



## African Union

**8<sup>th</sup> AU GENDER PRE-SUMMIT ON THE MARGINS OF THE 26<sup>th</sup> AU SUMMIT**

**17-21 JANUARY 2016  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

***"2016: African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women"***

## COMMUNIQUE

**We, Ministers of the African Union (AU) in charge of Gender and Women’s Affairs, representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), intergovernmental conferences, members of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) network, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), UN Agencies, African Development Bank (AfDB), development partners and private sector organizations meeting at the 8<sup>th</sup> AU Gender Pre-Summit under the AU Year 2016 Theme: “*African Year of Human Rights, with particular focus on the Rights of Women*”, held from 17 to 21 January 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the African Union Commission (AUC) Headquarters at the margins of the 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union;**

1. **Refer** to the AU theme for 2016 "*African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women*";
2. **Reaffirm** the content of the 10 Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the African Women’s Decade (2010–2020), the Beijing +20 Declaration and Plan of Action the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and other related Resolutions, the Sandton Declaration of Heads of State and Government on 2015 "Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Africa's Agenda 2063", and other Gender policies and frameworks;
3. **Appreciate** the commitment by AU Member States to declare 2016 as the: "*African Year of Human Rights, with particular focus on the Rights of Women*";
4. **Recall** the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) held from 17 to 18 January 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) under the theme, "*Looking towards 2020: Securing Women’s Rights through Gender Equality and Silencing the Guns in Africa*;"
5. **Welcome** the election of the Bureau of the Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) and express our appreciation to the Government of Sudan for hosting the inaugural session of the STC;
6. **Acknowledge** existing global, continental, regional and national frameworks on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and recommit to the implementation and mutual accountability of those existing frameworks without renegotiating their content;
7. **Aware** of efforts to promote GEWE around the continent, yet women’s access to basic and quality education, ownership and control of assets, access to public procurements, opportunities for scalable entrepreneurship, inclusion in financing

frameworks, and representation in decision-making positions among other social, economic and political rights still remain severely limited;

8. **Note** that the implementation of existing GEWE frameworks still remains a challenge for most African countries due to their slow pace of ratification and domestication as well as the inadequacy of technical and for financial resources to operationalize GEWE agenda; and underlining that only three (3) Member States have reported on measures taken to implement the Maputo Protocol as required by Article 26;
9. **Recognize** existing and emerging threats to Africa's development, including climate change, conflicts, terrorism, the illicit proliferation of arms and health pandemics (Ebola, HIV/AIDS) and the disproportionately negative impact they have on women's lives and well-being; and underscore women's sexual and reproductive health plays a critical role in their lives and that large numbers of African women and girls continue to die from pregnancy-related causes annually;
10. **Appreciate** the commitment of Heads of State and Government of the African Union to GEWE, having devoted two themes in 2015 and 2016, respectively, to this key development priority, and notably in adopting (six) 6 key priority areas on the socio-economic and political rights of women;

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11. **Assess** progress on women's participation and decision making in politics, public office, the judiciary and other public spheres at all levels; identifying the challenges and barriers hindering their effective participation as well as developing and implementing strategies to accelerate -the implementation of these commitments;.
12. **Facilitate** consultations and agreement on the opportunities, gaps and solutions for enhancing women's socio-economic empowerment and ensuring that women are at the centre of sustainable development, peace and security, regional integration and economic growth in Africa.
13. **Identify** how national regulations and policies, on one hand, and practices from financial institutions, investors, and businesses on the other, can be more closely aligned to improve women's financial inclusion, effective participation in the formal and informal economies, strengthen and strengthening gender budgeting processes, increase gender sensitivity of macro-economic policies and strengthen women's access to public procurements;.

