

14th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU



*27-28 June 2009
Tripoli Libya*



With the support of: ECA, OSIWA, AWDF, FINLAND, DFID



CONCEPT NOTE

I. Introduction

The 14th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union will be held at Tripoli, Libya from 27-28 June 2009. The meeting is organized by the GIMAC network and coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), who works in partnership with the African Union (AU), AU Gender Directorate (AUGD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), Department For International Development (DFID), African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The meeting will be held on the margins of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) in Sirte, Libya. The AU meeting will comprise:

- the Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), 24-26 June 2009;
- the Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, the 28–30 June 2009,
- the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the 1-3 July 2009.

II. Background

A. General

Member States of the African Union (AU) marked a new era in the history of the gender agenda in Africa through the adoption, at the Addis Summit meeting in July 2004, of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the 'Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union', calling for the full promotion and protection of women's rights at both a national and regional level. The SDGEA marks an unprecedented achievement of a continental organization towards gender-mainstreaming at the highest level, prioritizing issues such as HIV/AIDS, the recruitment of child soldiers and the implementation of gender-specific economic, social and legal measures.

Following the adoption of the SDGEA, women's civil society networks assembled on numerous occasions to further the work of mainstreaming gender in the AU. In July 2005, during the 6th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU held in Tripoli, African women's networks committed themselves to launching an advocacy campaign on the SDGEA by finalizing the 'Civil Society Framework for Monitoring and Evaluating the Solemn Declaration.' These organizations additionally agreed to share monitoring responsibilities, a decision reflected in an official document entitled 'Memorandum of Understanding', arising from the Tripoli Commitment for Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration.'

Women's organizations subsequently convened in Dakar, in October 2005 with the Senegalese Minister of Women and Gender Issues, during the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Meeting prior to the First African Union Conference of Ministers Responsible for Women and Gender. The 'Dakar Strategic Partnership,' which was the 7th Pre Summit's address to AU member States and the AU Commission held in Dakar, October 2005, regrouped and updated the work that had began in previous Consultative Meetings. Its focus was aimed at pursuing the involvement of CSOs in the monitoring and evaluation of the SDGEA as well as obtaining a solemn commitment from AU Member States to involve CSOs in such processes. The incorporation of the African Women

Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) into the mechanisms of the AU demonstrated the achievements of the advocacy work undertaken by female CSOs.

At the Consultative Meeting which took place in Banjul, Gambia in June 2006, women's networks and organizations officially launched the 'Gender is my Agenda' campaign. In addition to evaluating the Campaign Network Programme, the meeting was used as a tool to strengthen the monitoring, reporting and advocacy strategies and mobilize the different actors in the gender mainstreaming agenda.

The Pre-Summit Consultative Meetings have been held in the following locations: Durban, June 2002; Dakar, April 2003; Maputo, June 2003; Addis Ababa, June 2004; Abuja, January 2005; Tripoli, July 2005; Dakar 2005; Banjul, June 2006; Addis Ababa, January 2007; Accra, June 2007; Addis Ababa, January 2008, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt July 2008 and Addis Ababa January 2009.

B. Key documents

- Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union
- Dakar Strategy
- Maputo Declaration
- African Women's Contribution to the Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender in the African Union
- Abuja Recommendations for Civil Society Monitoring and Evaluation of the Solemn Declaration
- Tripoli Commitment
- Dakar Strategic Partnership
- Banjul Declaration
- Banjul Resolution
- Addis Call for Action
- Accra Inputs on the grand debate on the African Union Government
- Solemn Statement and Recommendations
- Support and Solidarity for Women in Zimbabwe
- Call to convene the Second Heads of State and Government Gender Summit

The adoption of the SDGEA and related accomplishments in the African women's movement have been greatly facilitated by the advocacy and networking that takes place during these bi-annual consultative meetings. The ability of the GIMAC network to organize these meetings and carry out other essential work would not be possible without the support of its long-time partners.

The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) works towards the advancement of open societies characterized by the rule of law, democracy, respect for diversity and human rights, free markets, informed citizenry, and vibrant civil society. OSIWA's partnership has been instrumental not only in helping to support the GIMAC network's overall communications, but also in providing long-term support to organize Pre-Summit meetings, and monitor the status of the SDGEA throughout the continent.

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) has provided long-term support to facilitate to the organization of the pre-summit meetings, as well as supported other GIMAC achievements such as the "Addis Call for Solemn Implementation of the SDGEA", the launching of the "Civil Society

Shadow Report on the SDGEA” and the publication of the "Best Practice Booklet on Gender Mainstreaming in Africa".

The Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is also a major supporter of the Pre-Summit process. The ECQ was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) in 1958 as one of the UN's five regional commissions. ECA's mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development.

C. Achievements of the 13th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting

Several outcomes were achieved at the previous 13th Pre Summit meeting in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, including:

- Recommendations to the AU on gender mainstreaming processes.
- The launch, promotion and dissemination of the "**Best Practices Booklet**", a study commissioned by FAS on gender best practices;
- A call for the AU to initiate a process towards convening of the Second Heads of State and Government Gender Summit for January 2010 in order to further the gender mainstreaming process.
- A call for the development of national action plans for the implementation of SDGEA for the remaining 35 countries who have not submitted their mandatory reports on SDGEA.
- Reiteration of the need for gender mainstreaming in the peace process for Darfur, the Great Lakes region and Zimbabwe.

III. Rationale

Although the African Union (AU) has made significant progress over the years with respect to gender issues, and its decisions and declarations have moved forward the gender agenda, much work remains to achieve female empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the AU and its programs, organs and Member States.

