

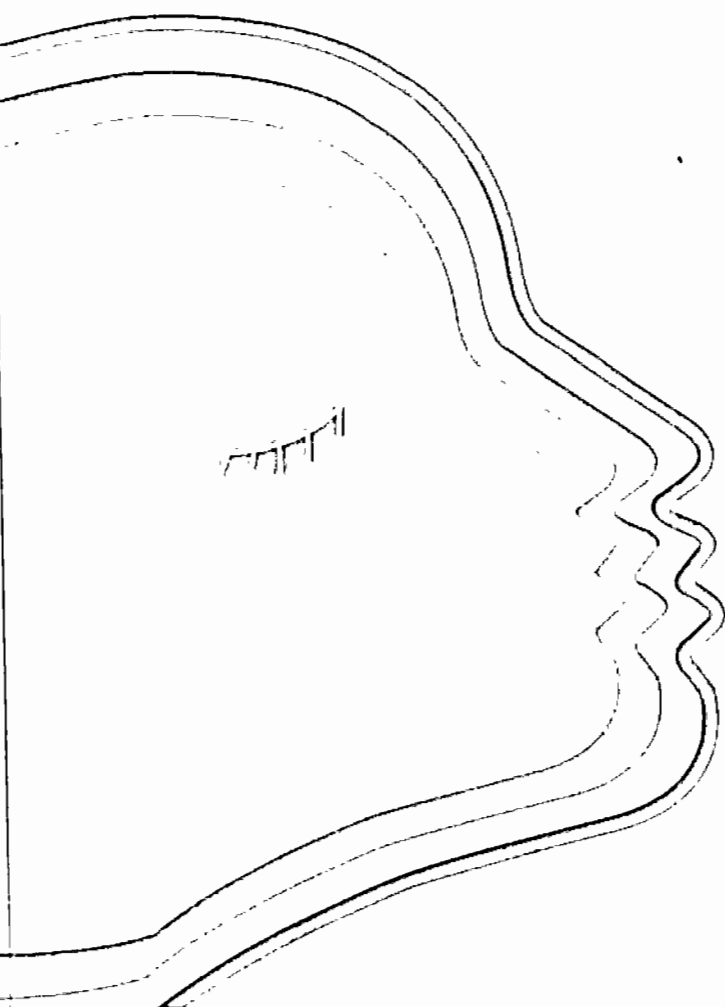


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Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063



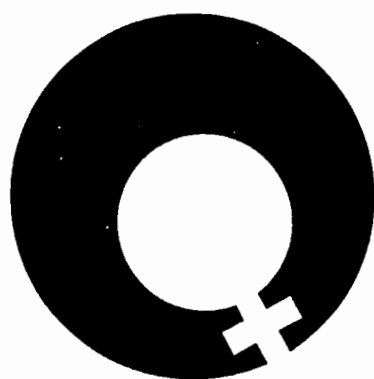


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Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063



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FOREWORD

It is my great pleasure to present this issue of the AU ECHO, the newsletter of the African Union Commission, which we are publishing under the theme of the African Union Summits for 2015 i.e. *"Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063"*. The newsletter is published each year according to the annual themes of the AU as decided by our Heads of State and Government.

The AU ECHO provides a vital linkage between the African Union and the African people. It is an avenue through which we can share knowledge and experiences that enhance our integration and unity. By giving voice to African people to tell their own stories of development, it helps us to achieve our desire to be a people centered African Union, especially now as we focus on Agenda 2063.

The manuscripts in this edition cover a wide scope of areas in which progress has been achieved and where challenges remain in terms of achieving the true empowerment and development of women.

The theme for our Summits this year deserves a special place in all our hearts. Women constitute more than half of Africa's population. They give birth to the other half. Women make up seventy-five per cent of the agricultural workforce. They constitute the bulk of cross-border traders and still provide for the well-being of communities, the workforce and our societies, as well as being custodians of our culture.

The continent has taken many decisions towards the emancipation of women and gender parity. The African Union's gender architecture includes important documents such as Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the Fund for African Women, and the African Women's Decade.

The African Union Commission, and more importantly the member states, have to implement these decisions. This newsletter allows us to hear from the people how the decisions made by our leaders are impacting their lives. As you read through this newsletter, you will find that the contributors have presented us with well researched information that can be used by others in their own programmes on empowering women. The writers also point to areas where we as the African Union, member states of the African Union and societies in general, should adjust and re-focus if we are to achieve gender parity by or before 2063, as set out in the Agenda 2063 framework.

May this short overview on women's empowerment and development arouse your own interest to learn how policies adopted by African Heads of State and Government are making a difference to the people of this continent.



Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma

CHAIRPERSON: AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION



GENDER EQUALITY: WHAT DO AFRICAN CITIZENS THINK?

Women have traditionally played critical roles in our African societies. Gender equality flourished in ancient lands where African women occupied positions of responsibility. While there were so many, our history books recognized only a few of them: Queen Ann Nzinga of Angola, Makeda the Queen of Sheba in Ethiopia, Queen Ahmose-Nefertiti of Egypt, Mbuya Nehanda of Zimbabwe, Yaa Asantewa of the Ashanti Empire, Buktu of Mali and Didon, Queen of Carthage (Carthage now known as Tunisia was the first State in the world founded by a woman). There are many, many other women that held very great responsibilities in our ancient civilisations, whose good deeds continue to influence us today.

Yet African women still do not have equal access to opportunities and services.

2015 has been called by the African Union the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Agenda 2063. The African Union Commission's Directorate of Information and Communication sent out a call in September, for papers to be published in the AU Echo at the January 2015 Summit of the African Union. The call was sent out to organs and employees of the African Union, and to African citizens in general, men and women, who wanted to share their successful experiences as well as some of the challenges faced toward the gender equality process.

Involving the people of the continent in the African agenda gives a voice to African citizens in the process of the AUC leadership's policy aimed at building a people's union through communication, information and outreach.

The results have been pleasing, both in their quantity and quality. I would like to thank all the contributors who have made this publication so rich.

May we all use this publication to learn from each other and encourage the further empowerment of women on our continent.



Habiba El Mejri Scheikh

Director Information and Communication
African Union Commission

BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS: POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND THE ECONOMIC SELF-EMPOWERMENT OF THE CAMEROONIAN WOMAN

By ALOBWEDE NGOME JOHN

Senior Administrative & Teaching Assistant CERIS – Brussels, Final Year PhD Candidate: Vrije Universiteit Brussels & Canterbury Christ Church University, Dept of Politics & International Relations

alobwedej@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper analyzes the implementation of the African Union's (AU) vision in Cameroon to empower women economically and politically. This strategy is pulling down gender and ideological barriers (gender parity) to catalyze development and to boost the political representation of women in Cameroon. Cameroon is signatory to the legal and institutional arrangements that inform the AU's policy framework on gender policy. Given its commitment to the AU's mechanisms for fostering gender mainstreaming, the Government of Cameroon has taken steps over the last decade to improve the participation of women in the political and decision-making processes (government and parliament) at the national level as well as the economic empowerment of rural women at the grassroots level, to catalyze development. Using the feminist theory, this article analyses the implementation in Cameroon of the gender equality vision and mechanisms designed by the AU to empower women in order to enhance development. The paper equally assesses the progress made in empowering the Cameroonian woman as a vector of socio-economic development. Important strides have been made. However, significant challenges abound.

Key Words: Gender Equality, economic empowerment of women, development, political representation and participation.

Introduction

Durable socio-economic development can only thrive in Cameroon through the enforcement of gender parity and the economic empowerment of women. The improvement of the political representation and participation of the Cameroonian woman and her economic empowerment at the grassroots (rural women) is bridging the gender gap and triggering socio-economic development, although challenges remain.

Women constitute 52 percent of the entire population of Cameroon. They are actively involved in fighting poverty in households and thus make a crucial contribution to development of the society. The status of women in the Cameroonian society that was often dwarfed and subordinated to that of men by culture and state institutions is gradually being reversed with the adoption of the AU's Institutional and legal framework on gender equality and the economic empowerment of women.

A perfect avenue to push for the economic emancipation of rural Cameroonian women is through the promotion of community-based projects. Women who possess economic and political power contribute to the wellbeing of their households. Their empowerment is a commitment of the government of Cameroon to catalyze development. Combining the political representation of women with the grassroots approach of economic empowerment with micro projects is proving effective, in reaching women in all spectrums of the Cameroonian society. The success of micro projects is contributing immensely to the welfare of poor and widowed families. They are learning to map out their economic future without relying on their often

'powerful' husbands and/or on the state.

The notion of gender domination and the related impediment to women can best be examined through the feminist approach. Raman Selden (1989) postulates that the central idea with feminism is: "to challenge male chauvinism and to end women's exploitation by patriarchy at all levels"(141). In the same light Bill Ashcroft (1995) asserts that feminist theory generally attempts to unmask and reject patriarchal ideology of domination and fight for female equality (249). In a sense, feminism as a doctrine advocates for the social, political and other rights of women as equal to those of men. Women and men alike should be entitled to economic empowerment and equal political representation.

Political Representation of the Cameroonian Woman

Cameroon is a member state of the AU. It has adopted and is implementing various AU conventions to improve gender equality, by improving the political representation of the woman. The state is taking steps to improve the political representation and participation of women in decision-making.

The state has increased the number of women in parliament. Cameroon currently has 180 parliamentarians drawn from various political parties. Women constitute 31.11 percent (56) of elected parliamentarians while men constitute 68.89 percent. Significant progress is being made to enforce gender parity as stipulated by the AU's gender mainstreaming architecture (National Assembly of Cameroon: 2014).

Measured success has equally been recorded in improving gender parity in the Cameroonian Senate. The Senate saw the light of day in 2013, although it was created by the constitution of 1992. Twenty of the 100 senators are women. This is a step in the right direction. However, significant improvement is required, given that amongst the seventy senators elected on April 14th 2013 during Cameroon's first-ever senatorial elections, only 17 are women. Among the thirty senators nominated by the head of state just three of his nominees are women (Senate of Cameroon: 2014). There is need for to further improve the political representation of women. The government

of Cameroon has over 30 ministries headed by presidential political appointee (Commonwealth: 2014). At any one time there have been a mere 33.3 percent of female ministers in government since the year 2000.

Economic Self-Empowerment at the Grassroots

In its implementation of the AU's gender parity vision, the State of Cameroon is encouraging numerous micro-projects to enhance the economic self-empowerment of women in rural and peri-urban terrains. Women are the main procurers and users of energy in Cameroon. They are being encouraged to improve their status in the constricting male dominated Cameroonian society by becoming dynamic in the production of bio-gas and other cheap renewables for income generation. This is enabling them to gain greater equality with men via economic self-empowerment. Rural and often illiterate and semi-educated women are involved in various activities designed to improve energy security and generate income. They undertake designing of better kitchens and improved cooking stoves, household lighting and productive income generating activities such as modern food and fruit drying installations designing.

The empowerment of the Cameroonian woman is key to the eradication of poverty. This is important because of the 1.3 billion people who live in poverty globally, 70 percent are women¹. Therefore, to lift families out of poverty, especially energy poverty, considerable attention has to be directed towards empowering women. The better welfare of women means the better welfare of entire families, especially because women head households in Cameroon. Single and widowed Cameroonian women who head households are now active in the informal sector. They are active in food preservation and processing activities, some of which have high energy demand. Small-scale industrial activities such as baking, fish and cassava milling are major income generators for disadvantaged rural women and their families.

Since the declaration the African Women's Decade (2010) Cameroonian women are more empowered to eradicating poverty and improve the welfare of their families. They are increasingly involved in kick-starting and operating small enterprises such as palm oil processing, small bakeries, fish smoking, the processing of cassava into garri, managing guest houses and hotels, tea and food preparation as well as soap

1. This figure is advanced by the African Development Bank in a special issue published captioned: ADB FINESSE AFRICA Newsletter of October 2004, p.2

and pottery making. The long-term survival of these income-generating projects entails improved access to clean energy services for productive activities, lighting and cooking. This could have a significant outcome on economic activities. This will in turn improve the lives of family members. Reducing women's drudgery through improved access to reliable energy services and the development of business initiatives would have significant positive impact on women's literacy and education, as well as on the nutrition, health and well-being of the entire family.

Empowering local Women through Solar Electrification

The Rural Women Development Center, a local NGO in Cameroon has made a significant contribution in promoting female emancipation through the creation of rural solar electrification centers in the South West Region of Cameroon. This is enshrined in the AU's vision to empower and emancipate the Cameroonian woman. Women residing in rural enclaves cannot be empowered economically in a context of energy crisis. Given the terrible energy situation in most rural-village settings, local communities that are not yet connected to the national electricity grid are opting for micro renewable energy. These initiatives are backed by the World Bank and the African Development Bank via the Government of Cameroon.

The historic micro renewable energy initiative: "Empowering local community through Solar Energy Electrification" is jointly supported by the Rural Women Development Centre (US\$18.205), the GEF Small Grants Programme (US\$ 50.000) and the Barefoot College in India which, through the UNDP, made a contribution of US\$ 33.990 to the realization of this project: (Mpeck Nyemeck 2012:2).

State backed micro projects are giving local women a voice through the production of renewable solar energy. The rural Solar Electrification Centers put in place for this scheme have to date provided 600 plus Cameroonians in 98 households with affordable solar electricity in addition to income generation. According to Nawah Ngoh Martin² this project has not only brought electricity to his community but it has predominantly impacted the lives of women and widows

positively, as it has improved the living standards of the entire community. The underlined goals of such projects are to achieve the economic empowerment of women and the alleviation of poverty amongst women and households headed by widows.

A major highlight of the AU's initiative to empower women in local Cameroonian communities through solar electrification involves the training of woman by the Barefoot College in India of "grandmothers" as solar engineers. This is groundbreaking because Cameroonian women hardly rise to the position of engineers. The field of engineering has always been a male preserve in Cameroon. Training women in solar technology has served as a morale booster to the women according to its participants: "It was a good experience ... I learnt a lot and now it goes to show that what a man can do a woman can do too. My colleague and I are regarded with high esteem in our community"- Nchenge Helen³. This group of women has been training their colleagues as solar engineers. These women are installing solar panels and batteries in households, which panels are capable of lighting at least three fluorescent bulbs. This process is generating income for rural women in addition to improving the lives of the beneficiaries. It has equally facilitated the charging of mobile phones which could not be charged in those communities before, given the absence of electricity. Solar power has "improved the lives of most families".

