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**RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT**

GENERAL PROVISION

The Executive Council,
Having regard to the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and in particular
Articles 14, 15 and 16,
Having regard to Decisions Assembly/Dec. 227 (XII) and Assembly/Dec.365 (XVII) on
Specialized Technical Committees,

HAS ADOPTED THESE RULES OF PROCEDURE:

RULE 1 DEFINITIONS

In these Rules:

“Assembly”	means the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union;
“Bureau”	means the Bureau of the Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
“Chairperson”	means the Chairperson of the Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment;
“Commission”	means the Commission of the African Union;
“Constitutive Act”	means the Constitutive Act of the African Union;
“Executive Council”	means the Executive Council of Ministers of the African Union;
“Gender”	time bound and changeable socially and culturally constructed differences, social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, typically masculine and feminine characteristics, abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in society which give them unequal value and life chances.
“Member State”	means a Member State of the African Union;
“Rapporteur”	means the Rapporteur of the Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

“STC” means a Specialized Technical Committee of the African Union;

“STCs Coordination Mechanism” means the Bureau of all STCs of the African Union;

“Union” means the African Union established by the Constitutive Act;

“Vice-Chairpersons” unless specified otherwise, means the Vice-Chairpersons of the STC on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

“Women’s Empowerment” means the process of generating and building women’s capacities to gain power and exercise control over their own lives through expanded choices, awareness-raising, building self-confidence, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.

RULE 2 STATUS

The STC on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment is an Organ of the Union in accordance with Article 5 (1) (g) of the Constitutive Act. It shall be responsible to the Executive Council.

RULE 3 COMPOSITION

1. The STC on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment shall be composed of the Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women’s Affairs or such other Ministers or authorities duly accredited by the Governments of Member States.

2. The STC on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment includes Experts from Member States responsible for sectors falling within the areas of competence of the STC on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, whose meetings shall precede the meetings at Ministerial level. Unless specified otherwise, meetings of Experts shall be governed, *mutatis mutandis*, by relevant provisions of these Rules.

RULE 4 DESIGNATION OF DELEGATES

Delegations of Member States to sessions of the STC on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment shall be duly designated and accredited representatives of Member States.

RULE 5

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

1. Pursuant to Article 15 of the Constitutive Act of the Union, the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall, inter-alia:

- a. Prepare projects and programmes of the Union and submit to the Executive Council;
- b. Ensure the supervision, follow-up and the evaluation of the implementation of decisions taken by the organs of the Union;
- c. Ensure the coordination and harmonization of projects and programmes of the Union;
- d. Submit to the Executive Council either on its own initiative or at the request of the Executive Council, reports and recommendations on the implementation of the provision of this Act;
- e. Advocate for the universal ratification, domestication and implementation of existing AU policies and instruments on gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights.
- f. Advocate for the promotion and protection of all human rights of women as well as for the implementation of the States obligations and commitments under international human rights law in relation to the human rights of women, which were made at international, continental, regional, and Member States level.
- g. Advocate for the promotion of gender responsive practices as well as the realization of commitments to the human rights of women made at international, continental, regional and Member States levels;
- h. Encourage Member States to report per agreed reporting schedule on the Protocol to the Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the African Women's Decade and Agenda 2063;
- i. Work to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in all policies and programmes of the AU organs and institutions, Member States and Regional Economic Communities to close the gender-gap by 2020 and to achieve women empowerment in Africa.
- j. Develop common positions and consensus on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment in Africa.
- k. Ensure harmonisation of instruments and policies for gender equality and women empowerment.

- l. Mobilize resources for the Fund for African Women
 - m. Advocate for the inclusion of women experts in all AU high level panel discussions
 - n. Advocate for the inclusion of women in all AU high level reporting activities.
 - o. Advocate for Member States to nominate competent women for international civil service positions
 - p. Advocate for Member States to propose competent women in their submission for AU chairperson and deputy chairperson and Commissioners per the rules of procedure of elections.
 - q. To mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in all programs of the African Union
 - r. Carry out any other functions assigned to it by the Executive Council or the Assembly.
2. The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment may set up such Sub-committees or *ad hoc* working groups, as it deems necessary and shall determine their mandate, composition and functioning.

