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Aide-Mémoire
11th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting
on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union
22-23 January 2008
Economic Commission for Africa
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I. Introduction

This meeting is the 11th in a series of Pre-Summit consultations of civil society networks concerned with gender issues and the promotion of women's human rights in Africa. The 11th Pre-Summit Consultative meeting will take place from **22 to 23 January 2008**. It is supported by DFID in partnership with the AUGD, ECA and OSIWA. It is organized by the network members of the "Gender is my Agenda" Campaign and is coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS). This meeting will be followed by a two day **African Women's Consultation on Darfur** from **24 to 25 January, 2008**.

The meeting will be held on the margins of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AU meeting will comprise of the 15th Ordinary Session of the PRC (25-26 January), the 12th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (28-29 January) and the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government: (31st January – 02 February 2008).

The theme of the 11th Pre-Summit is "**The Industrialization of the African continent: the gender perspective**" as well as **monitoring progress made in the implementation of the SDGEA**.

II. Background

Member States of the African Union (AU) marked a new beginning in the history of the gender agenda in Africa through the adoption at the Addis Summit meeting in July 2004 of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). Calling for the full promotion and protection of women's rights at the national and regional level, the SDGEA marks the ownership by a continental organization of an unprecedented achievement towards gender-mainstreaming at the highest level, prioritizing issues such as HIV/AIDS, the recruitment of child soldiers, and the implementation of gender-specific economic, social, and legal measures.

Following the adoption of the SDGEA, women's civil society networks assembled on numerous occasions to further the work of mainstreaming gender in the AU. In July 2005, during the 6th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU held in Tripoli, African women's networks committed themselves to launching an advocacy campaign on the SDGEA by finalizing the "Civil Society Framework for Monitoring and Evaluating the Solemn Declaration". These women's organizations further agreed to share monitoring responsibilities, a decision reflected in an official document entitled "Memorandum of Understanding arising from the Tripoli Commitment for Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration".

Women's organizations subsequently convened in Dakar, in October 2005 with the Minister of Women and Gender Issues of the Government of Senegal, during the Civil Society Organizations Meeting prior to the First African Union Conference of Ministers Responsible for Women and Gender. The "Dakar Strategic Partnership", which was the 7th Pre Summit's address to AU member States and the AU Commission held in Dakar, October 2005, regrouped and updated the work that had began in previous Consultative Meetings. Its focus was aimed at pursuing the involvement of civil society in the monitoring and evaluation of the SDGEA as well as obtaining a solemn commitment from AU Member States to involve civil society organizations in such processes. The incorporation of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) into the mechanisms of the AU demonstrated the achievements of the advocacy work undertaken by women civil society organizations.

At the most recent Consultative Meeting, which took place in Banjul, Gambia in June 2006, women's networks and organizations officially launched the "Gender is my Agenda" Campaign. In addition to evaluating the Campaign network programme, the meeting was used as a tool to strengthen the monitoring, reporting and advocacy strategies and mobilize the involvement of different actors in the gender mainstreaming agenda.

The adoption of the SDGEA in 2004 was the result of a long process characterized by the tireless work and achievements accomplished by African women's networks under the initiative of the AWCPD. This involved a sequence of Consultative Meetings which were held with African women's organizations in the following locations: Durban, June 2002; Dakar, April 2003; Maputo, June 2003; Addis Ababa, June 2004; Abuja, January 2005; Tripoli, July 2005, Dakar 2005; and Banjul, June 2006; Addis Ababa, January 2007; Accra, June 2007.

Key documents that were adopted during these consultations include the "Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union"; the "Dakar Strategy"; the "Maputo Declaration"; the "African Women's Contribution to the Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender in the African Union"; the "Abuja Recommendations for Civil Society Monitoring and Evaluation of the Solemn Declaration"; the "Tripoli Commitment"; the "Dakar Strategic Partnership"; and the "Banjul Declaration" and the "Banjul Resolution"

III. Rationale

Although the AU has made significant progress over the years with respect to women's issues and its decisions and declarations have moved forward the women's agenda, much work remains. While mechanisms, such as the AWCPD, have been created to advocate and oversee implementation of various recommendations made by women, attention must be focused on ensuring the effective implementation of their mandates.

Civil society organizations must continue to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the SDGEA. In addition, opportunities must be created to facilitate dialogue and the revision of strategies on gender mainstreaming within the AU.

In this regard, the network of women's organization members of the "Gender is my Agenda" Campaign have agreed to convene the 11th Consultative Meeting in Addis Ababa, in January 2008. The meeting will bring together the focal points of the Campaign and other participating organizations to move forward processes for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of AU Member States of the SDGEA.

IV. Objectives of the Pre –Summit Consultative Meeting

To foster a clear understanding of the industrialisation of the African continent to define clear strategies and recommendations for its full attainment while guaranteeing gender equity and mainstreaming through monitoring the implementation of the SDGEA

The specific objectives of the meeting are the following:

- To discuss the challenges and potential for the industrialisation of the African continent using the gender lense
- To assess progress and shortcomings in implementation of the SDGEA during these last years and make recommendations to the forthcoming new President of the AU Commission and the commissioners
- To raise awareness among women's grassroots organizations at the national, subregional and regional level of the SDGEA;
- To reinforce the commitment of civil society member of the Campaign to participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGEA.
- To undertake advocacy and outreach activities on the various thematic issues of the SDGEA;
- To foster the partnership between different stakeholders and strengthen the commitment to move forward the effective implementation of the SDGEA;
- To identify any constraints and to establish the way forward in support of implementing the principle of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

V. Activities of the meeting

The meeting will comprise the following activities:

1. Organization of a two-day Pre-Summit Consultations on the "Industrialisation of the African continent: the Gender perspective" as well as assessing best practices and lessons learned on the implementation of the SDGEA
2. Dissemination of information on the SDGEA
3. Advocacy activities around the AU Head of States and Government Summit
4. Provision of space for networking and partnership with all the stakeholders involved in the campaign

VI. Expected outcomes

The key expected outcomes of this meeting are the following:

- To foster a clear understanding of the challenges and potential for the industrialisation of the African continent and its development strategy
- To address the gender gap in the industrialisation policy of the African continent and make clear recommendations in favour of women's full participation and representation in decision making position
- To highlight key issues, strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the SDGEA and make clear recommendations to the upcoming President of the AU Commission and the AU Commissioners
- To mobilize and sensitise women's grassroots organizations and civil society organizations on the gender mainstreaming agenda and the Campaign activities;
- To strengthen partnerships with women's organizations at all levels and to strengthen regional mechanisms on gender issues;
- To commit civil society focal points on thematic issues related to the SDGEA and to its follow up;
- For advocacy issues to be undertaken on various issues of the SDGEA.

VII. Outputs

The expected outputs of the meetings are as follows:

- To document States' contributions to the implementation of the SDGEA;
- To raise awareness on the SDGEA and the work of the Campaign.
- To submit the recommendations from the Consultative meeting to the AU.
- A case study that will highlight best practices and lessons learned on gender equality policy and mainstreaming at all levels for knowledge building and replication which will be shared with the different stakeholders
- The pioneers of gender parity principles and mainstreaming are acknowledged and celebrated
- To raise awareness on the need to sustain and transform policy change in favour of gender equity and mainstreaming into attitudinal and behavioural change for the emergence of a new social order that will guarantee the human security , particularly that of women.

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