

Final review report of the  
African Women's Decade on

Grassroots  
Approach to  
Gender Equality  
and Women's  
Empowerment  
2010-2020





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## Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ARTs	Antiretroviral Treatment
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AWD	African Women's Decade
CAMFP	Parakou Center of Arts and Crafts for Women
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Program
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DER	Rapid Entrepreneurship for Youth and Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
FAFE	Fonds d'Appui pour l'Autonomisation des Femmes
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAW	Fund for African Women
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GIRINKA	One Cow per Poor Family" Programme
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
G-WIN	Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria
HEP	Health Extension Program
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
ME	Medium Enterprise
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MNCH	Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Indicators
MUFFA	Mutual Fund for African Women

NAPs	National Action Plans
NDP	National Development Plans
PEPUDA	Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	African Union Peace and Security Department
RECs	AU-Regional Economic Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration for Gender Equality in Africa
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SME	Small & Medium-Sized Enterprises
SMEDAN	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria
SMEDI	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SWANEN	South African Women Entrepreneurs Network
TVTET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UBW	Union for Business Women
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YOU-WIN	Youth Innovation in Nigeria
VAW	Violence Against Women
VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme
VVF	Vesicovaginal fistula
WBPC	Women Business Promotion Center
WGDD	Women, Gender and Development Directorate
WoF	Working on Fire

## Acknowledgement



On behalf of the African Union Commission's (AUC), Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD), I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who collaborated on this report. Without them the depth of insights would not have been possible.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Thelma Awori, the Consultant who devoted her expertise, countless hours and invaluable insights towards the development of this report. Secondly, I wish to thank UN Women for providing the requisite technical and financial support towards this process.

Thirdly, I would be remiss to not make mention of my colleagues in the WGYD for their tireless efforts, dedication and professional conduct as they coordinated the development of the report by providing leadership, necessary information, guidance to the Consultant and contributions to the quality assurance, review, design and publication of the report.

Last but not least, I wish to thank everyone who will interact with this report and learn from its findings. May it be as useful to all of you as we intend.

**Prudence Ngwenya Nonkululeko (Ms.)**  
**Ag. Director, WGYD**

## Foreword



I am delighted to introduce the Final Review Report of the African Women's Decade (AWD) on "Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), 2010-2020". The purpose of the Decade was to re-invigorate commitments to accelerated implementation of agreed global and regional GEWE commitments. The first AWD was adopted in 2010 by African Union Heads of State and Government.

This AWD report is prepared pursuant to the AU Executive Council Decision EX.CL/834(XXV), which requested the AU Commission (AUC) to prepare a mid-term status update of the AWD in 2015 and a final review report for the period 2016-2020.

The report details progress across the African continent, as reported by responsive Member States, on ten themes of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) on administrative and legislative action, policies, programs, commitments, and initiatives undertaken by AU Member States, and their implementation. In addition, the report sheds light on the challenges outlined in Member States' responses, as well as their recommendations for next steps forward.

At the end of the Decade, the world was hit by the novel Coronavirus19 pandemic. Lockdowns with children out of school and people out of work, saw an escalation in violence against women and girls, and an increase in their care burden, which has threatened to roll back many of the gains that had been made. Women and girls were, and continue to be particularly affected by the economic, social, political, emotional, and physical impacts of the pandemic.

Notwithstanding this somber reality, Member States have shown political will to navigate the challenges and take necessary steps towards gender equality. This report shows that new laws have been adopted/ passed. Progressive policies, strategies and programs that safeguard women's health, provide them access to financial assistance, education and training for girls to negotiate the new Covid19 reality, were put in place. For their part, the determination of civil society activism has shown in their bold efforts to engage authorities and advocate for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in all its dimensions.

I thus invite you to the report, which contains enriching and thought-provoking experiences from our African Union Member States in achieving GEWE. The report is an important signpost towards the areas that need greater attention in order to fully realize African Women's rights. It can also serve as a guide towards action to fulfill the legitimate aspirations of African Women and girls for a better life.

On behalf of the AUC, I wish to congratulate countries which have submitted their reports and those who continue to implement their GEWE commitments and encourage them to do more in the spirit of Agenda 2063.

**H.E Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat**  
**AUC Chairperson**

## Executive Summary

This report of the African Women's Decade (AWD) is prepared pursuant to the AU Executive Council Decision EX.CL/834(XXV), which requested the AU Commission (AUC) to prepare a mid-term status update of the AWD in 2015 and a final review report for the period 2016–2020.

The report details progress across the African continent, as reported by responsive Member States, on ten themes of the African Women's Decade (2010–2020) on "Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment". It sheds light on the challenges outlined in Member States' responses, as well as their suggestions for next steps forward. The report draws in part and follows on from the findings of the AWD Mid-Term Status Update developed for the period (2010–2015) and gives recommendations for sustaining and building on the gains in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) during the 2020–2030 AWD.

Part 1 provides an introduction of the concept for the African Women's Decade, which has its roots in the global movement for gender equality and women's empowerment.

African women have remained at the forefront of the international women's movement. Their agency gave impetus for the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); the African Agenda 2063, a Blueprint for the Africa We Want; the Gender Parity Principle enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the AU; the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA); and the Sustainable Development Goals. All of these serve as contextual and foundational markers for the AWD, which was proposed in December 2008 at the African Union Extra-Ordinary Meeting of African Ministers of Gender

and Women Affairs in Maseru, Lesotho.

The introductory section also describes the methodology applied in the review, which is a qualitative analysis of the Member States' responses to the AWD Questionnaire, as against other relevant documents reporting on the status of women in each thematic area. The reports covered in the review were submitted by the thirty-seven (37) countries. Thirteen (13) countries reported launching an AWD at national level and seven (7) reported receiving funds from African Union Fund for African Women (FAW). These countries are named in the introductory section.

Part 2 explores the Member States' reporting on their

“Thirteen countries reported launching an AWD at national level and seven reported receiving funds from African Union Fund for African Women (FAW).”

achievements, challenges and proposed next steps for continuing the work of the Decade. Member States had committed to taking action for gender equality along ten thematic areas:

- 1 Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship;
- 2 Agriculture and Food Security;
- 3 Women's Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV & AIDS;
- 4 Education, Science and Technology;
- 5 Environment and Climate Change;
- 6 Peace and Security and Violence Against Women;
- 7 Governance and Legal Protection;
- 8 Finance and Gender Budgets;
- 9 Women In Decision Making Positions; and
- 10 Mentoring Youth (Men and Women) to be champions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

**General Background: Shifting Landscape.** Reporting across Member States reveals increasing recognition of GEWE's value and their commitment to gender responsive and gender

protective governance. Most AU Member States have signed and/or ratified the Maputo Protocol and other continental and international GEWE instruments and a plurality has embedded action plans for implementing these instruments into their National Development Plans (NDPs).

### **Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship.**

Member States have focused on establishing funds for women's enterprises; increasing access to the factors of production; creating social safety nets; passing laws and policies protecting women's rights to decent work, equal pay for equal work and maternity friendly policies. Culture and harmful traditional practices as child marriage, physical, emotional and economic violence continue to impede progress. The COVID-19 related restrictions and consequent economic downturn compounded these effects. Low education and weak policies and mechanisms for promoting women's agricultural and other investments also posed challenges. Member States identified next steps including enhanced awareness and sensitization campaigns to impact behaviors and perceptions concerning

women's economic empowerment among other rights; providing training, investment in agro-industrial facilities; and providing women with the means of modern production, value addition, preservation and marketing.

### **Agriculture and Food Security.**

Key achievements during the Decade included expanding women's access to markets; water; land, through the system of land certificates; subsidies and agricultural inputs. Governments have also mobilized women into cooperatives for value addition and established funds for easy access to women. Major challenges included climate change concerns and deteriorating economic conditions that hindered investment in women's agricultural efforts. Proposed forward-looking commitments included continued implementation of women's agriculture programs; effective application and enforcement of laws promoting women's engagement in agriculture; enhancing institutional arrangements for sustainable land management in favor of women; rehabilitating farm roads.

### **Women's Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV & AIDS.**

Several countries increased access to and coverage

of Antiretroviral Treatment (ARTs); lowered the prevalence of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission, (PMTCT). Member States reduced Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) and took initiatives to strengthen adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health, (SRH) and prevent child pregnancies and other forms of violence against children. Some countries increased and improved infrastructure in health facilities and in schools to make them girl friendly. Challenges included the lack of human, financial and other resources to ensure accessible and affordable health services to women and youth. Member States recommended next steps focused on increasing the number of health workers and building their capacity; rehabilitating health centers and equipment and increasing their accessibility to the communities they serve; redoubling national efforts to prevent new HIV/AIDS infections and AIDS related deaths. Recommended interventions also include providing social and legal services for GBV victims and expand programs sensitizing men on their role in women's reproductive health.

**Education, Science and Technology.** Notable achievements have been realized in universal primary education, but secondary

education and tertiary levels remain a challenge. Member States are putting in place programs to enhance retention and safeguard transition from primary to secondary levels. Improved girl-friendly infrastructure in schools, increased number of schools, transport assistance, scholarship for girls from poor families, sanitary dignity, and strict measures against gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment are some of the measures that governments are putting in place. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and digital education are emerging areas of work. The reports acknowledged the need for more political will and engagement; for increased efforts in basic and Information Communication and Technology (ICT) literacies among the population; for projects that provide social safety nets and basic services such as school feeding; for strengthened measures to prevent teenage pregnancy; for education for pregnant teens, young mothers and girls outside of the traditional school system; for strong governments' partnerships with development partners and Civil Society on education; and for widely disseminated texts

and documents relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.

**Environment and Climate Change.** Most Member States reported efforts to mainstream gender in environmental programs, but concrete programs and policies are few and far between. Resilience to drought, deforestation and other natural disasters were integrated in programs in some countries. Measures to promote climate smart agriculture and energy conserving methods are being brought on board. However, this sector remains cause for concern along with the fast-growing urbanization, outdated sewage systems and poor access to clean and safe water. Some Member States are raising awareness to correct behaviors that contribute to climate change. Next steps include

“Most Member States reported efforts to mainstream gender in environmental programs.”

The establishment of funds promoting women's entrepreneurship is another key trend. Not with standing, resource constraints remained a persistent challenge across the AWD thematic areas.

“Gender still accounts for two percent (2%) of national budgets or less and GRB is considered a competing priority to economic recovery.”

strengthening normative, legal and strategic frameworks to further support women's adaptability to climate change; enhancing water resources management and accessibility to clean water in rural areas.

**Finance and Gender Budgets.** An increasing number of countries reported efforts to institutionalize Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), with growing effectiveness. Other homegrown approaches are improving gender mainstreaming in programs and projects. The establishment of funds promoting women's entrepreneurship is another key trend. Notwithstanding, resource constraints remained a persistent challenge across the AWD thematic areas. Gender still accounts for two percent (2%) of national budgets or less and GRB is considered a competing priority to economic recovery from shocks such as the COVID-19 related recession. This indicates that significant work remains to accelerate the pace of GEWE and development.

**Peace and Security and Violence Against Women.** Peace remains by far one of the major binding constraints to Africa's development and women's empowerment.

Member States during the Decade made significant strides to mitigate the worst effects of violence against women and build peace in Africa. They reported passing laws to criminalize Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and establishing structures to care for SGBV survivors. Women's entry into the military and police reflects a growing commitment to gender responsive security sector reform. Thirty (30) Member States and five regional organizations have adopted NAPs for UNSCR 1325. Despite these efforts, violence against women continues unabated. Conditions of conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic have seen a spike in domestic violence. At the national and regional levels, conflict and violent extremism still exist, despite the ongoing Campaign to Silence the Guns by 2020. The AU has established structures to place women at the center of peacekeeping efforts. It is also increasingly cognizant of the need for bottom up approach to conflict resolution – an important lesson learned through the work of the Special Envoy in tracking the NAPS is Uganda's approach of implementing District level NAPs.

**Governance and Legal Protection.** Forty-two (42) Member States have now ratified the Maputo Protocol. Laws and services to protect and safeguard the rights of women from violence and abuse are now in place in many Member States. Steady increases are noted in the number of women in the judiciary and law enforcement. Nearly all countries have constitutional provisions that protect the human rights of citizens against discrimination and abuse. Furthermore, countries reported the existence of laws, penal codes and policy declarations that are aimed at protecting women in their various diversities against violence, and protecting their rights to family planning, land, alimony, child support, and custody and citizenship of their children. Member States reported that the lack of human and financial resources hinders the strength of institutional mechanisms around GEWE; legal systems rooted in tradition and religion that sustains the likelihood of gender discrimination; lack of awareness among women and men about women's rights also caused setbacks.

**Women in Decision Making Positions.** Many Member States

have adopted constitutional provisions, laws and national policies aimed at gradually achieving gender parity in executive, legislative and judicial branches and political party rosters. Reported challenges included sexist traditional norms; the lack of a database of women qualified for decision-making roles; the lack of political will among the authorities to enforce gender quotas from political parties and create women friendly human resource policies in the public sector; limited funds to implement action plans promoting women's rights; and ineffectiveness lobbying and engagement by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's organizations to push for change. Member States' recommendations for the way forward included:

“Thirty Member States and five regional organizations have adopted NAPs for UNSCR 1325.”

adopting gender parity laws; improving the level of women's representation in the spheres of media and ICT; establishing systems to collect and process data, monitor and evaluate progress on gender issues; and enhance information, sensitization and training efforts for women and men on women's rights.

**Mentoring Youth (Men and Women) to be champions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.** Member States' efforts to mentor youth as advocates for women's empowerment have focused heavily on the subjects of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. Challenges included the lack of funding to conduct campaigns; the lack advisory support and monitoring for programmed activities; insufficient supervision of young people to be promoters of gender equality and women's empowerment and low interest among young people on these subjects. The following next steps were proposed: sensitize young people about the legal instruments that promote and protect women and youth to equip them to denounce GBV; integrate young people into efforts and structures established to promote their

health, to ensure a change in attitudes and behaviors relating to gender equality and women's empowerment; and continue initiatives engaging young male and female citizens.

**Part 3** provides an analysis of the extent to which Member States applied the implementation methods proposed in the AWD Roadmap. One of the key commitments was to establish institutional mechanisms and sustain robust advocacy and lobbying to drive momentum on GEWE, while maintaining a grassroots approach. Only a few reports mentioned establishing national committees to steer and track AWD interventions. The grassroots approach does not appear to have materialized, as not many Member States reported on the engagement of civil society in institutional mechanisms to achieve the AWD objectives. The major challenge concerning fulfillment of the bottom up approach was the absence of links with women's groups and civil society in general. Additionally, challenges with the Fund for African Women frustrated efforts to reach the grassroots.

**Part 4** covers the implementation of the AWD by the African Union Commission. The Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government had agreed to invest 1% of Member States' annual contributions to the AU budget (based on actual received contributions) in an AU Fund for African Women (AU-FAW) to support AWD targeted interventions. The AU-FAW was designed to support 540 projects for the Decade, at a rate of 54 per year. Due to several operational challenges, this goal could not be achieved.

**Part 5** concludes the report with the following recommendations:

**Actions for Member States**

- 1 Continue and strengthen initiatives in ten thematic areas.
- 2 Close gaps in digital financial services ecosystems, including through expansion of related infrastructure networks such as electricity and telecommunications.
- 3 Support and encourage women owned financial institutions.



- 4 Put in place measures to support vulnerable populations whose welfare and livelihoods the COVID-19 Pandemic has undermined.

