

# 13<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU

## **LAUNCHING OF THE BEST PRACTICES BOOKLET ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN AFRICA** **UN ECA, 27-28 January 2009** **Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia**



***With the support of: ECA, OSIWA, AWDF, FINLAND, DFID***



## CONCEPT NOTE

### **I. Introduction**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union will be held at the UNECA Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from January 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The Meeting is organized by the GIMAC network and coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS). At past Pre-Summit meetings, FAS has benefited from the partnership of Action Aid, the Government of Finland, GTZ, UNICEF, UNFPA, AWDF, OSIWA, DFID, and the African Development Bank.

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 Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), the 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> January 2009;

the Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, the 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> January 2009, and the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the 1st-2nd February 2009.

## **II. Background**

Member States of the African Union (AU) marked a new era 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) and the 'Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union', calling for the full promotion and protection of women's rights at both a national and regional level. The SDGEA marks an unprecedented achievement of a continental organization 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 organizations additionally 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 Senegalese Minister of Women and Gender Issues, 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Organizations 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 female Civil Society Organizations.

At the 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 different actors in the gender mainstreaming agenda.

The Pre-Summit Consultative Meetings have been held 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, Addis Ababa, in January 2008, and Sharm el Sheikh, July 2009.

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’; the ‘Banjul Declaration’ and the ‘Banjul Resolution’, and the ‘Sudanese Women’s Declaration on Darfur’.

The adoption of the SDGEA and related accomplishments in the African women’s movement have been greatly facilitated by the advocacy and networking that takes place during these twice-yearly consultative meetings. The ability of the GIMAC network to organize these meetings and carry out other essential work would not be possible without the support of its long-time partners.

The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) works towards the advancement of open societies characterized by the rule of law, democracy, respect for diversity and human rights, free markets, informed citizenry, and vibrant civil society. OSIWA’s partnership has been instrumental not only in helping to support the GIMAC network’s overall communications, but also in providing long-term support to organize Pre-Summit meetings, and monitor the status of the SDGEA throughout the continent.

The African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), in addition to being an important member of the GIMAC network, has also provided long-term support to facilitate the organization of Pre-Summit meetings. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting, AWDF actively participated in panel discussions and coordination of other events.

### **III. Rationale**

Although the African Union (AU) has made significant progress over the years with respect to gender issues, and its decisions and declarations have moved forward the gender agenda, much work remains to achieve female empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the AU and its programs, organs and Member States.

The evaluation of the priority thematic areas identified in the SDGEA demonstrates that some progress has been made, but a lot remains to be done in the focal areas of governance, peace and security, human rights, health, education and economic empowerment. Additionally progress must be made to consider gender mainstreaming as the good governance and human rights issue that it is.

Concerning Civil Society Organizations, it is crucial that they continue to make the government accountable for their commitment to accelerate the implementation of the SDGEA. Four years after the adoption of the SDGEA, it is indispensable to carry out an assessment of the tools and methodologies dedicated to the monitoring/evaluation of the SDGEA and their efficiency to address any new emerging issues. Therefore, opportunities must be created to facilitate dialogue between the AU and CSOs for the revision of strategies on gender mainstreaming within the AU, its organs, programs and its member states.

It is also necessary for the network members of the ‘Gender is my Agenda’ Campaign to ensure that knowledge and competence is shared so as to strengthen the capacities of female advocates in Africa and, exploiting the platform of the Campaign, to encourage wide support who can reinforce the female voice at a political level and challenge the governments and their commitments.

In this regard, the network of women’s organization members of the ‘Gender is my Agenda’ Campaign have agreed to convene at the 13<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting in Addis Ababa in January 2009. The meeting will bring together the focal points of the Campaign and other participating organizations to discuss the changing environment at the regional and international level which requires a paradigm shift in our work as CSOs advocating for effective gender parity policies and practice.

New issues have emerged to consider at this 13<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit, notably the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820, passed in June 2008, concerning the ongoing violence against women, and the links between Resolution 1820 and Resolution 1325. Additionally the WGDDs will have an agenda item entitled ‘Consideration of the Reports on the Implementation of the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa: Fourth Report of the Chairperson and Synthesis of Reports from Member States.’

At the previous 12<sup>th</sup> Pre Summit meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, the network had included agenda items such as African women’s land rights, in collaboration with ActionAid International, and female trafficking for exploited labor in Africa. For the upcoming 13<sup>th</sup> Pre Summit, the network has organized a panel with the long-time partner of FAS, RollBack Malaria, on malaria and gender, and also with the International Labor Organization (ILO) on gender equality in employment. Other topics concerning the general theme of gender and health shall be discussed, in addition to other relevant agenda items and themes.

#### **IV. Objectives of the Pre –Summit Consultative Meeting**

To discuss the changing environment at the regional and international level and elaborate a new paradigm in the work of CSOs advocating for effective gender parity policies and practice.

The specific objectives of the meeting are the following:

- To review new strategies of advocacy for effective gender parity policies and practice
- To comment State’s Report on the implementation of the SDGEA on the various thematic issues
- To present the *Best Practices Booklet*, a study commissioned by FAS on gender best practices
- 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 foster the partnership between different stakeholders and strengthen the commitment to move forward the effective implementation of the SDGEA
- To identify future challenges 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 of the following activities:

1. Organization of a two-day Pre-Summit Consultations Dissemination of information on the SDGEA, networking opportunities
2. Mobilization of media
3. Presentation of the *Best Practices Booklet*
4. Advocacy activities around the AU Head of States and Government Summit
5. 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 refine new strategies of advocacy for effective gender parity policies and practice, following the changing environment at the regional and international level

- To share Best Practices and Lessons Learned with Gender is my Agenda Network and other civil society organizations
- To highlight key issues, strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the SDGEA and make clear recommendations to the new President of the AU Commission and the AU Commissioners
- To mobilize and sensitize 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 common priority areas of concern in the implementation 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 favor of gender equity and mainstreaming into attitudinal and behavioral change for the emergence of a new social order that will guarantee the human security , particularly that of women
- To produce a report analyzing the Heads of States' respective reports in the implementation of the SDGEA

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On

*The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*

**THEMATIC FOCAL POINTS**

**Governance :** African Leadership Forum (ALF)

**Peace and Security :** Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), African Center for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)  
Safer Africa, Africa Policy Institute (API)

**Human Rights :** Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)  
African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)

**Health :** Social Aspects of HIV/Aids Research Alliance (SAHARA)  
Society for Women and Aids in Africa (SWAA), Roll Back Malaria Network (RBM)

**Education:** Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA)

**Economic Empowerment :** African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)  
Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA)

**REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS**

**Western Africa :** West African Women Association (WAWA)

**Northern Africa :** Tunisian Mothers's Association (ATM)

**Southern Africa :** Foundation for Development Community (FDC)

**Eastern Africa:** Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA)

**Central Africa :** Association Congolaise de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes (ACOLVF)

**OTHER ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING**

AAWORD, ABANTU for Development, Akina Mama Wa Africa, ANSEDI,  
Cardre Permanent de Concertation des Femmes Congolaises (CAFECO),  
CAFOB, Center For Human Rights(CHR), Commission for Gender Equality(CGE), CONAFED, Equality Now, FEMNET,  
International African Committee (IAC), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), ISIS - WICCE, MARWOPNET,  
Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI), REPERES, Pan African Movement, ProFemmes, SSWC, Women's Society of Alfathe

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH**

CADHP, AU, CEA, NEPAD, PAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF  
Government of Senegal, Government of South Africa

**WITH THE SUPPORT OF**

Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)

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