



## Concept Note

### 29th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union

22-23 January, 2017 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

#### 1. Introduction

The year 2017 brings a remarkable opportunity for Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) initiatives as regards to Young Women. The African Union Commission has earmarked 2017 as the year of youth, under the theme “**Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investment in Youth**”. The theme falls within the Decade on Youth Development in Africa (2009-2018) and Agenda 2063 that aspires to build Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially women and youth and caring for children (Aspiration 6). Agenda 2063 affirms the potential of youth for Africa’s development and calls for empowerment, development and enhanced participation of youth to create THE AFRICA WE WANT underlining the need to uphold gender equality.

For enhanced implementation of the commitments enshrined in Agenda 2063 the AU has adopted African Youth Charter (AYC), African Youth Decade Plan of Action, African Youth Declaration on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and the Declaration on 2015 Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063.

The 29<sup>th</sup> session of the GIMAC Pre-Summit Consultative meeting in harmony with the AU theme will be held on 22 to 23 January 2017 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme “**Gender Inclusive Youth Empowerment and Development for Peaceful and Prosperous Africa.**” It aims to address and enhance the gender responsiveness of Youth related commitments embedded in Agenda 2063 and other AU instruments in reference to the Solemn declaration. And sensitize the 2017 AU summit dedicated for youth with a gendered perspective.

The GIMAC is a leading African women’s civil society campaign dedicated to the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa/SDGEA (2004) and the respective thematic areas. The network strives to advance the implementation of commitments and goals enshrined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa/Maputo Protocol (2003), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and other human rights instruments.

In preparation for the 24-25 January, 2017 African Union (AU) Gender Pre-summit meeting and 30-31 January 2017 28<sup>th</sup> AU Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the GIMAC network will work closely with the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions, United Nations agencies and other civil society entities, to ensure the inclusion of women's voice in the youth agenda and identify key priorities for action.

The 28<sup>th</sup> AU Heads of States and Government Meeting is preceded by the Thirty-third (33rd) Ordinary Session of the AU Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) to be held from 23- 25 January 2017 and Thirtieth (30th) Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council to take place from 26- 28 January 2017.

## **2. Background**

The GIMAC network consists of more than 55 civil society organizations promoting gender equality and accountability for women's rights. The GIMAC was launched in 2002 in Durban, South Africa and has since held bi-annual civil society consultative meetings in advance of AU Summit meetings to engage AU Member States on African women's rights, issues and concerns. The GIMAC is organized around the themes related to the operating articles of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa namely human rights, governance, peace and security, economic empowerment, education and health. The GIMAC also monitors emerging issues such as climate change and promotes the leadership of young African women.

The GIMAC network members are leading practitioners in women's rights and development and over the years, the network has registered key successes in contributing to the adoption of the AU gender parity principle, the Maputo Protocol and the SDGEA. The GIMAC recommendations have been reflected in the outcome documents of the AU Summit and the GIMAC has supported advocacy campaigns for a female Chairperson for the African Union Commission and the appointment of an African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

In July 2016, GIMAC launched the first civil society monitoring report, the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI), to provide evidence-based monitoring of the progress of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

During the 24th GIMAC meeting in June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Gender Ministers and representatives of Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) joined the deliberations of the GIMAC and committed to working closely with the GIMAC in successive meetings.

On 22-23 January 2017, participants of the GIMAC will continue deliberations with the African Union Commission, Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs and RECs during the sessions of the African Union Gender Pre-Summit to be held at the African Union.

## **3. Agenda Topics for the 29<sup>th</sup> GIMAC Pre-summit**

Agenda 2063 reaffirms the need for gender sensitive youth empowerment and development strategy to achieve the realization of a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated Africa. In compliance,

Member States committed to ending all wars in Africa and gender-based violence by 2020 and to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination. Through improved quality of governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and strengthening the role of women via gender equality and parity in all spheres of political, economic and social life.

In the years 2010, 2015 and 2016 GIMAC participants advocated for stronger commitments by Member States to accelerate measures to advance the status of African women and welcomed African Heads of States and Governments declaration of 2010-2020 as the African Women's Decade, adoption of the Declaration on 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Africa's Agenda 2063, and declaration of 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women".

In the course of the July, 2016 GIMAC pre-summit consultative meeting, GIMAC participants called for enhanced investment and follow-up by Member States for effective implementation of Women's rights in Africa and welcomed the outcome recommendations of the Kigali Declaration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> African Union High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment under the theme "The Contributions of Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Achieving Gender Equality in Africa: Stocktaking, Opportunities and Accountability".

At the Young Women's Forum convened on the margins of the 22<sup>nd</sup> African Union Summit in 2014, young women and girls from 14 countries came together and produced a statement, "Future Young Women and Girls Want," which put forward concrete policy recommendations for improving the situation of young women and girls in Africa.

Building on the stated recommendations and commitments owed to youth and women, the 29<sup>th</sup> GIMAC consultative meeting will mobilize civil society to assess continental, regional and national efforts made for effective realization of gender responsive youth empowerment, development and participation in the following key areas of intervention;

1. Education (access to technology) and Skills Development
2. Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
3. Governance, Peace and Security
4. Youth Health and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
5. Agriculture, Climate Change and the Environment

#### **4. Objective**

- To create a platform for civil society to evaluate AU's and Member States progress in implementing commitments owed to the youth in line with the 29<sup>th</sup> GIMAC theme;
- To identify and present key areas of intervention for enhanced inclusion of the gender parity principle and gender equality on the 24-25 January, 2017 African Union Summit Agenda on Youth;
- To define a civil society advocacy action plan for gender inclusive youth agenda that effectively integrate women's interest;
- To demonstrate to civil society how to utilize the advocacy components of the Solemn Declaration Index (SDI) Report in their activities both at National and regional levels;

- To provide an opportunity for civil society to network with the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions and United Nations agencies and foster coordinated action.

## **5. Key Expected Outcomes**

- Incorporation of the GIMAC recommendations for an integrated youth development framework in the outcome documents of the January 2017 African Union Summit;
- Defined civil society advocacy action plan for gender inclusive Youth Empowerment and Development in line to the principles of Solemn Declaration;
- Consolidated partnership between civil society, the African Union Commission, African Union Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, Regional Economic Commissions and United Nations agencies.

## **6. Co-organizing partners**

The 27th GIMAC consultative meeting will be organized with GIMAC focal and thematic members who include, but are not limited to Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Ipas Africa Alliance, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA), Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), ABANTU for Development, Members of GIMAC Steering Committee, and the World Young Women's Christian Association ( World YWCA) leading the thematic aspect together with partner thematic members.

## **7. GIMAC Partners and Stakeholders**

The AU Commission and AU organs are key partners of the GIMAC. Officials of the AU have often engaged in the Pre-Summit Meetings, chairing sessions and actively participating during the debates. The UNECA's African Centre for Gender is an invaluable partner in lending logistical and technical support to the Pre-Summit Consultative meetings.

Other partners and stakeholders that have supported the GIMAC network over the years include the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Urgent Action Fund-Africa, UN Women, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Rockefeller Foundation, the Nobel Women's Initiative, the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, the World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Government of Norway, the Government of Finland, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida).