



CONCEPT NOTE

**33rd Civil Society Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on
Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union and Member States**

**African Union Summit Theme:
“Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Towards Durable
Solutions to Forced Displacement”**

**GIMAC Theme:
Towards Gender-Responsive Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement**

3th to 4th February 2019

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

1. Introduction

The African Union Heads of States Assembly has marked the year 2019 with the theme “**Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Towards Durable Solution to Forced Displacement**”. The theme speaks to African Union legal frameworks on forced migration including the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).

Forced displacement in Africa largely due to conflict, natural disasters, human rights violations or political instability has resulted in over 12 million internally displaced persons and an estimated 6.2 million refugees and asylum seekers across the continent. The growing number of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons poses a significant challenge to African states for which there must be durable solutions backed by legal frameworks, policies, structures, partnerships and efforts for prevention and response to the challenges of forced displacement.

The conflict and political instability at the heart of forced displacement also presents a risk for more conflict associated with refugees and internally displaced persons that must be prevented or managed. In cases of prolonged displacement – often due to unresolved push factors such as persisting conflict or insecurity in the home countries- host countries, the specific host communities and the displaced persons face challenges. This increases the burden on hosting states and can affect the nature and scale of assistance leading to reduced material and social support for displaced persons. Within host communities, it can cause growing tensions as competition for limited resources increases, along with environmental degradation and xenophobia if social and cultural conflict triggers are not addressed.

To effectively manage forced migration, it is critical to understand the root causes, specific challenges and consequences as well as the necessary measures and mechanisms for prevention, preparedness and response. In defining durable solutions, it is even more crucial to understand the place of women and girls in the context of African forced displacement and adopt relevant and effective strategies that address their specific priorities and include women, girls, and especially those with disabilities and the elderly.

In view of this, the 33rd session of the GIMAC pre-consultative meeting holds in 3th and 4th February 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme: Towards Gender-Responsive Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement. The meeting aims to identify strategies and interventions that have continental implications to effectively address forced migration in a manner that includes and benefits women and girls.

In preparation for the 2019 AU Gender Pre-summit meeting and the 32nd 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, African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, Regional Economic Communities, United Nations agencies and other civil society entities, to ensure the inclusion of women’s voice and those of the youths in exploring inclusive durable solutions to forced displacement.

The 32nd AU Heads of States and Government Meeting is preceded by the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Permanent Representatives’ Committee (PRC) to be held from 21st to 22nd January 2019 and the 34th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council to take place from 7th to 8th February 2019.

2. Background

The Gender is My Agenda Campaign came to existence 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 Member 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.

As a follow-up to the flagship project of the GIMAC, Empowering Women in Agriculture (EWA) launched in July 2012 in partnership with FAS and the ACBF, the GIMAC also 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 and the African Governments effort to facilitate the realization of property right of women in agriculture through the Kilimanjaro Initiative. The GIMAC also 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.

Since the GIMAC launched the first civil society monitoring report, the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI), in 2016, the performances of the Member States of the AUC have become measurable, given the benchmark set by the SDI, given 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). The SDI has served as an advocacy tool especially for countries that have consistently recorded low performances in the commitment to the SDGEA.

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. Justification

Women and girls who are forcibly displaced by conflict, natural disasters, economic reasons or other causes, face specific threats and diverse forms of gender-based discrimination, violence and human rights violations. Their access to legal protection, safety, gender-responsive assistance, a life of dignity and respect for their rights is often further undermined by factors such as age, disability, previous



marginalized social position among others. While the risk is generally heightened during transit, this does not disappear once in reception centres, refugee camps, settlements or sites of internal displacement. Women and girls often report increased vulnerability and higher instances of personal insecurity, unmet hygiene needs, sexual exploitation, early marriages and limited access to safe quality education at all levels, adequate protection, legal justice for sexual crimes, sexual and reproductive health information and services, livelihood opportunities among other challenges.

Migration policies play a key part in women's experiences of displacement as they determine whether women and girls can safely migrate or access legal protection mechanisms on arrival. They affect the effectiveness of registration and documentation processes, which often leave out young girls and their specific needs, under-serve women –particularly those in urban areas- and focus on the male head of family. In addition, the often-under-funded humanitarian response does not sufficiently address the specific needs and concerns of displaced girls and women such as trauma relief. Nationality laws that discriminate based on gender, further increase the vulnerability of displaced women and their children who remain stateless and do not enjoy equal rights. The integration of refugees and related gender-specific issues in national development plans therefore, has implications for progress in achieving gender equality, social and economic development in a way that benefits both the displaced women, families along with host communities.

