

**THEMATIC**

**FOCAL**

**POINTS:**

- ACCORD
- ACDHRS
- ALF
- ANCEFA
- AWDF
- EBWA
- FAS
- FAWE
- ISIS-WICCE
- IPAS
- SAHARA
- SWAA
- WILDAF

**REGIONAL FOCAL**

**POINTS:**

- ABANTU
- ACOLVF
- FDC
- OTM
- WAWA

**OBSERVERS:**

- Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe

**COORDINATOR:**

- FEMMES AFRICA
- SOLIDARITE (FAS)

**CONTACT:**

**Regional Office**  
 Immeuble Soumex  
 Mamelles, Almadies  
 1<sup>er</sup> étage  
 B.P 45077 Dakar  
 Fann - Dakar  
 SENEGAL  
 Tel: +221 33 869 8106  
 Fax: +221 33 860 2047  
 Email:  
 communicationdk@fasngo.org  
 acommunicationdk@fasngo.org

# DRAFT Concept note

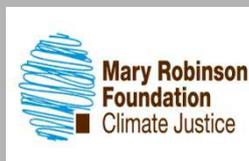
## 20<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU



*10-11 July 2012  
 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*



*In partnership with:*



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# Concept note

## 20th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU

### 1. Introduction

The 19<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from the **15 – 16 July 2012** will be reflecting on the theme of ‘Boosting Intra-African Trade’. One of the outcomes of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government that was held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, was the decision to focus on one theme for each year. Therefore, the 19<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session will continue to reflect on the same theme as the 18<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session that was held in Addis Ababa in January 2012. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting, the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) members reflected on the obstacles to boosting intra-African trade. This meeting noted that while the infrastructural obstacles are already known and analysed, issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment, violence against women, climate change, the challenges facing women and marginalised groups in area of food, fuel, and finances for women, and the unresolved conflict situations on the African continent have not received dedicated attention. These challenges need to be addressed so that sustainable solutions are sought in order to realise fruitful discussions and move towards sustainable engagement on intra African trade.

The 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Pre-Summit meeting focused on the vital issues that must be considered whenever any discussion of intra African trade takes place. It was emphasised that for future development and continental integration to be effective, issues concerning gender equality and women’s empowerment, challenges of climate change as well as food, fuel and finance matters, conflict situations on the continent and the violence in women’s lives, both at home and in public space ought to be collectively reflected upon and suggested solutions incorporated into the practices, procedures and institutions to which Member States and AU bodies are committed. The 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union will continue to reflect on these critical issues, and it will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 10 – 11 July 2012.

### 2. Background

Since the 2004 adoption of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women’s Effective Participation in the African Union, the GIMAC members have been active in tracking the implementation of these two important declarations for the enhancement of women’s human rights at the national and continental levels. Therefore, GIMAC consultations have been held biannually on the margins of AU Summits to monitor the implementation of and reporting on the two commitments, as well as link Summit themes to these two commitments and examine other cross cutting issues in order to advocate for meaningful gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment, thus contributing towards equality, development and peace on the African continent.

Since the adoption of the Gender Parity Principle and the SGDEA, the African Union (AU) has made significant progress in gender mainstreaming and moving forward policies and processes that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. However, a lot still needs to be done to move the gender agenda forward, and the GIMAC members as well as other gender advocates must remain vigilant as they monitor the national implementation and reporting of member states on the instruments adopted at the AU level. In spite of the declarations and policies that have

moved forward the gender agenda, much work still remains to be done to achieve practical and meaningful women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming at the African Union level and in the Member States.

It is therefore crucial that civil society organizations (CSOs) continue to hold governments accountable with respect to their commitment to accelerate the implementation of the SDGEA and gender mainstreaming in Africa. Eight years after the adoption of the SDGEA, it has been observed that there are member states that do not report regularly on its implementation at the national level, and even in those states that report, a lot still remains to be done to make gender equality and women's empowerment part of the regular parlance in these countries.

This calls for a regular assessment of the tools and methods developed for monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that they have the capacity to address any emerging issues. There is a need to create opportunities to facilitate dialogue between the AU and CSOs and to lobby for the constant review of the strategies for gender mainstreaming within the AU and its organs and programmes, as well as those of member states. The biannual AU Summits provide such opportunities and the mission of GIMAC is to ensure that they are used effectively.

The biannual GIMAC consultations are also opportunities for the network members to ensure the sharing of knowledge and competence on the cross cutting issues and other themes relevant to the Summit theme in order to strengthen the capacities of women activists in Africa and reinforce their voices. The reinforcement will enable women to effectively support their governments on national and continent-wide commitments.

