



Concept Note

27th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union 17–18 January 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. Introduction

The 27th session of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Pre-Summit Consultative meeting will be held on 17th to 18th January 2016 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme “**Looking towards 2020: Securing Women’s Rights through Gender Equality and Silencing the Guns in Africa.**” The theme is in sync with the African Union’s dedication of 2016 as the “African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women” and will also address commitments to women’s human rights as enshrined in Agenda 2063 and the Declaration on 2015 Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063.

The GIMAC is a leading African women’s civil society campaign dedicated to the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa/SDGEA (2004) and the respective thematic areas. The network strives to advance the implementation of commitments and goals enshrined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa/Maputo Protocol (2003), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and other human rights instruments.

In preparation for the January 2016 African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government, the GIMAC network will work closely with the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions, United Nations agencies and other civil society entities, to take stock of the status of women’s human rights on the continent and to identify key priorities for action.

2. Background

The GIMAC network consists of more than 55 civil society organizations promoting gender equality and accountability for women’s rights. The GIMAC was launched in 2002 in Durban, South Africa and has since held bi-annual civil society consultative meetings in advance of AU Summit meetings to engage AU Member States on African women’s rights, issues and concerns. The GIMAC is organized around the themes related to the operating articles of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa namely human rights, governance, peace and security, economic empowerment, education and health. The GIMAC also monitors emerging issues such as climate change and promotes the leadership of young African women.

The GIMAC network members are leading practitioners in women’s rights and development and over the years, the network has registered key successes in contributing to the adoption of the AU gender parity principle, the Maputo Protocol and the SDGEA. The GIMAC recommendations have been reflected in the outcome documents of the AU Summit and the GIMAC has supported

advocacy campaigns for a female Chairperson for the African Union Commission and the appointment of an African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

In July 2012, the GIMAC launched the “Empowering Women in Agriculture” (EWA) initiative in partnership with the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) to promote inclusive livelihoods development and to address the constraints faced by African women in agricultural production.

During the 24th GIMAC meeting in June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Gender Ministers and representatives of Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) joined the deliberations of the GIMAC and committed to working closely with the GIMAC in successive meetings.

On 19-20 January 2016, participants of the GIMAC will continue deliberations with the African Union Commission, Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs and RECs during the sessions of the African Union Gender Pre-Summit to be held at the African Union.

3. Agenda Topics for the 27th GIMAC Pre-Summit

Women’s rights are human rights and there can be no peace and sustainable development without securing women’s rights. In Africa’s Agenda 2063, Member States committed to ending all wars in Africa and gender-based violence by 2020 and to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination. Notably, Agenda 2063 commits Member States to improve the quality of governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and to strengthen the role of women through gender equality and parity in all spheres of political, economic and social life.

During the 2015 Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063, GIMAC participants advocated for strong commitments by Member States to accelerate measures to advance the status of African women and welcomed the adoption by Member States of the Declaration on 2015 Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063.

Building on past GIMAC recommendations, the GIMAC will mobilize civil society to assess progress of the implementation of the above commitments in their local communities and countries and to define civil society action to highlight gaps, successes and solutions to foster implementation.

The 27th GIMAC will also provide a space for civil society inputs for the first edition of the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI) to monitor implementation of the SDGEA.

4. Objectives

- To provide an avenue for civil society to assess progress on women’s human rights in Africa in line with the 27th GIMAC theme.
- To formulate key civil society recommendations to African Union Heads of State and Government to accelerate implementation of women’s human rights.
- To define a civil society advocacy action plan to highlight gaps, successes and solutions to foster implementation of human rights commitments.
- To solicit civil society inputs for the first edition of the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI).
- To enable civil society to network with the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions and United Nations agencies to promote solutions for action in their countries and local communities.

5. Key Expected Outcomes

- Inclusion of the GIMAC recommendations on women's rights, issues and concerns in the outcome documents of the January 2016 African Union Summit.
- Defined civil society advocacy action plan to foster implementation of human rights commitments.
- Collection of civil society inputs for the first edition of the Solemn Declaration Index.
- Strengthened partnerships between civil society, the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions and United Nations agencies.

6. Co-organizing partners

The 27th GIMAC consultative meeting will be organized with GIMAC focal and thematic members who include, but are not limited to Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Ipas Africa Alliance, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA), Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) and ABANTU for Development.

7. GIMAC Partners and Stakeholders

The AU Commission and AU organs are key partners of the GIMAC. Officials of the AU have often engaged in the Pre-Summit Meetings, chairing sessions and actively participating during the debates. The UNECA's African Centre for Gender is an invaluable partner in lending logistical and technical support to the Pre-Summit Consultative meetings.

Other partners and stakeholders that have supported the GIMAC network over the years include the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Urgent Action Fund-Africa, UN Women, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Rockefeller Foundation, the Nobel Women's Initiative, the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, the World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Government of Norway, the Government of Finland, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).