



## CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE 32<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE GENDER IS MY AGENDA CAMPAIGN (GIMAC) AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY PRE-SUMMIT CONSULTATIVE MEETING

### i. Introduction

In pursuance of AU's decision to make 2018 as African Anti-Corruption Year, GIMAC seeks to design a framework that promotes more systematic, effective, candid, and even-handed engagement with the CSOs and member countries regarding governance vulnerabilities that precipitate corruption and its attendant challenges which worsens inequality and quality of life, corrodes the economy, hurts development, and depletes the trust in institutions. The social costs of corruption in Africa are also deleterious as it deepens poverty and adversely affects good moral values in the society. Africa is perceived as the most corrupt region in the world, and concomitantly also the most underdeveloped and backward region<sup>1</sup>. Thus, given the strong evidence that links weak governance with corruption in Africa, GIMAC's anti-corruption approach will rely on a multi-pronged strategy that promotes not only specific anti-corruption measures but also broader regulatory and institutional reforms, taking into consideration the circumstances of the member states. At the heart of GIMAC's anti-corruption objective is women and youth empowerment and participation, whilst scaling up the fight against corruption on the continent with a view to ensuring a corrupt free, better governed, and economically prosperous continent.

### ii. Background

GIMAC at the January pre-summit titled "**Corruption and Governance: Impact and way out for Women, Children and Youths,**" discussed wide ranging issues on the causal linkage between governance and corruption, which inevitably created a global network of illegal exchanges at administrative, systemic, and international levels. The irony of corruption on nations is that despite the universal appeals to transparency made on governments and private sector; despite the technologies of transparency, such as internet or Wikileaks; and despite the myriad of international anti-corruption programmes, conventions, laws, commissions and projects, corruption (however defined) seems to be more prevalent than ever. GIMAC may therefore begin to understand not only the problems that corruption creates, but also how corruption persists despite calls for continental and global campaigns to 'combat' a phenomenon which remains difficult to define and to measure.

In measuring impacts of corruption on the continent, Afrobarometer stated that nearly 75 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are estimated to have paid a bribe in the past year – some to escape punishment by the police or courts, but many are forced to pay to get access to the basic services that they desperately need, a great number of these population being women<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Transparency International's 2017 Fact Sheet. Sub Saharan Africa is quoted as the worst performing region with a score average of 32% with Southern Sudan and Somalia ranking the worst in the world with 12% and 9% score respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Afrobarometer: People and Corruption- Africa Survey 2015

Women particularly experience physical abuse, sexual extortion or exploitation, and other forms of bribery in this process. In a related development, we correlate the relationship between cross border crimes and corruption. In their transnational scale and spider-web penetration into the most benign areas of society, both corruption and organised crime have become global security issues. The smuggling, illegal migration, arms trafficking, child trafficking, money laundering, illicit drug/diamond trade and other illegal entrepreneurial activities of global scale would be inconceivable without the involvement of corrupt officials at the customs checkpoints, financial agencies, contracting boards or police, any of whom may receive payments for looking the other way. Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index reports that Africa is poor because of the far-reaching effects of corruption. It further stated that, of the ten countries considered most corrupt in the world, six are in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>3</sup>. These revelations inadvertently lead us to asking: despite Africa's loss of billions in dollars to illicit transactions which constitutes a threat of its economy, to what degree is there a national or continental political will to fight corruption in Africa?

While corruption has debilitating and corrosive effects on progress, stability, and development of the continent, it does more damage to the future of education in Africa. Specifically, education shines light on the multiple manifestations of corrupt and unethical practices in education, be they the embezzlement of national education funds in Kenya, the selling of fake diplomas in Niger, teacher absenteeism in Cameroon, or sexual harassment by male lecturers in Nigeria<sup>4</sup>. TI's report states that if not addressed, corruption may lead to the collapse of a country's entire education system, and the waste of scarce public resources. Thus, taking bold steps to prevent the abuse of power, bribery, and secret dealings from corroding the educational experience is particularly important not only to keep children in school but also to help them acquire the skills and knowledge that will enable them to contribute to their country's development.

In addition, a CNN exposé depicting a heart-wrenching abominable international crime ongoing in Libya where serious violation of human rights, the violation of the rights to work, violation of the rights to life, violation of dignity, and violation of the right to be protected against slavery and slave trade have all been perpetrated against African youths fleeing poverty, war, or persecution. As these youth continue to wallow in disappointment and disillusionment, it is expected that the AU and RECs organise an extra-ordinary session to discuss the illegal international crime of slave trade and take decisive action, rather, we see leaders sitting on the fence or merely issuing verbal condemnations. The 5<sup>th</sup> EU-AU summit which was held in Abidjan focused on youth, migration, and terrorism, also could not bring lasting solution to this international crime fuelled by deep corruption. Libya is the biggest jumping-off point for young migrants trying to reach Europe, has become home to a thriving trade in humans. Youths unable to pay exorbitant smuggling fees or swindled by traffickers, some of the world's most desperate people are being held as slaves, tortured while girls are forced into prostitution. The data suggests that 'petty' or 'retail' corruption (when basic public services are sold instead of provided by right) affects poor women and that the currency of corruption is frequently sexualized—women and girls are often asked to pay bribes in the form of sexual favours.

