by screaming and shouting. You want to have venues for productive dialogue.

And I, you know, I hold ourselves accountable in not, you know, enough clarity, but it's certainly something as we work with leaders but they are much more aware of, you know, how do we communicate in a way that's really listening and hearing and constructive together. You are seeing in a number of countries youth ministers who along with gender ministers are often like the bottom of the pecking order suddenly being given very serious portfolios. So I'm hopeful about that.

MR. ORDU: Great. The comparison with Mexico and Egypt reminds me of next door to Egypt where I used to live, Tunisia, where from the very, very beginning President Bourguiba, past President of the Nation, set the tone on the issue of gender parity, which is why in all, you know, international comparators you find that almost all of the Tunisians, the women rank very high in secondary school education, primary, and of course university. Thank you. Thank you very much for

that.

Jeni, I think it's time for us to see what we have in stock from the audience. Jeni, do you see any questions from the audience to pose to our panelists?

MS. KLUGMAN: Well I see many questions from the audience, I think we have over 30, and sadly we don't have enough time to explore all of them. They cover kind of what works, about girls and role models, overcoming legal barriers, the role of women's peace and security agenda, leadership by OGBTQI groups.

A specific question for Michelle asking, you know, why can't we have the same initiative in the U.S. with black communities?

So it's clearly beyond the scope of this session to delve into all of these. Aloysius and I extracted a couple, using I guess our moderator's prerogative, that we're going to put before you. And I'll ask the first.

Each of you don't feel compelled to answer because we do have a final wrap-up question as well. But one I thought was a way of bringing together a lot of what we've been talking about around women's leadership was just to put the question more explicitly, and to ask you what you see as working to accelerate women's leadership in government or the private sector?

So we can start with Winnie, if you'd like to respond to this one. And then we can run through. It's probably simplest if we go in the same order again. So let me turn back now to Uganda.

MS. KIIZA: Hello?

MR. ORDU: Yes, we can hear you, Winnie.

MS. KIIZA: Yes, thank you so much. I know that accelerating women's participation in leadership calls for concerted efforts ensuring that we bring men and woman all on board to acknowledge that it's very important to play together, to lead together for a common purpose.

And this can be achieved by ensuring that we now have these legislations as a mandate for countries. Like I said, those countries in Africa that have achieved gender parity, like Uganda, we celebrate Uganda as one of the countries that have achieved gender parity and even going beyond because women are more in the parliament than the men. But it's because of the consideration that has

been put by the leaderships in those countries that have decided to walk the path of gender equality and equity.

In Uganda for example, there is a requirement before a budget of any ministry is passed for a certificate of gender equity. And if all other countries can be compelled to assuring that they take on the quotas and present these quotas to the parliament for constitutional reforms, then we shall accelerate the inclusion of women in parliaments, in cabinets, and even in other feasible society bodies in all public spaces we shall have women in that space. I consider this is what has given us the leverage and this is what has given the right attitude and charisma to continue to fighting on.

Also having right mentors in place. Those women who will take it upon themselves to ignite the change that we so desire. Those women who will take it upon themselves to be the role models and mentors for the young women in the leadership agenda. It can also help to accelerate the involvement of women in leadership. It has worked in other countries, it is working in Uganda, it worked in Rwanda, has worked in South Africa, and I know it can continue working in other countries, and Africa will have again the parity atmosphere, an atmosphere that espouses the involvement of women at all leadership levels. And that is what I pray.

MS. KLUGMAN: Well thank you very much. Fiona, would you like to add something here on the what works on leadership?

MS. TREGENNA: Sure. And to add to the brilliant points which Winnie has made. I fully agree with what she's said about quotas. And of course we all recognize that it's not enough and just having women in position is not enough. We also need structural and systemic change and of course not all women leaders necessarily advance a kind of a broader women's agenda. But even with all of those caveats we have to emphasize the importance of women's representation and women's leadership as one of the means towards that broader change.

