



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP  
GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE  
DE DEVELOPPEMENT

**Concept Note**  
**Women Deliver Conference: Africa Focused Sessions**

***Theme: "Maputo@20 - Bridging the Gap Between Policies and People"***

**Kigali, Rwanda**  
**18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2023**

## 1. Introduction

The year 2023, marks important milestones in the continental and global calendar for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and women's human rights. This year the continent celebrates and acknowledges the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), recognizes the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU) and, the end of the first Ten Year Implementation Plan for Agenda 2063 (2013-2023). In addition, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU adopted the Africa Union Theme of the Year 2023 as the year for ***"Acceleration of AfCTA implementation"***. Globally, 2023 commemorates 75 years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

It is against this background and in light of the Women Deliver 2023 Conference (WD23) which is scheduled to take place for the first time in Africa from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda. This presents the continent with an opportunity to mobilize and amplify African voices while focusing the conference on key African priorities on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).

The African Union Commission's Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate (AUC-WGYD) and African Development Bank's Gender, Women and Civil Society Engagements (AfDB-AHGC) in collaboration with other key partners, UN Agencies, International Organizations and CSOs will host Africa Focused Sessions during the Women Deliver Conference on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

The Africa Focused Sessions will convene under the theme ***"Maputo @20: Bridging the Gap Between Policies and People"*** and will reflect on a myriad of thematic issues that are critical to be addressed to protect and promote the rights of women.

## 2. Rationale

The Maputo Protocol covers a wide range of issues, including the elimination of violence against women, women's economic empowerment, access to education and health. As the continent celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Maputo Protocol, the continent has an opportunity to reflect on the progress made in advancing women's rights in Africa, to renew commitments to advancing GEWE in Africa as well as address the challenges that still remain.

In that regard, in order to address the issue of Gender-Based Violence in Africa, the 2023 February Summit adopted a decision requesting the Commission to begin negotiating the



AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. The Convention is intended to be a comprehensive legal framework that will set standards for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls as well as ensuring the protection and support of survivors.

For far too long, women have faced barriers to their economic empowerment, including lack of participation in economic decision making, unequal access to resources, limited access to markets, and the persistent gender wage gap. These challenges must be addressed in order to break the trade barriers that restrict their full and equal participation in the economic development.

As a means to reduce the obstacles that impede equality between men and women, through the implementation of innovative solutions to provide financial access to women, 2020-2030 was declared by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, convened in February 2020, as the African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion (AWD-FEI). In their declaration, African leaders recommitted to scale actions for progressive gender inclusion towards sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels.

As a flagship initiative of the AWD-FEI, the AU Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion (WYFEI) 2030 Initiative was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022 by H.E Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC and H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana and African Union Champion on Gender and Development Issues. The initiative seeks to unlock systemic bottlenecks that conspire to perpetuate poverty, deprivation and social injustice among women and youth in Africa.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) as the premier development finance institution on the Continent has also committed to accelerate efforts to ensure gender equality and women's economic power. Guided by its Gender Strategy (2021-2025), the Bank promotes transformative gender equality and women's empowerment programs within all its projects' operations in regional member countries (RMCs). The Bank's Gender Strategy is guided by three pillars, namely (i) empowering women through access to finance and markets; (ii) accelerating job creation for women through skills enhancement; and (iii) increasing women's access to social services through infrastructure.

In that spirit, the Bank launched its women focused flagship initiative - the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA) - which expects to unlock up to USD 5 billion of financing to women entrepreneurs by 2026 in 54 countries through 2 main channels

- (i) USD 3 billion through the AFAWA Guarantee for Growth (G4G) Program with the Africa Guarantee Fund (AGF). Through this channel, an estimated 27,000 women businesses will be reached and
- (ii) USD 2 billion through the Bank's traditional instruments. Already \$672 million have already been approved for on-lending to close to 3000 women SMEs in 23 countries. Additional activities such as the Women Entrepreneurship enablers program to train 16,000 women entrepreneurs and increase their bankability as well the transformation of women SMEs in the formal sector will further enhance the initiative's ability to meet its goal.

It is in this vein that the AUC and AfDB in collaboration with other strategic partners will convene the Africa Focused Sessions during the Women Deliver Conference to discuss innovative strategies to ensure policies reach African people through impactful partnerships to transform the African continent. The sessions will further consider promising practices in Africa that can be taken to scale in the advancement of Africa's GEWE.

