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Africa Pre-Commission on the Status of Women's Sixty Sixth (CSW66)

Ministerial Consultative Meeting Held on 28th February 2022 (Hybrid)

Common African Position (CAP)

Africa Pre-Commission on the Status of Women Sixty-Six (CSW66)
Ministerial Consultative Meeting on the Theme:

"Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes"

KEY MESSAGES AND STRATEGIES FOR CSW66

PREAMBLE

1. African Union (AU) Ministers responsible for Gender and promotion of Women met at a hybrid consultative meeting on 28th February 2022 in preparation for the sixty-six (66th) session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) on the priority theme: "***Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes***".

2. The meeting built on commitments made in the international and regional normative frameworks on women's rights and gender equality, climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction, as well as COVID-19 and women mainly:

At International level:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (UDHR), 1948
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (ICCPR), 1966
- Resolution 60/2 on women, the girl child and HIV, (2018)
- The Convention on the Political Rights of Women, (CPRW), 1954
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006)
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), 1995
- The Programme for Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 1994
- Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (SDGs), 2015
- The Convention on Biodiversity, 1992 and the Nagoya Protocol, 2010
- The United Nations Resolution 73/284 on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2019) 2021–2030
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), 1994
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1992
- The Paris Climate Agreement, 2015
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015
- The Marrakech Declaration, 2018

- The Lima Declaration and its Enhanced Programme of Action, 2014

At Regional level:

- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), 2003
- The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, (ACGEG), 2007
- The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), 2004
- The Africa Union Agenda, 2013
- The AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 2018
- The Africa Youth Charter, 2006
- The AU Road map on harnessing the demographic dividend, 2014
- African Union Programme of Action for Implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2016
- The Nairobi Declaration on accelerating the path to achieving the goals and targets of the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa, 2021

3. **Guided** by the African Union Agenda 2063 and its seven aspirations, particularly aspiration 6, the meeting reiterated the statement made in the African Union (AU) Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) 2018-2028, that "*Women in Africa remain the majority of the poor, the dispossessed, the landless, the unemployed, those working in the informal sector, and those shouldering the burden of care*."

4. **Consequently**, the meeting resolved that the current situation, marked by a regression of the gains made to advance women's rights and gender equality, due to the devastating effects of climate change and environmental disasters on one hand and the COVID-19 pandemic on the other, actions must be taken as an opportunity to ensure implementation of the following strategies:

    i. Integrating gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives into climate change adaptation, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, and programmes.

    ii. Promoting women and girls' full and meaningful participation and leadership in decision making and implementation of all policies and programmes aiming to address the causes and

consequences of climate change and in reducing environmental and disaster risks.

iii. Building women and girls' resilience to climate change, environment and disaster risk.

iv. Ending violence against women and girls.

v. Ensuring free and safe migration and transborder movements.

vi. Expanding gender sensitive financing for climate change, adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

vii. Enhancing gender statistics and data in the areas of gender, environment, and climate change.

5. **We**, African Ministers responsible for Gender and promotion of women, participating in the Africa Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), resolve to build consensus on strategies and actions for ensuring that African women and girls are at the centre of decision-making in sectors that are strategic for a transformative recovery that strengthen women and girls' leadership and resilience.

6. **Aware tha**t gender inequality coupled with adverse impacts associated with climate change, environmental crises and natural disasters are among the greatest challenges for sustainable development of our time, affecting the entire planet and all people, with disproportionate impact on women and girls, facing multiple forms of discrimination and conflicts.

7. **Reiterate** that the entire Africa region suffers from the effects and consequences of numerous climate change impact despite very minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions compared to developed countries. Such impacts include, increased average temperatures; recurrent droughts and floods landslides in parts of the continent; rising sea-levels; melting glaciers; decreased precipitation leading to desertification, deforestation, and accelerated land degradation; deterioration of agricultural productivity; increase of food insecurity and poverty; aggravation of conflict over natural resources and climate induced migration. These conditions, coupled with all forms of conflicts, emerging

political crisis, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, have led to political instability, exacerbated insecurity, increased poverty that has disproportionately affected women and girls and has increased gender-based violence.

8. **Realizing** that climate change directly impacts the livelihoods of all people in Africa especially the vulnerable groups and impede on their ability and potential, to access, use and manage Africa's natural resources and the conservation of ecosystems - including those with important carbon sequestration functions to ensure sustainable development.

