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**DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

**10<sup>th</sup> AFRICAN UNION GENDER PRE-SUMMIT**

**Theme:**

**“Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa”.**

**17 - 21 January, 2018**

**African Union Commission Headquarters**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

## **1. Introduction and background**

The African Union Commission (AUC) through the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) is convening the annual gender pre-summit on the margins of the 30<sup>th</sup> AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

This year's gender pre-summit will have three pronged objectives including, defining actions to rally women around fighting corruption and furthering understanding on its impact on gender equality; defining a road map to align policy platforms on gender equality with the AU reform; and preparing for the commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> session y of the Gender Pre-Summit in May 2018.

In collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC), in partnership with Civil Society Organizations and United Nations Organisations and supported by International Development Partners, the WGDD is convening the 10<sup>th</sup> African Union Gender Pre-Summit (AU-GPS) from 17 to 21 January 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, AUC Headquarters.

The year 2018 marks the commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the AU-GPS, which has played a significant role in influencing and shaping African Union (AU) policies on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and ensuring the inclusion of the critical voices of women and their perspectives in AU . The commemoration also takes place against a background of a new strategy for gender equality and women's empowerment for the AU, which will provide a clear and results- oriented roadmap for the effective implementation of existing commitments and of emerging issues.

Since establishment as an AU multi-stakeholder policy platform, some of the milestones achieved as a result of women's advocacy through the AU-GPS, include, among others, the adoption of the first AU Gender Policy in 2009; the establishment of the Fund for African Women (FAW) in 2010; the adoption of the African Women's Decade (AWD) 2010-2020; the Declarations of the AU Heads of State and Government of 2015 as the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Agenda 2063, and 2016 as the Year on Human Rights, with a Special Focus on the Rights of Women in Africa; as well as the appointment of special mandate holders to champion women and girl's rights

Commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the AU-GPS provides an opportunity to reflect on progress made thus far, in terms of lessons learned and challenges encountered as well as to identify opportunities, especially on the low hanging fruits on gender equality and women's empowerment that still require policy definition or implementation. This is also an occasion to determine the shape and nature of the AU-GPS, particularly within the context of Agenda 2063 which requires delivery of results and acceleration of action on all commitments and the new AU reforms which call for more effectiveness and efficiency at financial, political and operational levels in the work of the AU.

As it is practice, the AU-GPS will be aligned to the 2018 theme of “winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa’s transformation” with a special focus on its impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment. In this regard, the theme of the 2018 AU-GPS is “winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa”.

## **2. Rationale and Justification**

The AU Gender Pre-Summit will be organized around three focus areas.

**Firstly**, the AU-GPS will discuss the 2018 theme of the year on fighting corruption and its impact on the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Corruption is one of the most endemic of social ills, which affects all people in society. It translates, among others, into poorly- built infrastructures, unequal access to healthcare services as well as crime and violence in communities.

The adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) demonstrates AU Member States’ commitment to address corruption and its devastating effects on civil and political rights as well as social and economic rights alike. The AU further commits itself to eliminating corruption and impunity in Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063, which envisions an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.

Corruption is indeed a violation of human rights and exacerbates gender inequalities by deepening already existing discrimination in access to women’s rights. In a context where African women are mainly involved in informal sectors, corruption further limits their access to economic rights by putting additional conditionality that hinder their access to markets and credit. Agenda 2063’s target on awarding at least 25% of annual public procurement at national and subnational levels to women can only be achieved if laws against corruption are enacted and transparency is enforced across the Union. In the spirit of the principle of “leaving no one behind”, the AU need to further elaborate strategies that eliminates corruption and its adverse impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment to ensure women’s full participation in African high impact projects, as defined in its continental development agenda.

Corruption also reinforces discrimination in women’s access to public services in favor of those able to influence the authorities to act in their personal interest. Such practices compromise rights to basic health services, access to justice and perpetuate sexual and other forms of violence against women.

The AU-GPS aims at proposing key recommendations to prevent and fight against corruption and impunity on the continent as a sustainable path to a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

Leveraging on existing AU instruments which promote the fight against corruption and protect women’s rights such as the AUCPCC; the African Charter on Human and People’s

Rights; Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights; the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), the deliberations will provide a deeper understanding of corruption in general, and how it hinders gender equality and women's rights.

Nigeria's experience on fighting against corruption will also be reflected on, with reference to H.E President Muhammadu Buhari's appointment as AU Leader on the Fight Against Corruption.

The expected outcome of this segment of the meeting is a paper on concrete strategies to accelerate the fight against corruption and its negative impact on gender equality and women's empowerment, and strengthen women's role in fighting corruption.

