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DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

6th SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

African Union 

Stc 6th SESSION
SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE ON
**GENDER EQUALITY AND
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

1st March 2022

Venue ► Hybrid
Addis Ababa  zoom

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I. Introduction

The African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) is convening the 6th Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC on GEWE) which will be in a hybrid format (In person: Addis Ababa and virtually via Zoom), on 1st March , 2022.

The 6th STC on GEWE will consider among others the outcome of Men's Conference, the Trust Fund for African Women (TFAW), the 2020 Reports on Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the Institutionalization of the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, the National Launches of the AU Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the matrix of decisions on STC on GEWE. Further, the STC on GEWE shall be updated on the new Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) following the merger as approved during the ongoing reforms.

The Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index Framework: A COVID-19 Response and Recovery Monitoring and Implementation Tool - developed by the African Union Commission - Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (AUC-WGYD) with Africa Leadership Forum and Plan International - will also be launched during the 6th STC on GEWE. The Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index (MPSI) is an innovative contribution to the body of tools that seek to enhance accountability and assess the progress on gender equality and women's empowerment and the implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa adopted on July 11, 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique.

a. The New Women, Gender and Youth Directorate

The WGYD was created in January 2021 by the merging of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) which was under the Chairperson Office and the Human Resources and Youth Development Division (YD) which was under Human Resources and Science and Technology Department. The merging was done under the AU Reforms process. The merger integrates the AU's cross-cutting Agenda for gender equality as well as women and youth empowerment.

b. The Outcome of Men's Conference

Under the leadership of H.E. Felix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the AU 2021 Chairperson in collaboration with the AU 2020 Chairperson H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa; H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and upcoming 2022

Chairperson and, H.E. Nana Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana and the AU Leader on Gender and Development Issues in Africa; and H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the AU Commission (AUC) Chairperson will on 25th November 2021 convene the first AU Men's Conference on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls under the theme "***African Men Leaders Exploring / Engage in / Galvanize / Promote Positive Masculinity Approaches to End the Scourge of Violence Against Women and Girls In Africa***".

The overall focus of the Men's Conference is to mobilise commitment and galvanise action by men in leadership to promote positive masculinity approaches with the view of accelerating the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls in Africa at all spheres and at all levels.

It is expected that the conference will adopt a Declaration with a call to action that will list actions that states, businesses, male leaders in faith communities, male leaders in civil society structures and wider community can take in their professional and personal lives, including in the rearing of children.

c. The Trust Fund for African Women

Fund for the African Women (FAW) was implemented within the African Women's Decade (2010-2020). Towards the end of the decade, it was decided that FAW be realigned to the Agenda 2063 and there was a need to transform it to a Trust Fund for African Women's (TFAW). Since the 2020, the WGYD initiated the process of transforming FAW to TFAW by engaging a consultant to assist with this work.

A Trust fund for African Women (TFAW) , its communication strategy and resource mobilization strategy were designed by a consultant, positioning its a financial implementation mechanism for the newly adopted African Women Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion (2020-2030).

d. The 2020 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) Reports

Adopted by AU Heads of State and Government at their July 2004 Summit, the SDGEA is divided into six thematic areas of action: Health, Peace and Security, Governance, Human Rights, Education and Women's Empowerment.

There are two important obligations in the SDGEA. The first is in Paragraph 13, which enjoins the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) to submit an annual report for the consideration of the Heads of State and Government on measures taken to implement the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming per the articles of the SDGEA.

The second is in Paragraph 12, which further enjoins AU Heads of State and Government to report annually on their progress in gender mainstreaming at the Summit

The STC is mandated to meet every year to consider and adopt the SDGEA reports before submitting them to the Assembly.

e. The Institutionalization of the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security

With thirty (30) Member States and Six (6) Regional Economic Communities/Mechanisms that have adopted Action Plans for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, Africa is at the vanguard of the advancement of women's right to peace. The appointment of a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security has played a catalytic role in scaling up the adoption of the policy frameworks by Member States, registering a 46.6 % increase since her nomination. Nevertheless, progress in the delivery of commitments remains slow and below levels that will have a true impact on the peace and security of women and girls, and subsequently, their full participation and leadership in the realization of Africa's aspirations to a peaceful, prosperous and inclusive continent.

Cognizant of this status, the AU Peace and Security Council has called on Member States to accelerate actions for the implementation of the WPS Agenda and for the institutionalization of the AUC Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security to galvanize further Member States efforts. This was stipulated by the PSC in its 803rd session (19 October 2018), 887th session (17 October 2020) and the 951st session (5 October 2020).

In February 2021, during the 34th ordinary session of the African Union Heads of State and Government, the outgoing chairperson of the Union, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, requested the Assembly to operationalize the PSC decisions and their endorsement by the 5th STC on Gender equality and Women empowerment held in November 2020.

Strengthening AUC undertakings on Women, Peace and Security is part and parcel of the renewed efforts of the continent to silence the guns, translated by the decision of the extraordinary AU Assembly on Peace and Security, held in December 2020, to extend the Road map for another ten (10) years, covering the period 2021 to 2030.

f. The National Launches of the AU Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

In recognizing the need to promote a comprehensive and coordinated response to VAWG, the Directorate has developed the framework for the African Union Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, aimed at accelerating implementation of agreed obligations to prevent and end VAWG.

The campaign will be officially launched at the Men's Conference. In this regard, it is expected that the Member States would start the national launches of the AU Campaign on Ending VAWG.

g. The Matrix of Decisions on STC on GEWE

The WYGY will present the matrix of decisions on STC on GEWE for update and consideration.

II. Objectives of the STC

The objectives of the 6th STC are as follows:

- To receive information on the new Women, Gender and Youth Directorate
- To consider and adopt the outcome of Men's Conference
- To consider and adopt the 2020 Reports of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)
- To consider and adopt the Trust Fund for African Women (TFAW)
- To consider and adopt the Institutionalization of the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security
- To consider and adopt the National Launches of the AU Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- To launch the Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index
- To consider and to receive an update on the decisions on STC on GEWE.

III. Expected Results

- The STC briefed on the new Women, Gender and Youth Directorate
- The outcome of Men's conference adopted
- The Reports on the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) adopted;
- The new Trust Fund for African Women (TFAW) is adopted
- The Institutionalization of the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security adopted
- The Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index is launched
- Commitment by Member States to launch the AU Campaign on VAWG at National level.

IV. Participants

The meeting will be attended by the AU Ministers in charge of Gender and Women's Affairs and their Experts.

V. Dates and Venue of the Meeting

The meeting will be held on 1st March, 2022 in a hybrid format : In person will be in Addis and virtual will be via zoom platform as follows:

- 1st March 2022: Ministerial segment

.VI. Mode of Delivery

The meetings will be conducted in four (4) AU languages - Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.