#### Actions for the African Union

- 5 Adopt legal instrument to establish institutionalized gender responsive budgeting and data collection as continental standards.
- 6 Adopt legal instrument to establish both political and fiscal decentralization as a continental standard that financially empowers women by creating more centers of decision making where they can decide the fate of their families and communities.
- 7 Encourage Member States to adapt their existing national strategies to reflect commitments for the African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion for African Women, to ensure seamlessness with existing institutional arrangements and programs.
- 8 Ensure that the next AWD promotes women's role as investors and not only borrowers and grant beneficiaries.
- 9 Ensure that the next AWD strengthens women's ability to meet their own needs through access to affordable financial services.
- 10 Ensure that next AWD also concretely and innovatively addresses the financing challenges that hindered progress in each of the 10 themes of the past decade, within the context and parameters of financial inclusion.
- 11 Work with Member States to set clear, country specific metrics for meeting thematic goals for the next decade, supported by diagnostics from the APRM and other reports.
- 12 Enhance continental, regional and national coordination on gender issues, to ensure efficient and effective implementation of programmed interventions.
- 13 Set clear guidelines for adoption to ensure member states' gender responsive implementation of the African Continental

Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

- 14 Prioritize plans to operationalize the African Investment Bank and the Pan African Stock Exchange, and establish other African capital market institutions, for optimal benefit to GEWE.
- 15 Eradicate GBV through rapid and intensive action.
- 16 Appoint a Special Envoy for Grassroots Women in the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture. Actions for the UN Agencies, International Financial Institutions and Development Partners
- 17 Conduct regular and comprehensive data collection on the domestic, regional and continental informal sector.
- 18 Provide funding targeted at GEWE initiatives and technical assistance in line with best practices from other continents.
- 19 Intensify support to Ministries of Gender for their advocacy, coordination, training and monitoring work with other ministries
- 20 Support the Trust Fund for African Women

## PART 1. INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### A. Background and Context of the Decade

The African Women's Decade derives its impetus from the global movement of women in pursuit of gender equality from as early as the birth of the United Nations. In 1975, the United Nations pronounced four (4) separate decades to assess and promote the advancement of women. Each decade has culminated in a call to intensify efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Conscious of the early and consistent involvement of African women in this global pursuit, and at theme time recognizing the persistent obstacles and constraints that African women continue to face despite tremendous progress, Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs of the African Union prepared a 10-year strategy known as the African Women's Decade.

The African Women's Decade was proposed at an Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs in Maseru, Lesotho in December 2008. During this meeting the Africa Union (AU) Ministers for Gender and Women's Affairs called on the AU to declare 2010 – 2020 as African Women's Decade and undertake wide consultations to ensure that the objectives of the Decade are fully realized for women and girls in Africa. The Ministers' proposal was adopted by Assembly Dec. 487 (XIX) which declared 2010 – 2020 as African Women's Decade (AWD).

The Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Governments committed to investing 1% of Member States' annual contributions to the AU budget (based on actual received contributions) in the AU Fund for African Women (AU-FAW) as the mobilizing vehicle through which national resources are pooled at the continental level, and gender equality targeted projects implemented for the AWD.

According to the Roadmap for AWD, implementation of the Decade was designed to take place in two phases, the first phase covered the period 2010–2015 and the second phase transpired from 2016 to 2020. A mid-term review was carried

#### Box 1: South Africa's Commitment to GEWE

For South Africa, women's empowerment is a national priority and central to its development strategies. Today's session should as an outcome be a commitment to end all forms of violence against women and girls – whether domestic violence, femicide, child abuse, child marriage or female genital mutilation. Pressing governments also to prioritize the ILO convention on violence and harassment, he said that, in line with the African Women's Decade, African Union members agreed to put in place policies for increasing women's economic participation, access to finance and land ownership.

– *President Cyril Ramaphosa, Statement at High Level meeting on Beijing +25, October 2020. UN Press Release*

out at the end of 2015 pursuant to the AU Executive Council Decision EX.CL/834(XXV) requesting the AU Commission (AUC) to prepare a Mid-Term Review on progress made through to the end of 2015. A review of Phase 2 and the entire AWD to the end of 2020 was further recommended. This report meets the later obligation of the AUC.

The theme of the Decade, Grassroots Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment recognized the need to engage majority of women who are in rural and urban grassroots communities.

#### **B. Objectives of the Review**

The objective of this review is to develop an assessment of the implementation of the AWD during 2010 to 2020 by highlighting the achievements made, challenges encountered and future prospects for accelerating implementation of GEWE commitments. The specific objectives are to:

- Acknowledge steps taken by Member States to achieve GEWE through implementation of the AWD's themes;
- Identify achievements, best practices, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the AWD's themes;
- Propose recommendations to improve the implementation of GEWE.

#### **C. Methodology and Limitations**

This review relied on qualitative analysis of data retrieved from reports of Member States and other relevant documents such as reports of technical agencies of the United Nations, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (SDGEA), Beijing +25 reports as well as articles written on the topic of progress towards gender equality over the 10 year period of the AWD. The report therefore acknowledges the inbuilt limitations of relying solely on desk reviews.

The process of data management included retrieving summaries of responses of Member States to the

The theme of the Decade, Grassroots Approaches to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment recognized the need to engage majority of women who are in rural and urban grassroots communities.

“Beijing +25 reports as well as articles written on the topic of progress,,

questionnaire prepared by Women Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) and summarizing these on a data sheet along the 10 themes and guidelines from the Roadmap. A further round of data reduction into worksheets per theme helped to categorize the activities of Member States on specific themes. This eased the comparative and trend analysis of the achievements and challenges. Though the information recorded in the responses was not even, on a whole it was rich data and provided a holistic view on progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment on the continent. Experiences that stood out are highlighted as case studies for an in-depth spotlight on specific issues. Data has been interpreted largely in narrative form with graphic presentations for ease of understanding.

Although the depth and the nature of the responses from Member States varied, the validity of the data presented in this assessment report primarily relied on the submissions

where there are no complementary resources. The data is further limited by the number of countries responding to the questionnaire though not significantly. Thirty seven (37) is well over half of the 55 members of the African Union. These 37 generated rich data for this report. The fact that some AU members not mentioned does not negate the tremendous work they are doing to promote GEWE. It only means that information on their work was not easily accessible or available despite a search of other AU and UN reports, news reports or research articles written.

#### **D. Background and Justification of the Decade**

Another Decade, another Milestone for African Women

Women in Africa are subjected to a plethora of injustices and exploitation because they are women. Patriarchy breeds some of the worst forms of violence against women regardless of their age. Child marriage, child rape, femicide, genital mutilation, physical

and emotional violence, economic exploitation are but a few of the types of violence that African women experience often with impunity sanctioned in most cases by religion and culture. It is little wonder therefore that African women have always played a pivotal role in setting the global agenda on gender equality. During the first World Conference for Women held in Mexico in 1975, African delegations voiced their need for support to address fundamental development issues. Their presentations subsequently led to the creation in 1976 of the Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women [Margaret Snyder. Transforming Development: Women, poverty and politics - UNIFEM's First Fifteen Years. London: Intermediate Technology Publ., 1995.]. This fund was created to support women's initiatives and to advance GEWE in a practical way. The Fund grew to become the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). In the area of Peace and Security, UNSCR 1325 is rooted in the African women's peace

movement, that began with initiatives such as the UNIFEM supported Women in Crisis project based in Nairobi in the late 80's, the Peace Torch which went to Dakar and then to Beijing, the Peace Tent in Beijing, all of which brought attention to the situation of women in war. From Beijing these matters had to be taken up by the UN particularly because of its leadership in global peace keeping. Namibia's Minister for Women's Affairs, while chairing the Security Council, tabled the issue of women peace and security on the agenda of the Council which led to the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Under the auspices of the AU, women's rights have been recognized in several important continental instruments. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) remains one of the most progressive legal instruments with a comprehensive set of human rights provisions for African women and girls. Unlike other women's

human rights instruments, it details wide-ranging and substantive human rights for women covering the entire spectrum of civil and political, economic, social and cultural as well as environmental rights. A small minority of Member States have yet to sign and ratify the Maputo Protocol. Heads of States have taken other actions to show their support for promoting women's rights on the continent. The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and Agenda 2063, are other expressions of support by AU Heads of States for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

on the continent. In 2017, His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo, President of the Republic of Ghana was appointed as the AU Leader on Gender and Development Issues in Africa.

It is therefore in line with and on the foundation of the above actions that AU Ministers of Gender directed the Women Gender and Development Directorate to organize the African Women's Decade 2010 – 2020, focused on accelerating actions towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment using a grassroots approach.

### E. Engagement with and ownership of the Decade Project:

A larger number of Member States submitted reports of their activities for the second phase.

Member States were requested to submit two progress reports, one for each phase of the implementation of the AWD. They were also encouraged to establish national committees and raise funds. Twenty-two (22) countries submitted the mid-term review report while thirty-seven (37) countries submitted a second report and final report. Eighteen (18) countries submitted both reports, and twelve countries did not submit reports. Thirteen (13) countries reported having an event to launch the Decade and seven (7) reported receiving funds from FAW.

**Table 1:** Participating AWD Countries and Respondents to the Questionnaire

Attendance at Decade Launch	Submission of First Report Mid-Term Report (2010-2015)	Submission of Second Report (2016-2020)	No Report
Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, South Africa, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Togo and Zambia.	Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.	Botswana, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Lesotho, Libya, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania.

#### Launch of the Decade

Thirteen (13) countries reported launching the AWD. These were Angola, Eswatini, Namibia, Mozambique, Mauritius, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Senegal, Madagascar, Benin, Togo and Nigeria. Launch events included conferences, workshops around the country, ministerial participation all of which were intended to raise public awareness about the Decade and promote its objectives.

#### Countries that Received Funds from FAW

Seven (7) countries that reported benefiting from the FAW included Benin, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Guinea,

Nigeria, Senegal, and Zimbabwe. Cameroon and Guinea Bissau and Madagascar reported waiting for a long time for the funds which were slow in coming.

“ The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) remains one of the most progressive legal instruments with a comprehensive set of human rights provisions for African women and girls. ”

### African Women in Alignment with Global Agendas

The global agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment is evolving in line with the changing context. Most of the themes of the African Women’s Decade are in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, the SDGs, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the Maputo Protocol. It is comprehensive in

that it addresses some of the recurring and emerging issues such as the engagement of male

stakeholders as champions for GEWE and of its emphasis on mentoring of youth.

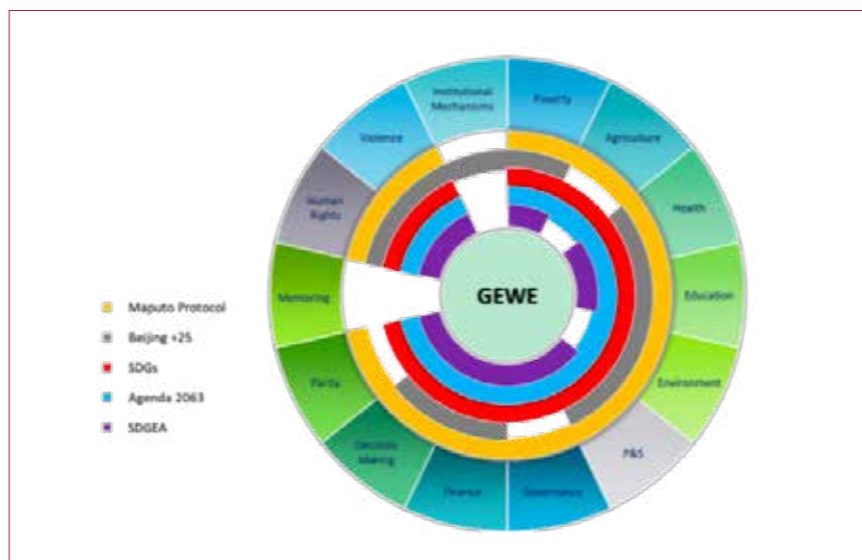


Figure 1: AWD Alignment with Global Agendas

### The Context of the Decade

The African Women’s Decade was born in a landscape of tremendous strides towards gender equality despite relentless waves of constraints and push backs. During the decade, Africa surged forward with seminal pronouncements on gender equality. The African Agenda 2063, a Blueprint for the Africa We Want was unanimously adopted by Heads of

States and Government in 2013. This built on the strong foundation of the Solemn Declaration for Gender Equality (2004), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) and the Gender Parity Principle enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the AU. During the same period on the global level, in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals, with precise articulations of

indices similar to those of the Beijing Platform for Action and The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were endorsed by all members of the United Nations. In 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its attendant resolutions paved the way for women’s inclusion in peace processes to advocate for actions to meet the needs of women in conflict and post conflict settings.

Despite advances in norms and policies, the realization of GEWE has been slow and in some instances stalled. Several countries weathered the ravages of nature with cyclonic winds in Mozambique and other parts of southern Africa causing loss of household economies, death and displacement. Severe drought in Namibia, locust in the Eastern parts of Africa affected countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. The economic downturn impacting most of Africa, with attendant high un- and underemployment, led to massive migrations of youth and women to Europe under perilous conditions

mostly from the Sahelian countries and Eritrea. Conflict and religious fundamentalism led to the death of citizens, especially women and young girls such as in Chibok, Nigeria. Epidemics and pandemics have also negatively affected women’s security, health and livelihoods. During the Decade the highly infectious Ebola virus caused more than 11,310 deaths[ Center for Infectious Disease research and policy, University of Minnesota, Dec 31, 2018] in the Mano River Union. Both the DRC and Uganda also saw deaths from the deadly Ebola infection. At the end of the Decade, the world

was hit by a new highly infectious virus – COVID 19 for which a new vaccine had to be developed. Though not as hard hit as Europe, African citizens at the lower end of the economic ladder were hard hit by the measures taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Lockdowns with children out of school and men out of work led to the escalation in violence against women and increase in the care burden, which has threatened to roll back many of the gains that had been made.

Notwithstanding, Member States have shown political will to navigate the challenges and take necessary steps towards gender equality. This report shows that new laws have been adopted/ passed. Progressive policies, strategies and programs that safeguard women’s health, provide them access to financial assistance, education and training for girls to negotiate the new normal, were put in place. For their part, the activism of civil society has shown determination in their efforts to reach out to authorities and advocate for GEWE in all its dimensions.

“The global agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment is evolving in line with the changing context.”

## KEY TRENDS

### A. General Background: Shifting Landscape

The information provided in the reports from AU Member States gives a picture of progressive shifts in the GEWE landscape. Governments have demonstrated growing recognition of the persisting gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) issues and demonstrated political will to take action, including through the adoption or ratification of continental and international instruments. However, as of February 2020, 13<sup>[</sup> The thirteen are Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Sahawari Democratic Republic, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. ] out of 55 AU Member States have yet to meet the deadline of 2020 to ratify the Protocol to The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). Three of them, Botswana, Egypt, and Morocco have neither signed nor ratified.

National Development Plans (NDP) have

increasingly recognized the centrality of women to their success. Most include action plans for implementing international instruments or law reform agendas pertinent to their own situations. Often a whole NDP pillar focuses on redressing gender disparities; in other cases, development plans mainstream gender in all activities. Across the board, policies that recognize the human rights of women and the importance of GEWE are prevalent. Laws pertaining to the right to land ownership, marriage, succession and donations were promulgated in countries like Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda and South Africa. Countries in contexts of conflict and political instability such as Guinea Bissau have passed laws and ratified legal instruments aimed at promoting women's rights.

Public awareness and sensitization efforts have yielded changes in perceptions and behavior. For example Angola reports more public openness to women in parliament and

leadership positions and growing interest among university students in doing research on gender. This is a growing practice in many universities on the continent which now have departments of gender studies. However, persistent barriers continue to be cultural and social norms, the mindset of privilege for men, and limited financing which constrain implementation of policies.

The Decade set out to promote a grassroots approach through combined top down and bottom up approaches. The reports indicate that national initiatives and policies are targeting existential injustice and historical exclusion of women. However, information on bottom up activities is limited. Except for in Ghana, Benin, Rwanda and Malawi, key policies have not been translated in local or simplified language so that women at the community level understand their rights and empower themselves with knowledge.

## PART 2. MEMBER STATES' INITIATIVES TO ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 10 AWD THEMES

### A. THEME 1: FIGHTING POVERTY AND PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: "Attain decent work for women and equal opportunity in employment, promotion and movement towards parity at the work place; and create employment and services by supporting women entrepreneurs, particularly in informal sectors, including Small, Medium Enterprise (SME), Medium Enterprise (ME) and grow them to big businesses".*

Governments' major activities have been to establish funds to support women's enterprises; create safety nets; provide women with access to assets such as finance, and land; passed laws and policies that give women the right to equal pay for equal work, to decent work for domestic workers and the right to spaces in their workplaces for lactating mothers. Women's access to finance has increased through mechanisms such as M-Pesa and other mobile money platforms, and land certificates have made women more bankable. Employment opportunities increased with the establishment of women owned enterprises and export processing zones and infrastructure development.