9. **Mindful** of the disproportionate effect of climate change on women and girls in Africa due to pervasive gender inequality, which continues to erode women's and girls' physical, emotional, sexual, and economic safety and security; increases the burden of unpaid care, domestic and community work; and contributes to the marginalization of women and girls in assuming leadership and participating in decision making on all issues related to climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

10. **Emphasizing** the need for adequate consideration of the diverse needs of women and girls in the design, implementation and benefits of policies and programs related to climate change, disasters, and risks reduction at global, regional, and local levels.

11. **Convinced** that the leadership and participation of women and girls in climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction will strengthen the resilience of communities.

12. **Further convinced** the responsibility to ensure that women and girls can access the benefits of the green and blue economy lies with governments.

13. **Recognizing** that governments responsibility is in the development of national policies and priorities in accordance with their national laws and priorities, international and regional obligations and commitments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Further recognizing the UN system entities are called to assist governments upon request in accordance with national laws and considering priorities, realities, and capacities.

14. **Acknowledging** the importance of regional efforts and multilateralism to address gender issues in the context of climate change and disaster risk reduction in Africa.

15. **Recognizing** the interdependence between participation in climate change adaptation and mitigation and participation in public life and other crucial rights such as social protection, the right to education, health (reproductive, mental, maternal and adolescent and child), the right to live free of all forms of violence, access to land and resources, to enable women's access to public life.

16. **Reaffirming** and **recognizing** the critical role that women and girls in Africa play in climate change adaptation and mitigation through their role and experiences in key sectors such as food and agricultural system as farmers, producers, and knowledge holders, or through sustainable management of natural resources in biodiversity conservation, sustainable food, and agricultural systems.

17. **Convinced** that actions to adapt and mitigate climate change risk and disasters can reduce gender inequality in Africa while promoting economic prosperity.

18. **Encouraged** by policy, legislative, institutional and programme initiatives already taken by Member States, in partnership with and support from international institutions, to address the challenges of climate change and to reduce the risk of disaster.

19. **Commend** the efforts of the African Union and its member states for progress made in the implementation of CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the AU Gender Strategy as frameworks to strengthen women and girl's agency in Africa and ensure that women and girls voices are amplified and their concerns fully addressed through, among others, effective implementation of legislation and dedicated and adequate financing of gender equality work.

20. **Cognisant** of the economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the compounded impacts of the climate and environment crises that continues to push people further behind and into extreme poverty, disproportionately impacting women and girls, especially those already

marginalized, and left behind, threatening decades of progress made and eroding the gains made on gender equality.

21. **Reiterate** the continued resolve to achieve the commitments made in Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child, and HIV/AIDS, considering the impact that climate change has on women and girls' health and access to services, and the specific needs of women and girls in COVID 19 response and recovery.

22. **Agree** on the importance of working collaboratively with all categories of stakeholders at local, national, regional, and international levels to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, human-induced and natural disasters on women and girls with due considerations of the specificity of plans and directions of each Member States , through the following six strategies of actions:

I. Integrating gender equality and women and girl's empowerment perspectives in climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, and programmes

A. Fulfil existing commitments and obligations under the Rio conventions and the Sendai Framework related to climate change, environment, and disaster risk reduction in a holistic and integrated approach, taking fully into account their gender action plans and calling for the creation of such plans where there are none and integrating gender perspectives into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction.

B. Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and bridge the gap between them and decision-makers to facilitate dialogue, to build consensus and alliances. Encourage member states to uphold their commitments that recognize the rights to development, safety and security, decent work, and livelihoods as well as a healthy environment.

C. Provide capacity and technical support at regional and national levels to ensure that action plans on climate change and disaster risk reduction are gender-responsive and transformative.

D. Invest in systematic capacity-development of parliamentarians and government officials (i.e., Gender equality machineries, ministries, local authorities) for gender responsive budgeting to mainstream

gender and awareness-raising on the gender and climate/environment/disaster nexus.

E. Strengthen intra-governmental coordination mechanisms to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of gender equality machineries and women's organizations in all key national policy processes for sustainable development, climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction management.

F. Ensure a rights-based, gender-responsive and transformative approach to food sovereignty and agro-biodiversity with equitable access to land, resources, assets and institutions and fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

G. Put women at the centre of the just transition towards the green and blue economy and ensure that all initiatives and all green and blue economy policies and strategies at the regional and national level mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives applying an intersectional approach.

