

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P.O. Box 3243 Telephone 517 700 Cables: OAU, Addis Ababa

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

**STAKEHOLDER'S CONSULTATION ON 2015 THEME "YEAR OF
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AFRICA
AGENDA 2063"**

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, FROM 21-23rd JANUARY 2015

I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, during the 23rd Ordinary Session, held from 26 to 27 June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, declared 2015 as the **Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063**, marking the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action (1995) the 5th Anniversary of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) and the 15th Anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This declaration, events and processes complement each other in providing concrete regional frameworks for gender equality and the empowerment of women in Africa. Governments, CSOs, and other partners should therefore seize this golden opportunity in proposing concrete actions and way forward using these normative frameworks to accelerate the implementation of the BPfA and related actions and make the AU Agenda 2063 and 2015 Theme practical and operational. As a continental player in promoting sustainable and equitable development, the African Union has been undertaking, by its own and in tandem with the international community, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the UN System and national institutions, diverse activities targeting gender equality and women's empowerment. Since then, the African Union, in collaboration with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States and AU Organs, and in partnership with the UN System, and other institutions, is making considerable effort to implement policies and strategies for gender equality; ensuring gender-sensitivity both in its continental programs and among its Member States. The ultimate objective of all these initiatives is to improve women's socio-economic and political status, uphold women's rights and close the gender gap in Africa.

The AU Vision is becoming a reality for African women with the introduction of the Agenda 2063, the continental development framework, which aspires, among its priorities, for an Africa where Development is people-driven, tapping particularly on the potential of Women and Youth. Agenda 2063 has as one of its goals "full gender equality in all spheres of life" with two priority areas (i) women and girls empowerment and (ii) sexual violence and discrimination. This goal and priorities respond to the organization's aspiration for "an Africa whose development is people-driven, especially relying on the potential offered by its women and youth and well cared for children". This aspiration, goal and priorities are taken a step further with the selection of the Theme for the 2015 AU Summit, "**Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063**". The goal, priority areas, AU 2015 Theme resonates with the conclusions of the Africa Regional conference on the review of the Beijing +20 where 45 countries on the continent reaffirmed their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and the importance of the objectives, principles and goals contained therein, and to scaling up and accelerating their implementation. The adoption of the Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: *Towards a transformational change for women and girls in Africa* in Addis Ababa during the Beijing +20 review conference provides additional framework for the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. This pre-summit

consultative meeting/conference of civil society organizations and African Ministers of Gender will focus on the linkages between, the Beijing +20 Regional Review Meeting and resultant Declaration, Agenda 2063 and the AU Theme of women in 2015 as they provide normative frameworks critical for the continent's gender agenda.

II. RATIONALE

In line with the outcomes of the Ministerial Consultation with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) held on 24th June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the AUCⁱ will start an inclusive Consultation involving the AU Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs, Women's Networks led by GIMACⁱⁱ, CSOs with the participation of RECsⁱⁱⁱ and AU Partners to strategize on the AU 2015 Summit theme "**Women Empowerment and Development towards Agenda 2063**". This platform will be a great opportunity for stakeholders and CSOs to reflect on and propose concrete actions on the AU theme, the Agenda 2063 and moving forward with the Addis Ababa Declaration on the Beijing+20 review. CSOs will also be able to strategize on how to influence/use these various normative frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa reflecting on the AU Summit theme during and beyond 2015.

III. OBJECTIVE

The overarching objective of this Consultation is to use current frameworks-the AU agenda 2063, AU 2015 Summit Theme and the Beijing+20 Africa review- to outline transformative actions that are critical for the continent's gender agenda moving forward.

More precisely this could include a review of best practices learning from 20 years of the implementation of the BPfA, an analysis of Agenda 2063 from a gender perspective and a suggested way forward on the AU Summit 2015 Theme with concrete actions to unleash women's potential for Africa's development.

IV. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- a) To create avenues for dialogue and consensus among States and non-States actors, such as national gender machineries and CSOs for a common Africa position on gender equality and women's empowerment
- b) To undertake a comprehensive review of Africa's Agenda 2063 and the AU Summit 2015 Theme to strengthen ownership of these frameworks among stakeholders.
- c) To establish the linkages between, the Beijing+20 Regional Review and its Declaration, the Agenda 2063 and the AU 2015 Theme with a view to set tangible

actions that can be reported through the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the African Women's Decade (2010-2020).

- d) To enhance partnership between Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, RECs and CSO's in order to enable collective actions to implement and popularize the 2015 Theme, the Beijing+20 review outcomes and the Agenda 2063.
- e) Develop a Road Map to be implemented during the year 2015 and beyond, as well as a Monitoring and Evaluation system to ensure accountability.

V. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- a) Increased engagement and actions among National Gender Machineries and CSOs on gender equality and women's empowerment
- b) Proposed and agreed concrete actions on the 2015 Theme and Agenda 2063 owned by all National Gender Machineries
- c) Enhanced dialogue and partnership between Gender Machineries on the Road Map of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063.
- d) Reinforced political commitment by African Leaders and all stakeholders for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

VI. METHODOLOGY:

There will be three (3) segments to the consultation. The first will be a Closed Session of AU Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, which will be held on 21st January 2015, at a Closed Session among Ministers themselves to strategize on their Consultation with CSO's and other Stakeholders, but also to determine their annual working Agenda with the AUC and UNECA.

The second segment will be a joint meeting between the Chairperson of AUC, Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, RECs and GIMAC, which will be held on 22nd January 2015, essentially focused on Ministers' Strategies to own Agenda 2063 and the Theme of 2015, and key presentations on the 2015 Theme, the Africa Agenda 2063 and the Regional Report and outcomes of the Africa Beijing+20 review. The second segment will be opened for debates and questions on the different presentations.

In the third and final segment on 23rd January, the Ministers will be invited to the UN Women planned regional consultation on Women, Peace and Security that will take place on 23 January 2015. This event is hosted by the AU's Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security with support from UN Women. This consultation will be in preparation for the 15th Anniversary of UNSCR1325 which will take place in New York in October 2015. The Ministers will be encouraged to use the opportunity of the consultation on 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 to share their country practices and challenges.

The three (3) Inclusive Consultation will end with the adoption of the decision from this meeting that will be presented to the AU Summit of January 2015.

VII. ORGANIZERS OF THE MEETING

Under the Presidency of Her Excellency Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the AUC, the Consultation is jointly organized by the African Union Commission; the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), UNECA and UNWOMEN Liaison Office to the AU.

VIII. PARTICIPANTS

AU Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, Gender units of the RECs, Women's Network from GIMAC, CSOs, UNWOMEN and ECA/the African Centre for Gender (ACG), AU Partners, NEPAD as well as their counterparts from the UN System will be expected to attend this Consultation.

IX. DATE AND VENUE OF THE MEETING

The Consultation is scheduled to take place from 21st to 23rd January 2015 at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

VI. Mode of Delivery

The Meeting will be conducted in four AU languages, Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.

X. LOGISTIC ARRANGEMENTS

- ✓ The logistic support will be provided by the AUC with the support of UNWOMEM, and GIMAC.

- ✓ Travel, Accommodation, Meals and DSA will be provided by UNDP.

ⁱ African Union Commission

ⁱⁱ Gender is My Agenda Campaign

ⁱⁱⁱ Regional Economic Communities