In addition, Femmes Africa Solidarité and other GIMAC members will hold parallel events to take advantage of the location and the high level representatives from the different countries.

### 3. Objectives

**The overall objective of the 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC consultative meeting is to strengthen the gender mainstreaming agenda in the debates at the African Union level, so that the ongoing women's struggles at the social, economic and political front can be integrated in these debates and the advocacy for women's empowerment can be strengthened at the African Union as well as the national level.**

The meeting will seek to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To provide an opportunity for civil society organizations in Africa to come together, develop a common agenda, and advocate to governments and the African Union for the acceleration of gender equality and women's empowerment at the African Union and national level to enable women to participate effectively in the efforts to boost intra-African trade;
- To foster the partnership between different stakeholders and strengthen the commitment to move forward the effective implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa;
- To monitor and evaluate the progress made in gender mainstreaming for effective integration of women in intra African economic cooperation, governance, peace and security, and climate change issues;
- To raise awareness among women's grassroots organizations at the national, sub-regional and regional level of the latest developments in the area of women and the food, fuel and finance crises.
- To review the progress made in the AU African Women's Decade theme of "Agriculture and Food Security."

#### 4. Participants

Participants will be drawn from the 55 civil society organizations that form the GIMAC network, as well as individuals and organisations interested in the gender dimensions of the Summit theme. The meeting will bring together the focal points of the Campaign and other participating organizations to discuss the changing environment at the regional and international level and the network's initiatives as CSOs advocating for effective gender parity policies and practice, especially with regards to regional integration, climate change, the 3F crises and issues relating to women, peace and security.

#### 5. Themes of the 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Pre-Summit

- **Regional Economic Integration and Intra-African Trade**

The African Union (AU) has brought into focus the issue of regional integration by having the 2012 Summit theme as **“Boosting Intra-African Trade”**. Women constitute 50% of the continent's population and have for decades contributed to intra African trade through informal cross-border trade, which, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), is the main source of job creation in Africa, providing between 25 and 70 per cent of total employment in most countries.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC in January 2012, it was noted that women needed to be fully integrated in the economy in order to participate fully in intra African trade. Some of the factors that constrain women's ability to participate in the economy included:

- Women's limited access to land, credit, and capital;
- Obscurantist practices that prevent women from inheriting land; and
- Limited access to information and technology, leading to poor access to markets.

It was also observed that as African women participate in cross-border trade, they are harassed by law enforcement agencies, the majority of whom are men, and forced to pay bribes. Therefore, it was noted that deliberate actions were necessary to ensure a fair integration of women in the economy in order to boost trade. These included the need for policy frameworks that would go beyond micro finance and improve women's access to resources, land ownership, credit, technology, and market information. The need to build women's skills and equip them to strengthen their businesses was also emphasized. Above all, there was the need to have a “Charter of Traders' Rights” to protect women from harassment as they crossed borders. These were built in the recommendations to the Heads of State Summit.

The 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC will host a panel that will build upon the outcomes of the 19<sup>th</sup> Consultative meeting and examine the role of grassroots women in cross border trade. In so doing, discuss ways in which their capacities can be enhanced and their businesses scaled up so that they can participate more effectively in intra African trade.

- **Gender, Agriculture, Climate Change, and the Food, Fuel and Finance Crises in Africa**

African women's involvement in agriculture is well known and the challenges they face arising from the lack of access to and ownership of land have been discussed over the years. In addition, women's participation in agriculture is badly impacted by the negative effects of climate change. In the past, the GIMAC has partnered with the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice to examine the gendered impacts of climate change and make recommendations to the African Union, and with the Government of South Africa in the preparatory meetings leading to the UN

Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20). In December 2011, Femmes Africa Solidarité held a conference on the 3Fs and their impact on women, peace and security, and it was noted at this conference that climate change was part of the causes of the food, fuel and finance crises on the African continent. The FAS General Assembly then recommended that FAS should strengthen the advocacy on women's effective involvement in agriculture. FAS then reported on these issues during the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC.

