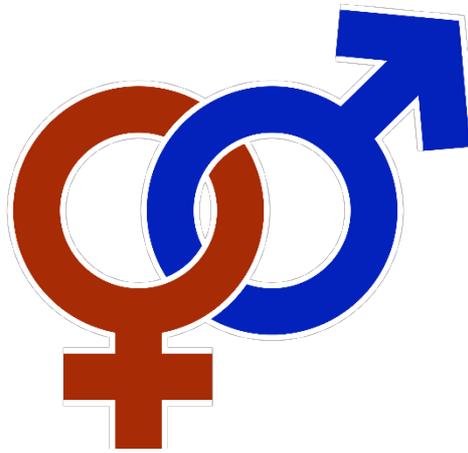




COSECSA GENDER POLICY AND GUIDELINES



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Message from the President

As President of COSECSA, I am very pleased to present the Gender Policy.

COSECSA affirms its commitment to reduce gender disparities; transform gender relations; promote inclusion of women and strengthen organisational structures and systems for gender equality.

The policy also builds on the progress and impressive results achieved by COSECSA over the past 18 years towards promoting gender equity.

COSECSA will continue to increase access to surgical care by training and credentialing surgeons as well as laying emphasis on mentoring female surgeons and trainees in the region. To realise this, under the auspices of COSECSA, Women in Surgery Africa (WiSA) was established in 2015, as an independent representative group for female surgeons, surgical trainees and women who may be interested in pursuing a career in surgical training.

COSECSA looks forward to working collaboratively and in partnership with national governments, like-minded institutions and partners who share our vision of attaining gender equality.

Respectfully Submitted,

Prof. Pankaj Jani

President of COSECSA.

Glossary of Terms

Affirmative action: Deliberate and usually short-term measures to discriminate in order to create a gender balance, e.g. employment of only women in senior positions until parity is achieved.

Empowerment: Process and result of gaining attitudes, knowledge and skills that position one to compete equally with others for available opportunities and resources and to exercise autonomy.

Curriculum: Refers to the content of an Education and Training Program.

Engender: The Process of ensuring that Planning and Programming is appreciative of and considers gender differences and concerns.

Gender: Culturally and socially based expectations of the roles and behaviour of men and women. Gender is socially constructed and is related to how we are perceived and expected to think and act as men or women because of the way society is organized. For instance, women cook, wash and take care of babies. Men head families inherit land and provide leadership. These roles can, however, be played by either sex as they are not biologically pre-determined.

Gender Analysis: Systematic scrutiny of contexts to reveal differences in the conditions and positions of men and women, boys and girls, the factors behind the differences and their implications.

Gender Awareness: Recognition that there is inequality in the conditions and positions of men and women, boys and girls, and that these inequalities are systemically caused and perpetuated.

Gender Balance: Equal representation and participation of women and men in all structures. Gender balance must not only be looked at in terms of absolute numbers but also at each level in a structure.

Gender Based Discrimination: Systematic bias in which a person is denied his or her rights because of being a woman, girl, boy or man.

Gender Disaggregated Data: Qualitative and quantitative information, broken down to show the different conditions and positions of women, men, boys and girls.

Gender equality: This is the absence of discrimination based on a person's sex in opportunities, in allocation of resources and benefits, or in access to services. It refers to the equal treatment of women and men, boys and girls so that they can enjoy the benefits of development including equal access to and control of opportunities and resources.

Gender Equity: Refers to the practice of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, access to and control of resources, responsibilities, power, opportunities and services. It is essentially the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender.

Gender Gap: Quantitatively measurable differences in the situations of men and women, girls and boys, e.g. school enrolment.

Gender mainstreaming: This is a strategy for making women and men concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes, activities and projects at all levels in the social, economic and political spheres.

Gender Sensitivity: Awareness of and respect for the needs, interests and sensibilities of women as women and men as men, e.g. not using derogatory language, avoiding stereotypes, avoiding patronising language, providing facilities for both in public places in recognition of different needs etc.

