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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 Fax: +251 115 517844

Website: www.au.int

33RD PRE-SUMMIT GIMAC- MEETING ON MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN
THE AFRICAN UNION

"TOWARDS GENDER-RESPONSIVE DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT"

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. PROF. SARAH ANYANG AGBOR
COMMISSIONER HRST, AUC

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ADDIS ABABA-ETHIOPIA

- ***H.E Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African union Commission Represented by H.E. Amb. Minata Samate, Commissioner For Political Affairs***
- ***Mrs Marha Muhwezi, Chairperson, GIMAC and Executive Director, Forum for African Educationist (FAWE)***
- ***H.E. Ambassador Morten Von Hanno AASLAND, Norway Head of Mission and Permanent Representative to the AU and UNECA.***
- ***H.E. Amb, Sonja Hylan of the Embassy of Ireland***
- ***Mrs. Anass Kenda, Representative of the Hon. Chantal Sonfou Lopusa, Minister of Gender, Child and Family of the Democratic Republic of Congo.***
- ***Your Excellences Ambassadors here present***
- ***Your Excellences Ministers***
- ***Madam Binta Diop, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security***
- ***Ms. Nicole Nyakong Ater Mayang, Young Women Representative***
- ***Dear Members of CSO's and family of the GIMAC and Women's Activists***
- ***Distinguished guests***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen;***

It is a great honor for me today to be part of the 33rd GIMAC Pre-Summit gathering amazing African women and men, all activists of Women's Rights.

First of all, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to the GIMAC and its leadership for inviting me at this memorable annual event. Congratulations to my sister Mrs. Marha Muhwezi who is the chair of GIMAC and Executive Director of FAWE. I use this opportunity to extend sincere gratitude to the Norwegian government for the support of AU/CIEFFA programmes.

In the same vein, I have the honour and privilege to be part of great people who have understood the necessity to work hand in glove for a common aim of achieving Gender equality and Women empowerment. The fight against all forms of discriminations marginalizing women that you have been pursuing for decades demonstrates how Africa should be proud of its daughters! Allow me to recall the great impact of GIMAC's work on

the African Union's Agenda to mainstream gender through the adoption and ratification of the Maputo protocol, the adoption of the Solemn Declaration on gender equality in Africa, the Solemn Declaration Index (SGI), and the role of GIMAC's traditional Pre - Summits among others advocacy's activities.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The concept of gender mainstreaming was first proposed at the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya. It was formally featured in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. The UN Economic and Social Council formally defined Gender Mainstreaming as: "Mainstreaming a gender approach is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies and programmes in all areas and at all levels. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality".

The African Union is very conscious in assessing the different implications to people of different event gender of any planned action, in all areas and levels. The Aspirations of Agenda 2063 speaks to this. Of course the different Specialised Committees implement mainstreaming policies that look at how national policies interact with the international norms and practices to make its citizens competent and skilled to compete in the global arena.

The Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, where I derive my mandate offers Education, Science and Technology and the Empowerment of Youth as very essential to the transformation of the 'Africa We Want'.

Indeed, the African Union Assembly consolidated education and I consider it as the backbone of my department because it cuts-across different development issues. This is the reason why, HRST Department is working so hard to ensure the effective implementation of CESA 16-25 and to also ensure that the gender dimension is integrated into the Continental Strategy for Education in Africa.

This is demonstrated by the work done by the AU/CIEFFA (The African Union International Center for the Education of Women and Girls) which is the AU Specialized

Institution for promoting girls and Women's education in Africa), which works closely with FAWE. Both Institutions have collaborated to develop the *Gender Equality Strategy for the CESA* which aims to mainstream Gender equity, equality and sensitivity throughout education and training systems. We all know that girls and women's education remain the bedrock of countries and a continent's development because if the largest part of the population is denied knowledge, science and technology, then this country and the whole continent will not be able to accomplish great achievements due to lack of basic values.

