Executive Summary

1. Aspiration 6 of the AU agenda 2063 provides a clear understanding of some challenges women in society face and clearly defines the goals (Section 50-52, pg. 8-9).

2. We thus call for special attention and cooperation from the United Kingdom partnership to assist in this regard. The case for the emphasis on women and people living with disabilities is evident from the four case studies collected among our partners.

3. Africa urgently requires foreign investment in order to build more resilient and inclusive economies, upgrade technological resources and generally improve the living conditions of all Africans. Foreign Direct Investment is what is required from countries such as the United Kingdom, if we are to address the many challenges women in Africa experience generally, and in particular the more greatly marginalised women with disabilities.

Submitters

Carlotta Redi is the International Director of the Conservative Party, where she heads up the international work aimed at promoting good governance, inclusion and the rule of law, empowering young political leaders and facilitating international dialogue and integration in partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

The Southern Africa Network of Democrats (SAND) is a regional network of centre-right political parties across Southern Africa, broadly covering countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It is fostering good conservative governance to improve the quality of life for all citizens. SAND seeks to foster the centre-right philosophy among its member parties, establish relations at bilateral and multilateral levels, and facilitate and encourage the exchange of best practices for the benefit of all members.

1. Purpose

The International Department of the Conservative Party, in partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, has been working with political parties in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1990s. The main collaborations have been with political parties in Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi and Angola.

The African Continent is a Continent full of challenges. The Agenda 2063 is a very ambitious agenda, but for it to become reality there is a need of pure
determination by not only the African Union, African governments and the United Kingdom, but also the African people.

This submission aims to respond to the question of “Creating the conditions to allow full participation of women and disabled persons in our societies.” We are specifically focusing on the experience of political parties, as essential for the functioning of democracy, can be key drivers to deliver a safer, healthier and more inclusive future.

This submission is structured around a selection of four case studies, directly submitted by member of the SAND regional network and a set of recommendations agreed by the Board of the regional network.

2. Case Studies

South Africa - two submissions from different political parties

a) Stats SA does not currently have up to date data on disability but according to the 2014 report based on the 2011 census the national disability prevalence rate is 7,5% in South Africa. Disability is more prevalent among females compared to males (8,3% and 6,5% respectively). Population group profiles show that black Africans had the highest proportion of persons with disabilities (7,8%), followed by the white population group (6,5%).

The results on socio-economic circumstances indicate that there are associations between school attendance, level of education and disability, given the differing rates of school attendance for persons with and without a disability. Non-attendance was prevalent among children with severe difficulty in functioning, particularly children with severe communication and walking difficulties, an indication that children with severe disabilities were the most disadvantaged in terms of access to education. Persons with severe difficulties had the worst educational outcomes. Limited access to education and other opportunities, such as employment, denies this vulnerable group a better life, and leads to confinement of persons with disabilities to a low socioeconomic status.

To deal with the substantive inequalities our partner has been working on creating more opportunities for rural dwellers through the promotion of the principles of ‘self-help and self-reliance’. While looking at the broad challenges people with disabilities face, they place emphasis, in particular, on women with disabilities. South Africa is currently not doing well in terms of employment statistics, access to government and private buildings, ease of transportation facilities etc. The general lack of facilities for people with disabilities poses an added burden to these citizens when they attempt to access already constrained and dilapidated public infrastructure. They are often left out of the thought process when new infrastructure or services are considered as they become, marginalised due to the prioritisation in respect of infrastructure spending. They are trying to implement progress toward a more equal and free society for all, through promoting that consideration of people with disabilities must come to the forefront of thinking within our society.

b) According to Stats SA in 2017, the percentage of births with no information on the natural father was 61,7%, that is 620,302 being born without a father on
the birth registration records from the Department of Home Affairs. This is in line with research which shows that a staggering 62% of South African children do not live with their fathers.

To improve the willingness of men to be registered on their child’s birth certificate and as paternity leave is one of the most important steps policymakers can use to improve women’s access to economic opportunity, one of our partners presented a Private Members Bill calling for paid paternity leave for new fathers. In November 2018 the new Labour Laws Amendment Act was signed into law giving new fathers 10 consecutive days of parental leave to be taken from the date that the child is born.

**Uganda**

In spite of the National Safe Motherhood Program which amongst other things seeks to reduce fertility and maternal morbidity and mortality by promoting informed choice, service accessibility and improved quality of care, maternal mortality remains high at 343 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Our political partners applied the African Union’s to achieve the Pan African Vision of “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens [...]” by promoting women action through women health.

By implementing “birth pack” a non-state welfare solution which cost approximately £1.30 per woman, solutions to the high level of death during childbirth were found by citizens and driven by them especially women. Women reached out to poor and vulnerable pregnant mothers across the country for sensitization and creation of awareness. This has had a direct impact on women’s involvement in healthcare and politics in the regions where the program was run while increasing their health and wellbeing.

**Angola**

Since demining started in 1994 tens of thousands of landmines and unexploded bombs have been cleared in Angola. There are still landmines over large sections of the country. They still cause injuries and deaths and are an obstacle to development and economic growth, especially in the east of the country.

Our partner recognises the issue of the participation of disabled population of Angola to be taken very seriously but think history is still haunting most of the decision-making people on either side of the political divide. Conditions have not been created to accommodate disabled people in public transports or on the streets where it is difficult to find access specific for disabled people. Sensibilisation of the country’s leadership and population through workshops would be beneficial to promote legislation to for example create quotas so that in every company or government institution recruiting there is specific number of positions for which priority is given to disabled people. Giving the large number of disabled people disability should be normalised.

3. **Recommendations:**
Aspiration 6 of the AU agenda 2063 provides a clear understanding of some challenges women in society face and clearly defines the goals (Section 50-52, pg. 8-9).

We thus call for special attention and cooperation from the United Kingdom partnership to assist in this regard. The case for the emphasis on women and people living with disabilities is evident below and any form of cooperation should be guided by informed data:

- **Poverty head count**

  A poverty head count would reveal that women are the most represented group, together with those who live with disabilities. The recognition of these two groups must be unpacked and emphasised in the AU Agenda 2063. Furthermore, the collaboration with the United Kingdom must bring innovation to women and women living with disabilities. As Africa embarks on improving its ICT infrastructure in order to gear itself up for the 4th industrial revolution, innovations and technology must be specifically tailored to ease the burden on women and people living with disabilities. Full recognition of structural challenges they face will provide insight as to exactly what would be required to capacitate them in this regard. For example, some women are still placed in gender defined roles which limit or restrict their movements. Technology such as WIFI in rural areas may assist them to seek employment opportunities rather than them having to spend what little income or funds they have on travelling to government departments to physically seek employment. An online database together with a census could inform government about the programmes needed and inform people living in rural areas about activities they may partake in to better their lives.

- **Unfair discrimination – disability**

  There are also limitations that people who have managed to navigate away from the rural living expectations placed on them by culture.

  Africa urgently requires foreign investment in order to build more resilient and inclusive economies, upgrade technological resources and generally improve the living conditions of all Africans. Foreign Direct Investment is what is required from countries such as the United Kingdom, if we are to address the many challenges women in Africa experience generally, and in particular the more greatly marginalised women with disabilities.

  If you can address the issue of self-worth, through the creation of employment and basic income generation you will indirectly address and reduce crime, gender and disability-based violence.

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