Examples of the funds Governments have set up for women include Isande, MAFISA, AGRIBEE in South Africa, UWEZO, National Government Affirmative Action Fund, Women's Enterprise Fund in Kenya, the Damane Ilayki Fund in Morocco, the National Fund to support female entrepreneurs and the National Credit Fund for Women in Senegal. Mutual Fund for African Women (MUFFA) banks are private funds being promoted and facilitated in Cameroon and Guinea, among other countries. In January 2014, Algeria adopted Law No.15-01 – 4, creating a fund for divorced women with minor children. In September 2015, Mali established a Fund for Women's Empowerment and Child Welfare. The project supports women in Shea butter business, as well as other women owned businesses. There is also FAFE (Fonds d'Appui pour l'Autonomisation des Femmes}, which is a

“Attain decent work for women and equal opportunity in employment, promotion and movement towards parity at the work place; and create employment and services by supporting women entrepreneurs, particularly in informal sectors, including Small, Medium Enterprise (SME), Medium Enterprise (ME) and grow them to big businesses”

“Social safety nets which included cash transfers, protection for working mothers and street children, and sustenance to vulnerable households were instituted in Comoros, Kenya, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Senegal, South Africa and several other countries.”

fund financing women’s entrepreneurship in Mali. Niger created a Solidarity Fund for rural women to commemorate the International Women’s Day. Sierra Leone’s Government established the Women’s Empowerment Fund with seed money of approximately one hundred thousand dollars (US\$ 100.000). An assessment of the impact of these funds can offer valuable insights to the new decade of financial inclusion that reaches the grassroots.

In addition to the funds, regulations guaranteeing funds for women have increased the types of financing available to women. For example, the Citizens’ Empowerment Act in Zambia makes it an obligation for 30% of loans to go to women. In 2013, the Citizens’ Economic Empowerment Commission approved 554 Women’s Projects and 648 for men. In 2014, it approved 113 projects for women and 118 for men. The Central Bank of Sudan through its Social Development Bank dedicated a unit on women’s micro-finance and credit. Women represent more than 60% of the recipients of the services of the bank. The country also established a Union for Business Women (UBW).

Employment opportunities have been creating through affirmative action measures in government procurement instituted in Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria, and South Africa. Export processing zones and large infrastructure development projects in Ethiopia have opened up job opportunities for rural and urban dwellers as have Labor Intensive Public works in Ghana. Morocco passed an Act establishing decent work conditions for female and male domestic workers and a Legal code mandating equal pay for men and women performing the same duties. Kenya has passed regulation allowing breastfeeding at the workplace with resting rooms for lactating and pregnant moms. The private sector is encouraged to support this effort.

Social safety nets which included cash transfers, protection for working mothers and street children, and sustenance to vulnerable households were instituted in Comoros, Kenya, Ghana, Madagascar, Mauritius, Senegal, South Africa and several other countries. The LEAP program in Ghana disbursed emergency cash grants to 2,188 persons affected by disasters.

Support to women’s entrepreneurship has included training in product development and business management and compliance, access to loans, and exposure to markets. South Africa established the B’avumile Skills Development Program, which is a women’s empowerment initiative aimed at enhancing the talent and capacity of women in the arts, crafts, textiles and clothing sectors. It offers formal training to develop women enterprises’ expertise in production of marketable goods and creation of formal enterprises in the creative and clothing and textiles industry. In Benin, through two government initiatives – the Parakou Center of Arts and Crafts for Women (CAMFP), and the Women Business Promotion Center (WBPC) -- 843 business women were trained in business management and other managerial skills in 2014. Ghana reported that 56% of the beneficiaries of its Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty program (LEAP) are women with 80% of them having access to credit.

Governments have also used their own statutory bodies for mobilization, training and mentorship of women. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute (SMEDI) of Malawi, The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and the South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SWANEN) are being used as vehicles for programs to reach grassroots women. Angola has put the program for assistance to women in the municipalities which have more proximity to the target group. In 2018, Senegal set up a Ministry dedicated to the solidarity economy. Except for Malawi, the reports did not name CSOs or grassroots institutions that Member States have partnered with even though many civil society organizations have large programs for mobilization, training and mentorship of women in the informal sector.

The span of the AU Member States’ initiatives shows their attempts to address some of the multiple deprivations that women experience. However, the number of funds established show the significance afforded to initiatives that focus on access to finance. This emphasis will be intensified during the second Decade focused on Financial Inclusion. Training in entrepreneurial management, social safety nets and to a lesser extent employment creation complement access to finance. Despite these very commendable efforts,

poverty is multidimensional in nature and must be addressed by a greater combination of initiatives to combat its intersectional nature.

From this perspective the Multidimensional Poverty Indicators (MPI) developed by UNDP and the Oxford Human Development Initiative are instructive.[ The 2020 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-MPI>] The indicators are in aggregate health, education and standard of living, all of which are within the thematic areas of the Decade. Standard of living is further broken down into the conditions of life (housing, electricity, drinking water, sanitation, cooking fuel and assets). Some of the measures that have taken made a brave attempt at improving performance against the Multidimensional Poverty Indicators (MPI). However, housing, electricity, drinking water, sanitation, and cooking fuel are largely the responsibility of governments and to a lesser extent the private sector. Concerted efforts towards putting these basic utilities in place

must complement the emphasis on finance and funds in order to accelerate reduction of poverty.

The 2020 MPI report shows that Liberia, Mauritania and Sierra Leone were the three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with the fastest reductions in MPI. The country with the fastest reduction in MPI is Sierra Leone where between 2013 and 2017 the percentage of people in multidimensional poverty fell from 74% to 58% with the increase in school attendance as well as provision of cooking fuel, water, sanitation, electricity and housing achieved during the Ebola period. Mauritania also achieved reductions in MPI largely driven by indices of education, drinking water and sanitation between 2011 and 2015. Liberia's reduction in MPI from 2007 to 2013 was driven by school attendance and assets.

## **B. THEME 2: AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

According to the AWD, Member States are required to: "achieve food security and fight hunger; increase women's access to agricultural land, farm inputs, credit, technology,

“Key achievements in agriculture during the Decade have included expanding women's access to markets; water; land, through the system of land certificates; subsidies and agricultural inputs.”

extension services, Irrigation and access to water through water harvesting, boreholes, etc.; link women to markets through value addition of their products, including agro-based supply chain, creating new markets for their produce including organic food stuffs.”

Key achievements in agriculture during the Decade have included expanding women's access to markets; water; land, through the system of land certificates; subsidies and agricultural inputs. Governments have also mobilized women into cooperatives for value addition and established funds for easy access to women.

Angola, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe, all mentioned activities to support access to local or global markets for women producers. A good example is the large USAID funded program in Kenya that exposes women's products to global markets through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA),

Though not mentioned in the reports, several UN agencies contribute to national efforts through research, policy analysis, training, capacity building for women traders' associations, and advocacy, with respect to women in cross border trade. These agencies are UN Women, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to name a few.

Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda have enhanced women's control over assets through the practice of issuing land certificates to women. Ethiopia reports that currently, 11 million women have land holding certificates, of which 9.11 million are jointly held with their husbands, while 2 million certificates holders are widows. To date, 60 percent (60%)

of rural women own land. In Ethiopia from the total beneficiaries of the housing program in the capital city, 54 percent (54%) are women. In regional states, 47 percent (47%) of the beneficiaries are women. In rural areas, 66 percent (66%) of women own a house, either alone or jointly with their husbands.

Rwanda amended its Land Law to allow 50 percent

(50%) equal ownership of land for women as collateral security for loan. In Zambia, the Government, through Circular number ML/101/1 of 2009, directed all councils to allocate 30 percent of land to women. In Mali, through the Agriculture Policy of 2015, 15% of national land is set-aside for women. The Government is also in the process of strengthening the policy and legal frameworks on land to ensure women's increased access to customary land, and security of tenure.

Though not giving land certificates, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe all mention activities to ascertain women's access to land. Some of these activities include studies on women's access to land, law reform policies and strategies to guarantee access to land.

Provision of training, technology and subsidies such as seeds, fertilizers, and tractors are reported in Benin, Burkina Faso, DRC, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Republic

“Several UN agencies contribute to national efforts through research, policy analysis, training, capacity building for women traders' associations, and advocacy, with respect to women in cross border trade.”

of Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo and Zimbabwe. Eswatini, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal are among countries that mobilize women into cooperatives for value addition and processing.

Burkina Faso unveiled a statue symbolizing commitment to the campaign to “Retire the Hoe to the Museum” and build momentum for this important promise of Agenda 2063. According to FAO, in 2005, more than 70% of the farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa use only handheld tools. Usage of tractors varies from 4% in Central to 25% in Southern Africa. [ FAO 2019 A Regional Outlook on Gender and Agrifood systems ] Ghana reported that it’s Women in the Driving Seat (WiDS) project which trained women to drive tractors gained employment for 200 women on commercial farms, training institutions and agriculture mechanization service enterprise centers between 2018 and 2019.

Specialized funds have also been set up in this sector, such as the Comprehensive Agricultural

Support Program (CASP), The South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) and the AgriBEE Fund which draws from the AgriBEE Empowerment Charter in South Africa; the Youth Enterprise with Innovation (Youth-WIN) in Nigeria; UWEZO in Kenya; Solidarity Fund for rural women in Niger; the Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria (G-WIN) Fund are examples of funds that have been set up.

Eswatini and Senegal have allocated percentages of ground water specifically for women in agriculture. Ethiopia, the Congo and Morocco are making safe and clean water available within easy reach of women.

Member States have also been implementing initiatives in the area of agriculture and food security which are land, water, finance and agriculture subsidies in line with the Malabo Declaration of 2014 and Agenda 2063. The Declaration of 2015 as the Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063 called for Member States to ensure that women access 30% of

documented certified land and encouraged financial institutions to ensure that 50% of the finances are dedicated for women. In nine countries in Africa; Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe women own more than 30% of documented land rights. [ FAO 2019 A Regional Outlook on Gender and Agrifood systems ] Gender gaps in land ownership are narrower in Eastern and Southern Africa than in West and Central Africa. [ Ibid page 48 ] More states will have to step up efforts in order to achieve the target of 30% by 2025.

Africa is committed to halving poverty by 2025 through inclusive agriculture growth and transformation. Meeting the targets of the various commitments made with respect to gender equality in agriculture and food security requires closing some of the critical gaps that now exist. Stricter attention to enhancing the capacity to apply rigorous gender analysis in the preparation of National Agriculture Investment Plans and all major agriculture plans and policies will be required.

### C. THEME 3: WOMEN’S HEALTH, MATERNAL MORTALITY AND HIV & AIDS

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: “improve women’s health; reduce maternal mortality; and address HIV/AIDS.”*

Several countries increased access to and coverage of ARTs and lowered the prevalence of PMTCT. Member States reduced MMR and took initiatives to strengthen adolescent SRH care and prevent child pregnancies and other forms of violence against children. Some countries increased and improved infrastructure in health facilities and in schools to make them girl friendly.

The maternal mortality rate has fallen by nearly half in Eastern and Southern Africa [ World Health Organization, UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank, Trends in Maternal Mortality: 2000 to 2017 WHO, Geneva, 2019.]. Progress in Western and Central Africa has been slow. Conversely, the prevalence for HIV/AIDS is lower in West and Central Africa than in Eastern and Southern Africa. Across the board, HIV prevalence rates for women are higher than those for men. Several countries have increased access and coverage to ARTs and PMTCT. Namibia reported that about 94% of antenatal care facilities offer PMTCT services, resulting in increased access by women and girls. Approximately 80 percent of estimated HIV positive expectant women are currently receiving antiretroviral medication. Togo reported that since May 2011, its national program on maternal health care has significantly improved by 90 percent. The reduction in maternal mortality in Member States resulted from increased health care workers across the country; increased deliveries in health facilities and specialized hospitals for women; more waiting homes for expectant mothers; free and subsidized health care for pregnant women; wide coverage of family planning services; widespread use of contraceptives; and safe abortion and post abortion care.

Rwanda appointed voluntary Community Health Workers, who promote the use of mosquito bed nets by pregnant women. The country is among the top ten countries in

the world, which made significant progress in reducing child and maternal mortality rates. Rwanda’s health system has become a best practice model in Africa. The country has also enacted Article 165 in its new Penal Code, providing exemption from criminal liability for abortion in certain circumstances, such as incest, rape, forced marriage, or if the pregnancy threatens the woman’s health. In 2012, Mauritius amended the Criminal Code of 1838, to legalize the termination of pregnancy in very specific circumstances, such as where the pregnancy endangers the life of the mother or resulting from rape, or that of a female less than 18 years of age. Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia have done the same.

Schools for husbands in Senegal, Guinea and Niger as well as the Fatherhood and Care program in Mozambique are reporting success in promoting positive attitudes of men to involvement in SRH.

Improved adolescent healthcare incorporated menstrual management,



with the supply of free sanitary pads for girls in Kenya, South Africa, Eswatini and Namibia. Several other countries have adopted policies to provide sex education in schools; prevent teenage pregnancies, child marriage and violence against children. Furthermore, Liberia has included sections on family planning, teenage pregnancy, as well as drug and substance abuse in the school curricula. In 2012, the country provided family planning services to 96,755 new users (women of reproductive age 15 – 49 years), compared to 65,812 in 2010, excluding those who opted for condoms.

Digital platforms are also being used to get much needed information to women about their reproductive health. In February 2014, South Africa launched the National Family Planning Campaign under the theme “My Responsibility, My Choice, Our Future – I Choose Dual Protection”, to provide information and services about various methods that prevent HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI’s) and unwanted pregnancies. In addition, South Africa’s National Department of Health introduced “MomConnect Programme”, which is an initiative to use cell phone SMS technology to register every pregnant woman in the country and provide an estimated 1.2 million pregnant women with free pre-natal health care information.

Ethiopia has also experienced good results from trying new approaches to health care delivery.

In Mauritius, One Stop Shops Women Centers were launched in 2012, to create awareness and education on women’s health and on HIV/AIDS, with support of NGOs.

In Guinea, in September 2011, the Government announced implementation of a special program for free cesarean surgeries, which has contributed to the reduction of the maternal mortality rate from 982 per 100,000 live births in 2011, to 724 per 100,000 births in 2015.

Namibia, Niger Sierra Leone and Sudan have adopted laws and put in place Road Maps on sexual health of women and HIV/AIDS to accelerate the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality. Sudan also adopted Road Map, the

### Box 2: The Ethiopia HEP program

*An innovative approach in responding to basic health needs in Ethiopian communities is the Health Extension Program (HEP). This program aims to reduce child and maternal mortality by deploying 38,000 health workers to promote 16 health packages consisting of disease prevention and control, family health, hygiene and environmental sanitation, health education and communication. The mode of delivering interventions is mainly house to house outreach visits working closely with women and youth grassroots organizations, traditional associations, schools and women’s development groups. The impact of the program has been an increase in health infrastructure and in health personnel. As a result, ante natal care has reached 74%, post-natal care now 34%, skilled delivery 49.8%, institutional delivery 47.5%, maternal mortality has reduced to 412/100,000 and child mortality is 55/1000.*

National Reproductive Health Policy and the National Strategy for the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation. Niger adopted a law on sexual health of women and an HIV/AIDS Road map (2006–2015) to accelerate the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality. Eswatini adopted the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy in 2013 and a Reproductive Health Strategic Plan 2008–2015. The country has strengthened integration of PMTCT with the provision of Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) services. It has also included Sexual Health Education in schools and in the Education Policy.

Some countries such as Angola, Benin, DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, South Africa, and

Sudan are on the path towards achieving universal health coverage, increasing basic social services, and improving the infrastructure of health facilities.

In response to the impact of global pandemic on women, fifteen (15) countries reported on the gender impact of COVID-19 which arrived amidst economies already experiencing the devastating effects of drought, cyclones, floods and persistent poverty. South Africa reported that domestic violence was exacerbated as a result of stay at home orders in normally small confined spaces in high density areas, strained health systems being unable to prioritize victims of violence over COVID patients. High increases in GBV were reported in most countries.

Djibouti, Guinea Bissau, Mauritius, Mozambique, Ghana, Nigeria and several other countries reported high unemployment and loss of income and productive capacity of women due to the collapse of various sectors of the economy.

The severity of the impact of COVID-19 has led governments to set up national and decentralized emergency plans and structures for the coordination of their COVID-19 response. Other responses have included food to vulnerable sectors of the population, free water and electrical supplies for limited periods, wage assistance to the self-employed in Burkina Faso and Mauritius, and budgetary increases to the social welfare budgets in other countries.

#### D. THEME 4: EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: “achieve parity in education at secondary and tertiary levels and achieve higher retention rates for girls; increase literacy levels of women through adult education; as well as contribution of women scientists and information, communication and technology.*

“Ethiopia has experienced good results from trying new approaches to health care delivery.”

