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**ABRIDGED ELEVENTH REPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION MEMBER
STATES AND TWELFTH REPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
(AUC) CHAIRPERSON ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN
UNION SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA
(SDGEA)**

Introduction

The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) was adopted at a Special Session on Gender, during the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly in July 2004, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since then, the Declaration has remained the most strategic reporting instrument deployed by the African Union (AU) in the promotion of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa. It has also been used to strengthen the ownership of the gender equality agenda and keep the issues alive at the highest political level in Africa.

Two obligations in the SDGEA are of special importance. The first is in Paragraph 13, which the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) is obliged to submit an annual report for the consideration of the Heads of State and Government on measures taken to implement the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

The second is in paragraph 12, in which the African Heads of State and Government committed themselves to report annually on their progress in gender mainstreaming. It is envisaged that this reporting will assist Member States to share good practices and identify areas in need of improvement to enhance the status of women. The reporting is also to serve as a form of peer review.

In addition, during the 1st AU Conference of Ministers Responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs held in Dakar, Senegal in October 2005, the Ministers adopted two (2) documents that would facilitate the implementation of the SDGEA namely, the Implementation Framework of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the Guidelines for Reporting on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

It is in line with these commitments that the Chairperson's and the Member States Synthesis reports are submitted for consideration.

This condensed report is divided into two parts: Part A, is the twelfth report of the AUC Chairperson on the implementation of the SDGEA for 2016.

Part B, is the eleventh Synthesis of 2016 reports of 28 Member States on the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). During this reporting period, 28 Member States have submitted their reports, which is the highest number of reporting since reporting started in 2006. The Member States are: Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In all, 51 Member States have submitted their reports, leaving Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, and Morocco which are yet to submit their initial reports.

PART A: AUC CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Part A is organized in 4 parts as follows:

- (1) Introduction
- (2) Overview of the AUC's progress on the implementation of the SDGEA Articles
- (3) Overview of Progress on the implementation of the SDGEA Articles by RECs
- (4) Conclusion

1. Introduction

This twelfth (12th) report of the AUC Chairperson is submitted pursuant to the obligation under Article 13 of the SDGEA, which enjoins the Chairperson of the Commission to submit an annual report for the consideration of the Heads of State and Government on measures taken to implement the principle of gender equality and gender mainstreaming at national, regional and continental levels.

The report provides highlights from AUC Departments and one Regional Economic Community (REC), namely, ECOWAS, in implementing gender equality and women's empowerment commitments related to the SDGEA. ECOWAS is the only REC that submitted its SDGEA report during this reporting period. The report is also informed by Pledges that AUC Departments and RECs made during the celebrations of International Women's Day on 8 March 2016, undertaking to implement at least two high impact gender equality and women's empowerment activities in furtherance of the 2016 African Union (AU) theme of the year, "African Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women". The adoption of gender related themes for two consecutive years in 2015 ("Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063") and 2016, opened a new vista of opportunities for the accelerated implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment commitments.

2. Overview of the AUC's progress on the implementation of the SDGEA Articles Progress on Article 1: Women, HIV/AIDS and Other Related Infectious Disease

Department of Social Affairs used the opportunity of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-VI) to position the Women's health agenda including issues relating to HIV/AIDS within international development environment. The High-level panel discussion on Maternal Health in Africa brought together Ministers, Heads of UN agencies and other high-level policy makers to share experiences on progress made in reducing maternal mortality in Africa. The event placed maternal health within the broader TICAD VI discussions as well as the outcome of the TICAD VI as a critical contributor towards Africa's economic growth and development.

The national launch of CARMMA in Mauritius and a high-level event to commemorate CARMMA Week in the Island States of the continent was held in Mauritius in November 2016. The event was held under the theme "Celebrating progress in implementing CARMMA in the Island States of Africa". The event brought together all the Island States to share experiences in maternal, new born and child health and chart the way forward to end preventable maternal and child

death by 2030. The Republic of Mauritius launched CARMMA and became the 46th African Union Member State to launch the Campaign

During the reporting period, the Medical and Health Services Department, created awareness on female and male reproductive system cancers and also increased the screening of female and male reproductive system cancer among AU MSD clients

Progress on Article 2: Peace and Security

In 2016, the Peace and Security Department (PSD) rolled out the 2016-2020 African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap, which recognizes gender mainstreaming in peace and security as a cross-cutting issues. The APSA Roadmap reinforces the continental commitment to silence the guns by 2020.

