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CONCEPT NOTE

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAPUTO PROTOCOL ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

THEME

RAISING THE BAR ON POLICIES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR AFRICAN PEOPLE

10 - 11 JULY 2023
NAIROBI, KENYA (HYBRID)

1. BACKGROUND

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, provides comprehensive rights for women and girls in Africa. The Protocol guarantees extensive rights to women, including the right to take part in the political processes, to social and political equality with men, improved autonomy in their reproductive health decisions, and an end to harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, among others. It covers a broad spectrum of civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights and is considered one of the most progressive human rights instruments globally. To date 44 out of 55 African Union Member States have ratified the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, with the Republic of South Sudan being the 44th African Union (AU) Member State to deposit its instruments of ratification to the AU Commission on the 7th of June 2023. A few more Member States have committed to ratifying the Maputo Protocol in 2023 to mark the 20th anniversary of this instrument on July 11th.

The African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (AUC-WGYD), in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa (SRRWA) of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), with the support of African CSOs, UN Agencies and International Development Partners, will host celebratory events between 10 and 11 July 2023, to mark the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights. The celebrations will also kick-start year-long commemorative events that will begin in July 2023 and last until July 2024.

The Maputo@20 High-Level Events will convene under the theme "***Raising the Bar on Policies and Partnerships for African People***" and will reflect on, among others, the achievements and challenges of women's rights in Africa over the 20 years of the Maputo Protocol, holding Member

States accountable for their human rights obligations to guarantee gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa, identifying emerging issues on women's human rights in Africa as well as defining impactful strategies and actions to consolidate gains and accelerate implementation.

The Maputo@20 High-Level Events will also be an occasion to engage in discussions on the historical decision to negotiate the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG), newly adopted by the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government during their 36th Assembly held from February 15 to 16, 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Anchored on the rights enshrined in the Maputo Protocol, this historic AU decision has its origin in the Kinshasa Declaration and Dakar Call to Action on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa, adopted during the Inaugural and Second Men's Conference, respectively held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo in November 2021 and in Dakar, Senegal in November 2022. Furthermore, the celebrations will be an opportunity to engage AU citizens on accelerating the implementation of the Roadmap on the African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion (AWD-FEI) 2020-2030 and mobilise partnerships for delivering on its flagship programme, notably the AU Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion Initiative (WYFEI).

2. RATIONALE

Significant impact of the AU Agenda 2063 and other regional legal frameworks such as the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, and international gender normative frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW), the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has been recorded all over the continent; legislations have been adopted, policies formulated, resources allocated, institutions created and remedies provided as a direct consequence of states parties' compliance with their women's rights obligations.

The **All for Maputo Protocol Programme (AMPP)** was developed by the AU Commission in 2018 to mark the 15th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol. The AMPP provides an overall framework, shared understanding, and vision of the work and engagement around the Maputo Protocol. It also seeks to ensure coherence and synergy among the various initiatives and programs being implemented at different levels, highlighting the complementarity and convergence among various parties and actors, including AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States, UN Agencies, civil society, women's rights organizations, human rights institutions, academia, media, eminent personalities, development partners, and others. The AMPP roadmap aims to prevent fragmentation, duplication of efforts, and wastage of scarce resources, while also amplifying the Maputo Protocol outcomes to ensure the realisation of the overall objective of universal ratification and increased domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol.

The year-long commemorations of the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol are premised on the five (5) strategic priorities of the AMPP, as shown in the diagram below.

All for Maputo Protocol Programme

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



In response to the exacerbated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls' human rights, the AUC also developed the **Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index (MPSI)**, which is an innovative contribution to the body of tools that seek to enhance accountability and assess progress by Member States in implementing gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment commitments under the Maputo Protocol. The AU further developed the **One Million Next Level Initiative (1MNL)** to empower young people, especially young women with opportunities for Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Engagement as well as Health and Wellbeing, all in alignment with the relevant provisions of the Maputo Protocol. To respond to women's economic development as outlined in the Maputo Protocol, the AU further developed the Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion Initiative (WYFEI) to advocate for parity in employment, unlock financing for African women and youth entrepreneurs, mobilize key stakeholders to provide financial products and services for African women and youth and contribute to business environment reforms in Africa.

The theme, ***"Raising the Bar on Policies and Partnerships for African People"*** highlights the 20-year journey of the Maputo Protocol and how it has positively changed Africa's GEWE landscape. It provides an opportunity to focus on a **3Ps** framework recently promulgated by the AUC-WGYD, that looks at '**Policies, Partnerships and People**' with **Promising Practices** as a thread that runs across the three PS.

The framework highlights three tiers of impact in development seeking to:

- (i) Explore the **Policies** and legislative frameworks developed at a regional/macro level by the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and related AU Organs and Specialised Agencies to set norms and standards on gender equality and women's

- empowerment, informed by global normative frameworks and the lived realities and needs of women and girls across the continent.
- (ii) Spotlight the role of strategic **Partnerships** and collaboration with development partners, civil society organisations (CSOs), private sector and other stakeholders and how these partners serve as the bridge to decentralize and operationalise policies adopted at regional and national levels.
 - (iii) Demonstrate the positive impact on the lives of the African **People**, in particular women and girls, to ensure sustainable and tangible benefits and overall improved livelihoods and development outcomes.

Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 speaks of, '**An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children**'. Without the critical work of duty bearers for laws and Policies, Partners who serve as the bridge for connections and People to determine impact, this may never be a reality.