RULE 6

VENUE

1. The Sessions of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall be held at the Headquarters of the Union, unless a Member State offers to host any such session.
2. In the event the session is held outside the Headquarters of the Union, the host Member State shall be responsible for all extra expenses incurred by the Commission as a result of holding the session outside the Headquarters.
3. In conformity with Rule 5 (3) of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, Member States offering to host sessions of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall not be under sanctions and shall be required to meet predetermined criteria, including adequate logistical facilities and a conducive political atmosphere.
4. Where two (2) or more Member States offer to host a session, the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall decide on the venue by a simple majority.
5. Where a Member State that had offered to host a session of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment is unable to do so, the session shall be held at the Headquarters of the Union, unless a new offer is received and accepted by Member States.

RULE 7 CONVENING OF SESSIONS

The Commission shall be responsible for convening and servicing all the meetings of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

RULE 8 QUORUM

1. The quorum for a Ministerial session of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall be two-thirds majority of the Member States eligible to vote.
2. The quorum for meetings of Experts, Sub-committees or *ad hoc* working groups of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall be a simple majority.

RULE 9 ORDINARY SESSIONS

The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall meet in ordinary session once every year.

RULE 10 AGENDA OF ORDINARY SESSIONS

1. The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Employment shall adopt its Agenda at the opening of each session.
2. The Provisional Agenda of an ordinary session shall be drawn up by the Commission in consultation with the Bureau of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and may include item (s) proposed by Member States. The Commission shall communicate it as well as the working documents to Member States at least thirty (30) days before the opening of the session.

RULE 11 OTHER ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA

Any additional agenda item, which a Member State wishes to raise at a session of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, shall only be considered under the agenda item "Any Other Business". Such agenda items shall be for information only and not subject to debate or decision.

RULE 12 EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS

1. The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment may meet in an extraordinary session, subject to availability of funds, at the request of:

- a) the policy organs of the Union;
- b) the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment itself; or
- c) any Member State, upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the Member States.

2. The extraordinary sessions shall be held in conformity with Rule 6 above.

RULE 13

AGENDA OF EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS

1. The Commission shall communicate the Provisional Agenda and working documents of an extraordinary session to Member States at least fifteen (15) days before the opening of the session.
2. The Agenda of an extraordinary session shall comprise only of the item(s) requiring the urgent attention of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

RULE 14

OPEN AND CLOSED SESSIONS

All the sessions of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall be closed. The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment may, however, decide by a simple majority whether any of its sessions shall be open.

RULE 15

WORKING LANGUAGES

The working languages of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall be those of the Union.

RULE 16

BUREAU

1. The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall, on the basis of rotation and geographical distribution, elect, after due consultations, a Chairperson. He/she shall be assisted by other members of the Bureau, namely, three (3) Vice-Chairpersons as well as a Rapporteur, elected on the basis of agreed geographical distribution and after due consultations.
2. The Members of the Bureau shall hold office for a period of two (2) years.
3. The Bureau will meet at least once every year.

RULE 17

DUTIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON

1. The Chairperson shall:
 - a) preside over all the proceedings of the Ordinary and Extraordinary sessions;
 - b) open and close the sessions;
 - c) submit for approval the records of the sessions;
 - d) guide the proceedings;
 - e) submit to a vote matters under discussion and announce the results of the vote taken;
 - f) rule on points of order.
2. The Chairperson shall ensure order and decorum during the proceedings of the sessions.
3. In the absence of the Chairperson or in case of a vacancy, the Vice-Chairpersons or the Rapporteur in order of their election shall act as the Chairperson.
4. The Chairperson shall attend the sessions of the Executive Council and take part in the annual meeting of the STCs Coordination Mechanism.

RULE 18

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

1. In accordance with Rule 4, the Ministers in charge of Gender and Women Affairs shall attend and participate personally in the sessions. In the event that they are not in a position to attend personally, duly accredited representatives shall represent them.
2. The Representatives of the Organs of the Union and of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) shall be invited to attend the sessions of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
3. The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment may invite, as Observer, any person or Institution to attend its sessions. Such Observer may be invited to make written or oral interventions but shall not be entitled to vote.