Gender parity: This is a numerical concept referring to equal number of girls and women, boys and men relative to their respective numbers in the population.

Gender responsive: Refers to action taken to correct gender imbalances.

Gender responsive pedagogy: Refers to teaching and learning methodologies and classroom practices that take gender into consideration

Sexual Harassment: Any covert or overt act of a sexual nature that is unwelcome, uninvited and unrequited and which makes its target uncomfortable, offended, demeaned, humiliated, coerced and undignified. The act could be physical, verbal, pictorial, electronic, or carried out in any form and could be targeted at and coming from a person of the same or opposite sex.

COSECSA's background.

The College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA), incorporating the Association of Surgeons of East Africa (ASEA), is a professional body that fosters postgraduate education in surgery and provides surgical training throughout the East, Central and Southern Africa region. The college was founded in 1999 and currently present in 12 countries namely: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Sudan, Sudan and Botswana.

The primary objective of the college is to advance education, training, standards of practice and research in surgical care in this region. The College delivers a common surgical training programme with a common examination and an internationally recognised qualification.

COSECSA provides a comprehensive Membership programme in Basic Surgery and Fellowship Programme in Orthopaedics; ENT; Urology; Paediatric Surgery; Neurosurgery; Plastic Surgery; and General Surgery. COSECSA has 113 accredited hospitals in 18 countries and 248 trainers distributed across the region, providing access to training in urban and rural locations.

COSECSA is dedicated to scaling up surgical services and care within the ECSA region by increasing the number of highly trained specialists' surgeons

VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

The goal of this gender policy is to contribute to the accomplishment of the vision, mission and core values of COSECSA, recognising and acknowledging the global consensus that gender equality is a prerequisite for achieving development goals.

Vision: To be the reference surgical body in the region of East, Central and Southern Africa and beyond.

Mission: Promote excellence in Surgical Care, Training and Research.

COSECSA Core Values

- **Transparency:** COSECSA practices utmost transparency in the processes by which trainings, examinations and accreditation are conducted.
- **Quality and Continuous Improvement:** COSECSA strives for quality in all that it does and practices continuous improvement in all areas, according to international best practice.

- Learning and Development: COSECSA is a trainee-centred institution that provides high quality educational training and research experiences.
- Institutional Integrity and partnership: COSECSA demonstrate integrity, based on honesty, fairness and respect, in all its dealings with its members and with its partners.
- *Institutional Agility and Entrepreneurism*: COSECSA conducts business in a lean and cost-effective manner
- Stewardship and Service: COSECSA demonstrates responsible stewardship of all its resources and reliable services in all its activities.
- • Accountability: COSECSA stands by its decisions and actions and is fully accountable for the overall probity of its programmes and partnerships.
- Gender Equity: COSECSA promotes allocation of resources, programmes and decision making fairly to both men and women without any discrimination and aims to address any imbalances in its undertakings.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

COSECSA affirms its obligation and support to promoting gender equality as an important aspect of its development. This is explicitly declared as one of the strategic objectives.

The College believes in providing equal opportunities and participation for men, women and people who identify as neither male nor female. Equality is both a human right, and a driver of sustainable development.

The Gender Policy provides a framework for fostering gender equality in COSECSA.

Gender is a term used to identify social, cultural and psychological features that identify one as a man, woman, boy or girl. It is the shaping of thinking, attitude and values of women, men, girls and boys. It is also about roles and responsibilities for men and women, boys and girls as perceived by the different communities. It is further reflected by gender differences in the choices made, access and control of resources, power relations and participation. The policy considers equality as a development goal rather than focus on either gender as a target. Achievement of this goal requires the college to examine all its policies, training programmes and projects for

their impact on either gender with a view of achieving a gender equitable environment.

This can only be achieved through a framework which outlines strategies and guidelines for gender initiatives within the College. The policy on gender will aim at guiding the College towards ensuring a safe work and learning environment which is free from all forms of discrimination for fellows, trainees and Staff.

