



**STATEMENT BY H.E EUNICE IIPINGE, PRESIDENT OF PAN  
AFRICAN WOMEN'S ORGANISATION (PAWO) DURING THE  
MINISTERIAL MEETING FOR MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT,  
NOVEMBER 2020**

Honourable Chairperson

Your Excellencies HON. Ministers of Gender Equality and Women's Affairs of  
our Continent;

The AU Experts on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment;

Your Excellencies present

Distinguished invited guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply honoured to be given this opportunity to make a statement in this  
high level important meeting of African Ministers of Gender Equality and  
Women's Empowerment; as a newly elected President of Pan African Women's  
Organisation (PAWO).

Let me take this opportunity to thank the organisers of this meeting and for having  
extended an invitation to PAWO to deliver the statement.



Honourable Ministers,

PAWO hold a very special place in the history of our continent as the first and oldest collective women's organisation which united African women from all corners of the continent to join the struggle for the liberation of our continent and the eradication of gender inequalities. Our mission has been to ensure that women's concerns are fully integrated in Africa's liberation agenda and that women's participate equally, fully and effectively in political, economic, social and cultural life of the continent.

This mission remains relevant to this day, as PAWO, in accordance with the vision of agenda 2063 continue to mobilise African women to build collective energy around a common agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment.

We pay tribute to the Assembly of the African Union at its 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in February 2017 in Addis Ababa for granting the status of a Specialized Agency to PAWO.

PAWO's status of a specialised agency of the AU strengthens the efforts to ensure that women remain in the top most agenda of the continental body.

This position enables PAWO to actively influence policy and decision-making in favour of women and mostly young women who form the majority of African population.

In recognition of this milestone, former PAWO President H. E. Madam Assetou Koite on behalf of PAWO presented an award to the Chairperson of African Union Commission, H. E. Moussa FAKi Mahamat during the AU Summit in February 2020.



Honourable Ministers

This meeting is taking place during the time when the continent is celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> African Women's Decade 2010 – 2020, on Grassroots Approach to gender equality and women's empowerment.

While we are celebrating the milestones on gender equality in the continent, Covid-19 pandemic is impacting negatively on the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment and women's rights in the continent.

We have noted that gender based violence (GBV) increased during this time and also in some countries like Namibia more school girls became pregnant during the lockdown and women economic activities are affected.

We therefore, need to ensure that violence against women and girls is dealt with as we noted with Covid-19 pandemic that the cases have and continue increasing.

PAWO noted with appreciation the efforts made in the continent for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, but more needs to be done. Notable to be mention is the improvement in putting in place legal frameworks to protect women's rights in line with regional and international instruments.

The ratification of Maputo Protocol by many Member States of AU is notable achievement, however more efforts is needed to ensure that those countries that have not done so are assisted to do so.

In terms of capacity building, we need to strengthen gender research and awareness raisings among communities for the gender sensitisation to be realized which will lead to actions towards gender equality and women empowerment in the continent.



It is only when gender disaggregated data is presented and gender awareness is raised that, society will be sensitive and be able to take more informed action.

We need more capacity building activities to ensure that gender blind cultural and social norms, as well as stereotypes that continue to restrict women from fully enjoying their human rights are completely eradicated.

These programs need human and allocation of sufficient financial resources to strengthen the position of women.

PAWO welcomes with great hope the new African Women's Decade 2020 – 2030 the Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion, as finance for gender equality remains a challenge.

PAWO, like all actors in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment is affected by lack of financial resources. I am aware that this meeting last year discussed about this issue and appreciated the recommendations thereof.

Dear Hon. Ministers,

Each year PAWO leads the Continental-wide celebration of Africa Women's Day on 31 July coinciding with Anniversary of its foundation. This year Africa Women's Day celebration took place amidst the global Covid-19 pandemic.

During the events, women reflected on the complex continental challenges including border health pandemics, economic shocks, inequalities, climate instability and threats to peace and security amongst others. However, despite Covid 19 challenges the day was celebrated throughout the continent.

Honourable Ministers



Most of you maybe are aware that between 26and29 February 2020 the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress of PAWO held in Windhoek, Namibia elected new leadership, adopted a Declaration and key resolution focusing one issues of peace and security, the boy child as well as the youth among other issues.

The newly elected leadership comprises President H.E.Eunice Ipinge of Namibia, Ms.Grace Kabayo of Uganda the Secretary General.

H.E Madam Assertu Koite, the outgoing President of Senegal was awarded the position of Honorary President and conferred the new title of Mama Africa.

South Africa continue to host the Headquarter of PAWO

At this juncture let me thank you all ministers of Gender Equality and Women empowerment of our beloved continent for your continuous support and harmonious working relationship both at regional, national, continental and global levels. PAWO will continue to counts on your usual support and cooperation to achieve our common goals.

PAWO continue to lead the continental agenda for women and participate in all AU decision making platforms and events of AUC on Gender Equality and women empowerment. Our participation in this meeting is a testimony that together we will make it.

We also would like to take this opportunity to thank the AUC Directorate of Women, Gender and Development for continuous facilitating our participation in both AU and UN events.

Forward with the Struggle for Gender Equality and women empowerment in the continent and beyond

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منظمة المرأة الإفريقية  
الملخصات

I thank you.