Conclusion and Challenges

This article has attempted an evidenced-based analysis of the implementation of the gender parity programmes of the AU in Cameroon. In implementing the AU's gender equality roadmap, the state has taken concrete steps to empower woman economically. Significant progress has been achieved in the economic self-empowerment of women as a strategy to boost development. The state has actively supported microfinance activities and encouraged women to run for political and administrative office. Significant hurdles however remain in this effort.

² Nawah Ngoh Martin is the chief of Munyange a village located behind Mount Cameroon that was not connected to the national electricity grid but is now lighted up thanks to solar energy generated from Rural Electrification Centers.

³ Nchenge Helen is one of the two widows trained as a solar engineer in the Barefoot College in India.

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MAXIMISING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN

*By Osai Ojigbo, Deputy Executive Director, Alliances for Africa
P O Box 60024 Alagbon Close Post Office, Ikoyi, Lagos State, Nigeria
osai@alliancesforafrica.org*

Women in traditional societies took on a number of roles when it came to providing for their families and seeking some means of livelihood. This varied from working on farms, trading (buying and selling), traditional weaving and dyeing of cloth and hair plaiting. The agriculture sector was definitely very important, with women working as farm hands, tilling and cultivating the land as well as processing and storing the produce for sale. However, globally, the services sector has overtaken agriculture as the main employer of women (UNIFEM, Who Answers to Women? Gender and Accountability Report 2008, p.54). In Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics' 2011 General Household Survey Panel revealed that 37% of women are involved in buying and selling as their main work compared to 33% of women involved in agriculture.

These statistics do not in any way reduce the significance of agriculture in Africa and its impact on food security which is crucial for growth and sustainability of the African continent. This paper however, is based on the assumption that the service sector particularly the provision of goods through buying and selling is increasingly becoming the route through which women can be empowered. This paper argues using recent initiatives that target women's economic empowerment, to illustrate strategies that have been implemented and how this can be scaled up to advance women's roles and leadership in Africa's development.

The most common description of women doing business is as market women and this has also transcended into modern society. Market women now take different forms and are not restricted to regular markets but are now entrepreneurs, distributors and international traders. The potential for growth in this sector show that women can become employers of labour as well instead of being only sole traders.

There are different challenges and barriers affecting women

trying to do business in the modern world. Many of these barriers are linked to limited access to resources. For example, lack of or insufficient capital to start or grow a business, cultural restrictions on ownership of land, insufficient technical skills, little knowledge of financial and business management and complex market structures that make it difficult for women to access potential regional and international trading platforms to market and sell their goods and services. Other barriers are social and these include violence against women, cultural misperceptions of independent women and lack of family support.

In order to excel in modern business, women require both the skills and support to do so. This is where economic empowerment schemes can be useful in meeting both the training needs of women under the scheme and providing opportunities for them to develop or market their goods including access to new markets at local, regional and international level.

In 2011, Alliances for Africa, an African-led human rights, peace and sustainable development NGO in Lagos, Nigeria collaborated with Unilever Nigeria, a manufacturer of personal products and consumer goods, to pilot a Women Empowerment Programme (WEP) over a 1-year period. This was an Economic Empowerment Scheme designed to contribute to Goals 1 and 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed at combating poverty and improving gender equality respectively. It was also planned to support activities under the African Women Decade (AWD) 2010-2020, particularly on the theme: Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship. It was implemented under a 3 step agenda: to train, empower and monitor.

One Hundred (100) women were trained from the North-Central region of Nigeria. The women were selected after a

through selection process to identify women with low or no income. The training was holistic covering business and finance skills such as bookkeeping, using an accounting ledger, marketing and stock-taking. It was important to stress the importance of keeping good records of stocks and finances. A major reason why many businesses cannot access loans even micro-ones is due to non-existent financial records that show a potential investor or bank how the business is being managed and growth of sales or income. Secondly, many of the women trained were not aware that how their goods were presented and marketed can massively increase their sales with customers.

Unilever Nigeria provided the trained women with a branded kiosk and start-up capital in the form of the value of goods. So no cash was involved. The women would generate income and replenish their stock from the sale of the goods received. In addition, the women had direct access to Unilever Nigeria's national distribution network effectively cutting off the middlemen and ensuring that the women maximise the gains they made from buying at distributor or wholesale price. The women beneficiaries were then monitored and evaluated over a one-year period.

The results of this private sector funded NGO collaboration were encouraging. It was able to bridge the gap between a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of a company with the Rights-Based approach of NGO working together to improve the livelihoods and economic empowerment of rural and urban poor women. After one year, most of the women showed an increase in their personal and families' income. Their personal achievements show that with the right support disadvantaged women can start a business and gain the capacity to meet their needs and supplement their families' livelihood. It is therefore imperative to emphasise women's economic empowerment in all development programmes and should have a key place in Africa's Agenda 2063.

The economic empowerment scheme described above focused on small-scale businesses but can be medium-scale and large-scale targeting different industries and sectors. These schemes can be widely accessible and funded with support from government budgets and programmes.

Women's empowerment and access to economic opportunities is a human right. Article 22 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights states that all

"peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development..." Article 13 of the Protocol to The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on The Rights of Women in Africa (i.e. Maputo Protocol) provides that States "guarantee women equal opportunities in work and career advancement and other economic opportunities." African states are therefore encouraged to work with one another and other diverse actors to maximise economic empowerment schemes to improve the economic status of women

We must not forget that women are not a homogenous group and special measures should be taken to provide access for women living with disabilities, women from poor backgrounds, women from marginalized groups and minority groups including African indigenous communities and refugee or internally displaced women.

The process of empowering women is a collective and multi-faceted one. Collaborations between the private sector, local industries, NGOs, development partners and the State can be more effective in leveraging on the different expertise and skills each brings to economic empowerment schemes. The success of economic empowerment schemes is not in the funds given to the women but in the access to opportunities that they offer. The access provided secures a place for anyone to develop and succeed.

'2015: YEAR OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT' WHAT IS IN IT FOR WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS?

*Authored by: Christina Kwangwari – ActionAid International Project Manager - Christina.Kwangwari@actionaid.org;
Anatole Uwiragiye - ActionAid Rwanda Project Manager - Anatole.Uwiragiye@actionaid.org;
Azumi Mesuna- ActionAid Ghana – Project Manager - Azumi.Mesuna@actionaid.org*

What will real women empowerment look like?

The theme for the year 2015 is women's empowerment and development towards agenda 2063. This theme is highly relevant and important to African women. First we need to examine what constitutes women's empowerment and development.

Generally, it is understood that women must be empowered to participate within the economic and political structures of society. However, empowerment should not be seen as something which can be bestowed by one person/ group upon another. As noted by Rowlands (1997) if power can be bestowed as a gift, it can just as easily be withdrawn. Real empowerment includes participation in decision making, the ability to formulate strategic choices, access, own, control resources and decisions that affect important life outcomes. Empowerment also places an obligation on the state as the principal duty bearer to put in place relevant policies and legislative frameworks.

Important background facts

- If men and women had equal access to productive resources in agriculture, food output in developing countries would increase by between 2.5 and four percent – enough to pull 100-150 million people out of hunger. Yet women continue to be discriminated against in accessing these resources, (FAO 2011).
- Women farmers grow the majority of staple food consumed in Africa and also are largely responsible for food preparation and cooking, yet, as elsewhere in the world, they are disproportionately represented among the hungry.¹

- Women face systematic prejudice and discrimination in access to land, water and other productive resources as well as participation in social and political movements that have a bearing on their farming activities. This negatively impacts on their abilities to feed themselves, their families and to contribute to the national economy.
- Women and girls have a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work. Care work includes all those activities that go towards caring for a household such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for the ill, elderly, children and voluntary community work.

This paper argues that without a holistic approach looking at intersections of women's rights, it is impossible to attain the goals of women's empowerment and development in 2015 as well as agenda 2063. It highlights some of the interventions that have worked on a pilot project implemented in Ghana and Rwanda and makes some critical recommendations for the African Union member states. The pilot project focused on mobilisation of women smallholder farmers, improving livelihoods, capacity building on climate resilient sustainable agriculture to enhance production and food security and reducing hours spent by women smallholder farmers on unpaid care work².

Low cost interventions that can impact women empowerment in Africa

a) Livelihood diversification

In 2013, AAI began a high target climate resilient sustainable agriculture training which resulted in 5,400



women smallholder farmers involved in the programme acquiring more skills on sustainable agriculture. This included facilitating learning the use of leguminous plants, composting, green manure, mixed cropping and livelihood diversification and interventions for livestock rearing, food processing and marketing. The livestock distributed to women smallholder farmers in the form of cows, pigs and poultry in Rwanda and goats in Ghana facilitated women's access to manure as well as assets which they could sell during periods of vulnerability such as droughts. Further the milk and eggs produced by the livestock was also useful in boosting children's nutrition. 'This project has really improved our lives, previously, we were not allowed to have a goat or even to pick the animal droppings from men's livestock but this has changed as we now are able to collect our animals' droppings and use them in our fields and kitchen gardens,' commented one smallholder farmer in Upper East, Ghana.

b) Access to and control over seeds

Throughout Africa, the access to and control over seeds has shifted from poor and small farmers to profit making companies. This increases the risk of extinction of local varieties. Seed security is the foundation of food security

because seed is the first link of the food chain and ultimate symbol of food security. With community based training on seed preservation, AAI has set up 9 community seed and grain banks in the Southern Province of Rwanda. The seed banks are managed by women smallholder farmer groups. '...We did not know it was possible to keep the seeds in a central location like this and do it together. We do not have to buy seeds any more... even when there is shortage of seeds at the market we do not get affected by this. We produce our own seed and other women in the community are also interested in this seed banking', Drocella Mukakabera, a member of Itetero women group in Busasamana sector, Nyanza, Rwanda.

The same structures used for seed banking are also used for grain banks. Grain banks can help reduce post-harvest losses, improve food and nutrition security. In Gisagara, some women farmers had this to say:



'We do not have to sell our grain when prices are low, we can store the grain in the grain bank and sell during the time when prices are more favourable'. The women use locally available materials such as plastic bottles and fire to preserve their seeds and grain.

Women smallholder farmers have become less dependant on private companies who sell mostly hybrid seeds at high prices.



Figure 1: Seed and grain bank in Rwanda:
Photo ActionAid



Figure 2: Women prepare seed for storing in seed bank

c) Breaking isolation, mobilizing and organizing

For a long time women smallholder farmers have felt isolated from mainstream discussions. Through the AAI project, women have organized into 180 women's groups with 30 members in each group. These groups are useful spaces for women to discuss issues affecting them as far as leadership, farming and unpaid care work is concerned.

As groups of women, smallholder farmers feel empowered when negotiating for resources with chiefs and local authorities. It is important for the state, AU and NEPAD to recognise such grassroots based groups and facilitate their participation in policy making and not only focusing on large farmers group.

d) Moving frontiers of exclusion on land

Women's access to land is another area which needs urgent attention in the year of women's empowerment and development. It is difficult to discuss sustainable agriculture without considering access to and control of land. In Ghana where 75% of women smallholder farmers said they had no land at the time of baseline3 data collection in 2012, women's groups have negotiated for land with local authorities and have been given land to grow soybean seeds, maize and other crops. This group farming has also resulted in changes in male attitudes at home as they are now aware that women need land.



Figure 3: Group soya bean seed farm in Ghana
Nanumba

However more still needs to be done in terms of security of tenure as there is no guarantee that women will always have access to this land.

e) Addressing unpaid care work

The drudgery of unpaid care work has a significant impact on how much time women can invest in agriculture and other economic and political activities. In AAI's baseline study,⁴ many women smallholder farmers interviewed in Ghana and Rwanda were spending three to four hours collecting water for household use and similar hours collecting firewood. There was an acute shortage of boreholes while some of the available water facilities were dry. In both countries as in many other African countries, there were no interventions aimed at resolving the energy related problems of women smallholder farmers. Further in Ghana 25% of the women smallholder farmers in the study sample reported that they travelled between 1 and 5 miles daily searching for firewood. Women were also spending many hours on child care.

In 2013, AAI piloted child care centers and tracked the time use changes. The results provide useful insights for policy interventions. Women smallholder farmers were able to gain an additional 5 hours of time which they could use to do other activities such as learning, farming, and marketing. The child care centers were provided with support of local government authorities on some disused community buildings. Child care management committees were set up and training was done for child carers. Leoncie says: "After 1994 genocide, my husband was taken to jail and I was left with 6 children but recently he came back home. Caring for the family was a huge burden. Since I brought my son at childcare centre I go for farming from 7am to 12am without child interruption. Before the early childcare centre I could not even go to cultivate because I could not leave my child alone at home because his young brothers and sisters had gone to school. But now, I do all my activities without any interruption". Leoncie, is a member of Abunzubumwe women group in Rwanda.



Figure 4 Chamba child care centre, Nanumba

Empowerment and development imperatives 2015 and beyond....

✓ *Setting up a clear gender goal regarding women's empowerment and agenda 2063*

The African union is party to a number of key commitments including the protocol on human and people's rights on the rights of women in Africa, Beijing Platform for Action and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. In terms of agriculture, the comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) remains the main commitment guiding African agriculture. Under CAADP, AU member states committed to allocate at least 10% percent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and annual growth rate of 6% per annual. Few countries have met this target, however among those who have met and those who have not met the target there are no clear gender targets. Within the different AU departments there is need to come up with one gender goal as well as specific targets under CAADP

✓ *Make a clear commitment/declaration on recognition, reduction and redistribution of disproportionate unpaid care work burden of women*

The African Union, its agencies, and member states should strengthen commitment by way of a declaration, on recognising, reducing and redistributing women's unpaid care work because its impact on development and empowerment cannot continue to be overlooked. In this regard, the state must prioritise public investments in areas such as child care centers; healthcare, energy, woodlots and water that will help reduce women smallholder farmers' disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work.

✓ *Empower women smallholder farmers to have control over seeds production system*

Governments must reduce smallholder women farmers' dependence on external inputs for seeds and promote community-based seed multiplication, indigenous seeds to ensure access to quality seeds at the time farmers need them. In many places in Africa, the introduction of high-yielding varieties (HYV), hybrid plants, and other green revolution technologies have displaced traditional varieties. These new varieties are not always affordable to farmers or easily adaptable to local soil and climate. Traditional varieties hold essential genetic characteristics that can help

smallholder farmers adapt to multiple climatic challenges.