The escalation of food prices and shortages continues unabated in Africa. Because agriculture is extremely vulnerable to climate change, it has been severely disadvantaged in the past years. For Africa this has meant reduced income for African governments, as the agriculture sector is a major contributor to the current economies of most African countries and decreased production of small rural farmers, who are predominantly women. Decreased production by small rural farmers has meant that countries no longer produce sufficient quantities of the food needed to sustain the populations.<sup>1</sup>

The African continent is rich in mineral and natural resources. However, despite its abundant resources, Africa suffers from a natural resources trap which explains why the continent has been severely hit by the current fuel crisis. Indeed, the African continent is over-reliant on fuel. Traditional fuels account for over 60% of total energy consumption throughout sub-Saharan Africa and in certain regions, such as Burundi and Burkina Faso, the figure is as high as 90%.<sup>2</sup> Once natural resources dry up, an external dependency is generated which puts increased pressure on governments that are becoming more vulnerable to global price fluctuations. As fuel prices have increased, availability to food supplies has also been undermined, worsening the food crisis already in existence.

The crisis situation in Africa was discussed during the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC, and it was observed to have been exacerbated by climate change issues and the occurrence of the global financial crisis, which has converged with the food and fuel crises. This has translated into reduced income for African governments through slower growth, fewer imports of capital goods, reduced capacity to repay national debts and overall slower progress towards achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In particular, targets for MDG 3 on gender equality have been undermined.<sup>3</sup> As western countries - the hub of this external support to women - have been greatly affected by the economic crisis, they are not in a position to prioritize women's political representation in Africa.

The panel on Climate Change and the 3Fs and their impact on women during the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC also emphasized the vulnerability of Africa to climate change, and noted the gendered impacts of this change. The panel also revealed the fact that the African continent was already under pressure from climate stresses. Unfortunately, the research on climate change has not been mainstreamed according to gender. The need for gender sensitive government regulations on climate change was emphasized.

It was also noted that in spite of the highest number of women Ministers of the Environment in Africa, this did not translate into gender sensitive policies on the environment and climate change issues. Among the recommendations made was one on the need to ensure that women and the youth participated in all aspects of climate change negotiations in order to ensure all-inclusive sustainable development. The need to harness Africa's opportunities at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) was emphasized.

Another recommendation made at the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Consultative meeting was the need to improve women's access to resources, credit and other financial services, technology and other market information. It was also recommended that opportunities should be created for women to own land and access training in new farming techniques to increase crop productivity and meet new challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Climate change impact on agriculture and costs of adaptation', food policy report by the International Food Policy Research Institute, 2009

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> 'The Global crisis (food, fuel and finance) and its impact on African women', background paper prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa and Femmes Africa Solidarité 2009.

The 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC will build on the recommendations made in January 2012 at the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC and at the 18<sup>th</sup> AU Summit to strengthen the priorities for grassroots women and youth on climate change, agriculture, and the food, fuel and finance issues. The GIMAC will also receive a report from the Rio +20 conference and consider its relevance to the African situation. There will be an examination of the opportunities of women for more effective participation in climate change issues and agriculture, including access to finances and relevant capacity building for better results. Strong recommendations will be made to forward to Ministers and Heads of State.

A high-level side event will be organised immediately after the 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC and it will focus on Women and Agriculture. Heads of State and members of the private sector will be invited to attend. A high level preparatory delegation has been selected to travel to the different countries to brief members of the private sector on the initiative and invite them buy into it. The heads of State who will attend will receive the recommendations from the 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC consultative meeting.

- **Women Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325 & 1820)**

Peace and security are important cornerstones for all the development activities on the continent of Africa. The concept of human security has widened the way security is regarded and moved the emphasis from national security and the need to have secure borders to the importance of freedom from fear and freedom from want. In addition, a gender sensitive view of peace emphasises the need for women to feel safe inside their homes with their most intimate partners, as well as in public spaces.

Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent UN Resolutions, women have been actively participating in the development of National Action Plans and Regional Action Plans for their implementation. The Great Lakes Region and the Mano River Union are examples of good practice in this respect.

The issue of violence against women (VAW) was a key agenda item during the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC in January 2012. VAW spans across borders and exists in various forms, such as physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological, with debilitating effects on women and girls. Although it can manifest in any situation, at any time, VAW is exacerbated by conflict and post-conflict situations.

A panel at the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC examined the different types of violence against women, in private and public spheres, and in “peace” times and conflict situations. Militarism and negative forms of masculinity were specifically identifies as causes of violence against women. Violence against women was reported as a major deterrent to intra African trade as women were constantly violated as they tried to participate in this trade.

There was also a presentation on what the AU is doing to mitigate women’s vulnerability, including the work of the AU Panel of the Wise on women and children in armed conflict in Africa.