The Maputo@20 High Level Events are intended to remind all relevant stakeholders, of their collective and individual commitments with regards to the advancement of the rights of women and girls in Africa, in particular ensuring the establishment of accountability mechanisms, making sure that necessary measures are taken, including reporting on the progress made. Using the 3Ps framework, the commemorations will also create a platform for dialogue and interface between stakeholders representing '**Policies, Partnerships and People**', discussing shared values, goals, and aspirations for taking forward the work of the Maputo Protocol.

3. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The primary objective of the Maputo@ 20 celebrations is to take stock of achievements made in Africa in the promotion and protection of women's human rights over the 20 years since the adoption of the Maputo Protocol, reflect on key challenges and some of the emerging women's rights concerns and agree on impactful solutions and strategies to accelerate better action and outcomes for the African women's human rights system.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Call to Action the 11 AU Member States that have not ratified the Protocol to do so, and those who have ratified to domesticate and implement and for relevant States Parties to withdraw their reservations;
2. Develop a report with extensive best practices on implementation, identification of low-hanging fruits and effective strategies to accelerate implementation and accountability for the Maputo Protocol;
3. Launch accountability tools to accelerate implementation of relevant provisions of the Maputo Protocol, notably the Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index, the Roadmap of the African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion as well as the AU Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

The Expected Outcomes are as follows:

1. Maputo Protocol achievements are highlighted, challenges are identified, emerging issues are underscored and strategies for accelerated and impactful action are agreed to

2. A Call to Action to ratify and withdraw reservations is developed.
3. A publishable report is drafted.
4. Accountability tools are launched.

4. ORGANISATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAPUTO PROTOCOL ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Supported technically and financially by local, regional and international NGOs as well as UN Agencies and International Development Partners, the Maputo@20 celebrations will be held as follows:

i. Maputo@ 20 Diplomatic Advocacy Week: Addis Ababa and Nairobi

With Addis Ababa as the Diplomatic capital of Africa and Nairobi hosting the largest number of African Diplomatic Missions, WGYD with its CSOs and UN partners will organise a High-Level Diplomatic Dialogue with AU Missions in Addis Ababa, to be followed by targeted Advocacy Visits to the Embassies of the 11 AU Member States that have not yet ratified the Maputo Protocol in Nairobi, Kenya. The objective of the Dialogue and Advocacy Visits is to encourage the diplomatic missions to push their Member States to ratify the Protocol and submit their instruments of ratification to the AUC by the end of 2023 and for those who have ratified, to accelerate implementation.

The Diplomatic Advocacy Week will be divided into two sessions:

- Addis Ababa: 20 June, Diplomatic Dialogue led by the AUC Deputy Chairperson, H.E. DR. Monique Nsanzabwagana and H.E. Commissioner Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, SRRWA- ACHPR. The Diplomatic Dialogue will also launch the Roadmap for the year-long Maputo@20 celebrations, 2023-2024.
- Nairobi: 10 – 13 July, Diplomatic Advocacy Visits led by the AU and Members of the SOAWR Network.

ii. Grassroots mobilisation and High-Level Conference to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights: 10 and 11 July 2023 – Multiple venues

The meeting will be organised as a High-Level hybrid Conference from 10 to 11 July 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The event will be attended by women leaders, including young women from across the African continent among them rural women, women living with disabilities and women living with HIV/AIDS; AU Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women's Affairs; AU Organs; AU Specialized Agencies; Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RMs); Civil Society Organizations (women's rights organizations, young women's organizations, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)); Members of the Diplomatic Corps; United Nations Agencies and International Organisations; International Development Partners and Private Sector Partners.

The High-Level Conference will launch the AWD-FEI Roadmap as well as the AU Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls as a way of launching the process towards

continental consultations and negotiations on the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.

The two-day High-Level Conference will be convened in the form of an 'Imbizo/Lekgotla' with different sectoral and thematic working groups to tackle critical priority areas of concern and come up with strategies and solutions to accelerate impactful action.

As the celebrations coincide with Africa Women's Month and especially Africa Women's Day on July 31, 2023, the high-level event will also be an opportunity to honour African women who contributed to Africa's liberation and development over the 60 years since the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the 20 years of the African Union.

The outcomes of the High-Level Conference will be a Report that will be published as part of the Maputo@20 celebrations as well as a Declaration on Maputo@20 to be presented to the AU Heads of States during the AU Summit in February 2024 through the STC on GEWE, PRC and Executive Council. The outcomes will also be presented at the Women Deliver 2023 Conference to be held from 17 – 20 July, 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda.

iii. Maputo@20 July 2023 to July 2024 celebrations

There will be year-long celebrations of the Maputo@ 20 starting in July 2023 and ending in July 2024. While a Roadmap is under development and will be launched during the Diplomatic Advocacy Week, some of the celebratory events will include, among others:

- Advocacy Missions to AU Member States that have not yet ratified the Maputo Protocol;
- Follow-up Missions to AU Member States that have received capacity building on the Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index;
- Promotion Missions led by the Office of the SRRWA;
- Development and publication of knowledge products on the Maputo Protocol
- Activities targeting in-country advocacy with other duty bearers such Ministries of Justice, Parliamentarians etc.
- Grassroots mobilisation of women and girls, as well as civil society organisations, media, and other key actors to popularise the provisions of the Maputo Protocol
- Activities targeting young women on the Maputo protocol.

The AU and its partners will also take advantage of other continental and global platforms during the Maputo@20 year to celebrate and raise awareness about the Maputo Protocol.

iv. Media Campaign on the Maputo@20

The AUC and its partners will produce and develop key messaging and content focusing on Maputo@20 in July as well as the year-long celebrations from July 2023 to July 2024 to be disseminated on the respective websites and social media pages:

- Increase awareness of the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa to make commitments and call for action towards the universal ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol;