Notable achievements have been realized in universal primary education but access to secondary education and tertiary levels remain a challenge. Member States are putting in place programs to enhance retention and safeguard transition from primary to secondary levels. Improved girl-friendly infrastructure in schools, increased number of schools, transport assistance, scholarship for girls from poor families, sanitary dignity, and strict measures against GBV and sexual harassment are some of the measures being put in place. TVET, STEM and digital education are emerging areas of work. Much focus has been hitherto put on gender parity at the primary level. According to UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 19 African countries (Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Burundi, Madagascar, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Zimbabwe, Gabon, and Tunisia) have achieved parity at the primary level [UNESCO Institute of

Statistics]. Notwithstanding this important achievement, parity at the secondary and tertiary levels remains a formidable challenge. Only one country, Namibia, reported gender parity at the secondary and tertiary levels though South Africa and Botswana are likely to obtain the same in the very near future. Other Southern African countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe are showing notable progress in this area. Zimbabwe's GPS on education is 0.94, not far from parity; the country has the highest availability of textbooks in Africa, achieved through sustained investment. [McKenzie Global Institute. 2019. The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Africa. McKenzie and Company. p25]

In Zambia, the Government is implementing several programs aimed at girls' school retention at the secondary level. These include introduction of a re-entry policy for girls after giving birth; bursary scheme for girls, orphans and vulnerable children; safe houses for girls; weekly boarding schools which enables children from

distant places to attend school; and, fee quotas where female students are enrolled at reduced fee. Other countries (Algeria, Benin, Egypt, Namibia, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, are among the countries that have instituted similar policies in order to promote transition from one stage of education to another and to improve and sustain girls' performance at all levels of education at all levels of education.

In South Africa, the "Talent Development Strategy" supports youths to enter into Science and Mathematics Olympiads, which is a competition for students. The program reserves 60 percent of the place for girls' learners/students who are in grades 10-12. Between 2011 and 2013, 70 percent of the participants in the Talent Development Programme, were girls. In Senegal, government aims to integrate apprenticeship programs into the professional and technical training system by supporting professional training for women and promotion of girls' access to the industrial and

technological sectors. Niger is initiating programs to increase access to and mastery in STEM education and the digital culture. Kenya has Annual Scientific Camps of Excellence for Girls in STEM and the Presidential Digital Talent program that places girls in internships. Uganda also has a Presidential Initiative on Science and Technology which raised intake of girls in this field from 28.5% in 2007 to 34.6% in 2016.

In Rwanda it was estimated that 82 percent of boys between the ages of 16 and 18 enrolled in primary 6 in 2015 were still in school in 2017 compared to only 68% of girls for the same period. [Mastercard report p146] Rwanda adopted the Girl's Education Policy and its Strategic Plan in 2008, which was revised in 2015. The Policy requires that separate sanitation rooms should be provided for girls in all schools; counselors be appointed in primary schools; and sensitization campaigns on menstruation should be organized for boys to create awareness that it is a normal thing for girls. The "Keeping Girls in School" initiative

“ECOWAS Merit program which is one regional program that supports Member States to accelerate the achievement of parity at all levels of education.”

established Girls Clubs in schools for mentoring and peer support, savings clubs which promote independence and self-esteem. [Ibid. p. 146] Rwanda has increased women's participation in private higher education to 53.38 percent (53.38%) as compared to 45.30 percent (45.30%) for men in 2012. The country is providing mentorship programs for women and girls to enhance their participation in male-dominated fields, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Eighty-one (81) women in Senegal and women in Niger have benefitted from the ECOWAS Merit program which is

one regional program that supports Member States to accelerate the achievement of parity at all levels of education. The program is open to qualified nationals (including graduate students, researchers, lecturers, and staff) of ECOWAS Member States who will be admitted for Masters or PhD degree programs at any one of the following three universities: University of Lagos, Nigeria, University of Ibadan, Nigeria and Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

The emphasis on parity in secondary education in this thematic area is justified in that this is where girls begin

to face multiple distractions and challenges. The onset of puberty, the cost of secondary education which is not yet universal in most countries, the need for menstrual management support, poor infrastructure in schools that are not girl-friendly, poor infrastructure with respect to transportation and electricity, sexual harassment from male students and teachers, early pregnancy, are only some of the hurdles that confront a 10 – 17 year old girls who want to complete their secondary education. Underlying negative cultural norms and harmful traditions should be added to the aforementioned list. For some societies, the arrival of puberty indicates a girl's readiness for child-bearing and marriage. Poverty creates a perception among parents and other community members that views girls as an economic asset who can fill the gap for domestic work or indulge in demeaning income earning activities to supplement family income.

It is no wonder then that the transition from primary

school to secondary school is a delicate one, resulting in high attrition rates. Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's lowest enrolment in secondary school standing at 40% in 2010.[ UNESCO 2010. Global Education Monitoring Report (659)] Fewer than 90 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys at the lower secondary level, and that number drops to less than 85 at the upper secondary level. Member States' efforts work to mitigate some of these challenges. A major thrust is required to address the multi-faceted burden that affects adolescent girls.

Few countries reported on their achievements in the area of literacy for women yet Sub-Sahara Africa is the region with the second lowest literacy rate in the world at 50% in 2010 projected to reach 55% in 2015[ Ibid]. According to UNESCO the literacy rate for women in Sub-Sahara Africa improved the most. The widest gender disparities in youth literacy occur in West and Central Africa at the expense of female youth.[ <https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/gender-disparities->

in-education/] Algeria reported that According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey conducted in 2013, 90.7% of women between the ages of 15 and 24 are literate. Burkina Faso has put in place a National Literacy Accelerator Program, Togo reports that it has put in place various policies and programs to promote literacy. Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic opened 9 literacy and pre-rehabilitation centers for women and girls within the framework of partnership between the Ministry of National Education – represented by the National Bureau for Literacy and Adult Education – and UNICEF.

“Sub-Sahara Africa is the region with the second lowest literacy rate in the world at 50% in 2010 projected to reach 55% in 2015.”

## E. THEME 5. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

According to the AWD, Member States are required to: *“Identify women’s role in mitigating climate change, as custodians of the environment, making sure they benefit from the new global packages to fight climate change”.*

Member States expressed cognizance of the role of women in mitigating climate change particularly identifying agricultural practices, water, soil and waste management. A few Member States are raising awareness about the application of harmful industrial products such as plastics, and the climatic effects of deforestation and energy choices. Additionally, fast growing urbanization coupled with outdated sewage systems and poor access to clean and safe water were mentioned. The reports noted that resilience to natural disasters and deforestation is cause for concern. Emerging use of climate smart agriculture and modern energy sources are gradually increasing.

A variety of roles that women play in mitigating climate change were identified in the reports. However, programs and policies to enhance these roles are still few and far between. The reports indicate that this is an emerging area for most Member States who reported efforts to mainstream gender in environmental programs.

In Africa, the proportion of women affected by climate-related crop changes could range from 48 percent in Burkina Faso to 73 percent in the Congo.[ Senay Habtezion. 2012. Overview of linkages between gender and climate change Policy Brief 1 page 3]

Resilience to drought, deforestation and other natural disasters and risk management featured in policies and programs in Angola, Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique Namibia, Niger, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Kenya and Mauritius reported awareness campaigns on environmental hazards, measures to promote climate smart agriculture, and the Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and Biogas initiative that has benefited more than 15,000

### Box 3: UN Women Statement on Gender and Development

*“Finally, women’s knowledge, agency and collective action has huge potential to improve resource productivity, enhance ecosystem conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and to create more sustainable, low-carbon food, energy, water and health systems. Failure to capitalize on this would be a missed opportunity. Women should not be viewed as victims, but as central actors in moving towards sustainability.”*

*– Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women*

women. Uganda saw an increased number of grid users. Thirty-four countries in Africa have reported bans on single use plastics [www.greenpeace.org/africa/en/blogs/11156/34. May 19,2020]. Importing or manufacturing single use plastics in Kenya can earn a fine of \$40,000. [Ibid]

Senegal reported women's participation in the implementation of the Great Green Wall of the Sahara - a project to plant a wall of trees across Africa at the southern edge of the Sahara Desert as a means of preventing desertification. Women in Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, and several countries are actively involved in the development of green energy initiatives such as biogas and energy efficient stoves.

Nigeria and Togo mentioned rising urbanization and the lack of adequate sanitary facilities to meet the health and sanitation needs of women and girls. No programs were mentioned in this regard.

Egypt implemented a number of activities to enhance women's role in protecting the environment. For instance, it organized twelve (12) cultural seminars for raising awareness on women and girls' roles in protecting the environment, reducing the use of chemicals in agriculture and recycling of agro waste and desertification. The Government has also developed a Gender and Climate Change Strategy, which seeks to ensure gender issues are captured in climate change mitigation efforts.

South Africa's Women in Water Program enables women to compete in water conservation and climate change. The four strategic areas of the competition include: water conservation; adopt a river; community development; and, education and awareness. The country also reported that the Working on Fire (WoF) program employs more than 5,000 young women and men, who are fully trained as veld and forest fire fighters. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the personnel in this program are women (the highest level in any comparable fire service in the world)

Initiatives by Member States reflect the recognition of the importance of women in protection of the environment evidenced by the number of international norms that have been domesticated into national policies. These policies and programs seek to ensure the inclusion of women and the protection of their rights in environmental initiatives in line with global commitments. However, the initiatives make limited acknowledgement of women's agency and voice and of the vast repository

of knowledge that women have on environmental management. Zimbabwe emphasized in its report that climate change policies must be owned by the communities and be gender sensitive.

The acknowledgement of women's role in environmental management would improve policy making and implementation efficiency. It should be remembered that the Nobel

Peace Prize, given to the first black African woman, Prof. Wangari Mathai, was in recognition of her work in environmental management.

## F. THEME 6. FINANCE AND GENDER BUDGETS

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: "Increase women's access to financial resources from Government budgets through gender budgeting, financial markets targeting economic stimulus packages and specialized funds from development partners to support Women projects aimed at empowering women economically, and mobilize resources through FAW, as well as mobilizing resources for the implementation of the Decade's activities in general, and priority areas in particular, to achieve the Decade's targets."*

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is becoming mandatory and being made more effective in its application in most countries. Other homegrown approaches are improving gender mainstreaming in programs and projects.

An increasing number of countries reported applying Gender Responsive Budgeting. These included Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Beyond financing of sector focused programs, efforts to establish institutional arrangements and build capacity to support gender mainstreaming in public sector budgeting and planning processes are being undertaken. Interventions have been led by Ministries of Gender and Finance, including gender budgeting training for staff responsible for resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation in Benin and Liberia.

Ethiopia reported providing such training at the federal and regional levels, in addition to developing sectoral gender responsive resource allocation guidelines. Rwanda requires spending entities to submit gender budget statements along with their sector budgets. [African Union Commission. Mid-Term Status Update Report of the African Women's Decade: 2010-2015. December 2015.] Ugandan ministries are required to obtain a certificate from the Equal Opportunities Commission without which their budget paper will not be considered.

A growing trend is the creation of special funds for women entrepreneurs in agriculture and other sectors. Morocco reported the establishment of the Damane Ilayki Fund that provides preferential

“Initiatives by Member States reflect the recognition of the importance of women in protection of the environment evidenced by the number of international norms that have been domesticated into national policies.”

guarantees to help women to establish SMEs. This program has mobilized DH18.5 million in credit for women to create new businesses, since March 2015. The government also set up the Maghreb Moubadarat Program providing financial and technical support to civil society organizations that provide microcredit to women entrepreneurs and business cooperatives. Senegal reported the implementation of similar programs, including a Rapid Entrepreneurship for Youth and Women (DER) established in December 2017 by Presidential decree and valued at CFA 30 billion. Zambia's programs follow suit and include a mortgage facility and plans to establish a women's bank, as of 2015. [Ibid.]

The establishment of these funds marks an important beginning of an imperative shift toward sizeable investments in women that will accelerate gender equality and development. These programs should, therefore, be carried forward at exponentially larger scales in the new decade of financial inclusion recognizing that gender inclusiveness is a catalyst for growth and prosperity. In order for these investments to bear fruit, Member States must ensure that ministries of finance and central banks underpin their short, medium and long term fiscal and monetary policies with gender sensitive data collection and analysis that accurately projects the impact of these interventions on women and girls as well as men and boys. [ Sen, Gita. "Gender Mainstreaming in Finance Ministries." World development 28.7 (2000): 1379–1390. Web.

Benin, Cameroon, Djibouti, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. reported that some women's groups had accessed the AU Fund for African Women (AU-FAW). FAW resources were applied to implement interventions across the AWD themes such as the rehabilitation of a health facility and provision of agricultural inputs in Djibouti; the conduct of a gender mainstreaming study in Guinea Bissau; and interventions to reduce the maternal mortality rate in Nigeria.

Despite all these interventions, resource constraints headlined the challenges listed across AWD themes. The AWD Midterm Status Update in 2015 reported expressed concerns that mainstreaming measures have not translated into higher resource allocation to gender. Rwanda reported that GRB accounted for 49 percent of its national budget in the fiscal year 2015–2016. By contrast, Cameroon, DRC, Eswatini and Mali are among the countries that reported in 2020 that gender accounted for two percent of the national budget or less and highlighted the real tensions between GRB and addressing immediate economic constraints.

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#### Box 4: Targeting Women in Nigeria's Large-Scale Sectoral Projects

*Nigeria is using a direct support approach to gender budgeting with interesting results. Five million women farmers and agro-entrepreneurs have been supplied with mobile phones to be able to directly access information on agro inputs through e-wallet accounts. The SmartWoman project of the ICT Ministry has enabled two million women to get relevant information. Road rehabilitation is targeting 35 percent women participation in the public works sector and women are being made leaders in water and sanitation management. One third the pool of women and girls who have been awaiting VVF treatment will be relieved of their condition by the Ministry of Health. Government invested 3 billion Naira into this initiative.*

monetary policies with gender sensitive data collection and analysis that accurately projects the impact of these interventions on women and girls as well as men and boys. [ Sen, Gita. "Gender Mainstreaming in Finance Ministries." *World development* 28.7 (2000): 1379–1390. Web. ]

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of Rwanda adopted the National Policy against Gender-Based Violence. Sierra Leone enacted in 2012, the Sexual Offences Act, the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and the National Referral Protocol on Gender-Based Violence. Eswatini also enacted legal instruments, such as the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill 2015, to eradicate violence and abuse perpetrated against women and girls. Zimbabwe reported establishing an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Rape and Rehabilitation and a National Action Plan against Rape and sexual abuse of girls.

Mauritius launched Victims Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy in November 2013 which galvanizes efforts to denounce gender-based violence, sexual abuse and harassment at the workplace.

Benin reported that, in 2012, a national law on Violence Against Women (VAW) was translated into local languages and popularized at local levels. Ghana reported that existing legal

Framework and policies such as the Domestic Violence Act 2007, Act 732, the Human Trafficking Act 2015, Act 694, and the Children’s Act 1998, Act 560 are being translated into voice format in eleven (11) Ghanaian languages for easy access by the general public. Child and Family Welfare Policy 2015, Justice for Children Policy 2015, National Aging Policy 2010, School Feeding Policy 2015.

A variety of structures to address the issue of violence against women and promote peace and security have been put in place. Kenya has established an Anti FGM Board, Ethiopia has set up 35 peace forums in

institutions of learning, 50% of community mediators in Rwanda are women. Benin and Uganda have men’s groups working to encourage their peers to end violence. Structures such as district and national SGBV committees, Listening Centers and One Stop Centers are in place in Benin, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Eswatini and South Africa. DRC has set up Dialogue Centers. A few of the One Stop Centers offer a variety of services including psychosocial support, legal counseling, court preparing, and access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), pregnancy test for women. A National Peace and Reconciliation Commission

## G. THEME 7. PEACE AND SECURITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: “work with the African Union Peace and Security Department (PSD), the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Panel of the Wise in relation to United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889, with particular focus on Violence against Women (VAW), peace building and reconstruction.”*

Laws to criminalize SGBV and structures to care for victims are prevalent in the reports. Women’s entry into the military and police reflect a growing commitment to gender responsive security sector reform. Thirty (30) Member States and 5 regional organizations have adopted NAPs for UNSCR 1325. Uganda and Nigeria are into their third NAPs.