Policy shall address issues of access, equity, retention, transition, relevance and quality of service to persons of either gender.

Legal and Policy Context

The Member states of COSECSA are signatories to Global, Regional and National commitments to gender equality. Some of the Global commitment include:

- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The Declaration states that rights and freedoms shall not be limited by a person's sex. It articulates that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990.
- The outcome documents from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994.
- The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, resulting in the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Actions
- Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015.

At the regional level, African governments reaffirmed their commitments by signing the following instruments among others:

- African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Banjul) 1981.
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990.
- The Protocol to the Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2003.

At the National level, Gender equality is ingrained in the Constitutions of most African countries. These constitutions prohibit discrimination on account of sex, race, ethnicity and other variables. All COSECSA member countries have national gender policies, in addition to sectoral policies in key areas such as health and education, which give more specific guidelines on critical gender

issues that must be addressed. COSECSA will take cognisance of these commitments in all its operations to the greatest extent possible.

Guiding Principles

The COSECSA Gender policy is based on the following guiding principles and assumptions:

- Gender equality will be considered as an integral part of all COSECSAs policies, programs and projects;
- Achieving gender equality requires the recognition that every policy, program and project affects women and men differently. Women's empowerment is central to achieving gender equality. Therefore, promoting equal participation of women as agents of change in economic, social and political processes is essential to achieving gender equality;
- Achieving gender equality will require specific measures designed to eliminate gender inequalities or imbalances.
- The commitment by COSECSA to ensure an enabling environment that promotes and facilitates gender equality at all levels. This will ensure gender responsive policies and programs to enhance gender parity to the greatest extent possible.
- COSECSA will also ensure a detailed documentation of all the processes related to the activities on the issue of gender within the College and its affiliates.
- Gender mainstreaming will apply in the College leadership with considerations of specific interventions to redress historical imbalances of any gender.
- Gender is a cross-cutting issue and therefore intervention strategies should encompass all College functions, systems and processes including policies, programs, and projects.

POLICY MEASURES

Engendering the Curriculum

COSECSA shall integrate gender issues in its curricula, so that trainees gain a better understanding of gender issues.

Strategies

- providing a common course on gender issues to all trainees
- incorporating gender issue in the curriculum/ syllabus
- Ensure the professional commitment of trainers assigned to include gender component in training.

Staff Recruitment, Training, Scholarship and Promotion

COSECSA shall put in place gender-responsive staff recruitment, training, scholarship

Strategies:

- Ensure that the college has gender-responsive staff recruitment, training, scholarship, promotion and recognition guidelines and procedures. Each COSECSA country chapter should strive to have at least 50/50 representation of trainers five years. As part of staff development plan, the college secretariat should include at least 50/50 representation. The college will purposively promote female scholarships in its efforts to improve gender parity of its trainees.

RESEARCH, PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

COSECSA shall take all necessary steps to promote female and male fellows as well as trainee's participation in research, publication and dissemination by providing equal opportunities.

Strategies:

- Establish special research grant for female fellows and trainees to conduct research and disseminate their research outputs.
- Encourage Fellows and trainees to conduct collaborative research.
- Recognize and reward female fellows and trainees for their achievement in research activities to motivate them and enhance role modelling.
- Develop guidelines to ensure that all research projects of the College consider gender as an important analytical element.
- Avail special research grant and encourage staff members to conduct gender research.

TRAINEE ENROLMENT, RETENTION AND PERFORMANCE

COSECSA shall strive to the greatest extent possible to attain gender balance in enrolment, access, retention and performance of its trainees

Strategies:

- Ensure that scholarships are by affirmative action awarded to the disadvantaged gender with regard to numbers, in this case females.
- Organize training programs and discussion forums on gender issues for Council and College membership during the AGM
- Recognize and award successful female trainees to motivate females' others.
- Develop mechanisms for recruiting more female trainers' who can serve as role models for female trainees . Now the COSECSA female trainers are 0.9%.
- Conduct periodic survey on the challenges of female trainers and trainees to ensure appropriate measures are taken.