The full attainment of women's rights and women's empowerment can only ensue if the debates on the Union Government prioritizes gender issues at all levels and continues the advances on gender parity and mainstreaming of the AU. As such, a complete gender reflection must take place to discuss the role and participation of women in new political, economic and social structures and the gender priorities and agendas of all stakeholders at the national, regional and continental level.

Visibility must also be given to AU Gender Directorate and to its experience promoting gender issues within AU structures.

An evaluation of the priority areas identified in the SDGEA demonstrates that some progress has been made, but a lot remains to be done in the focal areas of governance, peace and security, human rights, health, education and economic empowerment. Additionally progress must be made to recognize gender mainstreaming as a good governance and human rights issue.

Further, GIMAC network members need to ensure that knowledge and competence is shared so as

to strengthen the capacities of female advocates in Africa and, exploiting the platform of the Campaign, to encourage wide support to reinforce the female voice at a political level and challenge the governments and their commitments.

It is also crucial that CSOs continue to make governments accountable for their commitment to accelerate the implementation of the SDGEA. The Pre-Summit provides an ideal opportunity to facilitate dialogue between the AU and CSOs for the revision of strategies on gender mainstreaming within the AU, its organs, programs and its member states.

IV. Focus of the 14th Pre-summit

With regard to civil society organizations, it is crucial that they continue to make governments accountable for their commitment to accelerate the implementation of the SDGEA. Four years after the adoption of this instrument, it is indispensable to carry out an assessment of the tools and methodologies dedicated to the monitoring/evaluation of the SDGEA and their efficiency to address new emerging issues. The 14th Pre-Summit will therefore focus on the SDGEA evaluation report.

A recent AU Experts meeting in Banjul Gambia, May 6-8 2009 also saw a focus two main issues – SDGEA monitoring and evaluation and the implementation of the African Womens Decade 2010-2020. The Decade of Women as recently announced at the 12th AU Summit declaring 2010-2020 the 'Decade of Women'. The 14th Pre-Summit will expand on the discussions of the experts meeting, as well as provide a clear focus for GIMAC network discussions, in particular regarding the involvement of CSOs in advocacy and activities for the Decade.

Additionally, the recent election of FAS to position of Chair for the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) Sectorial group on Women and Gender has provided an opportunity to come together and discuss the GIMAC contribution to Women and Gender sectorial group strategic plan.

Further discussions will also take place in line with the theme of the 13th AU summit – *'Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security'*, as well as reviewing the outcomes and achievements of the 13th Pre-Summit.

V. Objectives of the Pre –Summit Consultative Meeting

To discuss the changing environment at the regional and international level and elaborate a new paradigm in the work of CSOs advocating for effective gender parity policies and practice.

The specific objectives of the meeting are as follows:

- To discuss the outcomes of the GIMAC strategic meeting in June 2008 and continue to develop future communications campaigns for the network;
- To review the outcomes of the 13th Pre-Summit;
- To reinforce the commitment of civil society member of the Campaign to participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGEA;
- To foster the partnership between different stakeholders and strengthen the commitment to move forward the effective implementation of the SDGEA and gender mainstreaming in the AU;
- To discuss the four-year strategic program for the ECOSOCC Sectorial Group Women and Gender to determine how to capitalize on this recent opportunity;

- To discuss the theme of the AU summit – “*Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security*”;
- To discuss the elaboration and implementation of the recently declared AU Decade of Women 2010-2020;
- To identify future challenges and to establish the way forward in support of implementing the principle of gender equality and gender mainstreaming

VI. Activities of the meeting

The meeting will comprise of the following activities:

1. GIMAC’s Pre Summit meeting as a follow up to the plans identified in Sharm El Sheikh in June 2008;
2. Organization of a two-day Pre-Summit in order to consult, discuss and disseminate information on gender mainstreaming issues, including the AU Decade of Women 2010-2020, the SDGEA and ECOSOCC.
3. Mobilization of media
4. Advocacy activities around the AU Head of States and Government Summit
5. Provision of space for networking and partnership with all the stakeholders involved in the campaign

VII. Expected outcomes

The key expected outcomes of this meeting are the following:

- To refine new strategies of advocacy for effective gender parity policies and practice, following the changing environment at the regional and international level
- To share Best Practices and Lessons Learned with Gender is my Agenda Network and other CSOs.
- To share ideas and discuss the involvement of GIMAC in the Decade of Women 2010-2020 and the ECOSOCC Sectorial Group Women and Gender.
- To further refine future communications campaigns for the GIMAC network.
- To mobilize and sensitize women’s grassroots organizations and CSOs on the gender mainstreaming agenda and GIMAC activities
- To strengthen partnerships with women’s organizations at all levels and to strengthen regional mechanisms on gender issues
- To commit civil society focal points on thematic issues related to gender mainstreaming and to its follow up
- For advocacy issues to be undertaken on common priority areas of concern in SGDEA and gender mainstreaming.

VIII. Outputs

The expected outputs of the meetings are as follows:

- Tabling of the report 'Evaluation on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa', prepared by Roselynn Musa.
- Distribution of the recently launched *Best Practices Booklet*, a study on gender best practice.

- Draft recommendations prepared for priority actions during the AU Decade of Women 2010-2020, particularly with regards to CSOs.
- Undertake an analysis of the progress of recommendations from the 13th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting
- To raise awareness on the SDGEA and the work of the Campaign.
- To submit the recommendations from the Consultative meeting to the AU.
- The pioneers of gender parity principles and mainstreaming are acknowledged and celebrated.
- To raise awareness on the need to sustain and transform policy change in favor of gender equity and mainstreaming into attitudinal and behavioral change for the emergence of a new social order that will guarantee the human security , particularly that of women