During the Decade laws and policies were adopted to address crimes against women and punish perpetrators. Several countries have Domestic Violence Acts, Sexual Offenses Acts and National Policies against GBV. Namibia and Tunisia reported National Plans to combat trafficking in persons. In 2011, the Government also adopted the National Policy against Gender-Based Violence. In 2011, the Government

“Laws to criminalize SGBV and structures to care for victims are prevalent in the reports. Women’s entry into the military and police reflect a growing commitment to gender responsive security sector reform.”

helped Zimbabwe bridge the transition into a new government. Ethiopia established a Ministry of Peace headed by a woman minister.

Support to survivors in the form of Safe Houses, assistance with re-establishing livelihoods legal aid and healthcare is reported by many of the Member States. Liberia reported that county hospitals established Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) Units and trained 173 health workers and 120 health care providers in the clinical management of rape. Ninety General Community Health Volunteers (GCHVs) have been trained in the referral of SGBV cases, while 325 community members from 12 communities were trained to provide psychosocial services to SGBV survivors and to provide referrals to health facilities.

Similarly, in Zambia health facilities offer treatment, care and support to GBV survivors, as part of the essential sexual and reproductive health packages. Business

skills are offered to GBV survivors to enhance their economic well-being. The Government also established a national and district coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act.

Many of these initiatives during the Decade contributed to the mitigation of the effects of violence against women. Many legal instruments have been adopted to deter and punish perpetrators. Support structures for victims of violence have been established by governments and by other non-state actors. Member States however expressed deep concern that despite their unrelenting efforts, violence against women continues unabated and shows signs of increasing under certain conditions of conflict and pandemics such as the COVID-19. Some gains have been made in the area of conflict resolution in places like Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Angola. However, conflict and violent extremism still exist in several countries.

Rwanda took ownership of

the 2011 Kigali International Declaration (KICD) on the Role of Security Organs in ending Violence against Women and Girls.

In combating discriminatory cultural and religious norms and practices, Mauritania launched, in November 2014, the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage. Senegal reported that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) prevalence was reduced from 28 percent in 2005 to 25 percent in 2014. Togo initiated the national program to fight against teenage marriages and pregnancies in formal school settings.

Mauritania however reported that the status of rural women is generally poor, due to various factors such as genital mutilation; early marriages; polygamy; divorce; marital and sexual violence; illiteracy; low participation in decision-making processes; lack of access to social and legal protection; and, limited awareness of economic and social rights. Similarly, despite undertaking various steps in the implementation of regional

and international norms on sexual and gender-based violence, Mali has reported that it has not yet domesticated the relevant norms into its national laws or policies against SGBV. The country further noted that some socio-cultural realities will need to be taken into consideration before the legal frameworks are harmonized and domesticated into the national legislations. The articulations of these two countries aptly reflect challenges expressed in many of the other country reports.

Togo mentioned the need to provide training and protection for refugee women an important matter not mentioned in any of the other reports. This issue might be taken care of in the NAP reports given its relevance to the Peace and Security Agenda.

On women's participation in the military, Nigeria established various mechanisms to enlist women to the military. From 2010 to 2013, the number of enlisted female regular combatant officers rose from 20 to 50, not

counting women deployed to peacekeeping missions within and outside of Nigeria. Women are 17.8% of the total number of military observers on UN peace keeping missions in Ghana.

In Uganda with the policy of including women in the military, by 2019 Uganda reports one female Lieutenant General and 8 Colonels. Women in Uganda participate in peace keeping missions. The Uganda People's Defense Force has a fully functioning gender unit. In Guinea Bissau, there are efforts to improve the living conditions and status of military women and police, so that they enjoy the same rights as men as well as are protected from GBV in the workplace[ Office of the Special Envoy on WPS Guinea Bissau SSR Background Note (2019) accessed at <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Country-Profiles/Guinea-Bissau-SSR-BackgroundNote#5Ev>]

According to a 2019 report by the Office of the Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security, women's participation in the military

is low but growing at a slow pace.[ African Union. 2020. Women Peace and Security in Africa, Report on Implementation 2019. Office of the Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security. p,34] The military arena does not have the same visibility as political participation and therefore has not been subjected to the same visibility as parliaments or cabinet positions. DR Congo, Senegal and Rwanda reported 4% female personnel in the military while Kenya and Mali reported 8%. Similarly, women's representation in law enforcement, including policing is low.

Mandated quotas for recruiting women into the police have been put in place in Uganda and Angola. A growing number of Family and Child Protection Units have been established in the police units in several countries.

Several states are conducting training of the military, police and civilians in the prevention of SGBV in times of conflict.

During the AWD, the

women peace and security sector gained tremendous visibility. Violence against women and incessant conflicts with brutal effects on women's bodies, their livelihoods, and their psychological wellbeing have stimulated the imperative for urgent measures to create an environment where women can enjoy their right to peace. In 2014 two decisions of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) are noteworthy with respect to achievements of the Decade. First was the appointment by the Chairperson of the AU Commission of a Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security to be situated in the Department of Peace and Security. The second was a decision taken by the Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women's Affairs calling on the Peace and Security Council to establish the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation which was then established in 2017 under the nomenclature, FemWise-Africa. The achievements associated with these two decisions demonstrate acknowledgement of the

agency, role and strategic importance of women's contribution in response to the malaise of conflict plaguing the continent. [<https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/final-concept-note-femwise-sept-15-short-version-clean-4-flyer.pdf>]

Since its official establishment in 2017, FemWise-Africa has trained women mediators involved in track 1, 2 and 3 mediation.

The Office of the Special Envoy has extensively engaged in supporting and monitoring the preparation of National Action Plans (NAP) for UNSCR 1325 through a Continental Results Framework. Cote d'Ivoire adopted the first in 2007. As of 2020, 30 countries have adopted UNSCR 1325 NAPs and related resolutions. Twenty-four of the NAPs were adopted during the African Women's Decade. See Annex 1. West Africa has the largest number of countries (13) that have adopted NAPs. SADC and the Maghreb sub-regions are the latest regions to come on board with Angola and Mozambique

in 2017/2018 and Tunisia in 2018. Uganda is leading in that it has developed its third generation NAP. Five more countries have adopted WSP NAPs making the total number to 29.

The Office of the Special Envoy reported that the inclusion of gender parity and gender dimensions in the nearly 20 peace negotiations in Africa were met with persistent challenges.[ Obid. Page 35] FemWise also concurs with this assessment.

Conflict is by far one of the biggest challenges facing Africa. Peace is a fundamental requisite for development. In Ethiopia, the House of Federation has developed the National Gender Mainstreaming Guideline to ensure women's full participation in all stages of peace processes, including in negotiation and implementation of peace agreements. An important lesson that has come through the work of the Special Envoy in tracking the NAPs is the localization of Action Plans such as the District plans in Uganda. It is becoming clearer that

the tree of peace begins from the ground and grows upwards.

The Campaign to Silence the Guns by 2020 has been extended as a rolling objective until 2030. In this regard, the Campaign provides an

overarching framework for the continued advocacy for the integration of women and their needs in peace processes in Africa. The AU itself has put in place important structures to ensure women are brought to the center of these efforts.

#### H. THEME 8. GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL PROTECTION

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: "Jointly with the Department of Political Affairs, the Women, Gender and Development Directorate will support women's participation in political and electoral processes in countries undergoing elections during the Decade, as well as in the implementation of gender issues in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and National Action Plans. Jointly with the Office of the Legal Counsel and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Commission), achieve universal ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and its domestication".*

Forty-two (42) states have now ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Thirteen states (Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar,

“The Office of the Special Envoy reported that the inclusion of gender parity and gender dimensions in the nearly 20 peace negotiations in Africa were met with persistent challenges.”



Morocco, Niger, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan) have yet to ratify. The three states have neither signed nor ratified the Protocol are Botswana, Egypt and Sudan. However, laws and services to protect and safeguard the rights of women from a plethora of violence and abuse are now in place in many Member States. Steady increases are noted in the number of women in the judiciary and law enforcement

Almost all countries have constitutional provisions that protect the human rights of citizens against discrimination and abuse. Furthermore, countries reported the existence of laws, penal codes and policy declarations that are aimed at protecting women in their various diversities against violence, and protecting their rights to family planning, land, alimony, child support, and custody and citizenship of their children. Legal aid in respect of these rights is provided in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Women have gained the

right to protection against rape, including conjugal rape, harmful traditional practices and trafficking of their persons in many of the reporting countries. Rights to parity in terms of fiscal allocations, quotas and succession are emerging. South Africa has passed a Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) in 2000 which is a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. Eswatini has a Law reform unit to align outdated laws to the Constitution which is supreme.

Measures catering to victims and survivors of gender based violence include hotlines for victims to report abuse and receive counseling; listening centers and/or housing facilities to cater to the psychosocial needs of GBV victims and legal aid houses of justice to bridge gaps in women's access to justice. Madagascar, Benin, Togo, Morocco, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Eswatini, Zimbabwe and Mauritius reported having some of these measures in place.

Mauritius is the only country that reported establishing a National Code of Corporate Governance to ensure gender balance in the management of corporations and on Boards. However, Africa is ahead of other continents in terms of the representation of women on Boards. According to an ECA assessment of APRM, "women's representation in executive and management positions in the private sector is negligible. The private sector is notorious for not observing labor laws, particularly the International Labor Organization (ILO) regime on the rights of female workers. Government failures to enforce compliance with codes and standards in this sector have had unfortunate results." [ UNECA. 2016. Gender Equality and the Africa Peer Review Mechanism. Addis Ababa. P4]

With more women trying to enter electoral processes, persistent challenges such as low access to finance, beliefs in women's status as submissive to men are

beginning to re-surface. Political parties still prioritize vote getting to gender equality in their choice of candidates. Violence marks many electoral processes, making the participation of women dangerous exposing them to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. Financial constraints are a major constraint to women's participation in electoral processes.

Countries with affirmative policies in favor of gender equality have witnessed tremendous growth in women's participation in politics. The parity principle of the African Union has given birth to the 50/50 campaign or parity movement in several countries, particularly in SADC which adopted its Gender and Development Protocol stipulating that by 2015, 50% of decision making positions in the public and private sectors will be held by women. [ SADC. 2009. SADC framework for achieving gender parity in political and decision making positions by 2015] Twenty (20) countries in Africa now have policies on electoral quotas. [ Angola, Burkina

Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe; upcoming are Benin and Sierra Leone (Bauer, Gretchen)]

With respect to assistance to women to navigate some of these difficult terrains in electoral processes, Kenya reported providing financial assistance from a Democracy Trust Fund and a legal aid fund to young women aspirants. Nigeria established a \$600,000 trust fund to assist

women candidates with campaigns and related activities. The Malawi Electoral Commission took an initiative to give women and persons with disabilities discount on nomination fees and 25 percent discount for youth.

Nigeria ensures the appointment of women in the judicial system as did several other states such as Burundi who's 2018 Constitution specifies that at least 30% of the judiciary must be women.

Rwanda has set up a GBV management Information

“Countries with affirmative policies in favor of gender equality have witnessed tremendous growth in women's participation in politics.”

Center to capture data on GBV.

The reports showed no evidence of working with the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the Legal Counsel, the Gender Directorate or the Department of Political Affairs to achieve universal ratification of the Maputo Protocol. Herein lies an important issue emanating from the prevailing situation, the absence of synergy amongst powerful entities to achieve strategic goals. The ECA report [ UNECA. Op cite] on gender in the APRM highlights the lack of clear lines of interaction between

the Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights in Africa, the Special Envoy on Peace and Security, the Gender Directorate of the AU, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. This lack of synergy leads to the generation of a number of good reports that are not used optimally. Hence, despite excellent mechanisms, the gap between good policies and the existential realities of women does not narrow.

Challenges mentioned in the reports were lack of human and financial resources, the low participation of women in decision making, legal

systems rooted in tradition and religion that sustain the likelihood of gender discrimination as well as the lack of awareness among women and men about women's rights.

“The reports showed no evidence of working with the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the Legal Counsel, the Gender Directorate.”

Eswatini, Morocco and Niger have ratified laws establishing minimum requirements for women's representation in cabinet, legislative bodies and/or the judiciary, beginning at low thresholds and increasing them over time. Djibouti reports having shifted its 10 percent quota to 25 percent. Niger reports its intent to increase its 15 percent and 25 percent women's representation for elected and appointed office, respectively, to 25 percent and 30 percent.

The effectiveness of minimum representation requirements varies by country. Djibouti reported that its parliament has seen major progress from no women in 2000 to 13 percent in 2008, 11 percent in 2013 and 26.2 percent in 2018. Eswatini, however, reported that women's representation in parliament steadily decreased from 13 percent in 2008 to 2 percent in 2013 and 3 percent in 2018, one tenth of its 30 percent quota. Eswatini attributes this challenge, at least in part, to the attractiveness of its contingency measures whereby parliament mitigates subpar women's participation by nominating women to occupy seats designated to women representing each region. The measure has become more attractive to women candidates, who perceive it as easier and, therefore, opt to obtain those nominations rather than compete in general elections processes. Burundi also has such a measure that requires the Independent Electoral Commission to seek corrective measure through the Community Council in case the representation of women in parliament is not 30% as mandated by the new Constitution.

Angola, Eswatini, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, DRC, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe have adopted national policies on gender parity and equality. Sierra Leone's gender policy is pending adoption. Countries such as Morocco reported having also developed strategies to institutionalize gender equity in public service, while also revising human resources policies to accommodate women's maternity and family needs.

The results of these interventions have been mixed, across the branches of governments. In terms of women's parliamentary representation, Rwanda dropped below its 2017 level of 64 percent but maintained the lead globally

with 61.3 percent in 2018. [ Zipporah Masau. African Renewal Magazine. African Women in Politics: Miles to go before parity is achieved. Wwww.un.org. 8 April 2019.] While no other country has reached or surpassed parliamentary parity, demonstrated political will in that direction has resulted in notable increases. Women parliamentarians in countries such as Namibia, South Africa and Senegal have made steady strides throughout the decade to achieve between 35 and 46 percent representation of women in national parliaments. [ ibid.] These countries surpass the 2020 average for Sub-Saharan Africa of 24.4 percent, as reported by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. [ Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in Parliament: 1995-2020. ipu.org. 2020.]

Representation in executive branches also shows some progress, while also pointing to the low impact of legal and constitutional amendments on gender parity in the absence of the political will to enforce them. Ethiopia Rwanda and Seychelles top the list of countries with women

## I. THEME 9. WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: implement AU parity principle in line with AU gender policy and ensure targets for equal opportunity of women in decision making positions, in the political (legislative), judiciary and the executive are achieved.*

The AU gender policy established the following targets for gender parity: put in place policy, institutional mechanisms and processes by 2010 and strive to achieve parity in AU Organs, Member States and Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) by the year 2015.

Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, DRC, Kenya, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, and Togo are among the countries that have constitutional provisions and

have passed legislation, and adopted national policies mandating gender parity in executive, legislative and judicial branches, political party rosters as well as across the public sector. Sierra Leone is developing its gender parity law.

Quotas are a frequently cited approach to increase female representation in high level elected or appointed public office. Burundi, Congo, Djibouti,

holding 50 percent ministerial positions in 2019. Guinea Bissau joined them in 2020, up from three women out of 18 cabinet seats in 2019. South Africa also joined this list with a 50/50 cabinet in 2020, 14 men and 14 women. Kenya, Mali and Uganda showed ministerial representation amounted to 33.3 percent, 34.4 percent and 36.7 percent, respectively. Morocco, which has one female minister working with 17 male peers, was the lowest performer in this category behind Mauritius, Nigeria and Sudan, all of which fall just below 10 percent representation. [ Zipporah Masau. African Renewal Magazine.]

Despite the disparity across Member States in progress on the representation of women in the executive branch, African women's increasing cross sectoral reach shows promise. Early trends of women being the lone female and confined to overseeing social affairs, family, and gender and child protection ministries have given way to more women being appointed to portfolios of higher and more central national importance. Women ministers of finance increased by 52.9 percent; ministers of defense by 30 percent; and ministers of foreign affairs by 13.6 percent in 2019. [ ibid. ]

Shortcomings in one branch may not result in low representation in another, as the case of Mauritius shows. The country's judiciary has exceeded the parity requirement with women making up 54.5 percent and 66.7 percent of judges and magistrates, respectively. [ 14th Report of the African Union Member States on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). 2019] Lesotho, likewise, has women represent less than one quarter of each house of parliament and 2 out of 27 seats in cabinet [ Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in Politics: 2020. 1 January 2020.] but boasts of women holding the offices of Chief Justice, President of the Senate, Central Bank Governor and Speaker of the National Assembly. [ SDGEA 2019] Guinea Bissau, while achieving parity in cabinet, shows 13.7 percent women's participation in the lower house of parliament and no women in the upper house. [ IPU. Women in Politics: 2020.

