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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
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**REPORT OF CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS  
IN CHARGE OF GENDER AND WOMEN'S AFFAIRS,  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 2 – 3 NOVEMBER 2011**

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**Mtg. Min./ Rpt.(I)**

**REPORT OF MINISTERIAL MEETING OF MINISTERS  
OF GENDER AND WOMEN AFFAIRS  
2 - 3 NOVEMBER 2011**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
AU Headquarters**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Meeting of Ministers in of Gender and Women Affairs, was held at AUC Headquarters from 2 to 3 November 2011 and was preceded by the Meeting of Experts from 31 October to 01 November 2011.

## II. ATTENDANCE

2. The following countries below sent their representatives to attend the ministerial Meeting: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saharawi Republic, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## III. OPENING CEREMONY

3. The Opening Ceremony of the Ministerial meeting was chaired by Honourable Nakadema Rukialsanga, the State Minister for Gender and Culture from the Republic of Uganda who welcomed participants to the meeting. She then invited the representative of the Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

4. In her welcome remarks, **Madam Tesfayenesh Lema, the Director in the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, welcomed participants to Ethiopia, the Headquarters of AUCommission. She noted with pleasure that the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has benefited a lot from the gender equality and women's empowerment programme in the country. She informed the meeting that Ethiopia has both ratified on the Protocol to Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), and also reported on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004); while carrying out several programmes and activities that promote the equality of women throughout the Nation. She stressed that attention had been given to the women in the field of education with training policies that have increased the number of girls and women in the primary and secondary and tertiary education. Measures had also been taken to reduce the maternal mortality rate from 871/100,000, women to 470/100,000 in 2009. Efforts were also being made to mainstream the concerns of women into national policies and programmes. She then wished all the participants very fruitful deliberations.

5. In her intervention, the **Honourable Nakadema Rukialsanga, the State Minister for Gender and Culture from Republic of Uganda** welcomed participants. She noted that women in Uganda had the right to education, health care and services, and were represented in decision making positions as Ministers and Members of Parliament representing their constituency. She then wished participants fruitful deliberations and invited the representative of the Minister from Kenya to deliver his Opening Remarks.

6. In his Opening Remarks, **Mr. C.M Chika, the Minister Counsellor from the Embassy of Kenya to Ethiopia and the AU**, first apologized for the absence of his

Minister who was unable to come to the meeting due to some urgent commitments. He welcomed participants and thanked them for their attendance and participating at the Launch of the African Women's Decade in large numbers. He briefed the meeting about the strides made by Kenya in ensuring the elevation of Kenyan women in various sectors including education and the economic empowerment of women and youth. Finally, he wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

**7.** The Opening Statement was delivered by Commissioner Gawanas on behalf of the Chairperson, H. E. Jean Ping. She extended special welcome to participants to the Addis Ababa and to the African Union Commission. She observed that this being the first time AU Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs were being hosted by the Commission, the Commission was pleased to host the 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary meeting.

**8.** She thanked the Ministers for the important and ground breaking work carried out during their previous meetings and at the national, regional and international levels. She then recalled the landmark event of the successful and colourful Launch of the African Women's Decade on the 15 of October, 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya, which adopted the Nairobi Declaration. She noted that the Launch was attended by over 2,500 delegates including Heads of State and Government, First Ladies, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Deputies and Parliamentarians, Heads of UN Agencies, Gender Champions, CSOs, Grassroots women, Youth, Male champions for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and women from all walks of life.

**9.** The Commissioner noted that the Ministerial meeting was preceded by important preparatory meetings, including Capacity Building Workshop for Member States that have not reported on the implementation of the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), Capacity Building Workshop on Harmonization of the National and Regional Gender Policies, Technical Committees including the Committee of 30 for African Women Decade (AWD) and the Steering Committee for the Fund for African Women, Meeting of AU Expert and Ministerial Committee of 10. These meetings, she observed, built on the African Women's Decade's continental framework which anchored firmly of the African Union Gender Architecture.