Therefore girls, women and the youth are entitled to the same opportunities of knowledge namely to science and technology innovations which will contribute to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063 for a prosperous and stable Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Invitees,

The Vision of Agenda 2063: 'An integrated Prosperous and Peaceful Africa driven by its own competent and skilled citizens able to play in the world arena can only be realised in a stable society. Speaking of stability of Africa, I would like to come back to the theme of this 33rd GIMAC Pre-summit that brings us together today; *"Towards Gender-Responsive Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement"*. A Gender Responsive Solution to forced Displacement argues that policies and programmes developed for males should not be generalised to female populations as females have unique issues and needs that need to be addressed in forced displacement situations.

Conflicts and natural disasters impact differently on men and women and that is why we need to be mindful of our solutions taken at varied contexts.

At the Africa Union, we have the Special Envoy for Gender, Mme Binata Diop, and the Directorate of Women, Gender and Development with Dr. Mahama-Kaba Wheeler as Director. They implement Gender Mainstreaming at the African Union.

Agenda 2063 is our strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 44years which shows the roadmap of continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development.

Many questions come to mind is seeking to address gender-responsive durable solutions to forced displacement; how do our policies protect the rights and interest of refugees and internally displaced people? What special policies have been put in place?

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

You may recall that the African Union theme has declared 2019 “***Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement***”.

Indeed, statistics reveals that and I quote the AU ECHOS “*The African continent hosts over a third of the world’s forcibly displaced persons... , including 6.3 million refugees and 14.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The continent is also home to 509,900 asylum seekers and 712,000 stateless persons.*” And yet we have the ***Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)*** adopted on 23rd October 2009 in Uganda which is a treaty of the African Union that addresses internal displacement caused by armed conflict, natural disasters and other related-matters.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Moreover, a report of the Norwegian Refugees Council titled “*The Kampala Convention: Make it Work for Women* ” stated that; “***There are nearly six million women and girl IDPs in Africa and the reason is based on their gender. They are subjected to violence, forced evictions and discrimination, amongst other violations***”. Women and girls are the most affected and their integrity and dignity as female is affected.

Indeed, refugees and IDPs Women face other specific challenges like; rape, abuse, denial of rights to access and control housing, land and property, of marital property rights, exclusion from inheritance, and lack of access to justice. Sometimes these women sacrifice their fundamental rights to provide for their vital needs and those of their families and often at the risk of their dignity and their lives. Nicole’s story exemplifies this.

Distinguished guest, Ladies and Gentlemen

If we speak of the Aspirations of Agenda 2063; A Prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and Sustainable Development; If we speak of An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; If we speak of A peaceful and secure Africa where Peace and security and sustainability is preserved with priority areas such as maintenance and preservation of peace and security; Women and girls empowerment violence and discrimination against women and girls; If we speak of An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women, youth and caring for children; then we must proffer durable solutions to our Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees.

Therefore, I cannot conclude my speech without recommending some durable solutions;

- ❖ ***We need to work more together in the spirit of Ubuntu to this distinguished assembly and to you strong advocates on protection and promotion of Women's rights;***
- ❖ ***Access to social and development services for displaced and refugees women;***
- ❖ ***Full inclusion of women in peace negotiation and discussion on Humanitarian Aid;***
- ❖ ***Protection of school in Humanitarian settings to encourage girls 'retention at school and their return at school;***
- ❖ ***Use Women's Network to ensure a Zero tolerance culture for perpetrators of any abuses on Women and Girls, especially those living in refugee camps.***
- ❖ ***The Mainstream Political Agenda must reflect a gender perspective;***
- ❖ ***Women and Men should be equally represented in any decision making.***
- ❖ ***We could borrow from FAWA by building A Model School for Pregnant Women.***
- ❖ ***It is not enough to mainstream but also to capacitate the refugees particularly women and girls who are found in different camps.***

Yes indeed, Nicole Nyakong Ater Mayang, not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends that will be remembered.

Yes Nicole, we need to take responsibilities and deliver our mandates and seek to see that even in refugee camps that adolescent girls and boys are protected.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

I wish you a very fruitful delivery for this meeting and I thank you for your kind attention.

I thank you! Merci beaucoup! shukraan jazilaan! Asante Sana!