Displaced women – often working through informal women's groups- have demonstrated their value as key contributors and drivers of often-durable solutions to the challenges of forced displacement such as improving the effectiveness of aid delivery seeking accountability and ensuring responses address women and girl's needs. It is important that displaced women and girls are meaningfully involved in implementation, monitoring and accountability around any solutions to forced displacement in Africa. This goes along with ensuring that women's groups and organisations receive funding support to continue their work. The move to implement the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (already piloted in Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Zambia) with the aim of promoting refugee inclusion, protection and self-reliance, supporting conditions in home-countries to allow safe and dignified return as well as the shared responsibility for the challenge of displacement, presents a positive platform.

The 33rd session of the GIMAC therefore provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the realities of forcibly displaced women and girls and to define durable gender-responsive solutions to forced displacement for Africa.

4. Objective

- To provide a forum for Africa to identify and articulate key gender-specific issues, challenges, priorities and identify actionable commitments and recommendations related to forced displacement for consideration by Member States and AUC
- To enable CSOs identify and develop a strategic mechanism for effectively engaging, contributing and following-up the policy dialogue and implementation of commitments made by Member States and AUC
- To enhance capacity of CSOs, particularly young women, to conduct regional advocacy on gender-specific issues on the theme of refugees, returnees and the internally displaced
- To explore how to leverage 20 years of UN Security Resolution 1325 and develop recommendations to drive accountability on implementation of the women, peace and security agenda

5. Activities:

Pre-GIMAC Online Conversations with Young Women and Girls

To include more young women and girls in the discussions to be held during GIMAC and in defining solutions to forced displacement, with a specific focus on the issue of child marriage.

Pre-GIMAC Training on Advocacy, Understanding and Influencing the African Union on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced People

1-day training targeting 40 participants nominated by GIMAC members and partners, to strengthen their understanding of and capacity to influence the African Union on issues of forced displacement in the specific countries and at regional level.

The training seeks to;

- Increase understanding of relevant regional frameworks, the African Union, its structures and processes
- Strengthen advocacy skills and identify opportunities for applying acquired knowledge and skills to influence the African Union

33rd GIMAC Pre-Summit Meeting

- The key topics proposed for discussion during the meeting include:

1. Governance, Peace and Security

- Early Warning and Early Response for Prevention of Crises and Forced Displacement
- Integration and Return of Refugees and IDPs: registration and documentation processes, discriminatory laws, and inclusion in national development frameworks
- Gender-responsive Humanitarian Response: addressing human security needs of IDPs and refugees including physical, psychosocial, legal, health etc;
- Displaced Women's Contributions to Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement and Seeking Accountability for Non-implementation of Policy Commitments

2. Education

- Access to Skills Training for Integration or Return and Reintegration through TVET
- Hindrances in the reintegration of women and girls to education opportunities in conflict situations
- Innovative approaches in restoring education infrastructure and school environment in emergency situations
- Alternative approaches in enhancing delivery or learning outcomes among survivors of conflict situations and natural disasters

3. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

- Child Marriage and Forced Displacement
- Access to Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Information and Services
- Protection and Sexual Violence: Implementation of Legislative and Policy Obligations

4. Employment, Entrepreneurship

- Access to Work and Livelihood Opportunities
- Building Resilience and Self Sufficiency

5. Media and the Arts

- Public Information and Awareness for Integration and Peaceful Coexistence

6. Environmental Protection in host communities



Other activities

- An official signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GIMAC and Action Aid International
- African Woman Pioneer Award Ceremony
- The launching of the GIMAC Handbook

Post-33GIMAC Pre-Summit

- **EWA High Level Breakfast Meeting with Women and Girls living in Rural Areas** to be held on 9th February 2019.
The meeting will bring together partners, rural women and other stakeholders to discuss progress made so far and follow up actions to ensure the empowerment of women in the agricultural sector.
- **‘Towards 20 Years of Women, Peace and Security’ Consultation Meeting** tentatively scheduled 6th February 2019 [TBC]
The meeting will reflect on implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Africa, looking at challenges and lessons learned, to leverage the 20th anniversary of the resolution for accountability on implementing the WPS agenda with its transformative intent. Participants will share experiences and learning, develop recommendations to move the WPS agenda forward and identify key mobilizing opportunities for joint action in 2019 and 2020.
- **The Girls Advocacy Alliance GIMAC CSOs Training (Cocktail)** on “*Enhancing African CSOs capacity to monitor the status reporting and implementation of the Maputo Protocol among AU Members states*” tentatively scheduled for the evening of 2nd February 2019
The purpose of the cocktail event is to train CSOs on the production of Maputo Protocol reporting cards on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Economic Exclusion (EE) of women and girls and benchmark CSOs to capacities to use regional monitoring and accountability mechanisms to hold their governments accountable to the fulfillment of the Maputo Protocol. The meeting will also create a platform for CSOs to showcase their best practices in pushing for women and rights fulfillment in their countries.

