



YEAR OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AFRICA'S AGENDA 2063

Moving from Solemn Declarations to Solemn Deliverables

We, women from across the African continent, gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa on the 8th and 9th of June 2015 as part of the 26th Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Pre-African Union Summit meeting, have deliberated on pressing issues related to health and reproductive rights, governance, education, agriculture, peace and security, violence against women and girls, economic empowerment and financial inclusion, and have identified practical and actionable recommendations and best practices to ensure that women are at the center of Africa's Agenda 2063.

As we commemorate 2015 as the year of women, we are unified in our demand that Africa moves **from solemn declarations to solemn deliverables** to protect the rights of women and to promote gender equality. This requires strong, demonstrable commitment from African Heads of State and Government, as well as religious and community leaders. In terms of numbers and capacity, there is nothing micro about women and social, political and financial investments in women should reflect this reality.

As representatives of civil society groups and the private sector, we are committed to work in our communities and beyond to strengthen initiatives that empower women and girls. We are also committed to monitor implementation of the strong, policy commitments made by African governments to accelerate the implementation of women's rights and development and to eliminate measures and practices that harm women and girls. We recall in particular, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and urge accelerated implementation of these commitments.

We welcome the decision of the African Union Chairperson to launch a continent-wide campaign to retire the hand-held hoe to the museum, which has been a key recommendation of the GIMAC to accelerate manufacturing and access to innovative farming technologies for women farmers.

We further welcome the decision by the African Union to Silence the Guns by 2020.

In the course of our deliberations, we referred to the GIMAC recommendations in January 2015 and have identified key priority actions to accelerate African women's social, economic and political development in the areas of economic empowerment, governance, health, education, and peace and security, which are summarized below:

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

We need women-focused funds and banks beyond the micro finance product, that directly delivers money to women. We need policy measures to secure guarantees and revolving funds that are dedicated to women, including women without collateral, and commercial banks should deliver financial services for women.

There is need for an integrated approach to agriculture that addresses environmental capital, social capital, markets, and the issue of joint land registration between spouses.

GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

We call on the African Union Commission to adopt the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI) for the monitoring of the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

We note the importance of women in decision-making and that it is within the power of Heads of State and Government to raise the number of women in cabinet positions to 50% by 2020, as committed in Agenda 2063.

We call on Heads of State and Government to respect constitutional and peaceful transitions of power.

HEALTH

HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death amongst adolescents in Africa and it is a priority to stop new HIV infections among young women and adolescent girls. Young women and girls should be empowered through comprehensive sexuality education and support.

Governments should initiate efforts to end maternal mortality through providing access to safe abortion information and services.

We urge governments to end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence and increase the number of health extension workers, community-based organizations and youth-focused services, in order to reach women and youth in their communities.

EDUCATION

We must rethink the use of the word “marriage” in the context of child marriage. Child marriage should not be seen as marriage, but as sexual violence and abuse. In this regard, we support a continent-wide campaign to end child marriage, and recommend increased protection to girls at risk and support to girls in “marriage”.

We recommend a gender-responsive pedagogy to replace the present system of education.

PEACE AND SECURITY

We need actionable commitments to implement a continental framework with strong indicators to monitor implementation of the women, peace and security agenda across the continent with a focus on identifying early warning signals and addressing the root causes of violence and conflict. We also need to invest in centres of excellence to build a critical mass of peacebuilders.

Done in Johannesburg, 9 June 2015