✓ *Promote and protect women's land rights*

Government must ensure that women's access, control and ownership of land is guaranteed. They must put in place measures for secure tenure to land for women smallholder farmers.

✓ *Ensure an intergrated holistic approach*

In particular, AA recommends a clear framework of the integration of unpaid care work and climate resilient sustainable agriculture by the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) in collaboration with the African Union Gender Directorate for a holistic approach which promotes climate resilient sustainable agriculture and recognises, redistributes and reduces unpaid care work burden for women smallholder farmers.

The data is based on the women's rights to sustainable livelihoods project funded by the Dutch ministry of Affairs under the FLOW grant

1. UN ECOSOC. 2007. 'Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development' Report of the Secretary General 1 June 2007.

2. The project is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3. Insights and experiences of women smallholder farmers in Ghana and Rwanda: Hidden intersections of women's rights and climate resilient sustainable agriculture Actionaid www.actionaid.org/flow

4. Ibid

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: STRIDES AND TIDES

Iyadunni Ikubaje-Aina¹

Programme Officer; Institute For Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), University of Addis Ababa,

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Introduction:

Historically, women have played significant socio-political and economic roles across the world (Bunch, Charlotte and Roxanna Carrillo, 1990). The experience in Africa, particularly in recent years attests to this conclusion. Aside from the fact that the academia and international development institutions, through research, have documented the concrete contributions of women to Africa's development, their input into the socio-political and economic transformation of the continent has been globally appreciated and acknowledged². Beyond their immediate continent, African women also occupy strategic positions in international development institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other similar global institutions worldwide making impacts on global development.

From the colonial epoch to the present day post-cold war era, accounts of women's contributions to the development of a united Africa are aptly amplified as expected. Politically, women participated actively in different colonial African states to liberate the countries from foreign domination³. Economically, they have contributed significantly to Africa's economic growth, particularly in areas such as agriculture, trade and commerce. Socially, African women are not left behind; they constitute the

building blocks of family cohesion on the continent. They have consistently remained the driving force behind effective African family system which is reflected in communal living and peaceful co-existence.

From OAU to AU: The Place of Gender Equality in the Institutional Frameworks:

It will be recalled that during the establishment of Africa's continental body, the Organisation of African Unity, in 1963, gender, like other good governance issues was not a priority. Combating colonialism and other forms of foreign domination and integration were the main objectives of the organization. However, with the transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in 2002, new developments began to take place; some of these include the adoption of the AU Constitutive Act, the creation of a Gender Directorate within the African Union governance architecture and the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Governance and Election. Internationally, the Durban Declaration of July 9, 2002 also impacted positively the global development agenda and gender issues began to occupy the front bench.

The Constitutive Act of the African Union which established the Peace and Security Council as one of its key organs clearly brought gender issues into the limelight within the African Peace and Security Architecture. Unlike the OAU which had no form of architecture in place to address gender concerns, the new AU demonstrated a clear commitment to good governance and gender equality by adopting important decisions through its summit. These decisions form the basis for the establishment of the African Union Gender Architecture (AU-GA).

The AU-GA has six pillars namely;

- The Constitutive Act of the African Union⁴,
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and

1: Iyadunni Ikubaje-Aina is a doctoral student in Global Area Studies with a special emphasis on peace and security in Africa at Leipzig University, Germany.

2: See details in the Publication of International Center on Research on women "Measuring the Impacts of Women's Economic Development Programmes at <http://www.icrw.org/where-we-work/measuring-impact-women%E2%80%99s-economic-development-programs>; viewed on 12 June 2014

3: Women were jailed by the colonial Government in countries like Nigeria and South Africa for taking part in the struggle for political liberation of these countries.

4 The Constitutive Act of the African Union specifically provide that the African Union "shall function in accordance with the promotion of gender equality", thereby making the promotion of gender equality one of the goals of the AU.

- The AU Gender Policy Framework (consisting of the AU documents and guiding the AUC's work on gender issues),
- The African Women's decade (which is an implementation platform)
- The Fund for African Women (which is a gender financing mechanism, and
- The AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and Gender equality as reflected in the new Agenda 2063.

As the African saying goes "Charity begins at home", the AU at the institutional level reflected its commitment to gender equality with the creation of the Women and Gender Development Directorate. Under the office of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Department has an overall mandate of ensuring capacity building for all AU Organs, RECs and Member States of the African Union in terms of gender mainstreaming in all policy and programme processes and implementation.

International Initiatives and Gender Development in Africa:

Aside from this continental initiative, the AU in its commitment to women's empowerment and development also keyed into the global initiative known as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁵ The continental organization held various regional consultations across Africa on the MDGs and took practical steps to follow up on these goals with key decisions. The African Union promoted and supported MDGs implementation across the continent with various initiatives. The AU also collaborated with organizations such as the African Development Bank, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank Group, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for all the Member States to achieve all the goals by the year 2015. Within the evolving framework of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the AU has equally taken the requisite action further in adopting a common position on Post-2015 Development Agenda. Gender equality in Africa constitutes a

formidable position within the Post-2015 framework.⁶

The Africa Agenda 2063 and Women's Development:

The Agenda 2063 is the continental blueprint for Africa's growth and development which emerged out of the need to move Africa forward, in a fast changing world of globalization and rapid technological advancement. It was informed by several strategic frameworks which were developed to enhance Africa's growth and development.⁷ This continental renaissance vision and the 50 year action plan are based on the principles of African shared values and common destiny. It paints a clear futuristic picture of a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated Africa by the year 2063: one that is structurally and economically transformed; an influential global player and partner with visible growth, and whose potentials have been fully maximized to positively impact on all areas of life of its populace.⁸

The origin of this horizon scanning for Africa's future otherwise known as Agenda 2063 is traceable to the African Union's 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration on 26 May, 2013 where African Heads of State and Government did a stock-taking of the continent's past achievements and articulated their recommitment to transform Africa with a set of goals and targets within a 50 year timeline⁹. The technical document of the Agenda which is currently being finalized will be presented for adoption at the January 2015 Summit of the AU, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Agenda will also have a comprehensive first ten-year action plan.

Within the African Agenda 2063 framework, unleashing the potentials of women in development and gender equality was clearly provided for. Gender is one of the aspirations of the African Agenda 2063. Gender equality is recognized as one of the catalysts for Africa's socio-political

5: The UN Millennium Development Goals was developed in 2001 by the United Nations Secretariat. It presents eight goals development goals and targets to be achieved by the year 2015. Goal 3 specifically seeks to promote Gender equality and empower women.

6: See <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/2/african-union-post-2015-position>

7: Frameworks such as the Abuja Treaty, The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Plan of action for Accelerated Industrial Development in Africa (AIDA), the Minimum Integration Programme, Programme for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA), and Africa's Agro-industry and Agri-business Development Initiative (3ADI).

8: See the Statement of the African Union Commission Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma to the 25th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council on June 26 2014 Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. Available at summit.au.int/en/23rdsummit/speeches/statement-chairperson-african-union-commission-he-d-nkosazana-dlamini-zuma-23-o accessed 25 October 2014.

9: See the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration Document. Available at <http://summit.au.int/en/sites/default/files/50%20EN.pdf> accessed on 14 October 2014.

and economic transformation. The Agenda highlights the features of the Africa future where there will be equal social, political and economic opportunities and access for all and a level playground for women in all spheres of life.

Gender Equality Indices:

Over the years, different gender equality indicators have been developed. Some of them include the UNDP Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) (Klasen and Schüler 2009). In addition, other international composite indices for measuring gender equality have been developed; partly to complement and expand on the GDI and the GEM. For example, Social Watch Gender Equity Index (GEI) (Social Watch 2005) and the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI) are other indices for measuring gender equality (Lopez and Claros and Zahidi 2005). International indicators such as the Africa Gender and Development Index (AGDI) have also been developed.

Current literature and work by scholars, international organizations and gender advocates have equally identified three broad priority areas underlining gender parity in Africa. These include freedom from violence against women and girls, gender equality in the distribution of capabilities and equality in decision-making power in public and private spheres of political governance¹⁰. Indicative strategies such as promotion of policies that will enhance access to productive assets (including financing) by women, implementation of mechanisms for tracking progress towards parity by women with respect to access to productive assets/skills, and participation in all levels of governance and advancement in positions within the public and private sectors were also outlined.

The World Bank for example defines gender equality in terms of rights, resources and voices - equality under the law, equality of opportunities (including access to human capital and other productive resource) and equality of rewards for work and equality of voice (World Bank 2001). Similarly, based on previous analytical work of various experts, the UN Millennium Project Taskforce for Education and Gender (Grown et al, 2005) adopted an

operational framework for understanding gender equality. It has three main domains:

- (i) The capabilities domain- referring to basic human abilities as measured by education, health, and nutrition;
- (ii) The access to resources and opportunities domain- which refers primarily to equality in the opportunity to use or apply basic capabilities through access to economic assets (such as land, property, or infrastructure) and resources (such as income and employment and financial services) as well as political opportunities (such as representation in parliaments and other political bodies), and
- (iii) The security domain- which is defined as reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict, as violence, particularly targeted at women and girls limits them from reaching their potential.

It is within the earlier identified indices and the above three highlighted parameters that the progress made so far on women's empowerment and development by the African Union and its member States can be evaluated.

Continental Efforts on Gender Development

It is important to indicate that in its attempt at translating the new Africa Agenda 2063 in the area of women empowerment and development into reality, the African Union has taken several giant strides despite various challenges. From short and medium, to long term strategies, visible efforts have been taken to build on the existing gender strategies and policy frameworks¹¹. Right from the outset of the Agenda 2063 development, a consultative forum with women was held on 12-13 December 2013, in Yaoundé, Cameroon to afford women the opportunity to input into the Agenda.

In line with the African Union Women's Decade (2010-2020), the Bureau of the Chairperson of the African Union

10: See United Nations publication titled 'Transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment'. Available at: [www.http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/10/UNWomen_post2015_positionpaper_English_final_web.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/10/UNWomen_post2015_positionpaper_English_final_web.pdf) accessed 15 July 2014

11: Existing policy frameworks include: The Constitutive Act which enshrined the parity principle, The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) (2003), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, (ACRWC), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004), Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP), Declaration 229 (XII) adopted by the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU which proclaimed 2010-2020 as African Women's Decade, the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (2006), and the African Union Gender Policy (2009) all of which endorse the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 on Women Peace and Security.

Commission in partnership with the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa designed a new regional programme focusing on “Building an Enabling Environment for Women’s Economic Empowerment and Political Participation in Africa”. The initiative birthed the first ever African women business forum held in Nairobi Kenya from 18-20 August 2014. In a similar vein, the AUC held a workshop to assess implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) by Member States on 24th September 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria. It will be recalled that during the July 2004 Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia the Heads of State adopted the SDGEA¹². African States are also signatories to the UN General Assembly’s land mark Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979.

On 30 September 2013, a High Level Panel meeting on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and MDG’s Post-2015 was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting provided an opportunity to critically assess the MDGs, (specifically MDGs 3, 5 and 6) and impediments to the implementation of the gender related goals. It also explored very wide opportunities ranging from socio-political and economic to strengthen the African women’s input to the African Common Position on Post 2015 Agenda. To take the discussion further, the First African Union High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment under the theme: The Post 2015 Agenda for Women within the Context of Economic Empowerment “was held from 2 to 4 October 2013 in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire. All these efforts provide platforms for exchange of views on women’s position on the Post 2015 Agenda. These meetings were also meant to engage the global community on the critical needs of African women in the coming twenty years, and mobilize continental support for existing initiatives on gender transformation.

¹² The SDGEA is an important African instrument for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, as it strengthens the ownership of the gender equality agenda and keeps the issues alive at the highest political level in Africa. It therefore serves as a reporting framework for Member States on gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEVWE). Although the agreement was that all Member States would submit their baseline report for the consideration of the January 2007 Summit, to date 41 Member States have submitted their reports on the SDGEA. The SDGEA is divided into six (6) thematic areas of action, namely: Health, Peace and Security, Governance, Human Rights, Education and Women’s Empowerment. Operative Paragraph 12 is a commitment by Heads of State and Government themselves to report annually on their progress in gender mainstreaming. It is envisaged that this reporting will assist Member States to share good practices and identify areas in need of improvement, in order to enhance the status of women.

The African Union has also made significant impacts in other areas. For example, in the area of freedom from violence against women and girls, which has a direct link to peace and security particularly within the context of current threats to human security such as violent conflicts, terrorism and organized crime, progress made so far is reflected in the development, adoption and implementation of decisions and key activities by the AU’s Peace and Security Department. For instance, the annual open session on the situation of women and children in armed conflicts has been sustained till date.¹³

In addition, the Gender Training of Trainers (ToT) Manual for Peace Support Operations (PSOs) has been developed. The manual targets the African Standby Force (ASF) and it brings a gender dimension to peacekeeping. The document has been fully developed and is currently being reviewed.

Also, the third AU Strategic Plan (2014-2017) was refined to reflect specific actions, achievements and challenges to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, in particular those concerning the participation of women in mediation and preventive diplomacy.

Furthermore, an experts’ meeting on Women, Peace and Security: From Resolution to Action, was held from 17-19 September 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting reviewed progress in the implementation of National Action Plans on DDR.

Also, there was a continental commemoration of the International Mine Awareness and Assistance Day on 4 April 2014. The theme was “Women in Mine Action”.

Furthermore, the AU Commission through its Peace and Security Department signed the AU-UN Framework Agreement in February 2014. The agreement was meant to promote a joint collaboration with the United Nations to prevent and to respond to conflict-related sexual violence. This agreement will make the AU work closely with the office of the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in conflict and to translate the agreed framework into a plan of action to be implemented at the continental level as part of the Prevention and Protection Pillar under the Gender, Peace and Security Programme.

¹³ Since the 2010 decision, three open sessions on the situations of women and children in armed conflict have been held namely: 28 March 2011, 26 March 2013 and December 4 2013. Press Statements from these sessions are available at peaceau.org/en/article/au-psc-devoted-an-open-session-on-the-theme-women-and-children-in-situations-of-violent-conflict-in-africa-contribution-and-role-of-women accessed October 1, 2014

In a similar vein, the appointment of Ms. Bineta Diop as Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security on 30 January 2013 is an additional indication of the AU commitment to firmly address issues affecting women and children in conflict.

