



African Union

9th African Union Gender Pre-Summit on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth: Empowering Young People, Empowering Young Women

**24 – 25 January 2017
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

COMMUNIQUE

Preamble

We, Ministers of the African Union (AU) in Charge of Gender Equality and Women's Affairs, meeting at the 9th AU Gender Pre-Summit under the 2017 AU Theme of "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth" with a particular focus on "Empowering Young People, Empowering Young Women", held from 24 – 25 January 2017, in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, at the AU Headquarters, on the margins of the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU.

REFERING to the AU Theme for 2017 "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth and its related Roadmap; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA); the African Youth Charter (AYC); the Youth Decade Plan of Action; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC); the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG); the 10 Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 in line with Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the African Women's Decade (2010–2020); and the African Maritime Charter.

RESOLVES to take targeted and immediate action:

1. **Submit** the new AU Gender Strategy for adoption by AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, following due process;

2. **Urge** Member States who have not ratified the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights to do so before 2020 i.e. the end of the African Women's Decade, and recommend a faster pace for domestication as recommended by previous AU decisions and to harness the demographic dividend;
3. **Strengthen** the National Gender and Women Machineries with adequate resourcing and create them where they don't exist;
4. **Increase** accountability and reporting against commitments;
5. **Create** a high- level committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to foster accountability, reporting, resource mobilization and increase actions in support of this agenda;
6. **Congratulate** Members States that received the African Gender Scorecard award and commend the AU Assembly for implementing this important accountability tool;
7. **Align** the Fund for African Women with Agenda 2063 to ensure its scope and scale meet the challenges set forth in this continental policy framework and accelerate the pace of project implementation;
8. **Take** full advantage of the Youth Fund and once set-up, priority should be given to projects which benefit young women and the girl child;
9. **Encourage** Member States, in line with achieving Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, to implement the African Union 50:50 gender principle as set forth in the Constitutive Act;
10. **Maintain** the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security and urge member states to implement the plan of action of UN Resolution 1325;
11. **Commend** the Executive Council decision to recommend to the AU Assembly the transformation of the Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO) into a specialized agency of the AU;

12. **Strengthen** gender and sex disaggregated data collection;
13. **Endorse** the adoption of the Pan African Women's Charter on Land Rights in scaling up continental innovations;
14. **Continue** to prioritize initiatives and investments which promote women's empowerment , leadership role and benefits of science and technology;
15. **Take** necessary steps to ensure the AU flagship project, the Continental Free Trade Agreement are engendered before the close of negotiations in 2017.