### 3. Organization of the sessions

**Two sessions will be organized as follows:**

- **On 18th July 2023, 11:00 to 12:30** - This will be a high-level accountability session with thought leaders and African leaders that spotlights Africa's priorities and interventions on GEWE in furtherance of Aspirations 6 and 7 of Agenda 2063. The conversation storyline will capture how to connect African Union policies to the people and to spotlight the role of strategic partnership in decentralising and implementing these policies.
- **Session Format:** the session will begin with a high level opening session followed by a moderated panel discussion that will explore the following thematic areas: 20 Years of Maputo Protocol, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion and finally promising practices in Africa.

The discussions will be anchored on the 3Ps Framework on **Policies, Partnerships and People with Promising Practices** as a thread that runs across the three PS. The storyline will focus on how to connect African Institutions' Policies to African People through impactful Afro-centered Partnerships, while highlighting Promising Practices at all the different levels.

- **19<sup>th</sup> July 2023, 09:00 to 12:00** – This will be a City of Practice session which will pick up where the previous session will have left off and will showcase replicable

and scalable promising practices in financial inclusion for African women, including guarantee systems, risk-sharing mechanisms, gender-lens investment, e-payments, blended finance, gender bonds, insurances, procurements entrepreneurship and other alternative financing mechanisms as well as Africa's requisite solutions to enhance women's access to finance and especially as it relates to increased access to capital as well as digital financial solutions.

- The session will be a facilitated discussion on existing innovative financing solutions in Africa under the theme **“A City of Practice - Solutions to Scaling Women's Access to Finance”**. The session is designed to explore existing and emerging financial inclusion solutions including innovative financial infrastructures, entrepreneurship and investment strategies via examining Africa-specific requisite solutions that aim to effectively scale up and enhance access to financial services and products for women. It will serve as a platform for learning from existing experiences and co-creating innovative solutions that can further enhance women's access to finance in Africa.

#### 4. Objectives

The overall objective is to advocate for African priorities on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), to advance and influence the global position GEWE.

The specific objectives are:

- To define existing policies and interventions that exist at the macro level (continental and national) that advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) in Africa
- To discuss the importance of strategic partnerships in decentralising African Institutions' policies and African Institutions to African people.
- To reflect on 20 years of the Maputo Protocol with specific attention to advances made in Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion as well as Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
- To examine and showcase available financial products and services as well as demonstrate the impact they have had in the lives of beneficiaries
- To showcase scalable solutions on financial inclusion for women and identify African solutions to scale up and enhance women and youth access to finance and financial products.

#### 5. Expected Outcomes

The following are expected outcomes:

- Awareness raised on African Institutions' policies and interventions to advance Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- Strategic partnerships to decentralize African institutions' policies to African people spotlighted, amplified and renewed commitments attained
- The outcome of the Maputo Protocol Turns 20 Celebrations presented to the Women Deliver Conference
- Increased investments in women's economic empowerment
- Concrete commitments to advance economic inclusion of women and youth established.

## 6. Participants

The sessions will be attended by former women AU Heads States and Government, First Ladies, Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women's Affairs, AU Specialized Agencies and AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Development Banks, United Nations (UN) Agencies, the Private Sector, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Representatives of Financial Institutions, African Philanthropists, Development Partners, youth and women Representatives, traditional and religious leaders, diaspora and media Representatives.

## 7. Dates and Venue

The sessions are scheduled as follow:

- **18<sup>th</sup> July 2023, from 11am to 12:30 pm:** Africa Focused Plenary Session
- **19<sup>th</sup> July 2023, from 9:00 to 12:00:** Africa Focused Technical session on economic inclusion of women and youth

All the sessions will be held in a hybrid format, with some participants in Kigali, Rwanda and others online (via Zoom).

## 8. Organizers

The sessions will be organized by AUC and AfDB in collaboration with other strategic partners, UN agencies, International Organizations and CSOs.

## 9. Media Coverage during the African Focused sessions

The AUC, the African Development Bank, and other partners' communication teams will produce and develop key messaging and content focusing on the Africa Focused





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Sessions during the Women Deliver Conference to be disseminated on the respective websites and social media pages.

## 10. Mode of Delivery

The meeting will be conducted in two AU languages: English and French.

*For further information, kindly contact the following:*

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