Another giant stride is the gender mainstreaming process which began in 2011. There is now a comprehensive AU Gender Policy strategy with a five year Gender Peace and Security Programme (2015-2020). This programme was launched on 6 June 2014. The development of its work plan is currently underway and it is expected that it will mark the beginning of transformation of policy to practice in gender mainstreaming in Africa.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation:

The various processes and frameworks described above constitute timely opportunities for the attainment of women's economic empowerment and development. It is important to indicate here that even though the Agenda 2063 is still at the infancy stage, the vision of gender equality as expressed in the email of the AU Chairperson, Madame Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, is achievable. Nonetheless, political will and unwavering commitment of all stakeholders are critical. Africa Union and its Member States will also need to strengthen their institutional mechanisms for gender to be fully mainstreamed in all spheres of life to drive and to accomplish the continental gender vision.

Finally, it is important to conclude on this note that the existing policy frameworks and mechanisms on gender equality and development in Africa are a means to an end and not an end in itself, what will make a difference is implementation.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: ADDRESSING THE GENDER GAP THROUGH RELEVANT AGRICULTURAL FRAMEWORKS

Dr. Janet Edeme, Head of Rural Economy Division, DREA; Ms. Wezi Chunga, Programme Officer in the Programme for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA), DREA; Dr. Oumou M. Camara, IFDC Senior Scientist-Economics, DREA

Women are the backbone of smallholder farming in Africa. However, despite the fact that women comprise 70 percent of the labor used in the production of food, they continue being marginalized in the agricultural sector. As a result of this, women's productivity is lower than that of male farmers. The yield gap between men and women averages around 20–30 percent, yet evidence shows that if women farmers used the same level of resources as men on the land they farm, they would achieve the same yield level, which would result in the decrease of malnourished people in the world from 925 million to as low as 100–150 million. In designing agricultural development policies and programs, it is therefore critical that we examine the interactions between the phenomenon of agricultural development and the social category of gender to maximize the contribution of women to sustainable agricultural development, food and nutrition security, and broad-based growth (FAO, 2010; 2011).

The role of women in agriculture

First, women contribute to food availability through their roles in crop production, animal production enterprises, fishing, and agro-forestry. According to FAO statistics, women comprise 70 percent of the labor used in the production of food. They engage in the clearance of farming fields, site preparation and seeding. They perform 90 percent of the hoeing and weeding work; they apply fertilizer and crop protection products; they do transplanting; their labor constitutes 60% of harvesting and marketing farm labor; they engage in post harvest work; and ensure 100 percent of the processing for basic food stuffs. In animal production enterprises, women herd smaller animals; provide water and feed to all livestock; ensure the milking, processing, and marketing of milk products. In fishing, women fish in shallow waters such as rivers. They perform a variety of on-shore tasks such as net making and repair. They also engage in the processing and sale of fish. In agro-forestry, women handle

seedlings and nurseries; they gather food, fodder, and fuel wood from the forests.

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Second, women also contribute to improving the farming households' economic and physical access to food. This can be easily seen in the increasing number of women who are economically active in rural areas. This increasing proportion of women in agriculture has been coined "the feminization" of agriculture. There are more women engaged in agriculture as independent producers. These are typically small scale farmers, female-headed households due to male migration into the cities and death due to HIV/AIDS. There are also more women in agriculture working as unremunerated family workers, agricultural wage-earners, or self employed in rural non-farm and producing activities. With the emergence of the non-traditional agricultural export sector, more women are now working as unskilled workers in fields or plants. The World Bank, FAO and IFAD (2009) estimates that women provide 60–80 percent of the labor to sell food; they handle 80 percent of food storage and transport from farm to village; they perform 60 percent of the marketing activities and over 95 percent of the processing of dairy and post-harvest handling of cereals (FAO, 2011).

Third, women ensure the effective utilization of food by providing 90 percent of the water and fuel used for food preparation; by contributing nearly 100 percent of the labor needed for food preparation, and by caring for the children, the sick and the elderly. Women may or not have an impact or say in the distribution of food within the household.

Finally, women also contribute to ensuring the stability of food availability, access, and utilization in the household by engaging in food storage, processing, and marketing activities and by also participating in social saving mechanisms and in a diversity of income-earning activities.

Agricultural transformation constrained by women's low capabilities and inequitable access and control of productive resources

Despite the significant contributions women make to agriculture in Africa, they have limited and inequitable access and control of proper productive capabilities and productive resources. These include:

- land, labor, livestock and livestock products, agricultural equipments, and productivity-enhancing inputs;
- technologies/innovations, education, training, extension services, and market information; and
- credit, farm income and off-farm income, insurance and risk financing capabilities.

This gender gap hinders the productivity of rural women and reduces their contribution to the agricultural sector and to the achievement of broader economic and social development goals (SOFA 2010-2011, FAO). According to the FAO, if rural women had access to proper training, to adopt new technologies, to use credit or other financial services, to receive extension advice, agricultural productivity would increase by 30%. Additionally, the active engagement of rural women at all levels of policy and decision making in the sectors of rural and agricultural development can strengthen their ability to respond to the challenges of low agricultural productivity, malnutrition, food insecurity and poverty.

Addressing the gender gap in agriculture through the integration of gender dimensions into the CAADP and its process

For Africa to achieve sustainable development, women must be empowered, meaning they will no longer be marginalized or excluded from decision making processes or the processes of obtaining basic opportunities. It is believed that women are empowered when these principles are met: leadership; equal opportunity; health, safety and freedom from violence; education/training; enterprise development, supply and marketing practices; community; leadership and engagement; transparency, measuring and reporting. These principles can only be achieved when they are mainstreamed into relevant agricultural policies. The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which was endorsed by the African Union in 2003, has now emerged as the most important instrument in accelerating agriculture growth and food security for Africa. For Africa, the active participation of women in the CAADP framework is critical for agricultural sustainable development.

In order to identify and develop strategies that address the distinctive needs of women in the agricultural value chain, AUC and NPCA will assist member states in carrying out mapping exercises for gender relations/ patterns, practices and participation, beliefs and perceptions, laws, policies, and institutions. By so doing, entry points for interventions will be identified.

Additionally, AUC recognizes that gender-disaggregated data at household, community and national levels is vital for policy design and monitoring and should therefore be part of the policy reform process through the CAADP framework.

To ensure that the relevant strategies are identified and developed, it is vital to include women in the decision making process of these interventions. Equally important is the articulation of clear and effective policy mechanisms to address gender gaps which will ensure greater policy attention to gender as a cross-cutting issue.

Implementing identified strategies

The AUC and NPCA have identified the following strategies to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into the CAADP processes and national policies:

- Mainstreaming of gender dimension into CAADP programs through the four pillars of CAADP
- Establishment of a structure with clear responsibilities to integrate gender issues in the CAADP process.
- Ensuring the effective participation of gender institutions/organizations (in the CAADP country roundtable process)
- Ensuring that the CAADP Compact includes an impact assessment on gender.
- Ensuring that there is a gender development plan, programme or component in the national agricultural investment plans.
- Ensuring that national agricultural investment plans (NAIPs) have clear programs to prioritize crops and/or agricultural off-farm activities that women are usually engaged in.
- Link women to new opportunities that result in changes in labor patterns, time and income allocation; to improve women's access to and control of productive capabilities and resources.

Enabling women to achieve their productive potential requires many of the same reforms that are necessary to address constraints facing small-scale farmers and rural people in general, but additional care must be taken to ensure that women's farming concerns are taken into account in the design and implementation of policies and interventions. No simple "blueprint" exists for achieving gender equality in agriculture, but some principles are universal and many lessons can be learned about best practices. Closing the gender gap in access and use of productive resources and services would unlock the productivity potential of women and could increase output substantially. Closing the gap could increase agricultural output in the developing world by 2.5–4 percent, on average, with higher gains in countries where women are more involved in agriculture and the gender gap is wider.

Increasing agricultural production by this magnitude could reduce the number of undernourished people by 12–17 percent, and would imply significant progress towards achieving MDG 1. This highlights the synergies that exist between promoting gender equality and reducing extreme

poverty and hunger. When women control additional income, they spend more of it than men do on food, health, clothing and education for their children. This has positive implications for immediate well-being as well as long-run human capital formation and economic growth through improved health, nutrition and education outcomes. Virtually any agricultural policy related to natural resources, technology, infrastructure or markets will affect men and women differently because they play different roles and experience different constraints and opportunities in the sector.

When women control additional income, they spend more of it than men do on food, health, clothing and education for their children.

Good agricultural policy requires an understanding of the gender dimensions at stake. Because some agricultural and gender issues are location-specific, these may best be addressed through location-specific assessments and tailored policies and programmes. Because interventions may have gender impacts that are difficult to predict, policies and programmes should include the collection of baseline data and rigorous monitoring and evaluation, and practitioners should be prepared to reformulate their activities in response to unforeseen developments. Making women's voices heard at all levels in decision-making is crucial in this regard.

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IN THE AFRICA WE WANT, GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS, NOT BRIDES

By: *Françoise Kpeglo Moudouthe, Girls Not Brides*

Every two seconds, a girl is married before she is physically or emotionally mature enough to become a wife or a mother. 720 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday. Every year, they are joined by another 15 million child brides – the equivalent of the entire population of Mali or Zimbabwe. These numbers will only grow if we do not take urgent action to reduce the rates at which girls are married as children.

Child marriage not only violates girls' most basic rights; it is also a major obstacle to building the Africa we want. The Agenda 2063 outlines Africa's vision to become a continent where human rights are respected; where children and youth are empowered with full implementation of the African Charter on the Rights of the Child; and where the potential of women and youth is unleashed. For our vision to become reality, we must work together to prevent child marriage and support women who were married as children.

African leaders increasingly recognise that ending child marriage is a critical step towards achieving sustainable development. But there is much more that we can do to ensure that we match the magnitude of child marriage. A crucial place to start is to develop and implement comprehensive, inclusive and well-resourced national action plans to end child marriage.

Child marriage is widely practiced across Africa

Defined as a marriage or union where at least one partner is a child, i.e. is under the age of 18 (as per the definition of childhood upheld by both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights of the Child), child marriage is a common practice across our continent. In sub-Saharan Africa, 39% of women are married as children. Africa is also home to 15 of the 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage in the world.

All African countries are faced with the challenge of child marriage, whether they experience extremely high child marriage prevalence, such as Niger (75%) or lower rates like Algeria (2%). Large parts of the female population of Africa suffer the consequences of child marriage both in West and Central Africa, where 41% of women are married as children, and in East and Southern Africa, where child marriage affects 38% of women.

Child marriage shares common roots across Africa

The ways in which child marriage is practiced in Africa may differ – from marriage by abduction in parts of Ethiopia and Southern Africa, to betrothal of girls soon after their birth in parts of West Africa – but the causes are common. Where **poverty** is acute, giving a daughter in marriage allows parents to reduce family expenses, or even to temporarily increase their income, in cases where a bride's parents are paid a bride price.

Tradition is also a factor: in many places, child marriage persists because it has happened for generations – and straying from tradition could mean exclusion from the community. In many areas, marrying a young girl is seen as the only way to ensure her safety, especially in areas where girls are at high risk of physical or sexual assault.

And crucially, **gender inequalities** across Africa also drive child marriage: in many communities where child marriage is practised, girls are not valued as much as boys – they are considered to be a burden and a commodity.

The persistence of child marriage holds back not only girls, but Africa as a whole

Child marriage violates **girls' human rights**, including their right to choose if, when and with whom to marry – a right that is enshrined in several African human rights instruments.

Both the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (article 21) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (article 6) condemn child marriage and establish 18 as the minimum age of marriage.

Child marriage can also have **life-threatening health consequences**. Under pressure to become mothers soon after marriage, many child brides become pregnant before their bodies can safely carry or deliver children. Complications in pregnancy can put them at risk of injury, and even death, as girls who give birth under age 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than young women in their 20s.

Child marriage denies girls their right to education. It is now widely accepted across Africa that education is key to the development of our continent; yet millions of child brides drop out of school to devote their time to house chores and child rearing. Over 60% of child brides in developing countries have had no formal education (UNFPA, 2012).

In Malawi, nearly two thirds of women with no formal education were child brides compared to 5% of women who attended secondary school or higher levels of education.

The example of education shows that the negative impact of child marriage is not limited to girls. **Child marriage has negative implications for Africa's economic prosperity and development prospects**. Because of child marriage, millions of girls miss the skills, knowledge and employment prospects that would enable them to lift their family out of poverty and contribute to their countries' economic development and prosperity.

The persistence of child marriage has hindered our efforts to achieve six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (to eliminate extreme poverty, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality, to reduce child mortality, to improve maternal health, and to combat HIV/AIDS). If we do nothing to protect girls from marriage and to support child brides, we will also fail to realise the vision outlined in Agenda 2063.

In Africa even more than elsewhere, ending child marriage is an urgent task

Child marriage is slowly declining, but progress is too

slow. The steady decline of child marriage prevalence rates in Northern Africa, and the general increase of the median age of marriage, contrast with persistent high rates of child marriage in countries where there has been little to no progress in the past three decades. Prevalence rates in Burkina Faso, for example, have remained high at around 50% for the past 30 years.

Africa must urgently address child marriage, because the devastating consequences of child marriage are likely to affect an even larger number of African girls in the coming years. New UNICEF projections on child marriage in Africa are alarming, especially in view of population growth prospects in sub-Saharan Africa. According to UNICEF estimates, if we do nothing to accelerate progress, **the number of child brides in the region is expected to double by 2050**, and Africa will overtake South Asia to become the region with the largest numbers of child brides in the world.

In Africa, child marriage is receiving unprecedented attention

In recent years, political leaders, civil society and the donor community have begun to recognise the importance of addressing child marriage in Africa. A growing number of governments have initiated country-wide strategies or campaigns that aim at ending child marriage. In 2013, the government of **Zambia** launched a national campaign that is spearheaded by traditional leaders, and includes plans to develop a comprehensive national strategy to curb the practice. Similarly, in **Egypt**, government, civil society and religious leaders have all contributed to the development of a national strategy. In **Tanzania**, a national campaign to end child marriage was launched in 2014, which intends to create "child marriage-free zones" in the country.

