

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone: 5517 700

Fax: 5517844

Website: www.au.int

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Forty first Ordinary Session
20 June – 15 July 2022
Lusaka, Zambia

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**REPORT OF THE 6TH SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON
GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT,
1 MARCH 2022**

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**SIXTH AFRICAN UNION SPECIALISED
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON GENDER
EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
01 March, 2022**

**STC 6/WGDD/MIN/Rpt
Original: English**

REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING

(Hybrid meeting via Zoom and In-person Attendance)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministerial segment of the sixth Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC on GEWE) was held as a hybrid-assembly comprising both virtual and in-person attendees on 01 March, 2022.
2. The meeting took place through a hybrid format, i.e., in-person at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, and online.

II. ATTENDANCE

3. The following 37 Member States attended the meeting:

In person: Benin, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Somalia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe.

Online: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Togolese Republic, Tunisian Republic, Uganda, Zambia.

The list of participants is attached as **Annex 1**.

III. SESSION I: OPENING CEREMONY

Opening remarks by H.E. Dr. Ergogie Tesfaye, Minister of Women and Social Affairs Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

4. **The Minister welcomed all participants to Ethiopia and to the 6th STC on GEWE, noting that gender equality and women's empowerment are recognised globally as part of the development agenda.**
5. **Noting** that Africa in the last few years has experienced a surge in violence against women as a result of COVID19 prevention and control measures, she underlined that positive masculinity will be a critical driver to end the scourge and applauded the Inaugural Men's Conference on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls and its outcomes.
6. She highlighted the need for significant policy shifts and investment in programmes to ensure gender equality in the wake of the unique challenges affecting the continent, citing specific examples from Ethiopia.
7. Ministers were encouraged to champion new and improved approaches to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls ensuring that adequate financing is available for the strategies and initiatives that are developed.

Opening Remarks by H.E. Dr. Mèdessè Véronique Tognifode Mewanou, STC Bureau Chairperson and Minister of Social Affairs and Microfinance, Republic of Benin

8. The STC Bureau Chairperson, H.E Dr. Mèdessè Véronique Tognifodé Mewanou, welcomed all participants to the ministerial meeting and thanked all experts for their work in preparing the report.
9. She highlighted that women and girls are exposed to several risks in light of disasters and conflicts that have increased risk of violence for women and girls on the continent.
10. The Chairperson reminded Ministers of the 2022 International Women's Day (IWD) theme which seeks to ensure gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow through innovative solutions for financial and economic inclusion for African women and girls in the wake of climate change, environmental disasters, violence and conflict, and encouraged that these are kept in mind throughout the STC discussions. Ministers were urged to pay special attention to the issue of climate change and peacebuilding and ensure that women and girls are meaningfully involved in forging solutions.

Opening Statement by H.E Dr. Monique Nsanzabagwana, Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission (AUC)

11. The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. Monique Nsanzabagwana welcomed all participants to the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. She congratulated the Member States for the implementation of the various themes of the Women's Decade 2010 - 2020 and highlighted that there is still unfinished business as gender inequalities still persist.
12. She urged Ministers to look forward to the next Decade to address the existing inequalities, also further noting that violence against women and girls is often a symptom of disproportionate financial and economic inclusion.
13. She called on Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs to build forward better and differently by placing women and girls at the centre of all aspects of response and recovery from the shocks and inequalities that continue to challenge the continent.
14. The DCP further noted gaps in financing for gender equality and urged Ministers to support budgetary allocations that tackle the structural causes and consequences of inequality.
15. She noted the progress made in the institutionalization of the Office of Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security; whose contribution has been recognized globally as the lead in implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

IV. SESSION II: ORGANISATION OF WORK

16. The Draft Agenda and Work Programme were presented and adopted (**Annex 2**).

V. SESSION III: BRIEFING ON DECISIONS ON GEWE FROM THE 35TH AU SUMMIT

17. The meeting received a presentation from Ms. Ouriatou Danfakha representing the Cabinet of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, briefing Ministers about the GEWE decisions that were adopted by the AU Heads of State and Government during their 35th AU Summit in February 2022. The Assembly decided to:

18. Adopt the Kinshasa Declaration and Call for Action of the African Union Heads of State on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

19. Institutionalize the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, with allocation of adequate and stable financial and human resources for the acceleration of the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in Africa.

20. Appoint H. E. Felix Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo and outgoing Chairperson of the African Union, as the Champion of the African Union in the Positive Masculinity Programme, for having demonstrated dedication and diligence in accompanying and supporting efforts to promote gender equality and to relentlessly combat sexual gender-based violence.

21. The Ministers took note of the decisions of the 35th AU Summit.

VI. SESSION IV: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS' REPORT ON PRESENTATIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

A. Introduction of the New Women, Gender and Youth Directorate

22. The meeting received a presentation of the new Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, which was established as part of the structural changes under the new AU Reforms.

23. The Directorate was created in January 2021 by integrating the Human Resources and Youth Development Division into the erstwhile Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD).