II. Promoting women and girls' meaningful participation and leadership in combating the negative impact of climate change, environmental and disaster risks

A. Develop policies and programs that foster women and girls' engagement in and control over agro-ecological food production that restores biodiversity, regenerates the agroecosystem, and provides resilience against climate change and other disaster risks.

B. Value and develop solutions to combating climate change and environmental degradation based on women and girls' indigenous, local, and traditional knowledge, innovation, and practices, particularly in the construction of sustainable food systems, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

C. Remove legal barriers and address gender discrimination in legislation to level the playing field and enable women and girls to be at the centre of climate change mitigation and environmental and disaster risk reduction.

D. Put women at the centre of a just transition to the green and blue economy.

E. Investing in skills building of women; removing structural barriers to women's access to stable, high value green and blue jobs; addressing women's unpaid care work and leveraging existing green economic policy and financing instruments to accelerate gender responsive green and blue economy transition.

F. Invest in capacity-building of women with disabilities, young women, women who are migrants or displaced, indigenous people, and their organizations to increase their leadership and negotiation skills to ensure a full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making spaces and institutions on climate change, environment, and disaster risk governance.

G. Strengthen inter-governmental coordination mechanisms to foster joint strategies by gender machineries and environment ministries and ensure the equal, full, and meaningful participation of gender machineries and women's organizations in all key national and international policy processes for sustainable development, climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction management.

III. Building women and girls' resilience to climate change and environmental risks

A. Build the resilience of climate affected communities by giving special attention to women and girls' role in identifying and implementing coping mechanisms to withstand crises and strengthen gender-responsive early warning systems to mitigate disasters.

B. Provide women and girls with resources and opportunities to find and apply innovative and viable solutions and coping mechanisms.

C. Invest in the protection of early childhood and take the appropriate practical measures, such as the building of community childcare, to benefit women and girls most of whom are in the agricultural sector and highly exposed to the impacts of climate change.

D. Encourage the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women and girls in quality public services by investing in the creation of decent jobs to ensure social protection and reduce women's and girl's unpaid

care, domestic and communal work and increase their resilience to and recovery from climate and environmental crises and disasters.

E. Support women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses in a just transition from the informal to the formal economy in high-value sectors of the green and blue economy.

IV. Ending violence against women and girls and ensure safe and secure migration and transboundary movement

A. Acknowledge and raise awareness on climate and environmentally driven migration and its impact on women and girls, specifically the increased risk of exploitation and violence, including forced and child marriage.

B. Promote cooperation to mitigate environment induced migration and to ensure safe, orderly, and humane migration, with a particular focus on women's and girl's safety and addressing the risk factors that lead to unsafe migration and trafficking.

C. Strengthen Member States and all stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable communities, decision makers, and leaders) to be gender transformative, and have the capacities to understand the link between power, transformative action and the modalities of the Green Climate Fund to build the resilience of communities.

V. Expanding gender-sensitive finance

A. Ensure gender-sensitive budgeting in all spheres of financing for climate, environment, and disaster risk reduction, with particular emphasis on gender equality in climate and environmental investments.

B. Increase the quality, quantity and accessibility of available funding and programmes addressing climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction to support women and girls and their organizations, with particular attention to groups representing women and girls facing all forms of discrimination.

C. Ensure interventions on climate, environment and disaster risk reduction explicitly allocate the required resources for designing,

delivering, and monitoring evidence-based and coordinated approaches to addressing the various forms of violence against women and girls exacerbated by climate change and disasters.

VI. Enhancing gender statistics

A. Strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and government institutions to collect, analyse, disseminate, and use disaggregated data to conduct gender analysis on climate change, environmental and disaster and risk reduction, with socio-economic indicators in all climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes and in disaster risk reduction.

B. Using relevant data, conduct gender analysis to identify challenges and opportunities for women and girls, women and girls-led businesses, including small holder farmers, to create and benefit from the green and blue economy including emerging green and blue jobs.

23. As governments, in partnership with the United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations Entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN Women) and the entity responsible for the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC,) as well as international and regional financial institutions, namely the African Development Bank (AfDB), and in partnership with civil society organizations, we commit to support initiatives aiming to ensure the full implementation of the above actions in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risks reduction.

Addis Ababa, 28 February 2022