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**GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON THE AU SOLEMN  
DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY  
IN AFRICA**

*ADOPTED AT*

**THE FIRST AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF  
MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN AND GENDER**

**Dakar, Senegal  
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**GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON THE AU SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER  
EQUALITY IN AFRICA**

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SD), which was adopted by The Heads of State and Government of Member States of the African Union during the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2004, is a product of a broad-based and highly consultative process and concerted efforts of all stakeholders working on gender and development, including members of the civil society.

In operative paragraph 12 of the Solemn Declaration, the Heads of States and Government commit themselves to report annually on progress made in gender mainstreaming and to support and champion all issues raised in the Declaration, both at the national and regional levels, and to regularly provide each other with updates on progress made during Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly.

These Guidelines have been developed to assist in reporting by AU Member States, in accordance with the provision of operative paragraph 12 of the Declaration. Consideration has been given to the fact that there are a number of existing formats for reporting on women's rights at the international level. Good practices have been drawn from these formats and used in the Guidelines.

Firstly, according to operative paragraph 12 of the Solemn Declaration, the reporting is done by Heads of State and Governments. Their critical intervention in the implementation of the SD is at **policy level**, and this should form the basis of their reports. Therefore, there has to be indication of policy measures taken to address issues raised in the SD.

Narrative reports will be prepared. It is important that such report be kept short and as simple as possible while still reflecting the essence of commitment to gender equality, as stated in of the Solemn Declaration.

Secondly, the Heads of State and Government have committed themselves to providing each other with updates on progress made at their Ordinary Sessions. The updates will be done on tables/ matrix, summarizing the narrative reports and capturing issues and data disaggregated by sex. The information will be shared amongst Heads of States during the Ordinary Sessions.

The report will be sent to the Chairperson of the AUC for transmission to the Summit of Heads of State.

The very **first reports** should give the background of mechanisms put in place to support the empowerment of women and promote women's rights. This should include legislative and administrative mechanisms as well as national gender machineries both within government and civil society.

The report should also provide information on progress made as well as problems and constraints encountered in the implementation of the SD. Through sharing such information, countries will learn from others and use good practices to improve on their situations.

**Subsequent reports** should be based on progress made since the last report. They should also capture data disaggregated by sex.

Because the Solemn Declaration is a product of the efforts of both government and civil society, there will be a mechanism in place for civil society to comment on the reports.

## **B. GENERAL FRAMEWORK**

Gender Equality in Africa is supported by the principle of gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as other existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women's rights.

These include:

- The Dakar Platform for Action (1994),
- The Beijing Platform for Action (1995),
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW - 1979),
- The African Plan of Action to Accelerate the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action for the Advancement of Women (1999);
- The Outcome Document of the Twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000);
- UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security;
- The African Charter on Human and People's Rights
- The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on Violence Against Women and Children
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003);
- The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004);
- The Outcome of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference of Women as Africa's Common Position in relation to the Beijing + 10 Review Process, (2004);
- The Beijing +10 Outcome Document (2005).

## **C. FORMAT FOR THE INITIAL REPORT**

### **1. Introduction**

In its introduction, the report should:

- include brief but concise information on the constitutional, legal and administrative framework as well as practical measures taken to ensure effective implementation of instruments and policies that promote women's empowerment and the protection of women's rights and also support gender equality;
- include information about national institutions or machineries that exercise responsibility in the implementation of the principle of the gender equality and women's empowerment and give examples of their activities in this respect.

## **2. Information on substantive operative paragraphs:1;2;3;4;5;6;7;8;and 9**

The report should provide information on each of the above operative paragraphs of the SD and explain:

- the factual and practical situation regarding issues outlined in a particular article and provide examples where possible;
- measures taken to implement each operative paragraph; demonstrate the progress made the that regard;
- any constraints, restrictions or limitations, even of a temporary nature, imposed by law, practice or tradition, or any other manner, the nature, and extent of, and reasons for every such factor and difficulty, if any such exist; and should give details of the steps being taken to overcome them.