**10.** She noted that political will to implement gender commitments at National, Regional and Continental level was at its peak. To date 30 countries have ratified the Protocol to the Charter on Human and Peoples Rights in Africa while 34 have reported on the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), while 40 had launched the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA). The Commission was encouraged by the countries that have signed the SADC Protocol and Member States that had emulated the AU gender parity principle, and looked forward to working with governments in this regard.

**11.** Commissioner Gawanas stressed that on top of the above Gender Architecture, The AU has a very clear vision for the next 10 years of the Decade. The Commission has put in place appropriate approaches, financial mechanisms, a practical methodology and a credible governance structure to deliver this Decade. She then recalled that the

Fund for African Women was now operational. Launched by the Assembly of Heads of States and Government in January 2010, this vehicle for mobilizing resources for the implementation of the decade activities had proved instrumental as the Commission was able to invite Member States and the civil society to submit proposals under Theme No. 3 of the Decade. She then itemized the various steps in the roadmap in processing the submitted projects to ensure that they fulfil the funding criteria of the Fund for African Women.

**12.** The Commissioner then thanked development partners for the support they continue to give to the Commission; and Member States for contributing to the Fund for African Women which will, among other things, support grassroots initiatives to make sure that the decade for African women would not be a decade of words.

#### **IV. THE ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME**

**13.** The Chairperson of the meeting presented the Draft Agenda and Draft Work Programme for consideration. Question and concerns were raised by participants regarding the low participation of Experts and Ministers, which they noted was due to late notification about the meeting. Thereafter, the Draft Agenda and Work Programme were adopted with amendments. Participants then went for the group photograph.

#### **V. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU**

**14.** The following Bureau was elected:

- a) Chairperson: Central Africa - Equatorial Guinea
- b) 1<sup>st</sup> Vice - Chairperson: North Africa – Mauritania
- c) 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice - Chairperson: Southern Africa - Zambia
- d) 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice - Chairperson: West Africa - Nigeria
- e) Rapporteur: East Africa - Uganda

**15.** The Chairperson, the Honourable Minister of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women of the Republic of Guinea Equatorial, H. Excellencia Eulalia Envo Bela, mandated the Rapporteur, the Minister in charge of Gender, Labour and Social Development H.E.M. Isanga Rukiah Nakadama, to chair part of the meeting on her behalf.

#### **VI. BRIEFING ON COP17**

**16.** The representative of the Embassy of South Africa in Ethiopia recalled that the AU Commission and the Embassy jointly organized a Brainstorming Seminar on the Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO) and the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP17) from 24 to 26 August 2011 to be held in South Africa in December in Durban, South Africa ( ). .

**17.** She then presented the gender-specific dimensions of the COP17 and the recommendations of the meeting as follows:

- Women need to create awareness in our communities through lobbying and advocacy with governments for additional financial support, the establishment of infrastructure and market access for organic food;
- Address pest control through a research and facilitation study;
- Encourage the protection of trees to emulate best practices from Rwanda;
- Implement instruments recommended by some networks working on gender and climate change;
- Development reporting mechanisms;
- Protect endangered species of grass and trees such as tick wood (grown in southern Sudan);
- African women should launch a campaign against the use of plastic bags.

**18.** H.E. Ms. Tumusiine, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Economy, provided additional information on the COP17 meeting. She traced the historical context of the COP17 which she placed in the African context, with African activities that were undertaken to combat the harmful effects of climate change in Africa and the African common position on the issue of climate change in conformity with the Kyoto Declaration. She mentioned the importance of the African common position that Africans must take at COP17, which required the creation of an African pavilion in accordance with the decision of the Assembly of the African Union (Assembly Decision 342 (XVI)) on the Sixteenth Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sixth Conference of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that called on the African Union Commission to liaise with the Republic of Africa South (SA) and the African Development Bank (ADB) to obtain the African Pavilion.

