



INFORMATION NOTE

19th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU

24-26 January 2012, UNECA Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Although the African Union (AU) has made significant progress over the years with respect to gender issues with the adoption of decisions, declarations and policies that have moved forward the gender agenda, much work remains to be done to achieve women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the AU and its programmes, organs and Member States.

The 19th GENDER IS MY AGENDA CAMPAIGN (GIMAC) Consultative Meeting, on the margins of the 18th Ordinary Session of the African Union, is an opportunity for civil society organizations in Africa to come together to develop a common agenda, advocate to governments and the African Union for accelerated and increased actions on existing commitments, and to monitor and evaluate the progress being made on gender mainstreaming in Africa.

GIMAC is hence crucial so that civil society organizations (CSOs) continue to hold governments accountable with respect to their commitments to accelerate the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and to gender mainstreaming in Africa.

This Consultative Meeting assesses developments and challenges for gender mainstreaming in Africa and focuses on issues that affect women and the youth, with emphasis on Regional Integration and Intra-African Trade, Gender and Climate Change, the "3F" Crises (Food, Fuel, Finance), and Violence against Women in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations. The key expected outcomes are:

- Refined new advocacy strategies for effective gender parity policies and practices, in line with the changing environment at the regional and international level;
- Key issues, strengths, and weaknesses in the implementation of the SDGEA, are synthesized and clear recommendations to the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the AU Commissioners and Member States are formulated;
- Strong recommendations are articulated to inform gender-sensitive policy formulation with regards to climate change, economic development and women, peace and security issues;
- Increased awareness among women's and other civil society organizations on the gender mainstreaming agenda and GIMAC activities;
- Strengthened partnerships amongst women's and other relevant Civil Society organizations at all levels and strengthened regional mechanisms on thematic issues related to violence against women, women in conflict, climate change and economic empowerment;
- Enhanced regional balance, strengthened relationships and collaboration between Member States and CSOs at the African Union level.

Member States of the AU marked a paradigmatic shift in the gender agenda in Africa through the adoption 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*” at the Addis Summit meeting in July 2004. These documents call for the full promotion and protection of women’s rights at national, regional and continental levels.

The GIMAC provides a space biannually. It is also necessary for the network members of the “**Gender is my Agenda Campaign**” to ensure that knowledge and competence is shared so as to strengthen the advocacy capacities of women and the youth, and use the GIMAC to encourage wide support which can reinforce their voices at a political level to challenge the Member States on commitments.

The biannual Consultative meetings have since then been used to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and reporting on the SDGEA, as well as mobilize the different actors in the gender mainstreaming agenda in line with the SGDEA commitments.

GIMAC has been sustained and has grown into this 19th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting thanks to the support of its members and various donors and partners, including the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa (UNECA), the African Union (AU), the African Women’s Development Fund, IPAS, and Urgent Action Fund.

Also, the GIMAC has greatly benefited from the support of its partners’ funding partners to bring women from the field to participate in the biannual events. These partners include the Government of Finland, the Government of Norway, the Government of Sweden, UN agencies and other supportive bodies.

The 18th GIMAC was dedicated to the subject of women, youth and sustainable development and contributed to the formulation of strong recommendations on facing climate change in Africa.

These recommendations were taken forward at the AU Summit and were later presented at the Consultative Continental Dialogue on the impact of climate change on women held in Pretoria in November 2011 as well as the 17th session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (COP 17) in Durban at the end of 2011.

The 19th GIMAC will build on this work and further refine the discussions on gender and climate change in the context of the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in June in Rio de Janeiro (Rio +20).

Indeed, the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) was officially launched at the June 2006 Pre- Summit meeting which took place in Banjul, Gambia, although the women’s advocacy had been active even before the Durban Summit that witnessed the change from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union.

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