

## **Gender Contestations and the Implications for Inclusive Societies**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines contemporary debates on gender and the state in Africa as a contribution to debates that will inform the United Nations (UN) Summit of the Future in September 2024. Specifically, this paper focusses on two intersecting questions. The first is the rising anti-gender rhetoric and concomitant creation of a trust deficit between society and state through state informed legislation on gender. In examining the anti-gender rhetoric, the paper notes that this is a challenge that is not only contained to the African continent but reflects a growing global movement of transnational actors working collectively and separately to undermine women's rights and gender justice broadly. The second and interlinked issue is the capture of multilateral spaces specifically the UN by anti-gender actors and the implications this capture has on undermining the UN common agenda as set out in the Secretary General's report Our Common Agenda in 2021. This paper draws on an analysis of grey and academic literature to examine the manifestations of anti-gender movements across Africa and its implication for the reduction of civil liberties for women and girls. This paper offers two recommendations. The first is the importance of state accountability for the compounded violence against women and girls that anti-gender movements create. The second is the need to protect the UN from capture by conservative forces.