**Secondly**, the AU-GPS will discuss the strategic positioning of AU multi-stakeholder policy platforms within the context of the new AU reforms, the AU gender strategy and Agenda 2063. These include, among others the informal policy-making platforms such as the AU-GPS and the High-Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (HLP) and their linkages to statutory platforms such as the Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC), the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC); the Executive Council (EC) and the Assembly. The AU gender strategy acknowledges that the organization has built a strong foundation for transformational policies and mostly generated through these platforms, however progress remains short of expectations due low levels of implementation and follow-up. Indeed, the need to strengthen the integration of policies taken at continental level with regional and national priorities and investments cannot be overstated and this position process will increase the likelihood of success.

The AU- GPS has been organized before each January and June/July summits of the AU. It was only in 2014 that it was decided that the GPS will be organized once every year. The GPS brings together voices of key actors in the gender equality and women's empowerment arena to update and discuss critical developments, with the aim of influencing and shaping AU policy decisions within the framework of the AU theme of the year. Key objectives of the AU-GPS are policy initiation and formulation; policy gap analyses; global policy influence and AU common position definition; tracking progress for the previous theme and understanding AU theme of the year; and networking. The key outcomes of the AU-GPS are draft decisions to be incorporated into the Heads of State Declaration on the theme of the year; report on policy gap analysis; AU statement on key issues pertaining Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).

On the other hand, the HLP is convened on the margins of the AU's mid-year Summit in June/ July. As a platform for critical reflection on gender policy implementation, the main objectives of the HLP on GEWE are to define key recommendations and concrete strategies for action to accelerate implementation of AU decisions and policies on gender equality and women's empowerment related to the theme of the year; identify and make decisions on policy gaps; experience sharing and networking. The key outcomes of the HLP are a comprehensive publishable report with recommendations and strategies to

scale up policy implementation; decisions on policy gaps; project/programme recommendations; and AU media communique.

Both AU-GPS and HLP are preceded by the civil society Gender Pre-Summit under the auspices of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), whose outcomes are incorporated into the outcomes of either the AU-GPS or the HLP. Other pre-summit meetings take place, such as the Ministerial Consultation meetings to prepare for the AU-GPS or HLP, meeting of RECs, and events hosted by other AU Departments/ Organs and partners.

The AU-GPS and HLP are attended by policy makers, i.e. Ministers and senior officials/ experts responsible for gender and women's affairs; national gender machineries, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including members of GIMAC and the Diaspora; AU Organs; Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs); United Nations (UN) Agencies, development partners and the private sector.

The outcomes of all these platforms converge at the Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC-GEWE), which is the Policy Organ of the African Union with statutory authority to recommend policies for consideration and adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, only platform with legal status to take decisions that will be transmitted, through appropriate AU channels, to the Assembly for adoption. The STC on GEWE convenes experts and Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women's Affairs of AU Member States to ensure harmonisation of instruments and policies and develop common positions and consensus on GEWE in Africa. The common positions are for example submitted to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), on priority and review themes. The Ministers may also meet during the Africa Pre-CSW meeting held immediately after the AU-GPS or hold a consultation meeting during the CSW to discuss and take decisions on outstanding issues on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The AU-GPS will examine all the AU's informal gender multi-stakeholder policy platforms with a view to re-defining among others, their structure, objectives, outcomes and regularity, and assess their impact, taking into account the demands of Agenda 2063 and the proposals in the report of the AU Reforms by H.E. President Paul Kagame. The redesign of the GEWE policy platforms will also take into account the need to rationalise them considering their interlinkages.

**Thirdly**, the 10<sup>th</sup> AU-GPS will plan for the celebrations of the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the GPS that will take place in May 2018. The AU-GPS was initially conceived as civil society consultation platforms and have evolved to a more inclusive platform, comprising African Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU organs, AUC Departments, the private sector, United Nations (UN) Agencies and development partners.

Building on the AU's obligations on gender equality and women's empowerment outlined in its legal instruments, these meetings serve as an important vehicle to incorporate

gender perspectives into the highest decision-making body of the AU, thus ensuring that gender and women's issues remain on the high priority list of the AU's Agenda. Over the years, the AU-GPS has made several recommendations which were translated into decisions and commitments from AU Member States to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

2018 represents the 10th session of the AU-GPS. As such, it's important to celebrate progress made in gender equality and women's empowerment as one of the priorities of the AU's continental roadmap for development, Agenda 2063. Over the years, the AU-GPS has been able to bring together voices of key actors in the gender equality and women's empowerment arena to update and discuss critical developments in the field and assess the extent of implementation of commitments. The two consecutive years dedicated to African women, namely 2015, Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Africa's Agenda 2063 and 2016, Africa Year of Human Rights with a Specific Focus on the Rights of Women, were an opportunity to call for greater acceleration in the effective implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the GPS will be an opportunity to celebrate progress achieved and also devise on strategies to strengthen and accelerate implementation of existing commitments.

