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Kigali Declaration of the 3rd African Union High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment under the theme "The Contributions of Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Achieving Gender Equality in Africa: Stocktaking, Opportunities and Accountability"

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WE, the African Union Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs, African Union Organs, Regional Economic Communities, national gender machineries, having met from 08- 09 July 2016 during the 3rd African Union High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment under the theme "The Contributions of Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Achieving Gender Equality in Africa: Stocktaking, Opportunities and Accountability, held on the margins of the 27th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda;

RECALLING, the Heads of State and Government's declaration of 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women" as part of the implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Africa's Agenda 2063.

FURTHER RECALLING the Heads of State and Government's declaration of 2017 as the year for "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through the Youth" and recognizing the important role of women and young girls in realizing Africa's demographic dividend.

RECOGNISING that 2016 marks the beginning of the second phase of the African Women's Decade (2010 - 2020) whose objective is to facilitate the implementation of national, regional and international human rights instruments on gender equality and women's empowerment and to promote grassroots approaches to development;

ACKNOWLEDGING, the commendable progress and efforts made as well as visible results in the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment commitments since the adoption of the CEDAW, the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals, Africa's Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan as well as other AU Assembly Decisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, particularly the Maputo Protocol;

NOTING that to date, only 37 out of 54 AU Member States have ratified the Maputo Protocol, some with reservations and that only 5 member States have reported on measures taken for its effective implementation;

NOTING with concern that despite the African Union's resolution to silence the guns by 2020, war and armed conflicts continue to ravage several parts of the continent and rendering millions of women and children refugees, internally displaced and victims of all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse.

EXPRESS GRAVE CONCERN over the escalation of violence against women and the denial of their basic human rights both in rural and urban settings, which constitutes gross violation of women's rights.

MINDFUL of the urgency of closing the gap between norm setting and norm implementation by removing all political, economic, social and cultural barriers that hinder the full and effective realization of legal obligations on gender equality and women's empowerment, including the Maputo Protocol.

REINFORCING the importance of a holistic and comprehensive approach amongst all stakeholders in the definition of strategies and actions for the implementation of the Maputo Protocol, including increasing knowledge and awareness of this legal instrument among local populations, lawyers and human rights activists.

REAFFIRMING the imperative need to protect and promote the sexual and reproductive health rights of young girls and women and strengthen policies and programmes to enable the realization of those rights.

ACKNOWLEDGING that severe funding constraints continue to limit the capacity of both national and continental gender machineries to effectively implement the programmes and activities needed to reduce poverty and promote the rights of women.

COMMEND the launch of the AU's Mid-Term Status Update Report of the African Women's Decade (2010-2015), the Report on Women, Peace and Security, the Solemn Declaration Index, the hashtag "follow the Maputo Protocol", the 30% women's access to land initiative and the 2016 edition of the African Gender Scorecard.

WELCOMING the recommendations of the 3rd AU High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment under the theme "The Contributions of the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Achieving Gender Equality in Africa: Stocktaking, Opportunities and Accountability, held from 08 – 09 July 2016 in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda.

HEREBY:

- **Call upon** all State Parties to the Protocol to comply with their obligations under the Maputo Protocol including under Article 21 (1) of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights to submit periodic reports, domesticate and implement the Protocol.
- **Appeal to** the remaining 17 countries who have not ratified the Protocol, to ratify without delay.
- **Further Call on** State Parties not to renegotiate the content of the Maputo Protocol, requests all government entities to comply with the obligations in

the Protocol and requests the AU Commission and Organs to implement the necessary actions to help streamline the interpretation of this legal instrument.

- **Urge** all stakeholders to take an urgent stand of zero tolerance on violence against women and implement measures to end all forms of discrimination against women, set-up mechanisms to provide psychosocial and financial support to victims and requests the Commission to implement projects to end violence and discrimination against women.

Request the AUC to implement decisions contained in previous declarations and communiqués. Request Member States to urgently develop plans to operationalise the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Resolution on HIV/AIDS and provide clear accountability and monitoring mechanisms.

- **Urge** Member States to adopt gender-sensitive planning and budgeting schemes, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the Maputo Protocol and national, regional and international gender related commitments through strengthened domestic and international resource mobilization and allocation for women's and girls' rights and needs.
- **Call on** AU to take the lead with support from Member States to fundraise a dollar a month per person, through a million volunteer donations from the women's movement across Africa and the Diaspora to finance key activities that further the gender agenda. Women are urged to mobilise their resources towards financing their own initiatives, and to head the call to save at least one dollar a month by one million women.

Exhort Member States to increase and provide sustained funding to national and continental gender machineries and create platforms where Ministers of Gender and Ministers of Economy and Finance meet regularly to review progress, alleviate constraints and develop strategies for domestic resource mobilization.

- **Further urge** Member States to prioritize programmes and activities in support of women's right to peace -, accelerate implementation of their women, peace and security commitments, set-up mechanisms to promote women's participation in mediation and peace processes, implement of national and continental campaigns for peace led by women and report regularly on the state of their implementation using the continental results framework
- **Also Call** on Member States to involve Ministries of Gender in all affairs affecting the lives of women and girls through strengthening their role in decision making and program implementation across government and donor funded initiatives.

- **Call upon** governments to adopt a holistic approach to realizing girls' rights to access, remain and complete their education, especially secondary and higher education levels, through meaningful collaboration among relevant ministries
- **Urge** Member States to ensure that the number of women in the local government system at all levels including in international and intergovernmental organisations is increased and create an enabling environment, including reviewing electoral systems, to facilitate their effective and equal participation of women in political and development agendas at a local government level.
- **Further urge** Member States to initiate legislative and institutional reforms to support women's ownership of land and land rights. Member States are urged to support the implementation of the High Level Work programme on Climate Change Action in Africa under the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) adopted by the Malabo African Union Summit in 2014; and in particular the Gender and Women on Climate Change in order to benefit from the Climate Change funds for the adaptation and mitigation of Climate Change in Africa.
- **Encourage the strengthening of** cooperation between UN and AU mechanisms, regional and national human rights mechanisms through establishing focal points, improving information sharing, cross referencing jurisprudence and recommendations of human rights mechanisms and
- **Widen the space** for young girls engagement by implementing programmes and activities that promote the enjoyment of their rights and for civil society engagement as well as strengthening cooperation with all stakeholders to mobilize resources and implement action oriented programmes and activities for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **Urge** Member States to develop and implement comprehensive and integrated policies to strengthen collaboration between the African Diaspora and African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); to involve youth and fund their initiatives to advance gender equality including investing in their education and entrepreneurship through public-private partnerships; and to partner with women in maritime to create employment opportunities for young women.
- **Welcome** the new Chairperson of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Gender and Women Empowerment, Hon. Dr. Jean A. N. Kalilani M. P. Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare from Malawi.
- **Sincerely thank** Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the Africa Union Commission for her commitment to gender equality and women empowerment and for bringing a new dimension to Africa's Agenda 2063.

- **Thank** His Excellency President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda for his unwavering support for gender equality and women empowerment and for facilitating the 64% positions for women in parliament.
- **Congratulate** His Excellency President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda and Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the Africa Union Commission for receiving the Africa Gender Champions Award from the African Women's Movement.

Adopted by the African Union Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs during the 3rd African Union High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment on 09 July 2016, Kigali, Republic of Rwanda.