I think it's also important that it's not only about the numbers of women that are in a parliament or cabinet, whatever, but which positions they occupy within those. And the importance of women occupying what I might call non-traditional portfolios. We're more used to having women ministers and portfolios like education, health, the disabled, with us where those portfolios exist, and so

on. And of course those portfolios are absolutely fundamental for women in the countries as well as more broadly. But it's also important to have women in positions in the security apparatus, in economics, and so on, which are kind of less traditionally associated with women's leadership.

And what's lastly I would say it's crucial I think to identify what are the pathways towards leadership and power for women. It's not just that you had parachuted and drop into a position. And one of these pathways is to use politics. In many countries we find a kind of traditional pathway where women's involvement in the youth wings of political parties and so on is one of the pathways towards seniority and power. Another common pathway is outside of party politics and gaining permanence and making an impact in non-party political positions in other domains, whether it be legal or community organizing or whatever. And gaining of prominence and experience and making a mark in those domains.

So I think these are just pathways which it's also important to look at supporting so it's not just at the apex, but holding up those different levels through that and building up a media profile and recognition of women's important contributions in these various ways.

MS. KLUGMAN: I want to add to both Jamie and to Michelle. So Michelle, you go first and then we'll turn to Jamie.

MS. WILLIAMS: Sure. I really loved the two responses and I just wanted to add in addition to pathways I'd like to say partners. And I say partners intentionally because we have an opportunity that I don't think we've all leveraged adequately. And that is forging good, solid partnerships that support youth and gender equity with our corporate colleagues.

And I'm thinking specifically about all of the resources and the professed good will and intention of investing ESG dollars strategically to address environment, social, and governance. And I think if we can find creative ways to open conversations, to draft an agenda that addresses gender equity issues, that addresses climate and environment issues, that address youth empowerment and encouragement of youth in the governance pathways, I think we will be better off.

And, you know, I'm always looking at development and equity through a public health lens. And if we are successful in doing all of this, we will be accelerating the advancement of health

equity as well and closing not only national health disparity gaps but global health disparity gaps with the resources, the talent, and the accountability that we can bring together by partnering strategically with the private sector.

MS. KLUGMAN: That's a great point. Thank you, Michelle. Jamie.

MS. COOPER: Yeah, I mean I'm not going to, I'm in, that's everybody else's, I think they've covered the lot.

MS. KLUGMAN: Aloysius, over to you.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Perhaps we have an opportunity for just one more. There is a question by Daphne Titus of Matasis Strategies, and she asks. What about equity in sport opportunities? Sports. We've heard so much about that in the news lately.

Fiona, you want to go first this time?

MS. TREGENNA: You're ambushing me with that one. I mean I think, for me maybe I would take sports as an example to say that, you know, in this discussion we've been focusing I guess on particular domains, which perhaps ourselves personally we tend to work on health, leadership, economy and so on.

But really there are millions of domains which are important to gender equality, cultural sports and so on. And that the opportunities for sports involvement go beyond sporting excellence and the importance of giving to the girl child and women opportunities for excelling in sporting excellence. But it's also about opportunities for improved personal health through being active and so on.

So I think, yeah, it's something which is important across the continent and more broadly across the world in providing the resources and the opportunities for women to flourish and excel in the sporting arena.

MR. ORDU: All right. Thank you. Jeni, shall we go straight to basically final rounds, a minute or so from each person? You want to kick us off on that, please?

MS. KLUGMAN: Sure. So we were just going to ask you to leave our audience with a take away from this very rich discussion. So a take away in terms of actions. It could be at the individual level, it could be at the corporate level, it could be, you know, for governance, from philanthropists. But if

you can just rather simplistically, of course, because we all recognize the complexity and the multi-faceted and chronic nature of the challenges being faced. Just one take away for our audience today.

I think we have about six minutes left. So you'll have about one and a half minutes each. Winnie, can we come back to you for one take away? And then we'll just proceed through. Thank you.

MS. KIIZA: Yeah. Maybe in a minute, like you said, the Africa Barometer 2021 on women's political participation. African countries are still far from achieving women's equal and political participation. I would really want to ask all of us at our levels to become champions of engaging governments, wherever they are in Africa, to ensure that they take care of the girl child, they take care of the needs of women, they vote the issues, the economic issues as well as the political issues because involving women is involving the nation. You can't plan for women and you don't involve them. Anything for them without them is not for them. Therefore all the leaders viewing us and present on this platform, I would like to say let us continue with a fight for equality.