Regional institutions are also mobilising to highlight the need to address child marriage in Africa. The need to end child marriage and other harmful practices affecting women and girls is embedded in the regional development framework, the **Agenda 2063**, which includes a commitment to "mobilise a concerted drive towards immediately ending child marriages, female genital mutilation and other harmful cultural practises that discriminate against women." The May 2014 launch of an **African Union's Campaign to end child marriage in Africa**, and the appointment of Mrs Fatima Sebaa-Delladj as

the African Union Special Rapporteur on child marriage and Mrs Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda as the African Union Goodwill Ambassador on child marriage are promising signs of African commitment to end child marriage.

Last but not least, **civil society** organisations across Africa continue to work at the community, national and regional levels to prevent child marriage and mitigate the effects of child marriage on existing child brides. Brought together by Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage, hundreds of NGOs share learnings on what works to end child marriage and work together on joint programmatic and advocacy initiatives to address the practice (www.GirlsNotBrides.org).

What will it take to end child marriage in Africa?

To build on the growing regional momentum and ensure that it results in positive change for child brides and girls at risk of child marriage, it is necessary that all actors work together in a concerted manner to develop and implement **comprehensive, country-specific and well-resourced action plans to child marriage** in every country where child marriage is a concern.

Having built on our members' expertise to develop a Theory of Change on child marriage, we at Girls Not Brides believe that an effective response should encompass the following four approaches:

- a. **Empower girls:** enable them to value themselves, to know and exercise their rights, to develop skills to support their own life plans and to have opportunities to connect with their peers and support one another. This can be achieved through programmes that equip girls with training, skills, information, as well as the provision of safe spaces and support networks.
- b. **Mobilise families and communities** as agents of change, by creating awareness of the harmful impact of child marriage, and of alternative roles for girls and women, so that families and communities prefer not to marry off their daughters as children and so that they themselves engage in efforts to end the practice.
- c. **Provide adequate health, education, justice and other services,** to remove the structural barriers that

push girls into child marriage and prevent them from accessing support within marriage. These services range from providing adolescent-friendly health services, to ensuring that schools are accessible and child friendly, and to providing safe spaces and other support services for married girls.

- d. **Provide an enabling legal and policy framework,** including legislation that sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage, removes legal loopholes – related to parental consent or customary laws – and related policies must be in place which protect women and girls' rights, including property rights, access to remedies, support for those wishing to leave a marriage, protection from violence, access to health services, etc. Strengthened civil registration systems which record births and marriages are also important. Government policy frameworks must define roles and dedicate resources across relevant ministries to expand opportunities for girls at risk and to support married girls.

It is also essential to integrate efforts to reduce child marriage into existing initiatives that seek to protect and improve the lives of girls and women in Africa – including the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality (CARMMA). After all, 90% of adolescent pregnancies in the developing world are to girls who are already married.

A global leader: Africa at the forefront

In 2014 alone, we have seen a leap in commitment across Africa to address child marriage, with the launch of a continent-wide campaign as well as national campaigns in a number of countries. It is time to match this commitment with the coordinated strategies, action and resources that will enable every girl in Africa to thrive. Our continent has a chance to fulfil its vision for emergence and development, and show the rest of the world how to prompt the kind of nationwide and regional change that is needed to end child marriage in a generation.

Françoise Kpeglo Moudouthe is the Africa Regional Officer at Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage (www.GirlsNotBrides.org).

PAN-AFRICAN ORGANIZING FOR A COLLECTIVE APPROACH TO AGENDA 2063



As a Pan-African women's organization, FEMNET, the African Women's Development and Communication Network, looks forward to working with the African Union and the family of African peoples on the next 50 years of collective effort for equality, justice and greater prosperity. We are grateful for the unrelenting labour, often supplied by unacknowledged African women and their allies that won us the advancements we enjoy today. We celebrate the triumphs of generations of indefatigable champions who dedicated their lives to fighting the oppressions that stood in the way of the dreams of the African people.

In 2014, the women of Africa can look with some pride at a continental governance structure that declares an aspiration to equality, justice, freedom and democratic participation as central to its imagination of the Africa we want for ourselves and for those who come after us. As we advance into 2015, the "Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063", we applaud the efforts that have entrenched in the working of the AU a gender architecture defined by a solid normative and institutional framework. This framework places gender justice at the centre of the imagined future society of equality, fairness and prosperity; allowing African women a realistic hope in the possibilities of the next 50 years.

Reality is, however, also clouded with awareness that there remain great struggles ahead. The durability of

past advancements at the state level is not assured, and experience proves that reversals in policy and practice are possible. As we push for states to sign onto and ratify foundational commitments, it is vital that we work together to actualize these bold aspirations into a transformed life experience for Africa's people; that we turn these promises into enduring welfare improvements.

A backlash against the advances of our societies with regard to gender equality is underway across much of Africa and the world. Progressive realignments that stripped the privileged of positions of domination and exploitation have produced anxieties that in turn imperil some of the most important advances of the past 50 years. Those interested in gender justice must therefore maintain a vigilant resistance against cultural, religious and political forces of conservatism and reaction. Our populations must be persuaded that the freedoms African women have won, and those they now demand, are not narrow articulations for individual emancipation. These impulses are instead steps towards unlocking the untapped energy for transformation that African womanhood has already shown it possesses - and which, when unleashed, has proven catalytic for the development and progression of entire societies.

Shifting Landscapes, New Models of Organizing

Global economic and political risks alongside climate change, energy, water, food and other resource-linked crises make the future the terrain of the unpredictable. They also promise to destabilize our continent and to disturb the theories of governance and resource allocation that we have constructed our imagination of the future on. Models and visions of the coming decades have to contend with a shifting landscape of possibility whose navigation will need more than the limited resources we've accrued, more than knowledge maps drawn from the experiences of the past. Tragedies like this year's Ebola outbreak or the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency remind us of the mobility of our challenges as well as the importance of commitments to principles of mutual aid and African self-reliance. These and other challenges require an appreciation of the limitations of the presently dominant models for social, cultural, economic and political organization.

The African Renaissance is a project demanding imagination. In the face of the challenges laid out above, it must be crafted on a revitalized capacity for innovation, cooperation and appreciation of difference and dissent. It will involve much listening and cooperation, making decision-making more inclusive and building resilience and adaptability. FEMNET's herstory and that of the women's movement in Africa has been a long story of building exactly this sort of agility.

Just as the AU is a powerful symbol rallying African energy to battle against the formidable forces of external domination, so are African women's organizations the standard-bearers of the spirit of liberty stirring in African women and girls. These organizations are the vanguard of an irrepressible Pan-African campaign for self-determination. Although, they often struggle against powers internal to Africa, their work shares the visions of justice, traditions of resistance and customs of solidarity with the oppressed that motivated exertions against slavery, racial oppression and colonialism. At FEMNET we believe that the forward looking vision of the AU, encapsulated in Agenda 2063, represents the broad aspirations of African women and girls loosed from the constraints of patriarchal tradition. These women now insist on participating fully, and as equals, in the realization of shared African ambitions for a durable, harmonious, inclusive prosperity. Their yearning

for liberation, for freedom from all forms of oppression, is an indigenous expression that far from being an imported idea antithetical to the principles of African sovereignty, gives full meaning to, and is inspired by Pan-Africanism.

African Women and Girls Crafting a Vision for the Future We Want

FEMNET was created in the lead up to the United Nations' Third International Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985. While in Arusha for a preparatory meeting for the Nairobi conference, participants realized that African women had no organizing body that could speak for them beyond national borders; own the report from the conference or take responsibility for pushing forward its recommendations. In the corridors of the Arusha meeting, they formed the African Women's Taskforce - which became FEMNET in 1988. In taking on the role of communication among different women's groups, mobilizing and preparing local women's organizations to participate in forming a collective vision for Africa, the Taskforce and later FEMNET played a crucial part in engendering a sense of solidarity across borders. Serving as a link between grassroots organizing and continental and global policy making, FEMNET brought together previously scattered organizations into a collective consciousness - contributing to the African Women's Movement.



FEMNET has continued to bring women together across language, national, legal and other barriers as we work to develop a common vision that is faithful to our variegated experience as African women. Today, FEMNET works with member organizations in more than 40 African countries, serving as an interface between civil society and national, continental and international bodies. Conscious of access barriers, we struggle to cultivate an inclusiveness in our work and to nurture a unity of purpose that does not ignore different perspectives. We push for women's voices to be heard as participants in continental and global meetings including, the UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and

the AU Summits. In addition to bringing African women's voices to these meetings, we bring recommendations from the meetings back to our members, and mobilize them to press their governments for the fulfillment of commitments to women's equality and justice. To this end, the Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) network co-founded by FEMNET, is a regional network that campaigns for the ratification, by AU member states, of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, a key instrument for the transformation of African women's lives.

FEMNET believes that women have a key role to play in many continental efforts, especially peace-building, democratic governance, transformative leadership and climate change, and they should be empowered to take leadership roles in addressing these issues. Since 1988, when Sara Longwe's speech at FEMNET's founding conference introduced the then - radical concept of women's empowerment, FEMNET has advanced the notion that fulfilling a commitment to gender equality requires a careful attention to women's capacity to control their destinies and participate fully in social life. FEMNET has insisted that this empowerment of women and girls is essential to the advancement of all people.

This understanding has shaped our commitment to making gender relevant in all aspects of policy, not merely those labeled as gender-related. We are not far from the days when even the concept of gender was foreign to policy-making institutions, and yet we have made great strides. FEMNET is proud to have had a part in developing the AU's gender architecture, as a player in the process leading to the birth of the AU; as a member of the working group that developed the Protocol for the AU's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC); and as one of only eight civil society organizations serving as a member of the ECOSOCC assembly then. We are pleased to have contributed to the design and implementation of strategies that ensure the entrenchment of the concept of gender in the institutions and instruments of the new organization and to have lobbied for gender mainstreaming in the instruments and structures of the AU. In addition to the advocacy undertaken around key AU meetings and functions held around the Durban Declaration, the Dakar Strategy and the Maputo Declaration, FEMNET also organized regional strategy meetings of African women's networks, iNGOs, media, scholars, and eminent persons that resulted in a detailed analysis of the gender responsiveness of the instruments, structures and programmes of the AU,

exploring the opportunities for, and developing strategies to achieve African women's inclusion and participation in AU processes. Today we celebrate H.E Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the first female Chairperson of the AU Commission and multiple AU women Commissioners!

"Our vision is that we the African women will reclaim, reconstruct, and transform Africa, on the basis of gender equality, giving credence to the principles of democracy and human rights; mobilizing and utilizing human and other resources; and take our rightful place in the global arena, on the basis of equality with other nations, from now into the future, in partnership with our men, girls and boys.

Excerpt from the statement read by FEMNET at the Beijing Conference in 1995

While we celebrate the creation of instruments like the AU's gender policy and gender-related declarations, it is not always self-evident how women's organizations can actually use these to effect change. FEMNET seeks, therefore, to find ways to enliven these instruments. We have organized Regional Training Workshops for African women's organizations that aimed at enabling the use international law and policy for development, equality and other human rights through advocacy at the regional level. These hope to raise awareness of the relevance of the AU within the African women's movement and to build the capacity for advocacy within its specialized mechanisms. They focus on gender gaps, opportunities for working with the Pan-African Parliament for the advancement of African women's rights, and the cultivation of strategic alliances between women's organizations and the civil society organizations in Africa. Since 2009, we have also been convenors of the annual Regional Conference for African Women in Political Leadership. We continue, as part of our many programs, to bridge the gap between policy creation and transformation of lives on the ground.

Moving Forward, Pan - African Collective Organizing

More than a quarter of a century after its founding, FEMNET and its members remain a powerful expression of a Pan-African movement that works through collaborations to demand progress and justice for the women and girls of Africa. The scope of our work, and the relationships we have created and sustained, are testament to the viability of non-governmental cooperation across borders, integrating African lives by building networks of knowledge and practice that supply skills and resources in an abundant diversity. These efforts also enrich governance and policy-making spaces with what would otherwise be inaudible or invisible perspectives. These relationships and our persistence illustrate the undisputed benefits of cooperation and collective action.

From the starting point of the Nairobi conference in 1985, when 15,000 women from over 100 countries came together with a warmth, hospitality and grassroots solidarity that came to be called “the spirit of Nairobi”, FEMNET and other regional networks have brought grassroots energy to policy work and empowered indigenous frameworks alongside those promoted by international NGOs. Our experience is testament to the productive synergistic potential in the networks between non-governmental organizations, governments and continental organizations. As a network of women’s organizations and as a civil society organization, we seek to connect women by **informing** them, **mobilizing** them into collaborative efforts, **participating** with them in crafting a vision for the future, and all this to better **influence** the bodies and institutions that make and implement laws. This is particularly important in an age where narratives like ‘Africa Rising’ celebrate limited, exclusive articulations of development and progress that leave hundreds of millions, particularly women, disenfranchised and disempowered.

In addition, we believe a substantive increase in financial, technical and human resources by our governments would not only result in effective implementation of gender related commitments already made but would also consolidate and safeguard gains in existing national gender machineries and programmes. AU should continuously strengthen the capacity of the AU Gender Architecture, integrating gender equality and women’s empowerment in other departments and organs to result in positive impact on actual lives of women and girls. And finally, since accountability breeds

response-ability, we propose integrating targets for gender equality and women’s empowerment in new and existing accountability mechanisms so as to monitor implementation of gender related commitments as well as strengthen reporting, networking and information sharing.

For more information and to contact FEMNET, email Dinah Musindarwezo, Executive Director, FEMNET on director@femnet.or.ke and copy communication@femnet.or.ke
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AVENUES FOR WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: FORMALISING INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE

By Mandipa Machacha¹

"...for us cross-border trade is not really an issue, it's an opportunity...what needs to change is the operating environment. We need to promote an enabling environment to allow those women who are doing that much for their families and communities, to just do business in a normal way..."²

Introduction

As a trade official for my government I have had the opportunity to be involved in trade negotiations at both bilateral and multilateral levels on behalf of my country for a number of years now. I have noted, with concern, the lack of attention that trade negotiations pay to the informal sector. This has often confused me because a large number of lower income Africans work within the informal sector, and if one of the benefits of trade integration is to eradicate poverty then it would only make sense to draft trade policy which is inclusive of informal traders. My essay will concentrate on a specific sect of informal trade i.e. informal cross border trade (ICBT). In Africa, it is estimated that ICBT represents forty-three (43) percent of official gross domestic product (GDP), thus being almost equivalent to the formal sector³. Another peculiar aspect of ICBT in Africa is that it is extremely feminised. In sub Saharan Africa the majority of informal traders, 70 percent, are women

between the ages of 24 and 40⁴.

