



29TH SESSION OF THE GENDER IS MY AGENDA CAMPAIGN (GIMAC) AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIVE MEETING

RECOMMENDATIONS

We, participants of the 29th session of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 22 to 23 January 2017 under the theme, “**Gender Inclusive Youth Empowerment and Development for Peaceful and Prosperous Africa**”, acknowledge our diversity and common objectives of advancing gender equality and the human rights of African girls and women;

WELCOME the decision of African Union Heads of State and Government to declare 2017 as the year of youth, with the theme “**Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investment in Youth**”, which falls within the Decade on Youth Development in Africa (2009-2018), the Decade of Human Rights in Africa (2015 to 2025) and Agenda 2063 that aspires to build an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially women, youth and children;

THANK the Assembly of Heads of State and Government for the support and cooperation given to the outgoing Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Her Excellency Madam Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma; recognize her landmark achievements in the area of gender equality and women’s empowerment, which has become an admirable legacy of the African Union, which we recommend for continuity;

APPRECIATE the support provided by the UN Agencies in the implementation of the gender and youth agenda in Africa.

REGOGNIZE that Africa has a comprehensive legal and policy framework that promotes the human rights of women including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Revised Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 2016 to 2030; and that African Governments have put in place programmes to end gross sexual violence, promote women’s land rights and the Rural Women’s Charter of demand (the Kilimanjaro Initiative); eliminate female genital mutilation, child marriage and other forms of harmful practices, improve women’s economic empowerment, enhance access to education and promote peace and security;

APPRECIATE the AU led campaign to promote the dignity of women in conflict situations and continued implementation of the commitments made under the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa over which fifty member States have submitted their reports;

CONGRATULATE the Pan-African Assembly of Rural Women for leading an inclusive process that led to the adoption of a charter of demands for the realization of women's land rights in Africa.

MINDFUL that 65% of the population in Africa is made up of young people, half of whom are adolescent girls and young women who are mostly unemployed and not engaged economically, socially, culturally and politically thus limiting their ability to realize their full potential.

RECOGNIZING that harnessing the demographic dividend and achieving full economic empowerment of young people obligates governments to ensure every youth, female and male can access learning opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their aspirations and contribute to their societies, and also includes addressing young people's access to youth friendly, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, information and services including access to safe legal abortion; and therefore

We urge the African Union Heads of State and Government to:

- Implement recommendations made by them relating to peace and security, good governance, gender based violence, sexual and reproductive health and access to education and the full implementation of the Maputo Protocol, Revised Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Integrate the outcomes of the 2016 theme on human rights with a special focus on women's rights to the 2017 theme on youth to enable their realization.
- Invest in young Africans to enable them achieve their full potential through the promotion and protection of their rights which include education, employment, access to information, sexual and reproductive health; prohibition of child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and urgent provision of necessary support towards achieving demographic dividend for Africa recognising the dividend is time limited.
- Support and strengthen the office of the Special Envoy on Peace and Security as a key strategy for the systematic promotion and inculcation of a culture of peace among young Africans. Strengthen the role of youth in particular young women in peace building to curb radicalisation and gender deficits in humanitarian response.
- Provide necessary support for the new gender strategy being developed by the Women, Gender and Development Directorate and ensure its full implementation at all levels.
- Ensure functional educational policies and programmes that give livelihood skills, embrace and invest in innovations, science and technology, protect young people's intellectual property as well as their capacities to promote peaceful coexistence in line with Agenda 2063. Efforts should be made to support and strengthen the AUC and its organs to promote the integration of these issues into educational and training curricula.
- Develop and implement frameworks and mechanisms that give sufficient economic opportunities through entrepreneurship development, access to business support services and finance, in particular the establishment of the African Union Youth Enterprise Development Fund to finance youth business initiatives under the four pillars of the demographic dividend roadmap.
- Increase budget allocation for national HIV/AIDs and SRHR programs to harness youth demographic dividends, while rejecting policies and funding that undermines efforts to combat unsafe abortion; and ensure that their national reports to the United Nations and other global health and human rights processes respond to Africa's human rights commitments and policies on sexual and reproductive health including access to safe and legal abortion.
- To appoint a Special Envoy on youth to enable the achievement of demographic dividend.

Dated at Addis Ababa this 23rd Day of January 2017