MS. WILLIAMS: You're on mute, Jeni.

MS. KLUGMAN: Sorry. Thank you so much, Winnie, for those powerful final words.
Fiona?

MS. TREGENNA: Thanks. I thought I would just mention one issue which we haven't touched on at all in this discussion, which is that of land. That's something that I personally focus on a lot and not something which is necessarily important to all women across the Continent, for example young urban women, this would be very far from perhaps their present concerns.

But for many women in rural areas, I think access to land and land tenure is one very important issue where a very deep gender inequality persists. An even across countries, but in some countries on the Continent women still cannot inherit land, and we've seen widespread practices of women being evicted from their small holdings when for example the husband passes away. It's connected I think with the range of other problems of gender-based violence, forced marriage, forced evictions and forced moving and so on. So I think it's connected to the security of tenure, to food security, even to access to critics and productive activities as well as to sections even of status as an adult.

So I think it's a legal issue in many cases but also an issue of implementation and protecting women's rights in those rural areas. So I thought I would just, you know, an overarching issue but I thought let me just pick up on that since we hadn't really touched on it at all.

MS. KLUGMAN: Fiona, thank you so much. I think it's important to highlight the importance of land and tenure and its link both kind of instrumentally to a number of other important aspects. So thank you for that. Michelle.

MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I'm going to focus on pay equity. And I want to come back to sports, Jeni, because I wanted to be asked the sports question.

I want us to celebrate the fact that the U.S. Women's Soccer, after a multi-year, I would say multi-decade fight finally, finally earned the right for equal work, equal pay. And that's even though they were out achieving their male counterparts objectively empirically for the world to see. So I want to use sports to say listen, it is about equal work, equal pay, we have to continue to work across all sectors, celebrate the success of these sports women, but go forward all throughout every sector of our civil society and be sure that we're working on equity.

And the other thing I'll just close with is talent is broadly, widely, democratically distributed but opportunities are not. And all of us, no matter what sector we're working in, should be working to balance that equation. Thank you.

MS. KLUGMAN: Thanks so much. Jamie.

MS. COOPER: You know, I think there are so many issues. I agree with Fiona, property rights, you know, I know Title IX, which is what gave me equal access to sports in the U.S. was, you know, absolutely a game changer, having lived in other countries too and seen the difference that's made.

I think every country needs to decipher such a host of issues that you could start with that are so important on the gender equity front that those issues won't emerge and we won't be having those discussions if women aren't part of that leadership and part of that discussion.

So I think that's the first place to start, but I think, you know, as Fiona said, there are so many things, you know, they work or they don't work or they have to be constructed thoughtfully, but

there is no shortage of things that 50 percent of the population care about that aren't getting sufficient attention or that would be dealt with differently if the discussion was broadened out.

MS. KLUGMAN: Aloysius, over to you just for the final thank you and on behalf of Brookings.

MR. ORDU: Thank you. Thank you very much to all of you. I think we heard so many things today which really from public policy point of view we will continue to push the agenda. The need for the fact that role models matter came out very strongly in all the conversations, mentorship without mentors is very, very difficult for some of us to get along, and particularly marginalized women. Showing up matters on sole representation we heard today. The need for systematic integration of gender lens in public policy was also part of the readout from this session today. Development partners obviously have a key role to play as well in gender equity. Concerted efforts not just by women, it came out very strong that men as well in partnership with all stakeholders. And these are some of the many, many things we heard today. It's very difficult to do justice to such a rich conversation.

And I just want to use the opportunity to thank each and every one of you. Winnie Kiiza, Jamie Cooper, Michelle Williams, and Fiona Tregenna. Thank you all very, very much for choosing to spend your time with us today here.

Of course my partner in crime, Jeni, thank you very much. And my colleagues in the Brookings family, EGI, Christina, David, the rest of the team, I really, really would like to thank you all. And of course John Allen for making the time to open us up today.

Have a wonderful, wonderful day. Thank you all.

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