The meeting will come up with an implementation roadmap that defines how the 10<sup>th</sup> session is envisaged to be celebrated, propose themes and sub-themes of the event, outline of actions to be undertaken. It will also establish a multi-stakeholder steering committee that will implement the roadmap and organize the 10<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the AU-GPS.

### **3. Objectives and Expected Outcomes**

The objectives of the 10<sup>th</sup> AU-GPS are three-folds as follows:

- a. To examine the impact of corruption on the achievements of gender equality and women's empowerment and to propose concrete actions to accelerate the fight against corruption and its negative impact on GEWE;
- b. To define the strategic positioning of WGDD multi-stakeholder policy platforms within the context of the new AU Reforms and Gender strategy
- c. To prepare for the celebrations of the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the AU-GPS

The expected outcomes of the 10<sup>th</sup> AU-GPS are:

- a. The impact of corruption on gender equality and women's empowerment examined and concrete strategies to accelerate the fight against corruption are proposed;
- b. Strategic positioning of WGDD multi-stakeholder policy platforms defined;
- c. Implementation roadmap for the 10<sup>th</sup> session celebrations of the AU-GPS developed.

d.

#### **4. Organization of the Gender Pre- Summit (GPS)**

The gender pre-summit events will take place from 17 to 21 January 2018. The GIMAC session will convene after the AU-GPS on 20 and 21 January, 2018. GIMAC will still present its draft outcomes document for incorporation into the outcomes document and final report of the AU-GPS.

The AU-GPS will convene between 17 and 19 January 2018 at the AUC Headquarters.

The following additional gender equality side events will be convened on the margins of the 30<sup>th</sup> AU Summit:

1. Central African Republic: The Search for Peace, convened by OXFAM, 17 January 2018, 17.00 – 21.00, Radisson Blu Hotel;
2. Regional Policy Dialogue on Ending Corruption and advancing SRHR, convened by FEMNET, 18 January, 2018, 19.00 – 21.00, Azzeman Hotel;
3. High Level meeting on Girls' Education hosted by the Centre International pour l'Education des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique (CIEFFA), 24 January 2018, AUC
4. High Level Event on Tourism and Gender, hosted by the Ministry of Tourism of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, 27 January 2018, 10.00 – 11.00, AUC;
5. High Level Breakfast on Equal Access of African Women in High Level Positions at the AU and in the UN System, hosted by H.E. the President of the Republic of Guinea, 28 January 2018, 08.00 – 9.00, AUC;
6. High Level Working Lunch on Gender and Development Initiative for Africa (GADIA) hosted by H.E the President of Ghana, 28 January 2018, 13.00 – 14.30, AUC
7. High Level Consultation on the Ratification of the Maputo Protocol by States Yet to Ratify the Protocol hosted by H.E the President of Ghana: 29 January 2018, 08.00 – 09.30; AUC
8. Revival Launch of the East African Region of PAWO hosted by H.E. the President of Uganda. 28 January 2018, 15.00 – 18.00, AUC

#### **5. Profile of Participants**

The 10<sup>th</sup> AU-GPS will be attended by not more than 50 key participants made up of:

- ⇒ STC Bureau Members, representing Member States;
- ⇒ AU women ambassadors
- ⇒ AU Organs, Representational and Liaison offices;
- ⇒ RECs and RMs;
- ⇒ Civil Society Organizations & Diaspora organisations;
- ⇒ UN Partners; and
- ⇒ International Development Partners

#### **6. Date and Venue of the AU Gender Pre-Summit**

The 10<sup>th</sup> AU Gender Pre-Summit and associated side events, will be held as follows:

⇒ 17 to 18 January 2018: 10<sup>th</sup> AU-GPS at the margins of the 30th AU Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government at AUC Headquarters, Addis Ababa.

⇒ 20 to 21 January 2018: GIMAC meeting at the UNECA Headquarters, Addis Ababa.

⇒ Other gender equality Summit side events will be convened as outlined above.

## **7. Organizers**

The 10<sup>th</sup> AU-GPS will be organized by WGDD in collaboration with DPA, AUABC and in partnership with Civil Society as well as the UN and supported by International Development Partners.

## **8. Working Languages of the AU Gender Pre-Summit**

Simultaneous interpretation will be available in all AU languages.