Challenges cited in the reports include the lack of awareness among men and women about women's rights; low access to education; inadequate gender disaggregated data on

economic disparities; sexist traditional norms; the lack of a database of women qualified for decision-making roles; the lack of political will among the authorities to enforce gender quotas for political party nominations and create women friendly human resource policies in the public sector; limited funds to implement action plans promoting women's rights; and ineffective lobbying and engagement by NGOs and women's organizations to push for change.

Recommendations proposed by reporting countries for the way forward included the following: increase political will to enforce laws and policies protecting women's rights; adopt gender parity laws; improve the level of women's representation in the spheres of media and ICT; establish systems to collect and process data, monitor and evaluate progress on gender issues; and enhance information, sensitization and training efforts for women and men on women's rights.

“Member States are required to: energize the African Women's movement and mentor young women and men leaders and professionals, both in Africa and the Diaspora, to be champions on gender equality and women's empowerment.”

**J. THEME 10. MENTORING YOUTH (MEN AND WOMEN) TO BE CHAMPIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

*According to the AWD, Member States are required to: energize the African Women's movement and mentor young women and men leaders and professionals, both in Africa and the Diaspora, to be champions on gender equality and women's empowerment.*

A growing consciousness of the dangers of discrimination and injustice to women has spurred an urgency to accelerate the implementation of commitments made to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. At the policy level great strides have been made since the 1995 Beijing Conference, and further enhanced by the achievements of the African Women's Decade. Despite all, it is quite evident that there is still a long way to go. There is a new realization that women's agency and voice, though powerful, still requires the power of the state and non-state actors to reach the final goal. Men and youth have been identified as critical actors in the struggle for gender justice and GEWE. Lessons learned from past experience have brought about the realization that people, their consent, and support are the main drivers of change. Against this background, Member States were required to energize the African Women's

movement and mentor the new generation of activists, and promoters that will take on the baton from the present generation. To this effect, Member States have taken some actions as have the African Union, the United Nations and the African Women's movement to meet this requirement.

Efforts to mentor male youths as advocates for women's empowerment have focused heavily on the subjects of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health. Programs along these lines are the Kwakha Invodza and the MAVAA in Swaziland, South Africa's Khuluma Noda, a social wellness movement that equips young men and boys to be champions against GBV, and Ophenta in Mozambique which sensitized 16,000 young men on women's rights. Men Engage is a large global network that does similar programs in countries such as Togo, Eswatini and about 22 other African countries. Their work is conducted in partnership with Civil Society Organizations focused on women's empowerment and health; and Ministries of

Youth and Sports, Education and Health. Morocco set up health centers in schools and universities to conduct training and mentorship. Sierra Leone, Uganda, Djibouti, Comoros, DRC, Morocco, Senegal, Benin, Togo, Niger, Guinea Bissau, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Mauritius reported having youth mentorship programs. Such investments have had a multiplier effect, as they groom male champions to advocate for women's rights, protection and empowerment among their peers.

Other efforts include engaging key actors in society to end gender discrimination and harmful practices to women. Ethiopia reported on an extensive program to engage the whole community, including men and religious leaders, to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Through the strategy of community conversation managed by Community Dialogue Facilitators, 30 to 50 people from all strata of the community come together to discuss the adverse effects of FGM and to accelerate actions

to eliminate the practice. Ghana annually observes the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula in collaboration with Chiefs, Queen Mothers, Opinion and Religious Leaders. Egypt established a program for changing some unhealthy cultural and social practices by mobilizing media outlets, religious clerics and educational institutions. The program is also critical in that it provides youth with necessary guidance including denouncing violence against women and girls.

Mentorship of girls and women to see themselves as leaders, as persons deserving of rights, as having a voice worthy of respect is prevalent in the women's movement carried out by many civil society organizations. In Mali, the Network of Young Women was established to enhance leadership and development in the country. Senegal invested efforts in supporting a network of young girls in the Population & Development Network (PopDEV). Niger reported that it is implementing a "Teenagers" program

which aims at delaying early marriage for young girls. Ghana reports that 7,278 girls and boys have participated in a mentorship program to empower girls and build their leadership capacity nationwide. A database for all girls' groups in Ghana has been built to help identify them for support.

Zambia has also created the Boys to Men initiative that provides counseling and mentoring, group-based education and dialogue, and community conversation to promote gender equitable relationships between girls and boys, men and women. It also champions and models positive and non-violent relationships between men and women.

The HeForShe movement developed by UN Women is gaining momentum globally in its call for people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a force for gender equality. The campaign engages influential males to be gender champions who advocate among their peers for women's rights, protection and

empowerment. Zambia and Ghana reported launching the HeForShe solidarity campaign. Paramount Chief Kyungu of Malawi, an influential cultural leader; Ron Archer, a renowned transformative leadership coach from the United States of America; and Gilberto Macuacua, a media personality in Mozambique are professed HeforShes. President Macky Sall of Senegal, the Kabaka of Buganda, President Paul Biya of Cameroon, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya. President Ernest Bai Koroma of Sierra Leone, Malian musician Salif Keita are all HeforShe champions. This campaign has influenced reversal of social norms and values that

discriminate against women. Through the HeforShe solidarity campaign for gender equality initiated by UN Women, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E Paul Kagame, was selected among the global champions to advance the engagement of boys/men in the gender equality agenda.

In addition to mobilizing men, African women also mobilized themselves under the African Women's Leadership Network (AWLN) which was launched in New York in July 2017 under the auspices of the African Union Commission through the Office of the Special Envoy on Peace and Security, the United Nations through Office of the Deputy Secretary General and the Entity for Gender Equality, UN Women. The Patron of the Network is President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The Federal Republic of Germany sponsors the network and is set to mobilize resources from various development partners. The network has six pillars: governance and political participation, peace and security, finance and women's entrepreneurship, youth leadership, agriculture, and social mobilization. The youth pillar has energized a spiraling movement of young women who are making their voices heard in decision making organizations of the African Union. Mentorship is one of the key strategies of AWLN. In 2019 and 2020, at the invitation of the President of Kenya, H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, the AWLN Young leaders met in Nairobi to dialogue with former female presidents and eminent African women leaders.

As of September 2019, AWLN had launched 25 national chapters.

The creation of COATLA, the Council of African Traditional and Cultural Leaders in 2019 with support from UN Women and in collaboration with the UN system and CSOs provides an opportunity to mobilize traditional leaders who are gate keeps and mostly men to end child marriage, FGM and other discriminatory practices. The Council provides a one stop center for knowledge and resources for use by the AU and other relevant stakeholders.

These achievements are important testimony to the social capital that has been generated towards making gender

“The HeForShe movement developed by UN Women is gaining momentum globally in its call for people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a force for gender equality.”

equality and women's empowerment a reality in the hopefully not too distant future. The realization that laws may deter but do not necessarily change hearts and minds about long standing inbuilt beliefs and attitudes means the continent is headed in the right direction. Laws must undergird the important work of changing attitudes and behavior.

Member States proposed intensifying sensitization of young people about the legal instruments that promote and protect women and youth in order to equip them to denounce

GBV. The sensitization should also encourage the integration of young people into efforts and structures established to promote their health in order to ensure a change in attitudes and behaviors relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.

for the implementation of the AWD activities, while South Africa's mechanism operates from the office of the President. Many of these mechanisms are partnerships with NGOs, CSOs, academia and the private sector to institutionalize multi-sectoral coordination. Senegal has partnered with the Cheik Anta Diop University's gender lab to track and report on gender statistics. Some countries have taken steps to mainstream gender into data collection on all sectors. These include Togo, Madagascar, Cameroon and Morocco

Morocco, Cameroon and Madagascar, Nigeria and Guinea Bissau utilized the private and public media infrastructure to disseminate messaging on a wide range of issues from sexual and reproductive health to GBV issues, premature marriage and girls' right to education. This engagement has relied on community radio stations and included gender training for media personnel along with other stakeholders. Niger stands out for having adopted a charter mandating that the media improves its portrayal of women.

of women and men's increased commitment to women's sexual and reproductive health. Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Togo, Congo, South Africa, Ghana and Ethiopia have engaged religious and traditional leaders to advocate against harmful practices such as child marriage, girls' under-education and female genital mutilation.

In Sierra Leone, Eswatini, and Mauritius, gender caucuses in parliament have played a major role, participating in and leading discussions and decision making on gender issues, lobbying for funding for women's empowerment initiatives and program implementation. In Senegal, grassroots organizations lobbied for legislation to strengthen protection of women's rights, including freedom from discrimination and access to justice.

Ministries of Gender are to be commended for their role in advocating within their governments for the increased visibility of gender and women's issues. Madagascar, Kenya,

Some Member States have leveraged the power of men, boys and male dominated societal structures as agents of change in support of women's empowerment. Senegal, Togo, Djibouti, Congo, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Benin, Mauritius, Eswatini, Rwanda and South Africa have Husband's Clubs, Schools for Husbands and other networks for men and boys to convene for learning and advocacy with their peers to promote better treatment

### **B. Advocacy and Lobbying**

The Member States have prioritized advocacy as the cornerstone of their strategies for promoting women's rights, recognizing that behaviors and perceptions outweigh legal instruments in deciding women's welfare. Angola has demonstrated creativity in its initiative to publish draft legislation into a comic strip for public dissemination. Namibia, Eswatini, Mauritius, Mozambique, Togo, Niger,

“Member States proposed intensifying sensitization of young people about the legal instruments that promote and protect women and youth in order to equip them to denounce GBV.”

## **PART 3. ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH MEMBER STATES APPLIED THE IMPLEMENTATION METHODS PROPOSED IN THE ROADMAP OF THE AWD**

### **A. Institutional Mechanisms**

Member States' implementation of GEWE initiatives for the decade have centered on Ministries in charge of Gender. Nearly all Member States have Ministries of Gender, with Sierra Leone having just established its own in 2019. Beyond these national level entities, several countries have decentralized gender promotion mechanisms on a sectoral

and geographical basis. Namibia, Mozambique, Rwanda, established permanent national and regional gender task forces, councils and other such bodies responsible for decentralized decision making and action. The Republic of Congo established a National Monitoring Committee

Senegal, Comoros, Uganda, Ghana, Angola, Sierra Leone and Mozambique, Congo and Djibouti reported having placed gender focal points in all Ministries and some at the district level to ensure that gender features in budgeting and programming and to track and advocate for increased female representation in public service.

### C. Trends in the achievements of Member States during the Decade

Gender Responsive Budgeting is clearly a fast-growing trend which advances the concept of gender mainstreaming away from the tokenism of a sentence at the end of a project document to say that women will be included. Mainstreaming had hitherto proven uncomfortable for MDAs given the recommendation to carry out a gender analysis before initiating programs and projects. Gender Responsive Budgeting seems to be a more comfortable way of affecting mainstreaming. Not all countries are at the same level of Gender Responsive Budgeting.

In countries such as Rwanda and Uganda, budget papers of ministry are unable to get parliamentary approval without a certificate from the Ministries of Finance indicating how women will benefit within its budget.

Promulgating of laws and policies that should end discrimination and promote gender equality in society is another major trend. In a few cases, bills having to do with marriage and divorce have been harder to pass in some countries. Affirmative action policies to compensate for the years that women lost due to discriminatory practices

have resulted in exponential increases in women's participation in parliament, cabinet, and the judiciary. The question is, will the numbers translate into gains for women? Allegiance to political parties can be a constraint to how a parliamentarian votes one's conscience. Women's political caucuses are helping to keep the focus on gains for women.

The creation of funds for women is also a notable development. Given the size of the hard to reach population of women who are on the periphery of the economic system, specialized gender specific

funds can play a great role in increasing access to finance. Indeed, the efforts of several countries are commendable. However, this should not dampen the creativity that banks can show in developing product lines that meet the needs of women. The award winning Equity Bank in Kenya, which gradually shifted its client base from the "included" formal sector to the "excluded" informal sector and developed products for this large majority consisting of women and youth, small businesses, and farmers is one such success story. Equity Bank with 290 branches in six

Eastern and Central African countries, understands how financial inclusion works and is a UN SDG center of excellence. Enat Bank in Ethiopia was founded by 11 powerful Ethiopian women, who aim to ensure that women have access to credit and banking services that meets their needs. Women hold 64% of its shares and most of the top management positions. Both these banks are an inspiration to others in the quest for developing banking product lines for financial inclusion. Institutions such as these present excellent opportunities for public-

private partnerships which, according to the Beijing +20 ECA Africa Regional Review Report, have in the past proven to be helpful to governments in achieving GEWE agendas.

Member States have warmed to the idea of generating action plans for implementing commitments and policies. Action plans give a roadmap for how a goal is to be achieved. When costed and monitored, action plans could become the incentive to close the gap and fast track urgently needed policy implementation.

“The award winning Equity Bank in Kenya, which gradually shifted its client base from the “included” formal sector to the “excluded” informal sector and developed products for this large majority consisting of women and youth, small businesses, and farmers is one such success story.”

### D. Analysis of persistent challenges and obstacles of Member States to the accelerated implementation of the AWD themes

Top of the list of persistent challenges remains cultural and traditional norms that endorse as normal and acceptable discrimination against women and abuse of their rights. These traditional and cultural norms are physical in the form of FGM or wife beating, social in terms of the exclusion of women from decisions making and economic exploitation, and psychological in terms of emotional abuse arising from domination and oppression. These obstacles are at the foundation of all other challenges to progress in GEWE.

Even though conflict and war impinge upon women as bystanders and innocent victims, there is still much resistance to the participation of women in peace talks and

other peace processes. Rape still remains an instrument of war. The practice of sexual exploitation and abuse continues to be a major issue in peace keeping missions despite Security Council resolutions.

Financing is also a major challenge. Millennia of discrimination against women have created deep disparities in education, health, access to assets, that narrowing the gap

in times of economic downturn appears daunting. Hitherto, funding for bridging the gap has come largely from foreign donations. Were Africa to pick up the tab by itself, women might never reach the goal of empowerment. This report shows that rethinking budgeting can make a difference but acceptance of the fact that large amounts are required to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment have yet to take a firm root in the minds of decision makers.

The call for data and statistics that would undergird planning has been made repeatedly. Strategic planning over time makes data imperative both for projections, for monitoring and evaluation. Data is woefully lacking with respect to some of the most obvious issues of demography, access, or measuring progress. Fortunately, some United Nations organizations are assisting but Member States have to take ownership and control of their own data processes.

## E. Emerging Priorities

### STEM and TVET

In order for Africa to compete in a rapidly digitizing global economy, it is imperative that Member States invest heavily in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is an equally high priority. TVET and STEM not only provide opportunities for gainful employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, but also provide the economy with technical competencies and services that elevate the standard of living. Gender parity must remain at the heart of these initiatives, ensuring that all

of the continent's human capital is put to optimal use for personal and national advancement.

Though not mentioned in any of the reports, the issue of partnership will no doubt have to be on the agenda during the coming decade. What forms of partnerships will be required and who might compose the alliance are all important questions.

### REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

While only Morocco and Togo mentioned support to refugees, recent conflicts, political crises and economic downturns, point to a potential increase in the volume of displaced persons. Many of whom are women. There is a need for greater continental standardization of support

for refugees. Such action, with sensitivity to gender, will help safeguard the dignity of displaced women and girls as well as the continuity in their access to healthcare, education and other services.

### DEALING WITH IMPUNITY

Member States have taken impressive action to build a body of laws and policies that assert

women's rights. The next steps must prioritize the consistent and adequate enforcement of those legal instruments. Furthermore, the vocabulary and narrative around GBV must shift away from marking it as a women's issue and lay the matter squarely at the feet of the perpetrators. Recognizing the deep cultural and religious roots of harmful, sexist behaviors up to and including GBV,

it was noteworthy how few were the mentions of engagements with religious leaders in Member States reports. The remarkable work done to engage men and boys as GEWE champions must imperatively extend to cultural and religious leaders, who remain the arbiters of culture and the definers of morality.