Various studies have shown that women (especially those in the low income range) have benefited greatly from their engagement in informal activity as it has afforded them many benefits. However although this sector plays an important role in alleviating urban poverty by generating employment and mobilising its own resources, its activities remain marginalised as will be explored in this essay.⁵ Despite this the potential for ICBT as a tool of economic empowerment for women is still untapped, this essay attempts to outline simple policy proposals which may explore its potential.

The sequence of this essay is that it will begin by discussing exactly what ICBT is and its benefits, it will then briefly outline the difficulties that women who engage in ICBT face. It will then discuss various policy options which may better appropriately address the issues faced by women traders. As far as methodological preferences are concerned, this essay is largely a literature review and will draw on the works of published academics, development reports and trade theorists as well as my own experiences as a trade official for the Government of Botswana.

Informal Cross Border-Trade as a Tool for Women's Empowerment

Loosely defined, ICBT is trade that involves legitimately produced goods and services, which escape government regulatory framework, thereby avoiding certain tax and regulatory burdens, hence fully or partly evading payment of duties and charges. Such trade includes those which pass through unofficial routes and avoid customs controls, as well as those that pass through official routes with border crossing points and customs offices, yet may involve illegal

1: Mandipa Machacha is currently employed as state counsel in the international trade law unit of the Attorney Generals Chambers, Republic of Botswana. She holds a Bachelor of Social Science (BSocSci) and Bachelor of Laws (LL.B. (Hons)) both from the University of Cape Town; and a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in Public International Law from the University of London. She is currently completing a Master in Public Administration (M.P.A.) in International Development through the University of York where she is focusing her research on Women, Work and Public Policy in Botswana. She has interests in Trade and Development, Feminist Economics, Trade and Gender, Post-Colonial Feminism, Dispute Resolution, Distributive Justice and Sustainable Development.

2: Tacko Ndiaye Interview held at the Expert Roundtable on the Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade, 25 October 2010.

3: Lesser, C & Moisé-Leeman, E Informal Cross-Border Trade and Trade Facilitation Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa OECD Trade Policy Working Papers 01/2009

4: Tekere, M Trade Liberalisation under Structural Economic Adjustment – Impact on Social Welfare in Zimbabwe The Poverty Reduction Forum: Structural Adjustment Program Review Initiative 2001

5: Ndlela, D B. Informal Cross-Border Trade: The case of Zimbabwe Institute for Global Dialogue Johannesburg South Africa (2006)

practices⁶. Such practices can comprise under-invoicing (i.e., reporting a lower quantity, weight or value of goods in order to pay lower import tariffs), misclassification (i.e., falsifying the description of products so that they are misclassified as products subject to lower tariffs), mis-declaration of the country of origin, with or without clandestine operations such as secret deals involving formal importers, exporters, customs and other public officials⁷.

Despite the fact that the transactions and gains of ICBT are unrecorded, according to the International Labour Organisation,⁸ informal trade is the most important source of employment among self-employed women in sub-Saharan Africa;⁹ as such, ICBT has been noted as an important feature in the fight against poverty.¹⁰ In some southern African countries, ICBT has contributed significantly towards employment creation and income generation especially for women who are unable to find formal employment due to various social and economic reasons and also those who have been retrenched from formal employment. The employment created has had a multiplier effect on the poor, helping to generate income which enables the ICBTs to access basic necessities including decent shelter, education and health care.¹¹ It has also enhanced household incomes by acting as a form of supplementary income as real income has steadily declined in countries like Zimbabwe.

ICBT also aids regional development. Various studies have shown that ICBT is a significant contributor to intra-trade trade in the SADC region and in fact many authors have argued that the real integration process of Africa is taking place in ICBT more than in formal trade as Africans are generally much more at ease in informal trade¹². ICBT also plays an important role in ensuring food security by moving agricultural produce and other foodstuffs from where they are in surplus to where there is a deficit. For example it

played a significant role in averting widespread food insecurity in Southern Africa during the major regional drought of 2002 and 2003¹³. Further, ICBT also plays a complementary role to established businesses, by supplying goods in short supply as well as opening new markets or pioneering new product lines. Lastly, given the heavy population of women in ICBT, it has been viewed as a tool for women's empowerment, allowing women to earn more money than in other traditional sectors such as agriculture.¹⁴ However despite these numerous advantages as much as forty-three (43) percent of informal cross-border trade is regarded as illegal and because of this, women traders suffer in the following ways:

Challenges women cross-border traders face

According to a United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) study, 'Harassment and sexual exploitation by border officials seeking bribes constitute the biggest obstacles for female informal cross-border traders in Africa'.¹⁵ This study reported that traders were harassed by police, soldiers, and customs officials if they refused to pay bribes. In some cases, many women were forced to engage in transactional sex in order to secure accommodation, transport, or to obtain border clearance.¹⁶ It has also been reported that ICBT further has the potential to instil a culture of corruption in trade at border posts.¹⁷ ICBT also operates in an inappropriate regulatory and policy environment. The benefits of development and economic policies such as employment and wage policies are only received by those in the formal sector.¹⁸ In addition, infrastructure constraints, such as poor road networks, telecommunications, and lack of storage and trading places, lead to smaller profit margins and thriving informal activity.¹⁹ Further, although relatively profitable, ICBT involves a very heavy workload. It is characterised by long hours of work and the use of

6: Ibid note 3

7: Macamo, J. L.; Ackello-Ogutu, C.; and P. Echessah - Editors (1998). *Unrecorded Trade between Mozambique and her Neighbors: Proceedings of a Workshop held in Maputo, November, 1997*. USAID SD Publication Series Technical Paper

8: ILO (1991). *The Dilemma of the Informal Sector*. Report of the Director General, Geneva: ILO.

9: A 2004 ILO study showed that trade is the most important source of employment among self-employed women of Sub-Saharan Africa providing 60% of non-agricultural self employment. Cite the report you are referring to.

10: Bayano, V. *Optimising Regional Integration in Southern Africa: Assessing Informal Cross Border Trade in SADC 2008* Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC)

11: Ibid note 10

12: UNIFEM (2007) *Regional Cross-Country Report on UNIFEM Baseline Studies of Women in Informal Cross-Border Trade in Africa*. Programme document. UNIFEM, New York, US.

13: WFP (2004) *Informal Cross Border Food Trade in Southern Africa*. WFP, Rome, Italy.

14: Ibid note 10

15: 'Strengthening Accountability, Sustaining Trade: Who Responds to Women Informal Cross Border Traders?' Study by UNIFEM

16: Tay, N *Women Traders Confronting Sexual Harassment at Borders* IPS Inter Press Service (South-South learning on Social Protection) 22 September 2010

17: When interviewing cross border traders Ndlela observed that many CBTs, especially women, were not perturbed about paying bribes, as this is part of the business. More than five respondents claimed that they stood to gain by paying bribes, which in many cases was much cheaper than paying the calculated custom duties (interviews with female CBTs).

18: Ibid note 15

19: Njiwa, D *Tackling informal cross-border trade in Southern Africa* International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (March 2013)

overnight travel to cut down on accommodation costs.²⁰ Women involved in ICBT are away from their families for extended periods of time. Traders that operate from serviced market stalls, such as in flea-markets, work for at least 10 hours a day and often make their way home very late at night.²¹ Besides the difficulty of juggling these taxing time schedules along with other economic or social responsibilities, these arrangements pose obvious safety issues (for women especially).

Another hurdle women may face with regard to ICBT is that of obtaining formal financing. When women begin in the ICBT business, they will usually require some kind of start up capital. In Southern Africa, it is notoriously difficult for low income women to obtain legitimate funding. In general, women have a lower likelihood of borrowing from formal sources because of the 'collateral, social and cultural barriers';²² thus, they have to rely on informal funding which is characterised 'by a lack of regulation, high interest rates and improper modes of recovery'.²³

Despite these difficulties ICBT is still a huge opportunity. The value of informal cross-border trade in Southern Africa alone is estimated to be above US\$7 billion. Informality not only limits government revenue but also constrains business growth for the reasons outlined above. Further in a recent survey, the majority of women engaged in informal cross-border trade expressed that they would prefer to operate formally, paying all legally required duties, if they could be treated respectfully like business people instead of smugglers. Improving the trade environment for women would stimulate greater formalisation, increased national revenue, and new opportunities for women-owned businesses.

Policy Recommendations

A lot can be done for informal cross border traders in Southern Africa, and a few of these recommendations will be discussed in this part of the essay.

a) Assessing contribution of ICBT.

Firstly, the African Union needs to ensure that African Governments improve data collection on ICBT in

order to capture the contribution of ICBT to economic development and inform trade policy-making and regional integration processes.²⁴

b) Capacity Building among women traders

Large scale capacity building needs to be conducted to enable women to access skills, information, networks and credit for improved delivery and higher level of competitiveness. Women also need to form pressure groups in order to ensure that their experiences and opinions are taken into consideration when policy is developed. The late Ottilia Chikocha's Regional Export Promotion Women's Trust²⁵ is a good model for such an organisation.

c) Implementation of policies that will aid traders

The development of policies which address the particular conditions of these women is pertinent. With regards to customs procedures several changes may be made such as simplifying and reducing documentation requirements and formalities, lowering the levels of fees and charges for importing and exporting, expediting the release and clearance of goods from customs custody, enhancing transparency and predictability of trade-related regulations and fees, improving border agency coordination, enhancing efficiency of controls at the border in order to lower the incidence of corruption and the creation a one-stop border post.²⁶ There are also development policies which may be put in place such as the implementation of finance schemes tailor-made for ICBT and the use of a common traders' licence, UNIFEM has also made a suggestion that a favourable tax regime be introduced for ICB traders.²⁷

d) Infrastructure

This is a priority area. Suitable accommodation, water, and sanitation facilities need to be provided for the traders; transportation must be addressed and market

²⁰ Ibid note 15

²¹ Ibid note 4

²² Chopomba, L. *The Struggle for Economic Support of the Indigenous Business Women in Zimbabwe* Xlibris, Corp. (February 17, 2010)

²³ Kiratu, S and Roy, S *Beyond Borders: The Gender Implications of Trade Liberalization in Southern Africa*, International Institute for Sustainable Development (2010)

²⁴ R, Mupedziswa. *Structural Adjustment and Women Informal Sector Traders in Harare, Zimbabwe* Perpetua Gumba

²⁵ The Regional Export Promotion Trust (REPT) is a registered women's organisation mainstreaming gender into Trade Policy in Zimbabwe. The organisation is making independent research on trade markets to provide Zimbabwean women with expertise and training on business expansion in emerging regional markets. REPT believes that ideas are powerful once they are seized by vast number of people, and therefore is pushing for a people driven regional trade development that is led from the grassroots respecting gender rights for economic development. REPT works within the framework of the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe which hosts a network of prominent network of women rights activists and women's organizations with national structures.

²⁶ Ibid note 10

²⁷ Ibid note 12

space must be demarcated; the provision of an information centre would also be useful.²⁸

e) Gender Mainstreaming

Lastly, in Southern African states are actually under a regional obligation to ensure that their trade policies are gender sensitive under Article 17 of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (SADC-PGD) which has been ratified by eleven Member States. Despite this effort, SADC is still doing very little to ensure gender mainstreaming with regard to its policies and development plans. There is also a great deal of fragmentation in SADC instruments. For example, the SADC Protocol on Trade is essentially gender blind²⁹ which undermines the fulfilment of any obligations created under Article 17 SADC-PGD. Greater advocacy must be garnered in this regard; states must be held accountable to their regional obligations and must actively start mainstreaming gender into their trade policies³⁰. In fact, given the inadequacy of the SADC Trade Protocol with regard to the needs of ICBTs in particular, the development of an annex to the Trade Protocol or separate policy framework specific to ICBT is recommended.³¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, women engaging in ICBT are key economic actors and it is long overdue that their activities be viewed as a continuum of the formal sector because they pay taxes, create wealth and employment, reduce poverty, and contribute significantly to regional integration. There is, therefore, a need for urgent reform with regard to their working conditions.

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YEAR OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AFRICA'S AGENDA 2063

By: Engr. Chukwudi Egwuagu Chairman Faculty Committee on Bakery Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Contact phone: +234 (0) 8104435255

The social, political, economic and environmental progresses and achievements enshrined by African women via women empowerment and development towards Africa's agenda 2063 can not be over emphasized. Empowering women and encouraging their active participation in governance in both local and international levels has proved beyond all reasonable doubts that "what a man can do, a woman can do it better".

Research findings conducted by an independent research organization has shown that encouraging women's participation in community development services and programs greatly increases economic growth, reduces poverty and gender discrimination, enhances societal well being and helps ensure sustainable development globally with African countries as case study. The African Union has demonstrated its unalloyed commitment and unmutated resolve to legalize gender parity or equality by making laws and adopting important decisions, charters and ordinances which form the foundation or basis of the AU gender backbone and architecture. These feminine gender protection and empowerment laws, charters and ordinances are inter-alia: the constitutive act, AU protocol on women's rights, solemn declaration on gender equality in Africa, Africa women's decade, and the fund for African women, to mention but a few. Women are the key agents and catalysts for positive social change and economic growth in all facets of African society.

Among the heroines, amazons, and celebrities whose indelible footprints and unscrapable legacies are notable and worthy of emulation are: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, former President Joyce Banda of Malawi, the Chairperson of Africa's first ladies mission Dr Mrs Dame Patience Jonathan of Nigeria, the World Bank guru and coordinating Minister of Nigeria's economy Dr Mrs Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the first female governor in Nigeria Dr Mrs Etiaba, the first female OPEC chairperson nominee globally Her excellency, Dr Mrs Diezani Allison-Madueke, to mention but a few.

Accountability, transparency, probity, and servant leadership flourished in ancient lands where women occupied positions

of authority. For example, we had: Yaa Asantewa of the Asanti empire, Queen Ahmose-Nerfertiti of Egypt, Queen Ann Nzingha of Angola, Makeda the queen of Sheba in Ethiopia, Mbuya Nehanda of Zimbabwe, Dahia Al-Kahina of Mauritania, Buktou of Mali, Margaret Ogola of Kenya, Dr Adadevoh of Nigeria, and many more.

