



DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

30th Civil Society Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union and Member States

Theme:

“Towards a continental Policy Framework for girls and young women: Gender Equality: A human right and key driver for economic transformation.”

Tentative dates (27th and 28th June, 2017)

***Venue:* United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

1. Introduction

January 2017 African Union Heads of States Assembly has been marked by the dedication of the year 2017 to youth with a specific focus on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youth. This is a step forward towards implementing African Union (AU) pillar document, Agenda 2063, commitment to utilize the potential offered by African people, especially women and youth to build a continent whose development is people-driven (Aspiration 6). It responded to Agenda 2063 calls for empowerment, development and enhanced participation of youth to create THE AFRICA WE WANT underlining the need to uphold gender equality.

Internationally, the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 61) was held under the theme: economic empowerment of women in the changing world of work”. The session, while emphasizing on the labor market signified the need for gender equality and investment in young women that make-up half of the world work force for transformative and sustainable economic development. The continental and international focus on the role of youth and especially women for economic transformation hold a great potential for the work of Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Networks in advancing gender equality and parity principle.

Within these contexts the 30th session of GIMAC pre-consultative meeting will be held from 27-28 June, 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme: **“Towards a continental Policy Framework for girls and young women: Gender Equality: A human right and key driver for economic transformation.”** Recalling on the commitments and recommendations made during the 29th GIMAC held in Addis Ababa in January 2017, the 30th GIMAC aims to identify strategies, approaches and interventions that have worked for gender responsive continental policy framework towards economic development with special focus on the demographic dividend and role of young women.

In preparation for the 29-28 June, 2017 AU Gender Pre-summit meeting and 03-04 June 2017 29th AU Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the GIMAC network will work closely with the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions, United Nations agencies and other civil society entities, to ensure the inclusion of women’s voice in the youth agenda and identify key priorities for action.

The 29th AU Heads of States and Government Meeting is preceded by the Thirty-fourth (34th) Ordinary Session of the AU Permanent Representatives’ Committee (PRC) to be held from 27-28 June 2017 and Thirty--first (31th) Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council to take place on June 30 and July 01, 2017.

2. Background

The Gender is My Agenda Campaign came to exist during the transformation of the Organization of the African Union (OAU) to AU to ensure women were part of, and benefited from, the transformation process. Taking cognizance of OAU’s focus on decolonization and its failure to address and integrate the concerns of African women GIMAC members called for the recognition and visibility of gender issues in the newly organized continental framework - AU and Member States. Since it was officially launched in 2002, in Durban, South Africa, GIMAC has been taking place bi-annually in advance of the African Union Summit of Heads of States and Government to engage AU Members States on African women rights, issues, and

concerns. So far GIMAC has played a pivotal role in influencing decisions and actions taken to strengthen women's rights and gender mainstreaming in the African continent by working closely with the AU.

The GIMAC network consists of more than 55 civil society organizations promoting gender equality and accountability for women's rights. The GIMAC is organized around the themes related to the operating articles of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa namely human rights, governance, peace and security, economic empowerment, education and health. The GIMAC also monitors emerging issues such as climate change and promotes the leadership of young African women.

The GIMAC network members are leading practitioners in women's rights and development and over the years, the network has registered key successes in contributing to the adoption of the AU gender parity principle, the Maputo Protocol and the SDGEA. The GIMAC recommendations have been reflected in the outcome documents of the AU Summit and the GIMAC has supported advocacy campaigns for a female Chairperson for the African Union Commission, the application of the point's principle 50/50 and the appointment of an African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

GIMAC is also commended for its support provided to flagship projects. In July 2012, the network launched the "Empowering Women in Agriculture" (EWA) initiative in partnership with FAS and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) to promote inclusive livelihoods development and to address the constraints faced by African women in agricultural production. Furthermore, GIMAC creates space for launching innovative ideas and campaigns such as the campaign on safe abortion with the special rapporteur on Human Rights and IPAS; the campaign to End Child Marriage with AU with an appointment of Goodwill Ambassador for Child Marriage of and the African Governments effort to facilitate the realization of property right of women in agriculture through the Kilimanjaro Initiative. As part of *Gender is My Agenda* Campaign, supported the launch of UNAIDS and the African Union joint report entitled *Empower young women and adolescent girls: Fast-Tracking the end of the AIDS epidemic in Africa* meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2016.

In July 2016, GIMAC launched the first civil society monitoring report, the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI), to provide evidence-based monitoring of the progress of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. An instrument that has also informed GIMAC's advocacy agenda and engagement.