## PART 4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AWD BY THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

### A. The AWD Roadmap

The Roadmap for the Decade spelled out a number of guidelines and principles that underlay proposed achievements. These had to do with the inclusion of various target groups such as men, youth and grassroots women; adequate financing; and advocacy and lobbying. The theme of the Decade, Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) demonstrated an attempt to bring to the fore a strongly desired but hitherto overdue agenda of bringing into continental level work the voices, power and energies of women at the grassroots. Recognition of the value addition that success of the theme would bring to the project of gender equality is clearly stated in one of the objectives of the Decade: namely, to usurp the opportunity for African women to provide leadership in rejuvenating the global women's movement, with a focus on youth and grassroots women. Two other statements of intentions further indicate what would be done with respect to grassroots engagement namely to simplify and translate

SDGEA and other relevant policy documents and to launch national grassroots women's projects.

Of the three target audiences, men, youth and grassroots women, less is heard in the reports about mobilizing grassroots women. Guinea Bissau reported appreciatively about the role of civil society which had helped the country to work on many of the thematic areas. The narrative of the reports nonetheless weighed heavily in the direction of gender discrimination and the denial of women's rights describing actions that

“In order for Africa to compete in a rapidly digitizing global economy, it is imperative that Member States invest heavily in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.”

were taken to correct or mitigate the situation. However, any narrative of the reality of women's lives is not complete without additions of women's resilience and agency as they struggle to liberate themselves. The intention to re-invigorate and accelerate implementation of commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment is intimately entwined with women's agency in the form of pressure placed on governments or intergovernmental bodies to initiate actions in their favor.

## B. Grassroots Approach

Providing opportunity for linkages with the grassroots is one of the guiding principles of the Decade (Guiding Principle 7). This principle speaks to a structural impediment that delinks the women's movement which is the energy of the cause for gender justice from decision makers. Principle 7 also speaks to the issue but does not offer a methodology of how the linkages will be made. The AU however has within its purview the Gender is

“Providing opportunity for linkages with the grassroots is one of the guiding principles of the Decade.”

My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), a continental gathering of more than 55 of the largest women's networks in Africa. GIMAC began with no official status but would meet on the margins of the Summit and deliberate on the theme of the Summit as well as on themes that are important for women. GIMAC would then find ways to lobby for its recommendations to be adopted in the decisions of the Summit. The AU has benefitted much from its loose relationship with GIMAC. Important decisions of the AU have been inspired from GIMAC. The Solemn Declaration, the idea to retire the hand held hoe which is found in Aspiration 13 of Agenda 2063, the parity principle in the Constitutive ACT of the AU, the idea to have a

Special Envoy for Women Peace and Security are but a few of the contributions from GIMAC to the AU. To ground itself more, GIMAC, through its members began to bring young women, market women and women farmers in large numbers to its meetings. These groups are now dynamic members of the GIMAC.

Overtime, the linkages with the AU have become more formalized and represent a good avenue to connect to the grassroots. Another good opportunity open to the AU is the African Women's Leadership Network, the newly formed network of African women whose goals are

- To enhance women's role in peace, security, governance

and sustainable development

- To be the driving force to implement AU Agenda 2063 and UN Agenda 2030
- To ignite creativity that will offer a new vision for society.

AWLN benefited from lessons GIMAC learned in dealing with the structural impediments to linking with the AU and has established itself as a creation of the AU in collaboration with the United Nations and supported by the Federal Republic of Germany.

## C. The Fund for African Women

The Fund for African Women (FAW) was the key mechanism intended to achieve the goals of the Decade. It was to be funded by 1% of Member States contribution to the AU and open to all its members and structures, particularly the RECs. Civil Society Organizations are also eligible to apply. FAWs goals were to support development projects for women, support women's initiatives to fight poverty

and close the gender gap, build capacities of women, share best practices and dissemination of information on African women. For the first three years, 2010, 2011 and 2012, 100 projects were funded. Total amount disbursed was USD 1,603,977 from 2010 to 2015. Since then no other projects have been funded. Several challenges with respect of operational management can be cited: the 80/20 disbursement method, the lack of national committees to monitor and supervise the projects, poor or no reporting from beneficiaries, low capacity of beneficiaries to write proposals and manage grants, long delays between application, approval and disbursement, inadequate capital amount which was reduced to 0.5% of Member States contribution instead of the promised 1%, intended beneficiaries not sufficiently aware of the fund and its mechanisms, funds for management of the entire project within WGDD Office not taken into account in the setting up of the project.

These challenges prompted two field visits to 7 countries [ : Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, Namibia and Nigeria.] in 2017 and 2018. Several recommendations were made of which the most pertinent was to set up the Fund as a Trust Fund and a Grant making facility. The Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held on 06 - 07 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by EX.CL/Dec.1073(XXXVI) instructed the Commission to establish a mechanism to properly manage the African Women Fund and submit credible Financial Report in February, 2021.

More specifically pertinent to the management of the Fund for African Women, The Executive Council requested the Commission to implement the following:

“Transformation of the Fund for African women into a Trust Fund including other stakeholders in its governance to ensure its sustainability.”

“Establishment of an independent implementation organization with autonomy in financial management and the recruitment of appropriate permanent staff to facilitate implementation.”



Implementation of the above request of the Executive Council will bring in grassroots women who have been missing in the configuration of the new African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion. This group comprises, small scale farmers, ordinary market women, unpaid health care providers, street vendors, village savings and loans groups to name a few of the entities in this very large category, commonly known as the informal sector.

The number and variety of funds that Member States have established indicate their recognition of the need for financial assistance to this very large category of women. Box 4 of this report is an example of what a Member State has done to reach out to grassroots women with extraordinary impact. Targeting grassroots women means targeting the majority of African women, resulting in an exponential impact on GEWE gains and accomplishments of the Aspirations of Agenda 2063.

Within the orbit of the AU, two funds have been set up to buttress the

new African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion for African Women. One of them, AFAWA, is based in the African Development Bank and the other, African Women's Leadership Fund, is being managed by UNECA. Both of these funds have the potential to reach medium and large scale enterprises and might not be, in their final configuration, fully grant making. These will provide the necessary complementarity to the entirely grant making Trust Fund for grassroots women to make the New Decade fully inclusive. To ensure synergy for impact, a coordinating mechanism of the three, chaired by the head of the AU Commission would be advisable.

The experience of managing the FAW during the Decade has pointed to the challenges that will accompany the imperative to include grassroots women. This a "hard to reach" group due to low literacy levels, low entrepreneurial skills, and mindsets developed from long term existence on the edge of national financial infrastructure. This is also the group that

has the characteristic of exceptional resilience and impressive creativity despite their limitations. It is therefore no mean feat to build the institutional infrastructure and skill set required to successfully include grassroots women.

Fortunately, there are institutions that have the knowledge and experience of working with grassroots women. Two of these, the Global Fund for Women, and the African Women's Development Fund come readily to mind. Their experience and expertise would benefit an "independent implementation organization with autonomy in financial management and the recruitment of appropriate permanent staff to facilitate implementation." as proposed by the Executive Council for the Trust Fund. The African Women's Development Fund has more than 20 years of working with grassroots women and has successfully reached 1,300 women's groups across the continent. It was established and is fully managed by African women themselves.

## PART 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the Decade was to re-invigorate commitments to accelerated implementation of agreed global and regional GEWE commitments. The assessment of the Decade's success can only be measured by the evidence of new activities targeted toward the goal of GEWE in the first instance. In the second instance it would be important to observe any changes in the realities of women's lives. This report is only able to do the first, assess evidence of the amount of new activities leading to the achievement of the goals of the Decade. Based on the above, evidence of all the activities across the ten themes reported by indicate that the Decade can be declared a success given the major thrust made by Member States to give visibility to the issues and take action to address them. Due to the need for brevity, this report has been unable to capture all of the interesting projects undertaken. These activities can be said to be in the interest of accelerating the achievement of gender equality. The Ministries responsible are to be congratulated for their ownership of the Decade and promoting it among their colleagues and stakeholders.

It should be noted that the progress on GEWE is uneven across the regions. North, Southern and Eastern Africa appear to be making strides with West Africa in a steady pace. The region of concern is Central Africa where some member states require much support. Extended conflicts in the DR Congo, Chad, Central African Republic and Cameroon have impeded the use of the extensive wealth of this region for the benefit of GEWE.

The project of achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is enormous because of the depth of its roots and the spread of its branches. The goal cannot be achieved in one Decade. It always needs to be re-invigorated and re-energized.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

#### Actions for Member States

1. Continue and strengthen initiatives in ten thematic areas. Member States have made significant progress in each thematic area. Continued commitment to these areas over the next decade will expand the reach of existing

programs to support women's political and economic empowerment; increase public awareness about women's rights and reproductive health; and deepen the institutionalized systems to support gender responsive statistics, budgeting and health systems.

2. Close gaps in digital financial services ecosystems, including through expansion of related infrastructure networks such as electricity and telecommunications. While infrastructure development has remained a stated priority across the continent, initiatives against that goal have been tied to agriculture and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene; and expanding the electrical grid. Fiber optic cable projects, while important additions to that package have followed the rest in being a mostly urbanized development. Financial inclusion demands the deurbanization of infrastructure development, thus allowing financial service providers to reach sparsely populated areas where a brick-and-mortar presence may not be operationally strategic.

3. Support and encourage women owned financial institutions. Note is taken of the various funds established by Member States to benefit women. While those initiatives are beneficial, they depend heavily on the political will of governments and their fiscal space. The Mutual Fund for African Women (MUFFA), which is spreading throughout Western and Central Africa, is owned solely by women who pool capital to establish a savings and loans institution for male and female clientele. This model, backed by Cameroon's Afriland Bank, appears promising as it puts financial power in the hands of women by affording them investment opportunities. Central Banks should be called upon to support the replication of such models across the continent.
4. Put in place measures to support vulnerable populations whose welfare and livelihoods the COVID-19 Pandemic has undermined. Member States' interventions in this direction must begin with consistent data collection on the pandemic's social and economic impact on women, youth, people with disabilities and the poor. This will ensure that efforts are evidence based, measurable over time and, therefore, effective.

#### **Actions for the African Union**

5. Adopt legal instrument to establish institutionalized gender responsive budgeting and data collection as continental standards. While some countries have established GRB at the national level, others have called for further steps toward gender responsive data collection. Institutionalizing and standardizing these initiatives is critical not only to including women's issues on national agenda but also ensuring that programmed interventions are evidence based and therefore effective.
6. Adopt legal instrument to establish both political and fiscal decentralization as a continental standard that financially empowers women by creating more centers of decision making where they can decide the fate of their families and communities. The work on the ten thematic areas have shed light on the specific challenges of rural women who

face limited access to infrastructure and basic services, and the limited number of decision-making roles available for women to assume. Fiscal and political decentralization together are critical to achieving a more even distribution of economic transformation, accelerated growth and development between rural and urban women and men.

7. Establish the new Trust Fund for African Women as proposed by the Executive Council. This grant making entity would add to the scarce number of such institutions that give financing access to the majority of African women for their activities that sustain the livelihood of their families and support national building. Bring the Trust Fund under a coordinating mechanism chaired by the head of the African Union Commission which will include the AFAWA and the AWLF to ensure complementarity for impact.
8. Encourage Member States to adapt their existing national strategies to reflect commitments for the African Women's Decade on Financial and

Economic Inclusion for African Women, to ensure seamless with existing institutional arrangements and programs. Many Member States' reports reflected a trend of multiple overlapping strategies for various initiatives including the AWD. Others had national development plans but no AWD Plan of Action. The integration of the AWD's thematic goals into each national development plan and the evaluation of said plans against the goals of the next decade will result in a gender responsive development planning that amounts to the more effective mainstreaming of women's issues.

9. Ensure that the next AWD promotes women's role as investors and not only borrowers and grant beneficiaries. Some Member States have begun to champion the MUFFA model of women investors pooling resources to establish financial institutions owned exclusively by women. These are mainly savings and loans associations catering to the general public. This model must extend into the areas of housing, land and

agriculture banks, to solidify women's ownership of the full range of investment opportunities in the economic sectors that impact their lives the most.

10. Ensure that the next AWD strengthens women's ability to meet their own needs through access to affordable financial services. Emerging financial services such as mobile and micro insurance are critical to closing the gap between demand and supply of health and education services.
11. Ensure that next AWD also concretely and innovatively addresses the financing challenges that hindered progress in each of the 10 themes of the past decade, within the context and parameters of financial inclusion. While Member States cited their own budget constraints as hindrances to progress, future action must reflect the recognition that the most effective GEWE initiatives offer solutions to such constraints in the medium and long term. New and significantly increased capital must be infused into existing programs, with proper

monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, to optimize impact.

12. Work with Member States to set clear, country specific metrics for meeting thematic goals for the next decade, supported by diagnostics from the APRM and other reports. The development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the decade, including country-specific baselines and targets, is important to further clarify the set goals for each thematic area and standardize reporting across Member States.
13. Enhance continental, regional and national coordination on gender issues, to ensure efficient and effective implementation of programmed interventions by connecting to the energies of the people. Agenda 2063 is "people driven". The plethora of supranational, national and subnational institutional arrangements on which GEWE depends including those of civil society must work together seamlessly to deliver clear and sustainable transformation in the lives of women.

Critical mapping of such arrangements is an important step for the AU and Member States to determine opportunities for synergy and identify areas in which each entity, including and especially grassroots organizations, have a comparative advantage.

14. Set clear guidelines for adoption to ensure Member States' gender responsive implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). As Member States look to implement AfCFTA, the private sector in general could benefit from transparency on its parameters, modalities and opportunities for trading within the area. Women, however, require specific support to ensure the protection of their rights and their access to the benefits of marketing to a wider continental market.

15. Prioritize plans to operationalize the African Investment Bank and the Pan African Stock Exchange, and establish other African capital market institutions, for optimal benefit to GEWE. As the AfCFTA is being implemented,

the development of the continental capital market should feature prominently in its roadmap. Mechanisms should be put in place, in tandem with the AfCFTA build out, to ensure that women are substantially involved in all aspects of these initiatives, from executive level decision making to intermediation and market making. As these and other elements of the continental capital market ecosystem evolve, they should prioritize support to women owned, women-focused and rural financial institutions. Such partnerships would involve capital infusion for capacity building and on lending. Loan securitization schemes could feature among the mechanisms to increase access to finance for women across Africa. This will require accelerated action from African Central Banks to advance the integration of their payment systems and capital markets infrastructure to optimize financial flows under an equally effective regulatory regime.

16. Eradicate GBV through rapid and intensive action. This requires new funding sourced domestically and through development

partners to strengthen legal, judicial and social systems to protect women's rights. Campaigns to shift perceptions about women and women's rights also requires more funding, innovative and persistent effort. Address impunity. More Member States must commit to intensifying engagement with traditional and religious leaders to eradicate tolerance and justification of GBV, building on successes in the mentoring men and boys. Focus on uplifting the Central Africa region.

17. Appoint a Special Envoy for Grassroots Women in the Department of for Rural Economy and Agriculture. Building on the success of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security and the Special Envoy for Youth, the Grassroots Women's Envoy should be tasked to establish a program that includes the grassroots in the AWD affairs. This will significantly address, in the next AWD, the limited fruition of grassroots engagement efforts in the first AWD. It will also ensure that grassroots women have the AU's permanent attention, to

bring their concerns to bear on AU policy and action.

18. Appointment of Heads of State and Government as AU Champion on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; AU Champion on Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion and AU Champion on Women, Peace and Security to compliment the current mechanisms available within the AUC and to mobilize political commitment for the implementation of obligations under these three critical areas of importance to the AWD and Agenda 2063

**Actions for the UN Agencies and International Financial Institutions and Development Partners**

19. Conduct regular and comprehensive data collection on the domestic, regional and continental informal sector. Given that women and youth are the key drivers of Africa's substantial yet insufficiently measured informal commerce, increased data collection in this area will significantly enhance interventions toward their economic empowerment.

With regional blocs such as ECOWAS seeking to implement a single currency regime, data on informal financial flows – especially in cross border locations – will assist in the effective implementation of monetary policy. Such information will also enhance financial inclusion policy and programs intended to integrate women, youth and other vulnerable groups into the financial system. Concrete knowledge of the dollar value of the informal sector would empower Member States, RECs and the AU in strategizing to attract currently untracked capital into the formal sector and the financial system. Avenues to do so could include attractive banking and capital market instruments such as high-yield savings accounts, crowdfunding, securitization and retail investment. Comprehensive data on informal sector actors will assist in developing financial literacy and awareness programs that would underpin and increase women and youth's appetite for formal financial activity.