The PSD continued to implement the Gender Peace and Security Programme (GPSP), though it witnessed fund reduction in 2016. The GPSP still supports the full and effective participation of women in all stages of conflict including prevention, mediation, peace support operations, early recovery and post-conflict reconstruction. Against this background, the GPSP through the AU Liaison Office in Madagascar, facilitated women's participation in the ongoing peace dialogue with a view to promoting the integration of women's concerns in the national reconciliation and peace building efforts. As a result, the PSD formulated a programme of support to the Malagasy Ministry of Gender to promote women's empowerment and women's rights, in particular for the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee on the rights of women.

Since establishment in 2014, the Office of the Special Envoy of the African Union Commission Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security, has sought to advance the implementation of the AU Women, Peace and Security Agenda through the development of a Continental Results Framework (CRF), which provides a monitoring, reporting and accountability tool on the implementation of women, peace and security commitments by Member States. This culminated into the launch of the first ever report of the AUC on the "Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa" on the margins of the 27th Ordinary session of the AU Assembly, in July 2016. The report highlights, among others, Member States achievements in the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 covering five areas, namely "legal and policy reform and adoption"; "women's participation in various spheres, including in decision-making processes and the security sector"; promotion; implementation institutions; and "coordination and monitoring".

The Special Envoy carried out solidarity missions to countries affected by conflicts, including the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria. In November 2016, she led a delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where she encouraged women political leaders from the government and opposition to work together for the paramount cause of peace in a unified approach as women are for peace. In December 2016, the Special Envoy travelled to South Sudan to continue the campaign that was launched in October 2016 by H.E., the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to enhance the status of the women of South Sudan and ensure accountability on violence against women and girls in South Sudan.

In October 2016, the Office of the Special Envoy, in partnership with UN Women, initiated the establishment of Network of Journalists and Reporters on Women, Peace and Security in Africa with the aim to promote gender-responsive reporting that portrays women in the multitude of roles in conflict and peace, not only as victims but also as actors and change agents, in conflict, post-conflict and fragile contexts.

The Office of the Special Envoy has also initiated the establishment of a Network of Centers of Excellence working on women, peace and security issues. A first meeting of the Centers was organized on the margins of the forum of African women mediators in December 2016 with the participation of the Women, Peace and Security Institute (WPSI) of the Kofi Anan International Peacekeeping Center (KAIPTC), Accra, Ghana, the Pan African Centre on Gender and Development (Dakar, Senegal), the African Leadership Centre (Nairobi, Kenya) and the Egyptian African Center for Women (Cairo, Egypt).

Progress on Article 4: Gender Based Violence

As part of its mandate to deal with gender-based violence (GBV), the PSD supported, through the African Union Liaison Office for Burundi, the Regional Women's Forum of the ICGLR (RWF)¹ held from 07 – 09 July, 2016 in Kampala, Uganda. In this Forum, the AUC, in close collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, brought together judicial officers including prosecutors from the eleven (11) Member States of the Great Lakes Region as well as from countries in conflict or emerging from conflict, to identify best practices and major challenges to addressing sexual violence in crisis settings, including obstacles for women's access to justice. The initiative resulted in two outcomes: First, it identified lessons and best practices to guide efforts to address Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and fighting impunity in the ICGLR Member States. Second, it provided a pool of experts from which potential experts can be drawn, to train judicial and police officers, medical and social workers and other categories of persons, handling cases of sexual violence.

Progress on Article 5: Gender Parity in the African Union Organs and Member States

The AU Organs and Member States (MS) are expected to implement the gender parity principle at all levels. The overall gender representation in the AUC is still much more in favour of men at 66% for men and 34% for women. The only level where gender parity is reflected is at the level of AUC Commissioners. At the Professional Staff level (P1-D2), the disproportionality in representation is heavily skewed in favour of men posting 71% men and 29% for women. At the General Service level, the same trend is discernible, 64% men and 36% women. The only level where women surpassed men in representation is at the level of the youth, many of whom are volunteers with 43% for male and 57% for female.

The trend within the other organs of the Union is not different from the AUC. The major decision making organs of the Union such as the Assembly, the Executive Council, Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) and the PSC are essentially dominated by men, with the

¹ The RWF is one of the mechanisms set up by Member States of the International Conference of the Great Lakes (ICGLR) peace process for the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development (The Pact). It is a specific mechanism for coordination and monitoring of gender issues in the context of the Pact.