A key recommendation of the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC was the need to develop early warning, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to eliminate violence against women and girls, and end militarization as well as the proliferation of small arms in order to create a stable enabling environment for intra-African trade.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC, Isis-WICCE, a member of the GIMAC’s Peace and Security Cluster, will lead the Violence Against Women theme, and host a panel on ***Peace, Empowerment, Accountability and Reclaiming***, during which women from Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Liberia, South Sudan and Uganda, will present findings from the work they have been doing in their countries in the past year. The aim of the presentations is to strengthen the capacity of women to inform and influence the policy discourse and practice to effectively respond to the strategic needs of female survivors of sexual violence, and to harness a sustained and collective engagement for the protection, participation and rehabilitation of women war survivors of SGBV.

The 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC will build on the experiences of the network members and participant experts to share and assess current areas of concern and the initiatives taken at the national, regional and international level to fight VAW and the impunity for crimes of a sexual nature. This will be the opportunity to formulate strong recommendations to the African Union, which will be taken further at the AU Summit and future Peace and Security Council's Livingstone Formula convenings on Women and Children in Armed Conflicts.

In addition, the 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC will host a panel on UNSCR 1325 and the progress of the National Action Plans.

- **Review of the implementation of the SDGEA**

Member States of the AU marked a new era in the history of the gender agenda in Africa through the adoption, at the Addis Ababa Summit in 2004, of the SDGEA and the Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union, calling for the full promotion and protection of women's rights at all levels.

The evaluation of the priority thematic areas identified in the SDGEA demonstrates that some progress has been made, but a lot remains to be done in reporting by States, and ensuring that a more concerted effort was made to ensure meaningful gender equality and women's empowerment at the national level where it makes the most difference to women. In fact, it was observed at the 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC that only 34% of the member states reported on their progress of implementing the SDGEA as required by the African Union.

One of the recommendations was that the GIMAC regional focal points needed to continue producing shadow reports monitoring the progress of the SDGEA implementation. More progress needed to be seen in gender mainstreaming at the national level as this was a good indicator of good governance, development and respect for the human rights of all.

The 19<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Consultative meeting observed the need to strengthen the GIMAC network by putting in place a steering committee to facilitate the work of the network. There was also a need to give the network a tool for measuring the impact of the SDGEA. The development of an INDEX was recommended. The index could be used by the Africa Gender Forum Award (AGFA), a project of GIMAC, to monitor the achievements made by African leaders in mainstreaming gender in national policies.

The same meeting also noted the need to develop a knowledge management strategy to improve the sharing of GIMAC practices to the public. The UNECA committed to assisting the GIMAC with the development of an Index.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Pre-Summit Consultative meeting, there will be a panel to report on the development of an Index. FAS will also introduce its Knowledge Management Strategy to the GIMAC to get their views on how the tool could be useful for the campaign. It will be an opportunity for the women's network to consider these new tools in order to make the campaign more effective in future.

## **6. Activities**

The 20<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Consultation meeting will have the following specific activities:

- A two-day Pre-Summit Consultation Meeting with presentations from high-level panellists and group discussions;
- Dissemination of information on the SDGEA and networking opportunities;
- Advocacy activities around the AU Heads of State and Government Summit;

- Provision of a space for networking and partnership with all the stakeholders involved in the campaign and the Meeting;
- A media campaign including the holding of a press conference.

## **7. Expected Outcomes**

The key expected outcomes of this meeting are the following:

- Refined new advocacy strategies for effective gender parity policies and practice, in line with the changing environment at the regional and international level.
- A synthesis of key issues, strengths, and weaknesses in the implementation of the SDGEA, the Protocol on the Rights of Women and the UNSCR 1325, and formulation of clear recommendations to the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the AU Commissioners and Member States.
- Strong recommendations to inform gender-sensitive policy formulation with regards to climate change, economic development and women, peace and security issues.
- A strengthened GIMAC partnership and concrete next steps for future work.
- Renewed commitments and follow up among civil society focal points on thematic issues related to violence against women, women in conflict, climate change and economic empowerment.
- An empowered vanguard of civil society organizations that is able to link the issues of climate change, violence against women and economic justice in the campaign for gender equality as the move towards strengthened intra Africa trade continues.
- Gender sensitive and measurable recommendations on a holistic approach to addressing the issues of climate justice, food and financial security, peace and human security, without which intra African trade cannot be successful.
- National level commitments on tackling climate change and the food, fuel and finance crises as well as promoting gender mainstreaming.
- Enhanced regional balance, strengthened relationships and collaboration between Member States and CSOs at the regional and international levels particularly with the African Union Commission and the UN system.