20. Provide funding targeted at GEWE initiatives and technical assistance in line with best practices from other continents. International agencies must make funding and technical assistance available to beneficiary governments seeking to meet their commitments on gender mainstreaming. Funding can support enhancing mechanisms for GEWE certification to underpin development programs. Other support can include training and technical assistance for gender responsive data analysis and budgeting. Increased budget support and other assistance can be provided to Member States that subscribe to these funding windows and demonstrate commitment to elevating and expanding the role of women in all areas of public service. This will create incentives for making progress in GEWE.

21. Provide funding for the Trust Fund for African Women. This fund will directly finance the resilience and creativity of African women to support their families and subsequently add to the GDP of their countries.

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## ANNEX 1: Countries with National Action Plans on Women Peace and Security

Table 2: List of 24 AU Countries with National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security as of 2018

ECOWAS	ECA	ECCAS	SADC	Maghreb Union
Cote d'Ivoire (2007) Guinea (2009) Liberia (2009) Sierra Leone (2010) Senegal (2011) Ghana (2012) Burkina Faso (2012) Togo (2012) Niger (2017) Nigeria (2012, revised 2018) The Gambia (2012) Mali (2012, revised in 2017) Guinea Bissau (2010)	Uganda (2008) Rwanda (2009 revised in 2018) Burundi (2012, revised in 2017) Kenya (2016) South Sudan (2015)	The Central African Republic (2014) Cameroon (2017) Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010, revised in 2018)	Angola (2017) Mozambique (2018)	Tunisia (2018)

Source: Women Peace and Security Agenda in Africa: Report on Implementation 2019 additional 5 countries as at 2020 are: Djibouti, Congo, Gabon, Sudan and South Africa.

## ANNEX 2: SPECIFIC GENDER COMMITMENTS ADOPTED BY THE AU DURING THE DECADE

- The Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods” adopted by the AU Summit in June 2014 calls for deliberate and targeted public support to women to participate and directly benefit from the growth and transformation opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods. It encourages specific preferential participation in the value chain for women and youth, with special attention to women’s nutrition.
- The Declaration “2015 Year of women’s empowerment and development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063” adopted by the AU Summit in June 2015 invites AU Member States to increase mechanization, technological innovation, education and skills development for women, enforce women’s rights to productive assets, including land, intensify financial inclusion in agribusiness and access to public procurement processes in agribusiness. It also calls upon financial institutions to reserve 50 percent of their funds to finance women to grow from micro to macro businesses. It stresses the need to ensure that the Continental Free Trade Area promotes the empowerment of women in agribusiness and agricultural value chains.
- The “AU Campaign to confine the hand-held hoe to the museum” was launched in June 2015 in Johannesburg during the Summit. Under its Aspiration 1 on “A prosperous Africa based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development”, Agenda 2063 strives for “modern, productive and attractive agriculture, using science, technology, innovation and indigenous knowledge,” and states that “the hand hoe will be banished by 2025.”
- In October 2015, in Addis Ababa, the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment endorsed a declaration that would ensure that 30 percent of documented land rights would be allocated to African women by 2025.
- The Declaration of 2016 as “African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women” was adopted at the AU Summit in July 2016 in Kigali and addresses the protection and promotion of women’s rights, including rural women’s rights to food, land and decent employment.
- Adoption of the new AU Gender Strategy on GEWE 2018–2028 at the 31st Summit of Heads of State and Government in July 2018 in Nouakchott, Mauritania It succeeds the AU Gender Policy of 2009 and takes cognizance of the various advancements related to gender commitments, including the SDGs adopted in 2015. Rural women are a priority target and the strategy stresses the need to enhance women’s economic empowerment with specific attention to education, financial inclusion, labour-saving technology and digital revolution. In addition, it emphasizes

the need to mainstream gender in all key AU flagship initiatives.

- Parity Decision of 2018 which requires the AUC to achieve 50/50 (men and women) in its staffing and to have 35% of youth by 2025
- The adoption in February 2020 by the AU Assembly, of a decision declaring 2020 to 2030 as the African Women's Decade on "Financial and Economic Inclusion for African Women"

- The launch of the African Women Leadership Fund in February 2020
- Preparation of the Africa Review Report on the implementation of Beijing + 25
- Appointment in January 2017 by H.E. Prof. Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea and the AU Chairperson the year of H.E President Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana as AU Leader on Gender and Development Issues in Africa

- The adoption by the AU Assembly during the AU-RECs/REMs Coordination meeting of a decision on the "development and implementation of AU Guidelines on Gender-Responsive Responses as a framework to integrate gender equality and women's agency in decision-making processes in Africa's COVID-19 responses and Post COVID-19 recovery plans."

## Questionnaire for the development of the Final Review Report of the African Women's Decade 2010 - 2020

The aim of the African Women's Decade (AWD) is to advance gender equality by accelerating implementation of Dakar, Beijing and AU Assembly Decisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) while the objective of the African Women's Decade is to re-invigorate commitments to accelerate implementation of agreed global and regional commitments of GEWE.

The AWD is implemented in two phases. The first phase was from 2010 to 2015 and in this regard, a Mid-Term Status Update Report was developed and launched in 2016 as part of the commitment to review implementation during the mid-term of the AWD. The report contained experiences from twenty-two (22) AU Member States, and it highlights, among others, actions taken and challenges encountered in advancing GEWE in the continent. The second phase of the AWD started in 2016 and will end in December 2020 and to this effect, a final review report will be developed outlining progress by Member States to implement the AWD, challenges encountered and areas where further action is needed to accelerate implementation of the gender commitments.

The AWD has 10 themes, which have been implemented on an annual basis through the Fund for African Women (FAW) as follows:

- 1) 2011: Women's Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV&AIDS
- 2) 2012: Agriculture and Food Security
- 3) 2013: Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship

- 4) 2014: Environment and Climate Change
- 5) 2015: Education, Science and Technology
- 6) 2016: Finance and Gender Budgets 2016
- 7) 2017: Mentoring Youth (Men and Women) to be champions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- 8) 2018: Peace and Security and Violence Against Women
- 9) 2019: Women In Decision Making position
- 10) 2020: Governance and Legal Protection

In this regard, Member States which submitted Mid-Term Reports in 2015 will report only on AWD themes implemented from 2016 to 2020, while Member States which did not submit Mid-Term Reports will report on all ten (10) themes from 2010 to 2020.

This questionnaire has been designed to obtain information from African Union (AU) Member States and to facilitate the development of the Final Review Report on implementation of the African Women's Decade (AWD) 2010 -2020 on Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).

The information supplied will be analyzed and compiled for the comprehensive review and assessment which will be submitted by the African Union Commission Women, Gender and Development Directorate (AUC-WGDD) at the February 2021 Summit.

The Final Review Report will contain a factual assessment of the status of implementation of the AWD since its adoption. It will show progress and shortfalls, and provide an

indication of areas where further actions and initiatives within the framework of the GEWE might be most urgent. The Final Report will contain suggestions for further actions and initiatives that might be considered during the review for the outlook on GEWE in the 2015–2020 period.

In order to prepare these reports, the AU-WGDD will draw on a variety of sources of information and statistics available to it in addition to the responses to this questionnaire. Among the sources to be used will be the national reports by Governments prepared for the AWD, the Africa Review Report on the Implementation of 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +25 reports) submitted in 2019 and statistics available to it, the AU Member States on AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (SDGEA) in Africa in addition to the responses to this questionnaire.

Responses to this questionnaire should be sent by no later than 30 June 2020 to: Women, Gender and Development Directorate, email: WGDD@africa-union.org and the hard copy should be sent through your respective Embassies in Addis Ababa.

Please note that the information being sought through this questionnaire is more qualitative than quantitative in nature. However, respondents wishing to update quantitative information disaggregated by sex and age or to report on indicators used at the national level to monitor activities for GEWE may do so.

The questionnaire consists of four parts.

**In Part One**, respondents are invited to provide a brief (1 to 3 pages) analytical overview of trends and experiences in implementation in the reporting country. This overall picture should highlight major achievements and

obstacles encountered since the AWD was adopted.

**Part Two** focuses on overall implementation in relation to the Road Map for the AWD 2010–2020 and in particular, on resource allocations and institutional arrangements

Part Three of the questionnaire focuses specifically on implementation in the two critical areas of concern of the AWD. In this Part, respondents are invited to describe policies, programmes and projects which have been undertaken specifically to implement the AWD including, for example, legislation, positive action measures, development of new or improved services and/or awareness creation. Where specific targets or strategies have been set, progress in achieving those targets and strategies should be reported. Respondents are also invited to indicate future actions or initiatives to be taken, nationally and or internationally, to ensure full implementation of Gender Agenda in your country. In this regard you are encouraged, in particular, to indicate any new commitments made to further implement the AWD and a vision for GEWE in your country in the period 2015–2020.

Part Four uses the guiding principles of the AWD to assess the extent to which Member States and Grassroots organizations have implemented the key framework of the Decade.

## Questionnaire

### Part One

#### Overview of trends in achieving GEWE and implementation of the AWD

1. Give a brief analytical overview (1 to 3 pages) of trends in your country in implementing the African Women's Decade. This overview or broad picture should, for example, describe the country's policy with regard to achieving the goals of equality between women and men and should be linked to your national action plan or other plans or strategies. Your response could, for example, address questions such as:

- What have been the major achievements and/or breakthroughs in concrete terms in implementing the policies and programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment under the AWD?
- Is the situation of women and girls in sectors better or worse than in 2010/2016/2020? Why?
- Are the goals of GEWE being pursued as a priority in relation to other public policy goals? Please explain.
- Identify areas where mainstreaming a gender perspective has been most/least successful. In which sector/s of the AWD is/are a gender approaches being applied? Please illustrate with examples of legislation, policies, best practice and lessons learned.
- Has attention to GEWE changed since 2010/2016/2020 -- in Government policies, in public perception, in the media, in academic institutions? Please explain concretely the nature of the change.
- How has the global situation, for example, the global financial crisis, political

crisis, global climate change and/or globalization of markets, Coronavirus pandemic affected women and girls in your country?

- How your country is has responded / is responding to violence against women and girls during this critical period of COVID 19? How your country has responded/is responding to COVID 19 in implementing 2020 theme on "Governance and Legal Protection"

### Part Two

#### Financial and institutional measures towards the implementation of the AWD

- a. Discuss how GEWE t are addressed in the national budget. This could include an indication of the percentage of the overall budget that is allocated for women-specific policies/programmes, and any increases/decreases since 2010/ 2016. What percentage of this allocation comes from international or bilateral donors? Describe efforts to monitor budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality and advancement of women.
- b. Has the Government allocated and disbursed adequate resources for programmes and activities during the Decade? Please describe the budget allocation process and the distribution of resources specifically for the AWD. If no budget has been allocated to implement programmes and activities for the AWD, please describe the reasons why not.

3. a. Discuss structures and mechanisms that have been put in place to institutionalize follow-up to, and implementation of, the AWD.

- The request on the establishment of the National Committee of the AWD and legal framework to implement AWD at national level.
  - Have you launched the African women's Decade at national level?
    - o If yes, when and what are the activities have you undertake in connection with AWD?
    - o If not yet, what are the reasons?
  - What were the country's priorities in terms of concern's critical areas of the African Women's Decade for 2010–2015/2016–2020? Explain.
  - Did the Government develop a plan of action and strategy to implement the AWD?
    - o If so, did the Government inspire from the continental Road Map of the AWD?
    - o If not yet, what are the reasons?
- The African Union (AU) has set up a Fund for African Women (FAW) to support grassroots projects submitted by Governments and NGOs. Did you receive support from this FAW? If no, why?

b. Describe the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in planning and shaping the follow-up activities. Do members of NGOs participate formally in the mechanisms established to follow up the AWD?

### Part Three

#### Implementation of the critical areas of concern of the AWD

*You may use Annex I to summarize responses for this section.*

#### A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

4. In relation to each of the ten critical areas of concern, describe best practices and innovative actions taken by the Government or other actors (NGOs, civil society, the private sector) to achieve the objectives in each critical area of concern. Your response should refer to the country's national action plan, and could include examples of legal measures, reforms, media campaigns, and pilot programmes or projects. Please cite, in particular, any targets which were set in the Government's national action plan or other relevant plans, and indicate how far these were met. (For example, a target may have been to appoint more women to the cabinet. To what extent was it achieved?)

## Questionnaire

### B. Obstacles encountered

5. What obstacles were encountered and what lessons were learned in implementing policies and other measures in each critical area of concern? (For example, despite new legislation to limit traditional practices harmful to the health of women and girls, these practices continued, showing that an education campaign was also needed to bring change in behaviour, or customary law was adapted to fit modern legislation when it was learned that women were more discriminated by customary laws than men).

### C. Commitments to further action and initiatives

6. Many Governments made commitments to action at the Nairobi Declaration launching the AWD. Describe steps taken by your Government to fulfill any specific commitments it made to implement the AWD.
7. List any new commitments in each of the ten critical areas of concern which your Government has made since the AWD and how these are being implemented, including any new targets which have been set and the time frame for meeting them.
8. List any further actions and initiatives which your Government believes should or could have been taken to fully implement the AWDe beyond the year 2020. Among these, identify which

ones your own Government intends to take and when. In which areas, where further actions and initiatives within the framework of the AWD, might be most urgent?

9. Briefly describe your or your government's vision for GEWE in the new post 2020 framework.
10. What are your suggestions for further actions and initiatives that might be considered during the review for the outlook on GEWE beyond the 2020 period?

### Part Four

The extent to which Member States and Grassroots organizations have implemented the guiding principles of the AWD

11. A set of guiding principles was developed for the AWD. Please respond to the following questions regarding Government and Grassroots organizations implementation of each of the guiding principles:
  - Has the Government provided adequate resources allocation for programmes and activities during the Decade?
  - Has the Member State reinforced and safeguarded women's gains so far since 2010? Please explain.
  - How has the Member State scaled up and ring fenced funding for GEWE programmes to prevent



encroachment by current economic crises?

- How has the Member State reinforcing benchmarks and mechanism to ensure implementation of decisions taken regarding the Decade? Please explain.
- How has the Member State Building capacities, and developing adequate data and indicators for measuring the decade's results? Please provide a list of indicators and data.
- How has the Member State ensured practical application of the gender parity principle?
- Has the Member State provided opportunity for linkages with the grassroots?
- Has the Member State already adopted implementation of all policy documents (such as the SDGEA, the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW etc). This process also covers campaign to mobilize support and political will for the attainment of target by AU Heads of States and Governments commitment at global and regional levels.
- How has the Member State already encouraged development of partners to complement regional gender commitments? Please explain.
- How has the Member State underlining and foregrounded the role of men including young men within its gender policies?

***The extent to which Member States have implemented the methods for implementation of the AWD, including the extent to which the following methods and milestones were reached:***

12. The Roadmap for the AWDs includes a set of methods for implementation of the decade. Please respond as relevant to the following questions based on the methods of implementation for the decade.

**Improved Advocacy Mechanisms**

13. Please describe and explain Member State's action on each improving advocacy mechanisms for the AWD.

To generate key messages, and create awareness as well as elicit understanding that will result in a change of beliefs on gender issues. Key outputs to determine improved advocacy mechanism have been identified to include:

- Building information sharing forum
- Simplification and translation of the SDGEA, Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights and other relevant instruments to local languages to stimulate participation of all stakeholders
- Public consultation and awareness
- Parliamentary Interactive Forum
- Gender Based Social Responsibility Initiative

## Questionnaire

### Increased level of lobbying

14. Please describe efforts to:

- Map stakeholders
- Establish effective lobby groups across levels (governments and organized groups)
- Build capacity and skills for lobbying
- Strengthen gender focal points in all institutions
- Promote male involvement and collaboration in the gender focal

points at all levels Increased resource mobilization for the implementation of the Decade activities

15. Please describe and explain efforts to:

- Integrate Gender into Budgeting process
- Gender budgeting creation in all institutions
- Gender Equality Fund (it means the mobilization of funds or creation of fund)
- Development of legal and legislative framework for fund generation e.g. monitoring of gender fund utilization.

## ANNEX 3 Describe efforts on the critical themes of the AWD

Thematic Areas of Concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the thematic areas African Women's Decade. Indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements	Examples of obstacles encountered/ lessons learned	Commitment to further action/ new initiatives	Other
Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship				
Agriculture and Food Security				
Women's Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV&AIDS				
Education, Science and Technology				
Environment and Climate Change				
Peace and Security and Violence Against Women				
Governance and Legal Protection				
Finance and Gender Budgets				
Women In Decision Making position				
Mentoring Youth (Men and Women) to be champions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment				



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