



OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HON. MINISTER AS CHAIR OF THE AU STC GEWE FOR THE 8TH AU STC GEWE

Your Excellences, Member of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment,

AU Special Envoys attending this meeting,

Representatives of UN Agencies,

Representatives of AU Partners attending this meeting,

Members of the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Excellences, I am privileged and honored to address you at 8th African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment that has been organized to provide an opportunity to discuss pertinent issues on gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa and adopt the Report of the STC on GEWE in preparation for the African Union Summit in 2024.

I would like to congratulate the women and girls upon the 20 years of the Maputo Protocol. I would like to thank the Members States that have ratified, domesticated, implemented and reported on the Maputo Protocol.

Excellences, it is our collective responsibility to mobilise AU Members States that have not ratified the Maputo Protocol to ratify and support its implementation.

Secondly, we have to play a more active role in peace building and conflict resolution. We are witnessing a growing number of armed conflicts and refugees in Africa. My country is currently hosting over 1.56m refugees; who are not certain when they will be able to go back home, re-unite with their families and contribute to their countries development.

Thirdly, ensure that periodic progress reports by Member States on the implementation of the Maputo Protocol, Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, UN Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security and other AU Plans and Programmes are submitted in time. This will enable the Secretariat to compile comprehensive reports on the implementation of the respective commitments to inform our future plans.

I am glad that we are going to discuss several reports including the Report on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa; the Report on the High Level Presidential Initiative on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls; report on the AU Women and Youth Financial Mechanisms and the report on celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Maputo Protocol - Maputo Protocol @20.

We appreciate the efforts of the African Union Commission- Women, Gender and Youth Directorate for new initiatives in particular the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; Regional Action Plan for Africa with a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls and the Gender and Youth Statistics that are going to be presented to us for endorsement.

As Chair of the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC GEWE), I would like to encourage all Members States to prepare for the 68th Commission on the Status of Women 2024 under the ***“Accelerating the Achievement of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all Women and Girls by Addressing Poverty and Strengthening Institutions and Financing with a Gender Perspective.”*** The fiscal space for the delivery of gender equality and women's empowerment is shrinking, we therefore have to mobilise domestic resources to finance our work.

I appeal for your commitment during the 2 two meetings and wish you fruitful deliberations.

I now declare the 8th AU Specialised Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC GEWE) open.

Thank you very much.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY