

Side Event for STI Forum 2023

- **Event Title:** Uncovering gender disparities in STEM and higher education in Southern Africa: evidence from nine countries

- **Main Organizers:** UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (UNESCO Office in Harare) & UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education (UNESCO IESALC)

- **Date and start time and end time of the event:** 04 May 2023, 1:15 – 2:30 p.m. (EST, New York time)

- **Format:** In-person side event inside UN Headquarters

- **Brief description of the event**

Although the primary responsibility for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lies at the country level, higher education institutions (HEIs) in the respective countries are well-placed to make a significant contribution to the 2030 Agenda. In recent years, enrolment in HEIs worldwide, including Africa, has been growing at an unprecedented rate. HEIs have expanded in number and outreach and therefore played an increasingly influential role in national and world affairs. However, this expansion is also presenting governments with multiple challenges, particularly with regard to the inclusion of women in HEIs and in STEM and their full and sustainable participation in the tertiary education sector.

A background study is being carried out, via a survey and desk research, across nine countries in Southern Africa (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) to assess women's representation in HE and STEM and identify areas with gender imbalances.

The event will discuss the preliminary results of the survey in these nine countries on gender distribution in leadership roles, teaching, and student enrolment, also with a focus on STEM areas of study and research.

- **Theme**

Lessons for improving the science-policy-society interfaces