Conversely, women account for about half of Africa's workforce and talent base; but they have been marginalized individually and collectively, and their economic, political, social and environmental contributions go in large part unsung, unrealized, underutilized, and undervalued. Poverty and HIV/AIDS still carry a female face in Africa. Women's education is often ignored, neglected, and sacrificed because of various socio-economic and cultural reasons. Women are among the most affected by conflicts and violence like: rape, sexual harassment, sexual defilement, gender discrimination, political suppression and intimidation, socio-political marginalization, to mention but a few. The barbaric cultural practices against widows still persist in the multi-faceted and multifarious villages, clans, cities, and communities on the continent of Africa. The African Union Heads of State and Government should as a matter of urgent importance, review and amend all existing women protection and empowerment laws, and strictly monitor their implementation in all sovereign states in Africa. In addition, African Union should re-emphasize and prioritize the immediate annulment or stamping-out of all discriminatory and unfavorable local laws and obnoxious cultural practices against women in all the nooks, crannies, and societies on the continent of Africa.

African leaders should endeavor to lead or govern by visionary policies and principles which are well tailored to favor women, instead of the inherent embezzlement of public funds, military coup d'etat, and tyranny which has contributed in the devaluation of the respective local currencies of African countries, economic depression, and very low gross domestic product, GDP, which has

kept millions of Africans in abject, poverty or penury for decades.

It is worthy of mention that more attention should be given to the proper implementation of the laws, policies, principles and viable programs, so as to achieve the desired goals or objectives.

African Union Commission in alliance with heads of state and government of the African Union should form an innovative continental union which will be referred to as "African Union Heroines Forum" or "AU Heroines Forum".

This innovative forum will be an integral part of the African Union, hence, it will be nurtured to adulthood or womanhood by the African Union. The forum will be made up of first ladies from all African countries, as well as empresses, queens, heiresses, and prominent female celebrities, dignitaries, and achievers across Africa.

This divine forum when formed and inaugurated will become a force to reckon with globally, and it will give the African Union a stronger voice in both the Security Council and General Assembly of the United Nations, in addition to global respect and honor. After inauguration, the AU Heroines Forum should elect a president or chairperson in addition to other members of the executive council who will pilot the affairs of the continental union for a period of four years.

Furthermore, as an innovative and visionary forum, the AU heroines forum should set the pace to prove to the world that they are truly pathfinders, trailblazers, and record-breakers. This can be achieved by awarding a contract to an expert software developer who will be given the responsibility of developing an innovative and customized software for the corporate governance of all African women, which includes those resident in Africa and those in the diaspora.

More emphasis should be on those women resident in the remotest suburbs and underdeveloped forest settlements. This simplified software which will be freely and easily accessed through the yet to be developed AU Heroines Forum website, is expected to organize, harmonize, and integrate all the laws, policies, charters, principles, and programs of the African Union on gender parity, women's development and empowerment. Also, on line training, learning, seminars, conferences, workshops, and symposia will flood the sky.

One of the major missions of the AU Heroines Forum will

be to reach-out to the poor, physically challenged, uneducated, and less privileged women in the respective nooks and crannies of African society. This heavenly or divine vision and mission can be achieved through: on line registration and biometric data capture of all African women resident in Africa as well as those in the diaspora, on line complaints submission and suggestions, on line alms giving and financial assistance, in favor of all African women.

Other objectives of the AU Heroines Forum includes re-branding of African women, aimed and targeted at restoring the lost glory and dignity of the African woman through capacity development, wealth creation, compulsory education, moral and religious teachings, grass root awareness campaigns, enlightenment, sensitization, and information dissemination, cultural values and re-orientation, to mention but a few.

LIBERTÉ D'EXPRESSION, PARTICIPATION CITOYENNE ET NON-VIOLENCE CHEZ LES JEUNES FILLES ÉGYPTIENNES.

Parole de Femme. Parole de fille: Le rêve des jeunes filles alexandrines.

Par Marius Yannick Binyou-Bi-Homb,

Université Senghor d'Alexandrie, Département Culture, Président, RIPAO www.ripao.org

Tel. : +20 1127796316. E-mail : bibihmy@yahoo.fr

1, Place Ahmed Orabi, El Manheya, Université Senghor, Alexandria, Egypte. BP : 21111-415

Un vaste mouvement global, nébuleux et tentaculaire se répand dans le monde des jeux, du sport intellectuel et des dynamiques culturelles : l'art oratoire. L'art oratoire devient une discipline à califourchon entre l'éducation, les jeux, la culture générale et les industries culturelles. Mieux, à l'instar des jeunes alexandrines, c'est une arme que doit s'approprier la jeunesse africaine afin de se connaître et de décider, dans leur diversité, convergences et divergences, de manière pacifique, du destin commun d'une Afrique une et unifiée.



« L'art oratoire améliorera l'Afrique. Dans l'art oratoire, les mots sont nos armes. On n'a pas besoin des armes réelles pour résoudre nos problèmes. C'est la paix. », Témoignage d'une jeune Alexandrine, 14 mars 2014.

CONSIDERATIONS GENERALES

« L'Agenda 2063 doit être considéré comme une partie de la Renaissance africaine, qui préconise des changements dans les attitudes, les valeurs et les mentalités en vue d'inculquer à tous l'ensemble des bonnes valeurs africaines. » Dans cet essai, nous traitons, de manière local un problème global, la question d'éducation à la liberté d'expression, la démocratie, la participation citoyenne et la non-violence chez les jeunes filles d'Alexandrie. Nous avons utilisé comme instrument éducatif les arts de la parole, un concept et phénomène

nouveau en Afrique. Notre travail dresse le compte-rendu et l'analyse d'une expérience vécue depuis septembre 2013 dans la ville d'Alexandrie. Un travail élaboré en partenariat avec le Centre d'Activités Francophones de la Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie grâce au RIPAO¹ que nous avons fondé dès notre arrivée en terre égyptienne en septembre 2013.

L'EDUCATION AUX ARTS DE LA PAROLE CHEZ LES JEUNES FILLES D'ALEXANDRIE : L'IMPACT FAMILIAL ET SOCIAL

La liberté d'expression demeure une valeur fondamentale défendue par l'article 19 de la déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme en ces termes : « Tout individu a droit à la liberté d'opinion et d'expression, ce qui implique le droit de ne pas être inquiété pour ses opinions et celui de chercher, de recevoir et de répandre, sans considérations de frontières, les informations et les idées par quelque moyen d'expression que ce soit. » Mais comment fonder une culture de liberté d'expression afin de garantir les valeurs démocratiques, pacifiques et citoyennes? L'art oratoire peut-il y avoir un rôle à jouer ? Nous pensons que l'Agenda 2063 ne se fera pas sans la promotion des arts de la parole au sein de la jeunesse africaine. C'est une arme non encore explorée qui peut s'avérer d'une grande utilité dans la construction « d'une Afrique prospère et unie, fondée sur des valeurs communes et un destin commun. »

La littérature sur les jeux oratoires a connu un pas en avant avec deux ouvrages considérables du Dr. Alfred Snider² : *Many Sides: Debate across the curriculum* (2006),

1: Réseau International pour la Promotion de l'Art Oratoire dans les Pays d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique, www.ripao.org

2: Professeur de communication à l'université de Vermont,

Sparkling the debate: how to create a debate program? (2014). Sa fille a fondé le World Female Debate Institute. Pourquoi pas pareil projet pour les jeunes filles africaines ? La multiplication de l'expérience d'Alexandrie ne peut-elle pas déboucher sur une promotion africaine de l'oralité moderne féminine ? Dans le processus de démocratisation des arts de la parole et de promotion de la culture démocratique, quelle place pour l'Afrique et la jeune fille de demain ?

A la question d'évaluation du premier atelier d'initiation à l'art oratoire des jeunes filles d'Alexandrie ³, « Pensez-vous que les ateliers Art oratoire pourraient avoir un impact sur la démocratie et la paix en Afrique ? », les apprenantes ont toutes répondu par un oui et une de manière plus précise: « Oui car c'est un art basé sur comprendre, entendre les autres. La langue est la paix. En parlant on peut résoudre des problèmes planétaires. L'art oratoire améliorera l'Afrique. Dans l'art oratoire, les mots sont nos armes. On n'a pas besoin des armes (réelles) pour résoudre nos problèmes. C'est la paix. Chacun s'exprime, on présente ses idées d'une manière civilisée (même si ces idées s'opposent) et on a à choisir. » Dans le second atelier, tenu de juillet à septembre 2014 et orienté sur le livre, certaines apprenantes sont allées jusqu'à acheter, à leur propre compte, des livres pour les lire et en débattre. Elles ont invité leurs parents qui ont savouré les phases finales. Désormais, elles peuvent défendre leurs arguments en famille sans la violence verbale ou du corps, sans la grève ou les pleurs, mais pas la seule force des arguments. Elles peuvent facilement convaincre leurs camarades ou enseignants à l'école. Elles sont prêtes, dans un avenir proche, à défendre des causes plus grandes auprès des plus hautes institutions. Elles sont conscientes de ce que la parole est un droit, un instrument d'expression. Et elles sont impatientes de créer des sociétés d'art oratoire dans leur établissement. Tel est leur vœu, le rêve d'une expression des libertés en terre égyptienne. Afin de soutenir l'initiative entamée depuis septembre 2013, nous comptons mettre sur pied l'Académie Internationale des Arts de la Parole d'Alexandrie.

DE LA NECESSITE DE LA PROMOTION DES ARTS DE LA PAROLE EN AFRIQUE

L'Union Africaine a intégré le Centre d'Etudes Historiques et Linguistiques par Tradition Orale (CELHTO⁴) dans le cadre de ses recherches et documentations sur les traditions orales en Afrique. Ceci est une résultante des recommandations de 1966 du Comité Scientifique International de l'Unesco en charge du projet d'écriture de l'histoire générale de l'Afrique, suite à la quatorzième session de la Conférence générale de l'Unesco en 1964.

Les USA, l'Angleterre et l'Australie ont pu saisir le rôle des sociétés d'art oratoire dans le développement de la jeunesse et la promotion de la culture démocratique. Grâce à la prolifération des saos⁵, le développement du secteur touche à l'éducation non formelle, aux dynamiques culturelles et constitue une potentielle source d'emploi pour la jeunesse. Les métiers de juges, orateurs, coaches ou promoteurs d'art oratoire deviennent de plus en plus prisés aux USA, en Europe ou en Australie. Et les institutions de l'oralité (IDEA, WDI, FFD, RIPAO etc.) de même que les championnats (PAUDC, WUDC, WSDC etc.) embauchent à temps plein ou partiel. Les arts de la parole sont sur le point de s'ériger en véritable levier du développement humain.

Dans le cadre de l'oralité moderne, le continent regorge de cinq « grandes » institutions, la plupart récentes : Africa Debate Foundation (i), think thank sud africain; African Voice(ii), groupe néerlandais ; Young Arab Voice(iii), groupe tunisien; Le RIPAO (iv), le groupe le plus récent (2013), spécialisé dans la recherche et l'innovation, dont la mission est de valoriser l'oralité traditionnelle via l'oralité moderne sans clivage linguistique; enfin, le plus ancien, le plus puissant et le moins organisé : le PAUDC Council (v). Créé en 2008, il s'est orienté vers l'organisation des championnats d'art oratoire en milieu universitaire. Ses championnats sont dénommés PAUDC (Pan-African Universities Debating Championship) et ont fait l'objet du projet de réforme proposé en juillet 2014 par le président en exercice du West-Africa Debate Board. Dans le document-cadre Review of the constitution of the Pan-african Universities debating council: the constitutional Reform as the foundation for a new Pan-African Debate

spécialiste en rhétorique. Directeur du World Debate Institute. Expérience professionnelle dans l'oralité moderne dans plus de 43 pays au monde.

3: Atelier tenu du 06 février au 31 mars 2014 à la bibliothèque d'Alexandrie

4: Le Centre de Recherche et de Documentation pour la Tradition Orale (CRDTO) fut créé à Niamey en 1968. Quelques années après, en 1974, le CRDTO de Niamey fut intégré dans l'organigramme de l'Organisation de l'Unité Africaine sous le nom de Centre d'Etudes Linguistiques et Historiques par Tradition Orale (CELHTO)

5: Sociétés d'art oratoire

Institution⁶, Hesse propose une réforme complète du PAUDC suite à une analyse systémique des échecs de l'institution. L'ossature de sa proposition tourne autour d'une réforme constitutionnelle et institutionnelle marquée par le passage d'un Conseil Panafricain Universitaire des Jeux Oratoires (PAUDC) à celui de Conseil Africain des Jeux oratoires (CAJO).

L'oralité moderne est encore embryonnaire en Afrique. En Afrique du Nord, les structures nationales ci-après sont émergentes ou naissantes: Debate Egypt, The Great Debaters Morocco, Tunisia Debate. En Afrique de l'Ouest: Debate Ghana Association, Deder Nigeria, Association Togolaise des Débatteurs, Benin Debate, Les Débats Oratoires du Burkina-Faso, The Great Speakers (Sénégal). En Afrique de l'Est : Kenya National Debate Council, Uganda National Debate Council et Idebate Rwanda. En Afrique Centrale : Cameroon Debate Association, Association Tchadienne des Débatteurs, Les Débatteurs (Congo RDC), Académie Gabonaise d'Art Oratoire (AGAO). En Afrique Australe, Botswana Speaking Union est l'unique recoupement national. Cependant, on note une prolifération des saos extrêmement bien organisées et mieux outillées que celles du nord, surtout en Afrique du Sud (Debate Institute South Africa et South African School Debating Community).

CONCLUSION

Un vaste mouvement global, nébuleux et tentaculaire se répand dans le monde des jeux, du sport intellectuel et des dynamiques culturelles : l'art oratoire. L'art oratoire devient une discipline à califourchon entre l'éducation, les jeux, la culture générale et les industries culturelles. Mieux, à l'instar des jeunes alexandrines, c'est une arme que doit s'approprier la jeunesse africaine afin de se connaître et de décider, dans leur diversité, convergences et divergences, de manière pacifique, du destin commun d'une Afrique une et unifiée.

6: Une proposition-plaidoyer de Chritian Lebrecht Malm-Hesse, Fondateur et Directeur Exécutif de Debate Association Ghana, hôte de la 8ème édition des Jeux Oratoires Africains qui se tiendront à Accra en décembre 2015.