6. Expected Key Outcomes

1. GIMAC recommendations with specific action points to inform the outcome document of the AU Heads of States Assembly;
2. GIMAC members and partners’ capacity for advocacy on forced displacement enhanced

7. Co-organizing partners

The 33rd GIMAC consultative meeting will be organized with GIMAC focal and thematic members who include, but are not limited to Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Isis-Women’s International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), African Artists Peace Initiative (AAPI), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), African Center for Democracy and Human Rights (ACDHRS), IPAS Africa Alliance, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA), Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT), World Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), African Youth Initiative (AYI), Institute for Social Transformation (ISF), Pan-African Women



Organization (PAWO) and Association des Femmes de l' 'Afrique de l' Ouest West African Women Association [AFAO-WAWA].

8. Member Organizations

33GIMAC will mobilize network members operating in Africa who include, but are not limited to AWORD; ABANTU for Development; Akina Mama Wa Africa; ANSEDI; CAFOB ; Center For Human Rights (CHR) ; Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) ; Equality Now; FEMNET; International Federation of Woman Lawyers (FIDA); MARWOPNET; Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI); Pan African Movement; ProFemmes, SSWC; Tunisian Mothers Association (ATM); Association Congolaise de Lutte contre les Violense faites aux Femmes (ACOLVF); Advocacy for Women Africa (AWA); Foundation for Development Community (FDC); WREPA, ROOTS, SWOFON, Fondation Internationale de la Femme Africaine pour le Developpement; Pro-Femmes / Twese Hamwe; Girls Not Brides; SOFEPADI/Bunia. Le Centre KARIBUNI WA MAMA; Women International League for Peace and Freedom; COCAFEM/GL; Jeunesse Africaine pour le Développement (JADE); Women's Rights and Empowerment Partnership in Kenya; African Women's Rights Caucus; Pan African Centre for Social Development and Accountability; Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa; Planate Femmes pour la Paix et la Solidarité; Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises; Borno Women; Landesa Rural Development Institute; ARUDA South Sudan; Women's Legal Resources Centre (WOLREC); Mouvement des femmes et filles pour la paix et la sécurité au Burundi; Campiagn for Female Education (CAMFED); Connected Development; Sauver Madagascar'; Aliab Rural Development Agency; alliance citoyenne pour la Democratie et le developpement; African Youth and Adolescents Network on Population and Development (AfriYAN); African Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC); Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation; Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA); Femmes Leadership et Développement Durable (AFLED); Gender Centre for Empowering Development (GenCED); Global Partnership Education (GPE); Morrocan Federation for Business and Proffessional Women; Plateforme des Femmes du G5 Sahel; SPECTRA Rwanda; Women Council of Libya and Business Council of Libya.

9. GIMAC Key Partners

The network has built relationship over the years with partners such as, AU Commission and AU organs and programs; AU Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD); UN Women; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA); New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). In addition, the platform has signed Memoranda of Understanding with strategic partners interested in the Gender Agenda.

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) UN Women, Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security and African Union Goodwill Ambassador on Ending Child Marriages 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), Training for Peace, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Nobel Women's Initiative, the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, 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) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

10. GIMAC Strategic Partners

The platform works with different strategic partners interested in the gender agenda and continues to invite more partners in the multiple areas to provide technical expertise, resources, and networking opportunities.

To date GIMAC has signed a Memoranda of Understanding with Action Aid International. The two parties agree to cooperate in supporting the full participation, empowerment and enhanced leadership role of women and young girls, including those living in the rural areas, in decision-making processes at all levels and in all sectors of governance in line with the eight thematic areas of GIMAC towards guaranteeing full gender equality in all spheres of life.

Our on-going partnership with Oxfam Pan Africa Programme includes financial and technical support during the GIMAC Pre-Summit meetings and currently we are moving towards strengthening the partnership.

The platform is also exploring a partnership with MSD for Mothers on the issue of reducing maternal mortality across Africa.