**19.** She informed the Ministers that the putting in place of the African Pavilion required the establishment of a Steering Committee supported by an advisory committee which, in turn, is advised by three sub-committees, namely a Technical Sub-committee, a Media Sub-committee and a Communications and Logistics Sub-committee. The Pavilion will serve as a hub for African activities and informal networks outside the formal negotiations. Also, a website had been created so that Member States could register for free participation at the Pavilion. The website is: [au.int/pages/cop17](http://au.int/pages/cop17)

**20.** At the end of the presentations, a Solidarity Statement on the gender-specific dimension of COP17 was read and adopted by the meeting (copy attached).

## **VII. BRIEFING ON PAWO'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

**21.** The Director, WGDD presented a brief historical overview of PAWO, the main points discussed and recommendations adopted at the Seminar to Popularize Decisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and Brainstorm on Pan African Women's Organization's (PAWO) 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary that was held at the premises of the Embassy of South Africa in Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 August 2011, namely:

- the renewal of the commitment of Member States to support the firm institutionalization of PAWO in all regions;
- the support and assistance that the Women, Gender and Development Directorate of the AUC, in collaboration with other actors, should lend to PAWO in mobilizing resources to ensure the success of the celebration of PAWO's 50th Anniversary;
- the possibility for the Assembly of the African Union, in consultation with Member States, to give the PAWO its rightful place within the AU structure; and
- the support that Member States can provide to PAWO in its programmes and operational activities.

**22.** The meeting took note of the Report.

## **VIII. REPORT ON OPERATIONS OF THE SPANISH/NEPAD FUND**

**23.** The Director of WGDD briefed Ministers on the existence of the Spanish Fund managed by the NEPAD/NPCA Secretariat to fund projects on women's empowerment in Africa. She however pointed out that it requires full information from the NEPAD Secretariat on the monitoring of this fund, being aware that a bilateral meeting was held between the AUC and NEPAD in July 2011 in Midrand, South Africa. The Ministers were concerned what the NEPAD Projects were not ready for their consideration and requested the Commission to make sure that these projects are presented to them in the next 2 to 3 months.

## **IX. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE LIST OF THE COMMITTEE OF 30, THE COMMITTEE OF 10 AND THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

**24.** The Commission reminded the Ministers of the decisions of the Lilongwe Declaration, which was the first meeting where the Fund was established, and that the AUC had requested Member States to nominate members with expertise in the field of finance to serve on the Committee. She informed the meeting that the Committee of 10 was formed in Nairobi, during the Ministerial Meeting on Gender held on the sidelines of the launch of the African Women's Decade. She noted that during the meeting, the Ministers had decided that the Committee will comprise 10 ministers in alphabetical order with a rotation of two years, thus allowing all 53 Member States to sit on the

Committee by 2020. She stated that the AUC had received no objection to the composition of the list and the Ministers were requested to decide on it at this meeting.

**25.** The Ministers approved the Composition of the Committee of 10. They however differed the consideration of the composition of the Committee of 30 and that of the Steering Committee on the Fund for African Women till their next meeting, Member States would be requested to make proposals for their memberships. The write ups on these Committees would be sent to Member States.

**26.** Meanwhile, the Commission would continue to operate with these interim Committees before the new Committees are constituted.

#### **X. CONSIDERATION OF DECISION ON THE HOSTING OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DECADE**

**27.** The Commission submitted the item bearing on the hosting of the secretariat of the African Women's Decade to the Ministers for consideration. The Ministers requested to be forwarded the criteria for hosting. The Commission agreed to make the necessary information available to Member States.

#### **XI. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE THEME OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DECADE 2012**

**28.** The Commission recalled that during the launch of the African Women's Decade in Nairobi, the Ministers had agreed on the theme "Education, Science and Technology" for 2012 and "Agriculture and Food Security" for 2013.