PSC posting 73.33% of men's representation. NEPAD currently operates at 50/50 representation, while the ACHPR and ACERWC are the two organs that have more women at 63% each. Concerted efforts are therefore required, including strategic recruitment, to ensure that the lopsided nature of gender representation is corrected to reflect the gender parity principle of the Union at all levels.

During the reporting period, the Directorate of Programming, Budget, Finance and Accounting (PBFA), recruited 15 additional short term staff members (intern, youth volunteer, short term and special service agreement), resulting in 73% female and 27% gender representation for short term positions.

Progress on Article 6: Women's Human Rights

The report compiled in 2016 of "achievements of Member States on implementing gender equality and women's empowerment commitments in 2015 and 2016", demonstrates how Member States converted their commitments and objectives into specific results and impact. The report records achievements in the areas of legislative actions and constitutional reforms; creation and reorganization of gender machinery; new policy orientation and delivery strategies; as well as programmes and activities.

The Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) also successfully convened multi-stakeholder policy platforms on GEWE. These include, among others: the AU Gender Pre-Summit held from 20-21 January 2016 under the AU theme "The African Year of Human Rights with Specific Focus on the Rights of Women", whose outcomes were integrated in the Declaration of the AU Heads of State and Government on the theme of the year; the 3rd High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, in collaboration with the AU Leadership Academy, held from 8-9 July 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda under the theme "the Contribution to Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Achieving Gender Equality: Stocktaking, opportunities and Accountability". The outcomes of the HLP led to the development of a project on in-country visits to promote the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol. WGDD also participated in the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held from 13-24 March 2016 at the UN Headquarters in New York, which was used to integrate the AU common position on GEWE in this global platform, as agreed to by African Ministers of foreign affairs and those in charge of gender and women's affairs during the Africa pre-CSW consultation meeting held in January 2016. On International Women's Day held on 8 March 2016, AUC Directors and some RECs made pledges to support GEWE and further the goals of Agenda 2063 by implementing at least two high-impact activities on GEWE. WGDD also hosted a continuation meeting in January 2016, of the 1st Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which resulted in the operationalization of the STC, the adoption of the Rules of Procedure and the elections of the 1st STC Bureau. Subsequently, the STC Bureau adopted its plan of action to implement its mandate over the two year term.

WGDD also developed some knowledge products, including, among others, the Mid-term Status Update Report of the African Women's Decade, the 2nd edition of the Gender Scorecard and the 2015 SDGEA reports. The design of the new AU Gender Strategy was also initiated, and one of

its objectives is to establish a platform to develop learning products and generate knowledge on GEWE in Africa.

The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) supported women' rights by organising training, which provided guidance and specific policy intercessions on best practices on project management to women and youth. The training enabled women and youth to understand entrepreneurship culture as an important driver of inclusive growth through creation and expansion of job opportunities for women and youth, corporate sustainability and innovative solutions. The training also build the capacity of women and youth on how the promotion of the Village-Banking Methodology can improve the socio-economic situation of the poor and empower women.

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) as the lead department responsible for facilitating the implementation of activities related to the 2016 AU theme, designed "Project 2016", which outlined all activities to mark the year of human rights and to promote the rights of women. The Department hosted four (4) regional consultations on Project 2016. As part of the commemoration of the theme of the year and in collaboration with WGDD, DPA deployed the historic, first-ever, all-women African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) to the Parliamentary elections in the Republic of the Seychelles. While the mission observed elections within the established framework of the AUEOM architecture, there was a much more deliberate effort to observe elections with a gender lens or from a gender perspective. During this reporting period, DPA also increased the number of women who participated in the AUEOMs to at least 50%, although most of the observer missions were led by men. The 5th Annual Human Rights Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa was convened under the theme "Reflecting, Celebrating And Advancing Human and People's Rights in Africa" from 23 – 26 November, 2016 in Arusha, Tanzania and was preceded by the 10th anniversary symposium of the African Court on Human and People's Rights and a youth forum.

The Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) in collaboration with the United States Mission to the African Union, organized an open discussion on Civic Engagement and Women's Political Participation on 25 February 2016. The open discussions, hosted through video conferencing and social media highlighted the role of women in civic and political participation in both the US and Africa. To bolster the representation of women in CSOs and Diaspora organizations, a quota of at least 50% women was set as a precondition for the signing of any MOU. CIDO also convened a continental forum on Interfaith Dialogue, whose outcome was the development, by the Inter-religious Councils of Africa, of an action plan on three main thematic areas, including gender and religion.