During the 24th GIMAC meeting in June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Gender Ministers and representatives of Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) joined the deliberations of the GIMAC and committed to working closely with the GIMAC in successive meetings.

3. Agenda Topics for the 29th GIMAC Pre-summit

Agenda 2063 reaffirms the need for gender sensitive youth empowerment and development strategy to achieve the realization of a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated Africa. In compliance, Member States committed to ending all wars in Africa and gender-based violence by 2020 and to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination, through improved quality of

governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and strengthening the role of women via gender equality and parity in all spheres of political, economic and social life.

In the years 2010, 2015 and 2016 GIMAC participants advocated for stronger commitments by Member States to accelerate measures to advance the status of African women and welcomed African Heads of State and Governments declaration of 2010-2020 as the African Women's Decade, adoption the Declaration on 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Africa's Agenda 2063, and declaration of 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women".

Welcoming the dedication of the year 2017 by the AU Heads of State as the year of youth with a focus on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youth, GIMAC participants identified policy gaps, implementation challenges hindering advancement of young women, opportunities available and presented key recommendations before the AU Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs on the 24 January. Further 29th GIMAC participants welcomed the Ministerial Declaration of the 9th AU Gender pre-summit under the theme: Empowering Young People, Empowering Young Women.

The GIMAC Network also reaffirmed their commitment towards gender equality welcoming the outcome documents of the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 61) held under the theme: economic empowerment of women in the changing world of work".

GIMAC Network recognizes the positive implication and effect of the commitments made toward women's human rights and investment in youth towards harnessing the demographic dividend for economic transformation. Nonetheless, much remains to be done for gender equality to be reality in Africa at all levels and in all spheres. Hence, 30th GIMAC aims to consolidate and build on previous commitments and recommendations made for strengthened policy framework and effective implementation on the road to realization of gender equality.

Taking a women's human rights approach in the context of harnessing the demographic dividend with specific commitment towards investing in young women the 30th GIMAC goal is to initiate the development of a firm continental policy framework that obliges states to invest in young women as part of their obligation to meet women's human for an effective economic transformation and beyond. The particular objective will be addressed to identifying areas of intervention and strategies of action for harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in youth particularly in young women.

The 30th GIMAC consultative meeting will mobilize civil society including the youth especially the young women to share experiences and assess continental, regional and national efforts made for effective realization of gender responsive youth empowerment, development and participation in the following key areas of intervention;

1. Education (access to technology) and Skills Development
2. Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
3. Governance, Peace and Security
4. Youth Health and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
5. Agriculture, Climate Change and the Environment

4. Objective

- Identify, consolidate and produce key policy recommendations focused on strategies of intervention and action points before the AU Heads of States in line with the theme;
- To create a platform where CSOs can share experiences on best practices and lessons learnt and define a civil society strategy for gender inclusive youth agenda;
- To enhance CSOs capacity on how to use the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI) for advocacy engagement at various levels; and
- To provide an opportunity for civil society to network with the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions and United Nations agencies and foster coordinated action.

5. Key Expected Outcomes

- GIMAC recommendations with specific action points to inform the outcome document of the AU Heads of State Assembly;
- Defined civil society strategy for gender inclusive youth empowerment and development in line to the principles of Solemn Declaration;
- GIMAC members capacity on how to use SDI for advocacy enhanced;
- Consolidated partnership between civil society, the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions and United Nations agencies; and
- Call for observance and effective implementation of the gender equality and parity principle on the 03-04 July, 2017 African Union Summit Agenda on Youth.

6. Co-organizing partners

The 30th GIMAC consultative meeting will be organized with GIMAC focal and thematic members who include, but are not limited to Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), African Center for Democracy and Human Rights (ACDHRS), Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Ipas Africa Alliance, Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), Pan-African Women Organization (PAWO), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), the World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA), African Artists Peace Initiative (AAPI), Association des Femmes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest West African Women Association [AFAO-WAWA], and ABANTU for Development.

7. GIMAC Partners and Stakeholders

The AU Commission and AU organs are key partners of the GIMAC. Officials of the AU have often engaged in the Pre-Summit Meetings, chairing sessions and actively participating during the debates. The AU Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) and UN Women are our key partner in ensuring the success of GIMAC meetings. UNECA's African Centre for Gender is an invaluable partner in lending logistical and technical support to the Pre-Summit Consultative meetings

Other key partners and stakeholders that have supported the GIMAC network over the years include United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),

the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Ipas Africa Alliance, Training for Peace, the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Urgent Action Fund-Africa, , the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Nobel Women's Initiative, the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, the World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Government of Norway, the Government of Finland, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).