24. The merger integrates the AU's cross-cutting Agenda for gender equality as well as women and youth empowerment and development into one portfolio. The Directorate is strategically placed within the Office of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) to facilitate the mainstreaming of

women and youth policies, programmes and projects within and throughout the African Union.

25. The mandate of WGYD is anchored on Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 and it is to unleash the potential of women and youth by achieving gender and youth parity, enabling development and fostering meaningful engagement for women and youth. The Directorate has three priority areas, namely, Youth and Gender Transformative Programming, Maintaining Strong Foundations, Catalyzing Action, and Gender, Women and Youth Mainstreaming in AU member states for scale and impact. The Directorate comprises three Divisions, i.e. the Coordination and Outreach Division; Women, Gender and Policy Development Division, and Youth Development and Engagement.

26. The Ministers decided to maintain the separate STCs on GEWE and on Youth, Culture and Sports

B. Outcomes of the AU Men's Conference on Positive Masculinities in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa

27. The Meeting received a presentation of the Experts Report on the Outcomes of the AU Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa which was held in Kinshasa, DRC in November, 2021.

28. The meeting was informed that the next Men's Conference will be held in Senegal in 2022.

29. Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the Men's Conference.

C. The Trust Fund for African Women

30. The meeting received a presentation of the Experts Report on the draft strategy for the new Trust Fund for African Women.

31. The Ministers endorsed the recommendations of the Experts report.

D. 2020 Reports on Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

32. The meeting received a presentation of the Experts Report on the 2020 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).

33. The Ministers endorsed the recommendations of the Experts report.

E. Institutionalization of the office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security

34. The meeting received a presentation of the Experts Report on the Institutionalization of the office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

35. The presentation reiterated the decision of this STC during its 5th session held in November 2020 supporting the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council to institutionalize the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security
36. Ministers welcomed the decision of the 35th AU Summit held in February 2022 to institutionalize OSE-WPS.

F. National Launches of the AU Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

37. The meeting received a presentation of the Experts Report on the National Launches of the AU Campaign on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.
38. The Ministers endorsed the recommendations of the Experts report and committed to launch National Campaigns on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls to ensure sustainability of actions.

VII. DATE AND VENUE OF THE 7th STC ON GEWE

39. The Ministers received a presentation on the date and venue of the 7th Ordinary Session of the STC on GEWE and decided that the next STC will take place in November, 2022 online or in the AU Headquarters, if the COVID-19 situation allows.

VIII. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT STC REPORT

40. The report was adopted as amended.

IX. SESSION III: CLOSING CEREMONY

a. Remarks: Ms. Nonkululelo Prudence Ngwenya, WGYD Acting Director

41. The Ag. Director thanked the Ministers and partners for their attendance and support and noted some of the concerns raised.
42. She highlighted that the Directorate is in a learning phase and also seeking to adapt to the new context and the new ways of working.

b. Closing Remarks: H.E. Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security

43. In her closing remarks, the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security recognized the leadership of the STC Chairperson and the manner in which the Bureau is steering the work of the STC.

44. She expressed delight with all the progress that has been made on gender equality and women's empowerment. She acknowledged the Ministers of Gender and their respective leadership in continuing to provide guidance and championing the platform for a shared vision and implementation of Agenda 2063.
45. She recognized that women and girls are key stakeholders in development and key to achieving a prosperous Africa.
46. She highlighted that 30 countries in Africa have National Action Plans on UN Resolution 1325 and that Member States still need more women in political decision making. She applauded the countries that have established AWLN chapters and encouraged those who are still to launch to do so.
47. Having men at the table is important to achieving gender equality and correcting challenges in expressing masculinity. The Men's Conference is a testament of the importance of men being involved in gender equality work. Further, she recognized DRC President Tshisekedi for leading the work of promoting positive masculinity, as well as Senegalese President Macky Sall for his commitment to follow up.

c. Closing Statement: H.E. Dr. Mèdessè Véronique Tognifodé Mewanou, STC Chairperson

48. The Minister thanked participants and the host, Ethiopia's Minister of Women and Social Affairs for her warm welcome. Despite the challenges of hybrid meetings, all teams did their best and managed to have conclusive discussions.
49. The Meeting allowed Ministers to review key issues, such as the outcomes of the Men's Conference, Trust Fund for African Women and the national launches of EAWG campaigns. The decisions arising out of our discussions provide a platform for participation and solidarity of all stakeholders.
50. The union of African women shows that our work is essential to improve the lived realities of the women and girls in Africa. She encouraged all stakeholders to strive to hold the 7th STC with significant improvements in the structure of the meeting and the overall welfare of African women and girls.

Annexes:

Annex 1: List of Participants

In person: Benin, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Gabon, Somalia Tanzania, Zimbabwe.

Online: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lybia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Togolese Republic, Tunisian Republic, Uganda, Zambia

Annex 2: Agenda

Annex 3: Programme of Work

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