**29.** The Ministers expressed the need to prioritize the theme of agriculture and food security, considering the African and international market conditions for food and the vulnerability of African women to food insecurity. The theme "Agriculture and Food Security" was therefore adopted for the African Women's Decade 2012.

#### **XII. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF 10**

**30.** The Ministers considered and adopted the Report of the Ministerial Committee of 10.

#### **XIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING**

**31.** The Report was proposed for adoption by Djibouti and seconded by the Republic of Rwanda as amended.

#### **XIV. CLOSING CEREMONY**

**32.** In her Closing Remarks, the Chairperson, the Honourable Minister of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women of the Republic of Guinea Equatorial, H. Excellence

Eulalia Envo Bela, congratulated the Director for the hard work which she and her Directorate had put in place, particularly for the high quality work. She expressed her hope that the Directorate had taken note of the concerns on the communication between Ministries, Capitals and Embassies reiterating that Member States should have documents in AU working languages, She hoped that the translation challenges would not become chronic and advised that electronic copies of all documents should be sent to participants.

**33.** She thanked the Rapporteur for the diligent, hard work and support provided to the Bureau. She congratulated the Ministers for their contribution to the meeting and wished all safe trip home. She then thanked the Directorate for their good work.

**EX.CL/723(XXI)**  
**ANNEX**

**DECLARATION**

**MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN  
AFFAIRS AND GENDER OF THE AFRICAN UNION,  
02 – 03 NOVEMBER 2011  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**MM/Decl. I**

## **DECLARATION**

**DECLARATION  
OF MINISTERS OF GENDER AND WOMEN AFFAIRS  
OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

**We**, the Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs of the African Union, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 2 to 3 November 2011:

**Recalling** the 2009 review of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action contained in the Banjul Declaration, which recommended redressing gender imbalances, and emphasised the need for gender-sensitive, participatory and inclusive poverty reduction strategies as well as the promotion and protection of the human rights of women with emphasis on the definition, development and implementation of legal and policy frameworks;

**Also recalling** the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), adopted during the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, as an important African instrument for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment;

**Considering** the report on the "Briefing on COP17/CMP7 back to back with the Brainstorming Seminar on Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO)", organised by jointly by the Commission of the African Union and Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Ethiopia, and hosted on 25 August 2011:

1. **WISH** to declare our solidarity with our colleagues, the AU Ministers of Environment with respect to the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
2. **REMAIN** resolutely committed to the global and regional frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment commitments put forward by the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the MDGs, the AU Gender Policy, as well as strategies developed by the RECs;
3. **REAFFIRM** that gender equality and women empowerment remain non-negotiable and constitute core elements of the continent's human rights instruments;
4. **NOTE** that the impacts of climate change have far-reaching implications for Africa's growth and remain concerned specifically in respect of this impact on women;
5. In this regard, **NOTE** that it remains important to ensure that the severity and magnitude of the impacts of climate change on different population groups, especially vulnerable groups, are also identified from a gender perspective;

6. **ALSO URGE** further awareness creation on the impact of climate change on vulnerable groups, including women;
7. **FURTHER NOTE** the importance of providing especially women with early warning information and adaptation mechanisms.
8. **BELIEVE** that it is important to allocate sufficient and timely resources to address climate change and food security issues and their gender differentiated impacts, and therefore also call upon member states to endeavour to improve domestic resource mobilisation. Africa, however, alone cannot meet the challenges and we thus also call upon the international community to meet its financial commitments to compliment and strengthen domestic efforts in addressing climate change and gender development;
9. **REAFFIRM** the importance of utilising the vast skills, knowledge and energy of women to promote overall growth and sustainable development on the continent. In this regard, it remains important to include women in National, Regional and Continental Decision-making Processes;
10. **URGE** our colleagues, the Ministers of Environment of AU to ensure that women's issues with respect to climate change are placed high on the agenda of COP17/CMP7.

2012

Report of Conference of Ministers in  
charge of gender and women's affairs,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2 – 3  
November 2011

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