The report should include sufficient data and statistics disaggregated by sex, relevant to each operative paragraph, to enable it to assess progress in the implementation of the Solemn Declaration

## **3. Annexes to the report**

The report should, where possible, contain sufficient quotations from summaries of the relevant principal, constitutional, legislative and other texts, relevant to the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

## **D. SUBSEQUENT REPORTS**

These reports should:

- Be structured so as to follow the substantive operative paragraphs of the Solemn Declaration. (see 2. above)
- Focus on the period between previous report and the current ones.
- Mention fundamental changes that may have occurred affecting the implementation of the Solemn Declaration after the last report.
- Highlight any remaining obstacle to the implementation of the Solemn Declaration.
- If there is nothing new to report under any article, it should be so stated

## E. THE FORMAT OF THE REPORT

- The report should be submitted in one of the AU official languages, in hard and electronic form.
- Reports should be brief but as concise as possible.
- The length of the report should not be more than 15 pages.
- The documents should be on A4-sized paper and presented in single-spaced format
- The document should be printed on one side of each sheet of paper so as to allow for reproduction by photo-offset.

## THE MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISM

There will be two reporting cycles:

- a) The first reporting cycle is the **initial reporting which will be submitted before the end of June 2006** to the Office of the Chairperson; for processing and for the reporting to be done at the Assembly of Heads of States and Government in January 2007.
- b) For the second reporting cycle, starting from **January 2008**, Member States will be required to submit their reports once every four years. At least 13 Member States will submit their reports for consideration at the Summit of the Ordinary Session of Heads of State that year. **Subsequently, another 13 countries will submit their report in January 2009, January 2010, January 2011, respectively.**

The Office of the Chairperson of the African Union will arrange that reporting be done on rotational basis. The list of countries due for reporting will be drawn and made available to Member States. This list will also be posted on the website of the AU for African civil society to access

The Africa Union Women's Committee (AUWC) will be established and will report to the Chairperson of the AUC. One of its functions will be to provide independent advice on how to accelerate progress in implementation of the SD. The reports will be availed to the AUWC for consideration. These reports will also be made available to the civil society organizations from the reporting country, and will be posted on the AU website.

**The reporting cycle for the initial reports-** The reports will be submitted to the Chairperson of the Commission before the **30<sup>th</sup> of June 2006**. Civil society organizations (CSOs) will be given the opportunity to comment on the reports and to send their comments to the Women, Gender and Development Directorate by **30<sup>th</sup> of August 2006**. The comments will be forwarded to the AUWC for consideration. After considering both the reports and the comments from CSOs, the AUWC will make concluding comments and recommendations and submit these to the Chairperson of the Commission not later than **30<sup>th</sup> September 2006**. The Chairperson may use the concluding comments and recommendations in his report in **January 2007**.

**The reporting cycle for subsequent reports-** Member States will submit their reports by **28 February of the year**. Civil society organizations will be given the opportunity to comment on the reports and their comments sent to the WGDD by **30<sup>th</sup> of March** of the same year. The comments will be forwarded to the AUWC for consideration. After considering both the reports and the comments from civil society organizations, the AUWC will make concluding comments and recommendations and submit these to the Chairperson of the Commission not later than **30<sup>th</sup> of April** of the same year. The Chairperson may use the concluding comments and recommendations in his report in **July** of the same year.

The Committee will also make General Recommendations on the emerging issues, which are in line with the Solemn Declaration but are not covered by the present Declaration. The Chairperson in his report may bring such general recommendations to the attention of the Assembly. This system will ensure that the Solemn Declaration is updated regularly and captures the emerging issues as well.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission will make sure that gender issues are identified for discussion/debate by the Heads of State at each reporting session on the SD. This will be captured in the Chairperson's report, for consideration by the Heads of State, at each annual Summit. It is envisaged that such discussions/debates will strengthen the commitments of the Heads of State to implement the Solemn Declaration.

**This cycle may change due to changes in the AU work plan. Such changes will be brought to the attention of Member States and Civil Society.**