RULE 19

MAJORITY REQUIRED FOR DECISIONS

1. The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment shall take all its decisions by consensus, failing which:
 - a) at the Ministerial level, by a two-thirds majority of the Member States present and eligible to vote;

b) at the Experts' level, by a simple majority of the Member States present and eligible to vote.

2. Decisions on questions of procedure shall be taken by a simple majority of Member States eligible to vote.

3. Decisions on whether or not a question is one of procedure shall also be determined by a simple majority of Member States eligible to vote.

4. Abstention by a Member State eligible to vote shall not prevent the adoption by the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of decisions by consensus.

RULE 20 AMENDMENT OF DECISIONS

1. A proposed decision or an amendment (s) thereof may at any time, prior to it being submitted to a vote, be withdrawn by the initiator.

2. Any other Member State may reintroduce the proposed decision or amendment that has been withdrawn.

RULE 21 POINT OF ORDER

1. During deliberations on any matter, a Member State may raise a point of order. The Chairperson, in accordance with these Rules, shall immediately decide on the point of order.

2. The Member State concerned may appeal against the ruling of the Chairperson. The ruling shall immediately be put to a vote and decided upon by simple majority.

3. In raising a point of order, the Member State concerned shall not speak on the substance of the issue under discussion.

RULE 22 LIST OF SPEAKERS AND USE OF THE FLOOR

1. The Chairperson shall, subject to Article 23 of the Constitutive Act, during the debate, grant the use of the floor in the order in which the speakers indicate their intention.

2. A delegation or other invitee shall not have the floor without the consent of the Chairperson.

3. The Chairperson may, during the debate:

a) read out the list of speakers and declare the list closed;

- b) call to order any speaker whose statement deviates from the issue under discussion;
- c) accord the right of reply to any delegation where in his/her opinion a statement made after the list is closed justifies the right of reply; and
- d) limit the time allowed to each delegation irrespective of the issue under discussion, subject to sub Rule 4 of this Rule.

4. The Chairperson shall, on procedural questions, limit each intervention to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

RULE 23

Closure of Debate

When a matter has been sufficiently discussed, the Chairperson shall close the debate at his/her discretion.

RULE 24

SUSPENSION OR ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

During the discussion of any matter, a Member State may move for the suspension or adjournment of the meeting. No discussion on such motions shall be permitted. The Chairperson shall immediately put such motion to a vote.

RULE 25

ORDER OF PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

Subject to Rule 21 of these Rules of Procedure, the following motions shall have precedence in the order listed below, over all other proposals or motions before the meeting:

- a) suspend the meeting;
- b) adjourn the meeting;
- c) adjourn the debate on the item under discussion;
- d) close the debate on the item under discussion.

RULE 26

VOTING RIGHTS

1. Each eligible Member State shall have one vote.
2. Member States, subject to sanctions under Article 23 of the Constitutive Act, shall not have the right to a vote.

RULE 27

CONSENSUS AND VOTE ON DECISIONS

After the debate has been closed, and there is no consensus, the Chairperson shall immediately put the proposal with all the amendments to a vote. The vote shall not be interrupted except on a point of order related to the manner in which the vote is being taken.

RULE 28

VOTE ON AMENDMENTS

1. When there is no consensus, the Chairperson shall put all amendments to a vote.
2. A proposal shall be considered as an amendment to a text if it adds or removes therefrom.

RULE 29

METHODS OF VOTING

The Methods of Voting shall be determined by the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

RULE 30

Decisions and Reporting

1. The Ministerial session of the STC shall take decisions on issues falling within its competence, except where there are attendant financial and structural implications in accordance with Decisions/ Assembly/AU/Dec.582(XXV) on streamlining of the AU Summit and its working methods.
2. Without prejudice to sub paragraph 1 of this rule, the Executive Council may, if necessary, consider decisions of the STC at the request of any member state.

RULE 31

Evaluation of Implementation of Recommendations

The Commission shall present a report to the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

RULE 32

IMPLEMENTATION

The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment may lay down guidelines and supplementary measures to give effect to these Rules.

**RULE 33
AMENDMENTS**

The STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment may propose amendments of these Rules to the Executive Council for consideration.

**RULE 34
ENTRY INTO FORCE**

These Rules shall enter into force upon their approval by the Executive Council.

ADOPTED BYHELD IN....., ON.....