The needs to review gender-based approach to addressing corruption cannot be over-emphasised. Child brides are often robbed of their rights to safety and security, to health and education, and to make their own life choices and decisions,” “Child marriage not only puts a

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<sup>3</sup> Corruption in sub-Saharan Africa: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/corruption-sub-saharan-africa>

<sup>4</sup> Transparency International (2013) Global Corruption Report: Education

stop to girls' hopes and dreams. It also hampers efforts to end poverty and achieve economic growth and equity. Ending this practice is not only the morally right thing to do but also the economically smart thing to do." An important benefit from ending child marriage would be an increase in women's expected earnings in the labour market. Due in large part to the impact of child marriage on education, women who marry as children have, on average, earnings that are nine percent lower than if they had married later. In Nigeria, this equals to \$7.6 billion annually in lost earnings and productivity. Understanding corruption's linkages to gender equality issues and how it impacts women's empowerment is part of the broader process of advancing women's rights and understanding the gender dimensions of democratic governance.

As a follow-up to the 31<sup>st</sup> Civil Society Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting held in January 2018, this mid-year consultative summit seeks to articulate action plans for GIMAC members in view of the new AU reform. This meeting will also afford GIMAC members to hear from the **African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC)** and the **AU Gender Directorate** as they share experience on policies, projects and advocacy that has been embarked upon since the 2018 anti-corruption campaigns began.

## **Justification**

Policy intervention programmes are supposed to produce change. As it is common in all areas of policy formulation and implementation, issues of impact, or of measuring impact should produce result, as far as policies have goals. Development based interventions such as increasing employment, reducing HIV/AIDS, achieving a cleaner environment, reducing crime, preventing corruption- all require a complete set of practices to achieve these goals. Suffice to therefore say that anti-corruption policies are supposed to reduce corruption.

Secondly, unlike other development targets, the entire world has for the first time acknowledged the universality of the problems of corruption and the need to jointly tackle it. This comes with the recognition that fighting corruption is critical to achieving a sustainable future. SDG Goal 16 is about peace, justice, and strong institutions. To achieve this feat, it is recognised that the world must deliver justice, stop illicit financial flows, and end corruption and bribery. Where corruption is assessed as severe, the anti-corruption approach would rely on a multi-pronged strategy that promotes not only specific anti-corruption measures but also broader regulatory and institutional reforms, taking into consideration the circumstances of the member states.

The civil society plays a key role in fighting corruption. As seen in other cases, civil society is seen as an increasingly important agent for promoting good governance such as transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness, and accountability. Since GIMAC launched the first civil society monitoring report, the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI) in 2016, the performances of the Member States of the AUC became measurable, given the benchmark set by the SDI, its data-driven and evidence-based approach to monitoring progress of the MS in the implementation of the Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). Therefore, given GIMAC's capacity and convening power to coordinate high level campaigns, GIMAC will deploy its capacity to assist member states in their fight against corruption by meeting international anti-corruption standards, whilst supporting their own domestic reform efforts, by enhancing their capacity to fight corruption and by helping disseminate successful experiences and techniques. These initiatives represent the acceptance of new norms of anti-corruption

behaviour and the emerging standards as embodied by the AU Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption (AUCPCC), adopted in 2003, and other international agencies such as the Europe Criminal and Civil Law Conventions, the European Union instruments, the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, and the OECD anti-bribery instruments.

**iii. Objectives**

- a. Evaluate the outcome and recommendations of the last GIMAC Consultative meeting
- b. Conduct a review of the current AU Reforms and Impact of Advocacy Engagement of GIMAC with the AU
- c. To have an interpretative understanding and the role of CSOs in the New Gender Strategy of the AU
- d. Develop various Anti-Corruption Campaign Strategies
- e. Critically examine the impact of corruption on education, youth migration and early child marriage
- f. Initiate the promotion and participation of civil society organisations in the anti-corruption efforts, and as anti-corruption watchdog.
- g. To promote the co-operation of public and civil society actors in anti-corruption efforts starting with AUABC.

**iv. The key topics proposed for discussion during the meeting include:**

- a. The AU Reform and the Way forward for GIMAC
- b. GIMAC-AUABC anti-corruption Collaborative Agenda: Approach, Strategies and Update
- c. 'Child marriage' as a form of Corruption: Roadmap to Ending Menace
- d. Using Arts to Fight Corruption: The Required Actions
- e. Impact of Corruption on Africa's Educational Sector
- f. Relationship between Corruption and Youth Migration in Africa
- g. The role of CSOs in the New Gender Strategy: Understanding and Utilising the Engagement Space

**v. Expected Outcomes**

- a. GIMAC effort will promote civic engagement and social accountability (the demand side of anti-corruption) through youth and women's empowerment and the participation of civil society and the media
- b. It will strengthen state/institutional capacities (the supply side of anti-corruption) to prevent and combat corruption (working with line ministries and oversight institutions including parliamentarians);
- c. Expanding the political and normative agenda on anti-corruption to development plans by integrating anti-corruption in service delivery and other sectors (e.g. mitigating corruption risks in health, education, and water sectors);
- d. In accordance to the AU reform, gender and youth engagement is prioritised to raise awareness, strengthen networks and capacities to prevent corruption and institutionalize transparency, accountability and integrity through youth leadership.

**vi. Co-Organizing Partners**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> 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), Rozaria Memorial Trust; 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.