The Department of Infrastructure and Energy (DIE), included women in regional capacity building and training programmes; provided a number of slots for women in the training programmes of various transport professions including railways especially for the African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network (AIHSRN) flagship project, mainstreamed gender into bioenergy policy development and strategies as well as in projects preparation and development.

Progress on Article 7: Rights to Land, Property and Inheritance

The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) launched, on the margins of the 3rd HLP, a campaign to promote 30% land rights ownership by women. DREA also supported the implementation of this article by developing programmes for enhancing agribusiness including access to productive resources and capacity of women. It also provided measures to enhance access of women and youth to land and other agricultural productive assets and credits. DREA facilitated the establishment of a Continental Agribusiness Chamber and supported a three-month entrepreneurial training for a group of 20 women farmers and youth at the Songhai Center in Benin in collaboration with the RECs. A high level engagement was conducted of financial, banking and insurance institutions for development of substantive innovative financing packages focusing on women and youth. DREA also facilitated the creation of Jobs for women within the Framework of the New Alliance Initiative for Food Security and Nutrition.

Progress on Article 8: Education for Girls and Women

The Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) organised, on the margins of the 3rd HLP, a high level dialogue on the rights to education for girls and women in Africa, which recommended the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Girls and Women's Education. The Directorate of Administration and Human Resources Management (AHRM) organized a course on Women in leadership.

Progress on Article 9: Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

During the reporting period only one Member State, Algeria, ratified the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights.

Progress on Article 10: Establish AIDS Watch Africa

Aids Watch Africa (AWA)'s Strategic Framework 2016 - 2030 prioritizes girls and women with regard to HIV prevention. AWA published a report in July 2016, on the margins of the 27th AU Summit, which welcomed the UN Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS on the fast-track to accelerate the fight against HIV and to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. The Department of Social Affairs is tracking Progress on Elimination of Mother to Child HIV Transmission (MTCT) and planning to launch an MTCT continental campaign with the Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA). DSA also published a scorecard on domestic financing for health in July 2016, which was endorsed by the AWA Heads of State and Government. The department is also working with PSC to set up health programs in conflict and post conflicts countries to implement the 2014 desk review study on girls, women and HIV in conflict and post conflicts countries.

Progress on Article 11: Establish an African Trust Fund for Women

During the reporting period, focus was placed on clearing the backlog projects under the Fund for African Women. As a result, more than 50 transfers were made by the AUC Finance Department for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 projects; 25 projects received 100% funding and 75

projects have received 80% of approved funding, out of 145 approved projects for the 2011-2013 years. WGDD undertook first field visit to five countries, namely, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Togo, Mauritania and Cote d'Ivoire to assess the results of the Fund for African Women in the field and generate knowledge on the progress made in implementing the two first themes of the African Women's Decade.

Progress on Article 12: Commitment to Annual Reporting

An analysis of the response of MS to their reporting obligations in accordance with article 12 of the SDGEA showed that 94% (51) of MS had submitted their initial report. However reporting fatigue seems to have set-in as the frequency of submission drops geometrically from initial report to the seventh report. The most consistent Member State which is up to date with its reporting, having submitted all its annual reports is Senegal, followed by Mauritius. These two Member States should be commended for their commitment in advancing the gender equality agenda in their countries and should serve as good practice of emulation for other countries. Four countries namely: Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau and Morocco² are yet to submit any report since 2004. These countries need to be encouraged to join others in submitting their initial reports. The performance of MS in this reporting cycle is a pointer to the fact that the capacity building efforts of the WGDD is yielding a great dividend as the current report produced the highest number of reports submitted since 2004.

Progress on Article 13: Submission of Annual Progress Reports on SDGEA implementation

The AU Commission Chairperson has complied with the obligation to provide annual reports on the progress of implementation of commitments made under the SDGEA. This is the Chairperson's Twelfth (12th) report to the AU Assembly

3. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGEA ARTICLES BY REGIONAL ECONOMIC BODIES

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was the only REC that submitted SDGEA report for 2016:

Progress by ECOWAS: The ECOWAS Commission executed the following initiative and programmes in support of the implementation of SDGEA within the West Africa sub-region:

- ⇒ **Strengthening the Role of Women and Community Leaders in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in West Africa:** One Regional Workshop was held in 2016 to promote dialogue with communities on countering violent extremism, within the framework of the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The workshop focused on how to strengthen community resilience against harmful ideologies and networks involved in radicalization, and on how to forge greater partnerships between ECOWAS and civil society organizations in the fight against terrorism.

