



Launch of the Africa Gender Equality Moot Court Competition, 3rd edition

THEME: Legal dilemmas of commercial surrogacy in Africa

Date: 25th July 2024

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Concept Note

A. About the organizers

Equality Now

Equality Now, founded in 1992, is an international women's rights organization that works to achieve legal and systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against women and girls around the world, with a focus on ending sexual violence, harmful practices, sexual exploitation, and achieving legal equality. Combining grassroots activism with international, regional, and national legal advocacy, Equality Now's approach links high-level policy advocacy and global activism with support and legal advice to grassroots partners and networks working on specific cases of women and girls in order to promote change at all levels.

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) Coalition

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) is a coalition of over 70 national, regional, and international civil society organizations working on women's rights in over 30 African countries. SOAWR was formed with the principal objective of advocating for the ratification, domestication, and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol).

Kenyatta University School of Law

Kenyatta University School of Law is a fully accredited School by the Council of Legal Education, Kenya that offers Bachelor of Laws Programme. Established on 29th February 2012 and with a vision of being a premier Law School educating legal entrepreneurs of conscience, competence, and compassion with the ability to meet the challenges of leadership and the administration of justice in Africa and beyond, the School aims at providing legal writing and research skills to the highest standards through developing cutting-edge capacity building, promoting holistic student development and increasing sensitivity to community needs in order to ensure global competitiveness.

B. Background

Since 2020, Equality Now and the SOAWR Coalition have hosted the Africa Gender Equality Moot Court Competition (AGEMCC) with the primary objective of enhancing law students' research, understanding, and application of the Maputo Protocol and other regional and international human rights instruments to advance the rights of women and girls in Africa.

This continental Competition, conducted in French and English (referred to as the Francophone and Anglophone Components), seeks to nurture the interest of the next generation of lawyers in women's and girls' rights in Africa, emphasizing the role of continental and international human rights instruments in advancing gender equality on the Continent. The Competition challenges students to engage in comparative research on legal standards and develop arguments on the intersection between women's and girls' rights in Africa and international law.

This year, in collaboration with the SOAWR Coalition and Kenyatta University School of Law, Equality Now is hosting the 3rd edition of the AGEMCC from July to December 2024. The focus is on women's sexual and reproductive rights, specifically the legal complexities of commercial surrogacy in Africa.

The hypothetical case for the moot court will cover:

1. **Exploitation by Agencies:** Intermediaries exploiting surrogate mothers and intending parents due to lack of legal oversight.
2. **Legal Protections for Children** born out of surrogacy arrangements.
3. **Transmission of Prenatal Rights:** How pre-natal rights are handled in surrogacy arrangements.
4. **Enforcement of Surrogacy Agreements:** Legal aspects of enforcing surrogacy contracts and parental rights.
5. **Pregnancy Complications and Multiple Births:** Rights of surrogate mothers in cases of complications and multiple births, including ethical and legal issues when intended parents revoke contracts or request actions against the surrogate's will, such as abortion.

C. Launch of the 2024 AGEMCC

The 3rd edition of the Africa Gender Equality Moot Court Competition (AGEMCC) will be officially launched through a virtual webinar on **25th July 2024 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM EAT**. This online event will bring together law students from across Africa, along with academics and experts, to mark the commencement of the 2024 AGEMCC.

The webinar aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Launch the 3rd Edition of the Africa Gender Equality Moot Court Competition:** Introduce the theme and framework for this year's competition, outlining the objectives, structure, and key timelines.
2. **Inspire student engagement:** Highlight the educational value of participating in the competition and emphasize how it offers an opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary issues related to sexual and reproductive health rights in Africa.

3. **Provide an overview of surrogacy in Africa:** As this is an emerging and contemporary area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, the webinar will offer insights into the practice of surrogacy in Africa.

Languages: English with simultaneous French interpretation.

AGENDA

Launch of the 3rd Africa Gender Equality Moot Court Competition

Date: 25th July 2024

Time: 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM EAT (GMT +3)

Format: Virtual Webinar via Zoom

Languages: English and French (Simultaneous Interpretation Available)

Time	Session	Session Content	Speaker
11:00 AM - 11:15 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Introduction to the Africa Gender Equality Moot Court Competition, its significance, and a brief on Equality Now's role in the competition.	Ms. Faiza Mohamed Africa Office Director, Equality Now
	Welcome Address by Kenyatta University School of Law (KUSOL)	Welcome to participants and a brief on the importance of academic engagement in gender equality issues, and an introduction to KUSOL's involvement in the competition.	Ms. Margaret Cokumu Registrar, Kenyatta University School of Law
11:15 AM - 11:30 AM	Introduction to the 2024 Moot Court Competition	Presentation of this year's theme, competition structure, and objectives	Ms. Esther Waweru Senior Legal Advisor Equality Now
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Understanding Commercial Surrogacy: Legal and Ethical Perspectives	An expert discussion on the legal and ethical dimensions of commercial surrogacy, focusing on the contemporary issues in Africa	Ms. Ayieta Lumbasyo CEO and Founder-Fertility Law Centre, Nairobi
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	Regulation of cross-border surrogacy	Efforts of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in Africa; the dilemma of uniform regulation and the intervention /attempt of the International Social Services which led to the Verona Principles.	Dr. Olanike Adhlakun Associate Professor Faculty of Law, Lead City University, Nigeria
12:30 PM - 12:50 PM	Q&A Session with Keynote Speakers		

12:50 PM - 1:00 PM	Break		
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Panel Discussion	What value does the AGEMCC offer to law students, and how can they help shape gender equality on the continent?	Potential panelists: 1. Ms. Marion Ogeto Program Officer, Equality Now 2. Previous years' AGEMCC winners (Nadia Mutisi and Ryan Migani) 3. Dr. Harrison Mbori , Lead Moot Court Coordinator
1:30 PM - 1:45 PM	Next steps	Details on registration procedures, deadlines, key timelines, and other details (passports etc.) for the 2024 moot court competition.	Equality Now and Moot court coordinators
1:45 PM - 2:00 PM	Closing Remarks		Ms. Esther Waweru , Equality Now Ms. Margaret Cokumu Kenyatta University School of Law