14. **Monitoring** trends in migration and displacement, particularly challenges and their impact on women, , refugees and internally displaced persons, girls as well as identifying reflect on best practices to address the their specific vulnerabilities and strengthen their capacities of this target group in Africa and in the countries of destination and transit; and to adopt international conventions on trafficking to prevent cross-border trafficking;
15. **Accelerate** the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda agenda on the continent through the establishment of a continental results framework to monitor and report on national and regional Women, Peacewomen, peace, and Security security commitments at all levels, learning from the outcomes of the Global Study on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, among other key studies, and in collaboration with RECs, the UN, and civil society;.
16. **Share** status updates and devise solutions to increase the representation of girls and women in Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and in Technical Industrial Vocational Education and Training (TIVET);
17. **Strengthen** the implementation of existing instruments on sexual and gender-based violence resulting from ongoing existing discriminatory practices, including Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) such as child, early and forced marriages; ensuring the ratification, domestication and implementation of the articles of the Maputo Protocol related to sexual and reproductive health and reinforcing the role society should play to end violence against women and girls;
18. **Provide** an opportunity for various stakeholders to consult and address the challenges, which hinder progress in achieving women's land and property rights in Africa, as well as identify means to advancing relevant solutions with a view to securing greater commitment towards promoting best practices.

**We recommend as follows:**

**AUC, RECs and Member States to:**

19. **Implement**, in line with Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, gender parity at all levels of decision-making at the AU Organs. The AUC should guarantee an alternating system between men and women in the position of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Commission. We commend the AU for implementing the gender parity rule at the level of Commissioners and similar efforts at that for Directors;
20. **Commit** to designing, in collaboration with all stakeholders, new Gender Strategy which will reflect priorities in Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and COP 21 and aligned with existing GEWE frameworks, as well as developing a more robust Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Mechanisms in support of said strategy;

21. **Share** the outcomes of the 8<sup>th</sup> AU Gender Pre-Summit during the 27<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly of the African Union;
22. **Assess** the implementation of commitments made on GEWE in Africa, with specific reference to the 2015 theme of “Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063” and the African Women’s Decade (2010-2020), and develop follow-up intervention strategies to accelerate the implementation of commitments on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment;
23. **Recognize** and value unpaid care and domestic work predominantly done by women by enforcing existing laws, raising awareness with private sector actors on the protection of their rights and implementing programmes to help them graduate to better conditions of work;
24. **Implement** and strengthen accountability on existing decisions, policies and frameworks for the protection of women and girls’ rights, and in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders continue to raise awareness and develop a common strategy on the implementation of the 2016 theme of “African Year of Human Rights, with particular focus on the Rights of Women”.
25. **Organize** a continental Campaign on the ratification and domestication of the Maputo Protocol and eradication of HTPs, align national legislations to reflect women’s sexual and reproductive health rights, create a legal fund for women victims of human rights violations; hold perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse accountable, and ensure women’s effective inclusion and participation in peace dialogues;
26. **Increase** budget allocations to programmes and organisations dedicated to GEWE and strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to ensure effective mainstreaming of priority actions in all areas;
27. **Adopt** an integrated approach to reinvigorate dialogue between stakeholders participation, in playing a leadership role in public office by 2020. on the opportunities, gaps and solutions for enhancing women’s economic empowerment and ensure that women are at the centre of sustainable development, peace, regional integration and economic growth initiatives in Africa;
28. Engage practitioners, policy-makers, civil society organizations, and a broad range of stakeholders to review the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda on the continent, learn from various experiences and challenges, and reflect critically on what is needed to accelerate implementation and monitoring at all levels, as well as on the way forward;
29. **Increase** resource allocations and create enabling conditions to increase women’s participation and visibility in women in Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET);

30. **Address** challenges which hinder progress in achieving women's land and property rights in Africa, as well as identify and promote practical approaches to addressing these challenges with a view to securing commitment towards promoting proven models;
31. **Intensify** efforts to increase women's political participation and their appointment in decision-making positions, especially in non-traditional fields such as the military and their share of public procurements, industry and support their efforts to scale-up their enterprises;
32. **Congratulate** the African Union Commission, under the leadership of the Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, for the adoption and implementation of Agenda 2063 and its 10-Year Implementation Plan, which recognizes gender equality and women's empowerment as a critical driver for the transformation and development of Africa in all the seven (7) Aspirations of Africa's Agenda 2063;
33. **Thank** the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for convening this Pre-Summit, and the AfDB, UNDP, UN Women, and UNECA for their support and contribution, as well as the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for its hospitality.

***Adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016***