² Morocco rejoined the AU in 2016

⇒ **Draft document on ECOWAS Directive for Gender Assessment in Energy Projects:** ECOWAS Commission through the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) conducted a study on, ‘Developing a Legal Instrument for Gender Assessment in Energy Infrastructure Planning and Development within ECOWAS. The study revealed that energy sector governance was largely gender-blind which led to development of a “Draft document on ECOWAS Directive for Gender Assessment in Energy Projects” which has undergone some validations

4. CONCLUSION

The 12th SDGEA report of the AUC Chairperson highlights some of the achievements recorded by the AUC and ECOWAS in the implementation of the SDGEA in 2016. This report is also informed by the 2016 AU theme, namely, “African Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women” and the Pledges made on 8th March International Women’s Day, where AUC Departments and RECs committed to implementing at least two high impact activities in furtherance of gender equality and women’s empowerment, within the framework of the 2016 AU theme. While notable achievements were made, including among others, the historic all-women AU Election Observation Mission, the first ever report on the “Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa as well as the establishment of a Continental Agribusiness Chamber, three key challenges have been observed. The 50/50 parity principle is yet to be fully realized, especially within the AUC; reporting fatigue by Member States as the reporting seems to have dropped geometrically from initial reports; as well as ratification of the Maputo Protocol, which received only one ratification by Algeria, during this reporting period. There is a need to strengthen recruitment processes to attract competent women in the AUC and AU Organs. Harmonisation of reporting commitments with other instruments should be considered to reduce the number of reports that Member States submit, while not compromising the uniqueness of each instrument. More capacity building workshops on reporting should be convened to support Member States to comply with reporting obligations. Advocacy is also required to encourage Member States that are yet to ratify the Maputo Protocol to do so and to urge those who have ratified, to accelerate domestication and implementation.

PART B: ELEVENTH SYNTHESIS REPORT OF AU MEMBER STATES

The report is organized in 4 parts as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Condensed analysis of synthesis Report
3. Comprehensive Analysis of Synthesis by country
4. Conclusion

Introduction

The eleventh (11th) Annual Synthesis Report of the African Union (AU) Member States is submitted pursuant to the obligation under Article 12 of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, that requires Member States to report annually and to provide regular updates during their Ordinary Sessions on progress made on gender mainstreaming and

to support and champion all issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment at both national and regional levels.

This part constitutes Synthesis of 2016 Reports from 28 Member States, namely Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

1. Condensed Analysis of Synthesis Report

Article 1: HIV/AIDS and Other Related Infectious Diseases: All twenty-eight Member States reported to the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) in 2016. The reports show that with the implementation of the National Action Plans on HIV/AIDS, there is reduction in the HIV/AIDS cases, while mother to child infection has also drastically reduced. Multiple health centres have been created, particularly in the rural areas for the administration of Anti-Retroviral Drugs. Efforts to curb Tuberculosis and Malaria have also been strengthened.

Article 2: Women in Peace Processes: All twenty-eight Member States submitted reported on women, peace and security commitment. While most have taken measures in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, others like Angola and Madagascar are still in the process of reforming the security sector and domesticating the UNSC Resolution. In addition, while some improvement is reported on the inclusion of women in peace processes, progress is still slow, with the number of women participating in peace processes still unacceptably low.

Article 3: Child Soldiers and Abuse of the Girl Child: Member States like, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo DRC and Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Liberia, Somalia have experienced conflicts in the last five or more years and are consciously working on reintegrating child soldiers with their communities. All Member States who reported recognise the challenges of sexual exploitation and early child marriages and have adopted legal measures and established Child Protection Centres to address this concern. DRC withdrew boys under the age of 18 from the Army and other Vigilante Groups to be rehabilitated and reintegrated back into society.

Article 4: Gender-Based Violence (GBV): All the twenty-eight countries are implementing this article using inter-ministerial committees and coordination to adopt and implement strategies, policies and legislation that prevent Gender-Based Violence while ensuring that perpetrators are prosecuted and victims are effectively supported and rehabilitated. Cote D'Ivoire, for example, has made reporting and response to GBV cases easy through the adoption of a National Strategy on GBV and the implementation of inter-ministerial Circular No 016/MJ/MEMMIS/MPRD. Mauritius amended the protection for Domestic Violence Act in 2016 to reinforce protective services for victims of GBV by increasing the powers of enforcement officers as a way of curbing GBV. Liberia established Criminal Court "E" to deal with GBV cases which has increased the number of cases prosecuted from 9 cases in 2014 to 121 cases in 2015.

