



Joint Press Release

Stakeholders' Consultation on 2015 Theme "Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa Agenda 2063"

Addis Ababa, 23rd January 2015 – Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs of African Union member states have adopted a Communiqué towards the realization of women's empowerment in the framework of Agenda 2063. The joint Stakeholder Consultations of Gender Ministers from across Africa, the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) and Civil Society Organizations, the UN system and other development partners, was held at the African Union Commission, in Addis Ababa from 20-23 January 2015 to consult on the AU "Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa Agenda 2063" in 2015 and resulted in the adoption of a Communiqué.



The meeting analysed current global and continental challenges in the implementation of gender equality frameworks, namely Africa's Agenda 2063, the Declaration on Beijing+20 Africa, the African Women's Decade, the post-MDG agenda and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and

provided solution feeding into the AU 2015 Year of Women. Recommendations and commitments form part of a Communiqué adopted by the Stakeholders' Consultation that are critical in order for the continent's gender agenda moving forward. The meeting included, amongst others, interventions by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the representative of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Network, the UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa as well as the UN Women Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, the Envoy for Gender of the African Development Bank.

In her opening address to the Meeting, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, AUC Chairperson, raised the fact that "If women are emancipated and uplifted, the human race will get better. The ownership of this idea across the continent is substantial to make the aspirations of Agenda 2063 happen". The Chairperson further stressed that "women's issues should be completely and fully integrated in our ten year plan of action for the implementation of Agenda 2063".

The Chairperson emphasized that this should include mainstreaming a critical mass of women in all sectors as well as ensuring women's access to modern agricultural technologies, land, and capital to improve their productivity in agribusiness and ICTs. The Chairperson also raised existing and emerging threats that threaten the advancement of the gender agenda and the continent's development, which includes health pandemics, like HIV and Ebola as well as terrorism.

On her part, Hon. Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace & Security, commended African Union for dedicating this year 2015 to the empowerment of women across the Continent. "It's a golden opportunity to launch the year of women empowerment" she said in that regard.

She also affirmed that Africa had achieved a lot on gender equality in terms of declarations and elaboration of legal frameworks, but pointed out the fact that what is missing is implementation, solutions and actions.

Mr. Lebogang Motlana, Director UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa recognized the importance of this theme which speaks to African realities. He also emphasized the fact that it resonates with UN ideas. African women are critical actors in the process of development and their contribution need to be recognized and valued.

He insisted on the necessity for African women to be further empowered and be more present on the political sphere. "Time for African women has come" he concluded..

The representative from the Ethiopian Ministry of Women, children and Youth Affairs said Africa and the entire International community as a whole have realized that

women empowerment is key to human progress and development. “Given the significant role played by women in our society, women emancipation will without doubt pave way for concrete solutions to the social-economic problems that are existent at family and national level”, she added.

Participants appreciated the AUC lead in the institutionalization of a joint stakeholder meeting bringing Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs, the Gender is my Agenda Campaign network and other civil society organizations, and UN partners together to develop common strategies towards the implementation of Agenda 2063.

While it was agreed that the development of monitoring mechanisms for implementation will be critical, participants also noted the need for a mindset change that allows culture as a driving force for change that does not serve as a constraint to women’s rights and empowerment

Overall, the discussion focused on the need for implementation of existing development frameworks towards the realization of the Agenda 2063 vision, which should be coupled with financial commitments, especially to women’s organizations.

The adopted Communiqué will be presented in a declaration to Heads of States during the 24th Assembly of the African Union taking place from 30 – 31 January 2015 for adoption. The Addis Ababa Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action Towards a transformational change for women and girls in Africa (Beijing+20) will also be presented to Heads of States for adoption.

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