GENDER FOCAL PERSON

COSECSA has a gender focal person who sits in Council. The gender foal person shall follow up the proper implementation of COSECSA Gender Policy

Strategies:

- Ensure the College allocates the necessary resources to implement the gender activities
- Ensure the college has feasible or workable action plans (regarding staff recruitments and development, promotion, participation in leadership, scholarship, research grants, etc).

LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

COSECSA shall enhance the participation of women in leadership and decision making by addressing the gender imbalance within Council and ensuring that gender-based discrimination is deterred.

Strategies:

- Design and implement sensitization programs to challenge the stereotypes that associate management and leadership roles with masculine domain.
- Ensure females' participation in decision-making by setting-up specific ratio, at a minimum of 30% representation of either gender in the College Council, College Executive Committee and the College Committees. The college should fulfil this in collaboration with the affiliate surgical societies/associations during the nomination of country representatives.
- Ensure the College criteria for allocation of all leadership positions are gender mainstreamed.

- Encourage women to hold leadership positions at all levels and enhance their managerial and leadership skills.
- Develop females' personal strategies for balancing career and personal life, by acknowledging their multiple roles.

ENSURING SECURE ENVIRONMENT

The College shall create enabling environment for women to ensure security and provision of gender responsive service delivery.

Strategies:

- Ensure that the environment is safe and secured for all serving the college
- Ensure equal accessibility of resources (learning materials) to both females and males
- Develop a sexual harassment policy of the College and ensure its implementation
- Establish dialogue fora to create awareness among the university community on issues pertaining to prevention of gender-based violence.

GENDER DISAGGREGATED STATISTICS

COSECSA shall generate an updated gender disaggregated data on Fellows, Council members, Trainers, Trainees and disseminate to all relevant stakeholders.

Strategies:

- Establish and update regularly gender disaggregated database of all Fellows, Council members, Trainers, Trainees as per ranks, experiences and leadership positions.
- Disseminate gender disaggregated data through the website of the College and other available mechanisms.

GENDER RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

COSECSA shall ensure gender equality in all its documents, such as policies, strategic plans, projects, and communications at all levels.

Strategies:

- All annual and strategic plans of the college shall have gender-responsive activities and reports done on the same.
- Ensure that all projects and initiatives are gender responsive
- Make sure that all communications, directives, guidelines are gender sensitive.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND GENDER BUDGETING

COSECSA shall uphold resource mobilization and gender budgeting processes to ensure adequate and sustainable budget allocations for effective institutionalization of gender mainstreaming.

Strategies:

- Include financing for gender policy implementation in the College resource mobilization strategy
- Mobilize resources female scholarships and research grants

NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP

COSECSA shall promote and support networks and partnerships that advocate gender equality within and outside the College.

Strategies:

- Encourage networking and improve accessibility to information to promote females and male participation and efficiency in all arenas.
- Establish network for female and male faculty and researchers in higher learning institutions at national and international levels.
- Encourage and support the participation of College Fellows and Trainees in national, regional and international conferences and other fora that enhance knowledge sharing on gender issues among other issues.
- Develop and implement collaborative programs with sister Colleges to share learning experiences and empowerment for both female and male.
- Promote Women in Surgery Africa (WiSA) efforts.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Rules and regulation shall be enacted for the implementation of the Gender Policy.

The COSECSA fraternity have a responsibility to adhere to the Policy and apply it in their day-to-day activities and in all communications with, or on behalf of the college. The overall responsibilities in relation to this Policy are as follows:

- Council will receive an annual progress report on the monitoring and implementation of the Policy from the Gender focal person to enable its members to ensure that the Policy is under implementation.
- College level Gender focal person shall assign the secretariat and any other relevant persons to follow up the proper implementation of the policy

REVIEW OF POLICY

- This policy is liable for amendments every 5 years.