Article 5: Gender Parity Principle: All Member States except Somalia have reported on this article. Chad, Cameroun and Seychelles specifically mentioned that they are yet to adopt laws on quota for women or gender parity in their electoral system. The Seychelles 2016 election produced 16% women representation in the Parliament which is the lowest in 40 years. Member States which have fulfilled above 30% representation of women in Parliament are Senegal and Zimbabwe, while Ethiopia incentivised the promotion of women's participation in political parties. Other Member States have some level of improvement in the involvement in women in politics, public offices and other decision making areas. However, they are yet to meet the 30% parity and representation for women as stipulated in the article. Many Member States attributed this on illiteracy, socio-cultural constraints and gender stereotypes.

Article 6: Women and Girls' Human Rights: All Reporting Member States except Angola, outlined measures to promote women's human rights. Burundi, Chad and Djibouti created long term National Gender Plan, while countries like DRC, Liberia and Cameroon strengthened domestic violence laws and penal codes to offer more protection for women and introduced important innovations that have positive impact on the legal status of women.

Article 7: Rights to Land, Property, Inheritance and Housing: All reporting Member States except Mauritius and Somalia reported on legal action being taken to address the discriminatory customary practices hindering women's rights to land ownership and inheritance. Ethiopia reserved 30% of Federal Housing Scheme for women, while the remaining 70% is distributed equally between men and women. This resulted in 54% of women becoming beneficiaries of housing programmes in the capital city, while 47% of women own houses in regional states and 66% of women in rural areas own house either alone or jointly with their husbands

Article 8: Education for Girls and Women: All reporting States documented their strides in ensuring equality in enrolment between girls and boys. Many Member States succeeded at the primary level, however, this success was not recorded in post primary schools namely, secondary schools, vocational schools and at the tertiary institutions. A large percentage of girls drop-out is reported from age 15 due to teenage pregnancy. Despite this challenge, many Member States have made arrangement to recall drop-out students feed students in schools, as well as attach massive incentives to encourage young girls to continue their education.

Article 9: Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: Ethiopia, Senegal and Somalia did not report on the Maputo Protocol, while Mauritius is in the process of reviewing its reservation regarding articles 14 (2c) of the Protocol. Togo and Liberia, continued their vigorous awareness campaign to educate the public on the provisions of the Protocol and how it promotes the rights of women in all spheres of life. Malawi used the Protocol to review its National Gender Policy, develop and enact the Trafficking in Persons Act 2015; Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act 2015; and the Gender Equality Act 2013 which has now informed the formulation of the National Plan of Action to combat Gender Based Violence (2015-2020). In the same manner the Government of Zambia enacted the Gender Equity and Equality Act No.22 of 2015 to promote rights of women in the country

2. Conclusion

The 11th SDGEA Member States Synthesis report records good progress made by Member States in delivering on the gender equality and women's empowerment commitments. The reports suggest a percentage reduction in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Mother to child transmission has also drastically reduced as health centres administering ART treatment have been expanded to many rural areas. Good progress is also noted on the domestication of UNSC Resolution 1325, which will support the inclusion of in peace processes. Member States who have come out of conflicts are taking measures to ensure that child soldiers are integrated back into society. The challenges of early marriage is also being tackled, however, more efforts are needed to ensure that this practice is totally eradicated.

Legal instruments are also being created on the rights of women, while sensitization and capacity building programmes are on-going to ensure these rights replace cultural practices that undermine the human rights of women. However, note is taken that despite these legislative and constitutional guarantees, there is still a huge deficit on women's rights to land ownership and inheritance. Member States need to accelerate efforts to ensure that these rights are realized. More attention is also needed in the area of women's political participation. While progress is recorded in some Member States where women's representation in Parliament has increased, some drawbacks have been experienced in countries like Seychelles, which dropped to 16% representation.

Reporting fatigue is also noted, which requires creative measures to be developed at the AUC level to assist Member States to lessen the burden of multiple reporting, while not compromising the uniqueness of the various instruments.

Overall, the 28 Member States that have submitted their reports demonstrate very good progress and should be commended for the efforts made in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Executive Council is called upon to:

- Endorse the reports on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), for onward transmission to the Heads of States and Government;
- Appeal to the four Member States that are yet to submit their initial reports to do so urgently. These are: Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau, and Morocco
- Also appeal to Member States which have not yet done so, ratify the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights and those who have ratified, to accelerate domestication and implementation.
- Call on Member States to implement all the commitments made in the SDGEA.