GENDER IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES
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Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu
Senior Programme Manager
Democracy and Gender
International IDEA, www.idea.int
CONCEPTUAL CLARITY ON GENDER

Gender refers to socially constructed rather than biologically determined roles of both women and men, as well as the relationships between them in a given society at a specific time and place, while sex refers to the biologically determined differences and roles.

The qualities, identities and behaviours expected from men and women are determined through the process of socialisation. Relationships between women and men and the way in which gender impacts on democratic processes for instance the persistent unequal political participation and representation is a particularly stark example.

Gender equality—equal rights, opportunities and the power to shape and contribute to society regardless of gender. This implies that an individual’s rights and opportunities, including those of democratic participation do not depend on their gender. Substantive gender equality recognises women’s and men’s differences and is not a simplistic understanding that places emphasis on sameness.