



PRESS RELEASE

25th GIMAC Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender in the African Union and Member States

Stakeholders Consultation under the theme of the 2015 AU Summit “Year of Women’s Empowerment and the Development Towards Africa Agenda 2063”

20-23 January 2015

The media is invited to a **press conference** on 23 January 2015 from 2 pm-3 pm at the African Union New Conference Center Mandela Hall chaired by H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union with H.E. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security of the AUC Chairperson; Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Special Envoy on Gender of the African Bank of Development; Ms. Letty Chinawa, UN Women Representative to the AU and ECA; Mr. Lebogang Motlana, UNDP Director of Regional Service Centre for Africa, and Dr. Thelma Awori, Representative of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) network.

Addis Ababa, 23 January 2015 – Today, Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs of the African Union member states adopted a Communiqué towards the realization of women’s empowerment in the framework of the AU Agenda 2063. The communiqué is a result of a joint Stakeholders’ Consultation of Gender Ministers from across Africa, the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) members, UN Women, UNDP and UNECA, which is hosted by the African Union Commission, in Addis Ababa from 20-23 January 2015 to deliberate on the year 2015 as the “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063.” The Consultation also marks the 25th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting of the GIMAC on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in the African Union and Member States.

The Stakeholders Consultation is organized as a follow-up on one of the key decisions taken at the 24th GIMAC Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in the African Union and Member States held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in June 2014, to institutionalize Pre-AU Summit consultations between the AUC, GIMAC, Gender Ministers and other partners.

The discussions and final Communiqué built on the recommendations adopted by the members of the GIMAC Campaign and aimed at analyzing the implementation of current global and continental frameworks and mechanisms, such as the Africa’s Agenda 2063, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the African Women’s Decade, (2010-2020) the post-2015 agenda and UN Security Council resolution 1325, and to strategize on the AU 2015 Year of Women to outline transformative and practical solutions that are critical to the advancement of the women’s agenda.

In attendance at the Stakeholders Consultation were more than twenty Ministers of Gender and their representatives, 170 women and youth from across Africa and the Diaspora, gender focal points of the African Union Commission and Regional and Economic Communities.

Today’s discussions included interventions by H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, AUC Chairperson, who raised that “women issues should be completely and fully integrated in the AUC ten year plan of action

for the implementation of Agenda 2063” and that “existing and emerging threats, which includes health pandemics, like HIV and Ebola and terrorism, threaten the advancement of the gender agenda and the continent’s development.”

The Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Bineta Diop commended the leadership of the AUC Chairperson for designating 2015 as the Year of Women’s Empowerment. She stressed the great progress made by the African Union in recognizing the importance of women’s contributions to Africa’s development and in putting in place the necessary legal frameworks for women’s empowerment and peace and security. “Achieving our goal of *Silencing the guns by 2020*, requires a complete paradigm shift.” She adds “We need to think out the box, we need to innovate, to build solidarity chains among women, reach out to traditional leaders, religious leaders, involve our men and educate our boys”.

Dr Thelma Awori, representing the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), presented the 25th GIMAC recommendations to the AUC Chairperson and Ministers in charge of Gender and Women’s Affairs. She noted that “2015, the year of women’s empowerment, should be seized as an opportunity to focus on the implementation of practical solutions that will provide measurable results for women’s empowerment.” These include the Solemn Declaration Index initiated by the GIMAC to monitor progress against commitments made by African Heads of States and Government to implement the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. Another recommendation concerned the need of a mindset change. “Culture is too often perceived as a constraint to women’s empowerment when in fact it should be considered as a driving force for change.”

The Gender is my agenda Campaign (GIMAC) is deeply appreciative of the opportunity offered by the African Union to contribute to defining the strategy around the implementation of Agenda 2063. Awori said on behalf of GIMAC: “We are delighted and committed to be part of this process and to support the realization of the vision of the Africa we want in 50 years.” She also said “The adopted Communiqué reflects most of our recommendations and we are confident that our collaboration with the AUC, the UN and other civil society organizations involved in the empowerment of women and promotion of gender equality, will bear the fruits we expect for the benefit of all.”

The adopted Communiqué will be presented in a declaration to Heads of States and Government for adoption during the 24th Summit of the African Union taking place from 30-31 January 2015.

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Background Information

2015 is a unique opportunity for the acceleration and realization of the commitments made to African women's rights, gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusive development. 2015 marks the 5th year into the African Women's Decade (2010-2020), the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+20), the fifteenth anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, and the finalization of deliberations on the Post-2015 agenda.

In this context, **one of the largest networks of African Civil Society Organizations on the continent monitoring women's rights and gender equality on the continent**, the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), held its 25th Pre-Consultative Meeting on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in the African Union and Member States under the theme **"2015, Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063: What is the Change We Want to See?"**. Close to 200 participants working on promoting gender equality and women's rights in Africa reflected on progress, current gaps and emerging issues, and review implementation of existing commitments made by African Union member states to women's human rights, health, education, governance, women's economic empowerment, peace and security and climate change.

The GIMAC was followed by a **stakeholders' consultation** from 22–23 January 2015 held by the African Union Commission, under the leadership of the Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the African Union New Conference Center Mandela Hall. The consultation brought together Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs from across Africa, the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) members Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) gender focal points and other development partners to strategize on the "Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063".

The Gender is my Agenda Campaign, A unique network of African civil society organizations coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarité

GIMAC is one of the largest African women's platform on the continent. It is coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and brings together more than 55 organizations coming from diverse backgrounds and from all over the continent. It was created to provide the space for civil society to formulate and promote a gender equality agenda for Africa. It has campaigned tirelessly over the last ten years for the equal participation of women in AU leadership and to ensure women voices are heard during the Head of states AU summit meeting.

Since 2005, the GIMAC members meet on the margins of the African Union (AU) Heads of State Summit for a Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU. The GIMAC members use this opportunity to examine cross-cutting issues in line with AU summit themes and to develop recommendations that are disseminated to the African Union Heads of State and Government and the international community, in support of the ensuing high-level recommendations.