LA PETITE FILLE ET LES STEREOTYPES SEXUELS

Yankey-Ouattara Simone; Senior Program Officer; Women, Gender & Development Directorate
African Union Commission

Cet article est extrait de ma présentation faite le 05 Novembre 2013 durant la 22^{ème} Session du Comité africain des Experts sur les droits et le bien-être de l'Enfant dont le thème général était «Discrimination & Violence Contre Les Filles En Afrique».

J'ai voulu publier cet article dans le cadre du thème 2015 comme «Année de l'autonomisation des femmes et développement de l'Afrique pour la concrétisation de l'Agenda 2063». Je pense que l'autonomisation socio-économique, politique et culturelle de la femme africaine ne se fera pas si les causes profondes qui engendrent la discrimination à l'égard des femmes et des filles ne sont pas connues et éliminées. C'est l'exemple des stéréotypes sexuels établis depuis la petite enfance.

Ma réflexion va porter sur les règles préétablies par les institutions publiques et privées qui constituent donc la source des stéréotypes. Afin d'illustrer mes propos, je donne quelques exemples de clichés institutionnalisés et leur but.

Impacts des stéréotypes sur le présent et le futur de la petite fille.

Afin de prouver qu'au niveau global, continental et national, les décideurs ne restent pas insensibles aux constructions sociales comme source de violences basées sur le genre, je cite quelques textes juridiques et politiques qui abordent le sujet, même s'ils ne contribuent pas toujours à lutter contre les violations des droits de la petite fille et de la femme.

Ma réflexion, va bien sûr, présenter quelques impacts des stéréotypes sur le présent et le futur de la petite fille.

« Ma fille de 3 ans voudrait devenir ébéniste plus tard ! Son frère se moque d'elle en lui disant que c'est un métier destiné aux hommes ! et quand lui, il veut apprendre à faire un gâteau, sa sœur lui dit que la cuisine c'est pour les filles et non pas pour les garçons ! Leur père ne fait pas les mêmes jeux avec les deux, car selon lui certains jeux ne sont pas faits pour les filles car elles sont trop fragiles ! Ou cela pourraient les masculiniser ! Moi, leur mère je leur achète des jouets différents en faisant

attention de ne jamais choisir du rose pour mon fils et du bleu pour ma fille !. »

Les Stéréotypes sont définis comme des clichés, des préjugés liés à une catégorie de personnes

- Les stéréotypes commencent avant la naissance, se poursuivent et se renforcent chez l'adulte. Ces exemples ci-dessous le démontrent si bien.
- L'avortement du bébé de sexe féminin
- Le refus du bébé de sexe féminin (très souvent abandonné)
- Le choix de l'habillement et des jouets dès la naissance
- Les rôles assignés à la maison, et parfois à l'école aux petits garçons sont différents de ceux attribués aux petites filles.
- L'attitude même des parents envers leurs filles et leurs garçons

En fait, les stéréotypes reposent sur les normes et les croyances de notre culture, transmises par la Télévision, les livres, les magazines, les institutions sociales et religieuses telles que la famille, l'école, l'église, la mosquée etc. Leur conséquence c'est donc de causer la division des rôles sociaux. Le fait d'établir des constructions sociales va conférer une identité sociale aux Filles, aux garçons, aux femmes et aux hommes dans un contexte socio-culturel, religieux et économique donné pendant une période.

- En effet, la famille et la société veulent que le garçon et donc l'homme adulte soit plus indépendant, actif, compétitif, ambitieux, rude, et non autorisé à exprimer des sentiments de tendresse.
- selon les mêmes stéréotypes de genre, les filles et plus tard la femme doit être moins autonome non compétitive, moins courageuse, sans ambition. Mais elle doit plutôt être délicate, douce, bavarde, ordonnée et autorisée à exprimer des sentiments tendres, désirables, et être une bonne épouse et mère.

Un cadre juridique et politique pour lutter contre les stéréotypes de genre.

Il va de soi que les conséquences de ces constructions sociales vont constituer un obstacle à l'égalité du genre et à l'autonomisation des femmes.

Comme mentionné ci-dessus, il existe tout compte fait, un cadre juridique et politique qui essaie de prévenir & de lutter contre les stéréotypes de genre.

- Au niveau global, la CEDEF ou CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women) affirme que :

«tous les êtres humains, quel que soit leur sexe, et en particulier les femmes, doivent pouvoir développer l'ensemble de leurs capacités, poursuivre une carrière professionnelle et faire leurs propres choix, sans être soumis à des limites fixées par les stéréotypes de genre, les rôles sexués rigides ou les préjugés sexistes» & que «... Les Etats doivent prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires à la réalisation de cet objectif »

- Au niveau continental, il existe la Charte Africaine des Droits et du Bien-être de l'Enfant dans laquelle.. les Etats membres se sont engagés à bannir toute pratique religieuse, traditionnelle, contraire aux droits des enfants». En outre, le Protocole à la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples en Afrique relatif aux droits de la Femme, et la Déclaration Solennelle sur l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes en Afrique (AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa- SDGEA) prévoient que les Etats membres de l'UA s'engagent à :

«.. Promouvoir et développer la personnalité de l'enfant, ses talents ainsi que ses capacités mentales et physiques jusqu'à son plein épanouissement»

«.. Abolir les coutumes et pratiques qui constituent une discrimination à l'égard de certains enfants, pour des raisons de sexe ou autres raisons.»

«.. Prendre des mesures spéciales pour veiller à ce que les enfants féminins doués et défavorisés aient un accès égal à l'éducation»

«.. Modifier les schémas et modèles de comportement socioculturels de la femme et de l'homme.. avec les stratégies d'Information, d'éducation et de communication.. « L'objectif ici étant d'éliminer tout stéréotype fondé sur l'infériorité ou la supériorité d'un

sexe sur l'autre.

«.. Reconnaître la Promotion & la Protection de tous les droits des femmes y compris des filles au développement».

Les stéréotypes sexuels créent un impact physique et mental sur la vie de la petite fille et sa vie adolescente et adulte.

En général, on pense que la seule vocation de la fille serait de se marier et d'enfanter. Ce stéréotype fait qu'elle subit, tant au sein de la famille que de la communauté et de toute la société, de nombreuses atteintes à son intégrité physique et morale. C'est le cas des abus sexuels tels que viol, inceste, prostitution, proxénétisme, mariages et grossesses précoces et forcés, rites de maltraitance physique et psychologique, que la société impose à la fille et donc à la futur femme et qu'elle devra accepter de l'homme, considéré comme le sexe fort. Un autre constat de l'impact négatif des stéréotypes, c'est le peu d'intérêt que les Filles démontrent pour les mathématiques, les sciences et la technologie. Ces stéréotypes vont amener les filles à être limitées dans la réalisation de leur potentiel ainsi que dans les choix et opportunités de carrière.

Il faut transformer les mentalités dans le milieu privé et public

Au-delà des textes ces quelques exemples de stratégies pourraient contribuer à lutter contre les stéréotypes à l'égard de la fille.

Les Etats n'ont pas le droit d'invoquer des considérations de coutumes, de tradition ou de religion pour se soustraire à leur obligation d'éliminer la violence à l'égard de la fille. Les Etats ont l'obligation de prendre des mesures pour interdire toutes les formes de pratiques néfastes qui affectent négativement les droits humains de la petite fille. Ils doivent également promulguer des lois qui aspirent au changement de mentalités, telles que celles contre la violence domestique et les autres violences sexistes. Ils doivent aussi développer des programmes éducatifs permettant de corriger les stéréotypes en diffusant une éducation non basée sur le Genre à tous les niveaux depuis la petite enfance. Cela va consister à transformer les mentalités dans le milieu privé et public (Familial, école, média, église, lieux de culte) etc.

Au-delà de la mise en œuvre de quelques stratégies que ce soit, de nombreux défis, s'ils ne sont pas levés contribueront toujours à renforcer le gap entre les filles et les garçons, entre les femmes et les hommes en Afrique !

RENFORCER LE RÔLE DES FEMMES DANS LA GESTION DES FORÊTS AUX COMORES: FEMMES GARDIENNES DU PATRIMOINE

Houmi Ahamed-Mikidache, journaliste indépendante franco-comorienne basée à Paris

Résumé

Cet article fait suite à un documentaire réalisé en 2008, basé sur le Programme d'Adaptation National au Changement Climatique (PANA 2006), intitulé « Après le débarquement » ou « où vont les Comores avec Anjouan ».

Aux Comores, les femmes forment plus de la moitié de la population comorienne (54%). Plus de 70% de la population comorienne vit de l'agriculture. Ce secteur correspond à plus de 40% du Produit Intérieur Brut (PIB). La société comorienne matrilineaire confère à la femme le droit de la transmission des biens mère- fille, « le manyahuli ». A Mayotte, Anjouan, Mohéli et Grande Comore, la femme est le socle de l'organisation sociale à différents degrés. En Grande Comore, le patrimoine foncier de la femme est la base du mariage coutumier appelé « Grand mariage » ou « Anda ». La femme existe à travers le statut de « l'homme accompli ».

Les femmes rurales comoriennes sont les gardiennes du patrimoine forestier

Ces traditions dominent le système fédéral de ce petit état insulaire en développement. Les femmes paysannes, elles, ne sont pas épargnées par les traditions. Mais, elles sont marginalisées en ville. Toutefois, elles pourraient exister collectivement économiquement, socialement et politiquement à l'échelle nationale par la valorisation de leurs activités rurales à travers le Syndicat National des Agriculteurs Comoriens (SNAC) ou tout autre groupement agricole. Les femmes rurales comoriennes sont les gardiennes du patrimoine forestier. Elles peuvent s'appuyer sur leurs savoirs faire ancestraux méconnus du grand public liés à la diversité biologique et culturelle des îles. L'objet de cet article est démontrer qu'il est possible de renforcer le rôle des femmes dans la gestion des ressources naturelles (gestion des terres, de la forêt, de l'eau) en utilisant le rôle traditionnel des femmes

à travers l'organisation matrilineaire. Ce texte souligne le réel potentiel des femmes à travers leurs connaissances locales et leurs pratiques traditionnelles. Ce texte montre aussi que les femmes rurales peuvent protéger les ressources naturelles si elles bénéficient de programmes d'alphabétisation et de vulgarisation quotidien parce et pourraient lutter contre la déforestation. Ce court article encourage l'utilisation des ressources naturelles issues de la forêt comme la fleur d'Ylang Ylang et l'argile. Parce que les Comores ont la possibilité de s'alimenter en énergies renouvelables (Anadolu-2014). L'Ylang L'Ylang produit phare des Comores (voir film Anjouan 2008) peut être exploité dorénavant par l'énergie solaire. L'argile utilisé pour la construction de parpaings à Mayotte (Info terre 1999), mais aussi dans les trois autres îles de l'archipel (Al watwan-8 février 2011), Cette ressource peut être utilisée pour les soins naturels et les maladies infectieuses (De Coursou 2002- Natural news 2008 et Hihadjaden 2012)

Qui sont les Comoriens ?

L'origine du peuplement de l'archipel des Comores (Grande Comore, Anjouan, Mohéli, Mayotte*) est assez mystérieux. Il y a différents phénotypes, arabes, africains, austronésiens... Certains spécialistes comme l'anthropologue d'origine australienne Iain Walker pensent que les pirogues et le riz témoignent de l'influence des émigrés d'Asie du Sud-Est venus à Madagascar puis aux Comores (Walker 2009). Mais il ajoute aussi que « ces apports matériels ne sont pas des preuves tangibles » d'une présence autochtone austronésienne. Les traditions orales, les quatre dialectes comoriens (Shingazidja, Shindzuani, Shimwali, Shimaore) de l'archipel marquent une certaine présence africaine ancienne (Walker 2009). La souche comorienne serait plutôt formée par des africains, des bantous (Walker 2009). La société autochtone comorienne est matrilineaire, s'inspirant d'un système africain qui se retrouve aussi dans certaines parties de la Côte d'Ivoire (Blanchy 2010). La filiation en Grande Comore se

transmet de mère en fille. Définie comme le « manyahuli », elle se manifeste en Grande-Comore et à Mohéli dans un moindre degré. « Gérer les manyahuli suppose une bonne connaissance visuelle des terrains, que seuls possèdent ceux qui les cultivent, et la mémorisation de liens de parenté des ayant droits, » explique l'anthropologue Sophie Blanchy (Blanchy 2010). Mais elle n'existe pas Anjouan et à Mayotte. Les biens appartiennent à la lignée et souvent sont « conceptualisés comme terre d'origine de la famille. » (Blanchy 2010)

Mais, ce n'est pas si facile. Le droit foncier comorien, le droit coutumier est assez complexe, il est mêlé au droit musulman et au droit issu de la législation française, découlant de la colonisation française. Jusqu'alors, le système juridique n'est pas respecté aux Comores. Pour Abdou Djabir (2005), auteur, de l'ouvrage, « le droit comorien entre traditions et modernité », ce manque de respect est lié à une méconnaissance du droit comorien. Cette méconnaissance entraîne une mauvaise interprétation du « rôle des femmes dans la gestion des forêts aux Comores: Femmes Gardiennes du patrimoine ». 54% de la population sont des femmes aux Comores. Les femmes, notamment les femmes rurales fournissent 70% de la production vivrière des Comores. L'agriculture correspond à plus de 40% du PIB. Le rôle traditionnel des femmes, « la transmission des terres mère-fille » valorisée et vulgarisée peut permettre une meilleure reconnaissance nationale de l'utilité des actions des femmes rurales.

Le Grand Mariage

L'Union des Comores est une république fédérale avec trois gouverneurs et un président. Le système fédéral repose sur « la célébration de l'alliance matrimoniale » (Blanchy 2010), le mariage coutumier de la Grande-Comore, le « Anda connu aussi sous le nom de « Grand mariage ». Le Anda, selon M. Walker (2009), est « une obligation sociale, la force structurante la plus puissante dans une hiérarchie qui s'étend sur un espace à la fois social et géographique. » Pour l'anthropologue, les différents rangs sociaux sont classés en fonction de ce mariage et de son mode de fonctionnement. Comme le souligne Mme Zahara Toyb, l'une des fondatrice du Réseau National Femme et Développement dans une interview à Afrique Asie en 2011, il existe différentes règles du Anda aux Comores. Ces règles connues sous le nom de « Katiba » diffèrent en fonction des villes et villages. A Moroni, le Katiba marginalise la femme qui n'a pas fait son grand-mariage, lors des célébrations coutumières, d'après

Mme Toyb (2011).

En Grande-Comore, la maison conjugale appartient à la femme. Les parents dès la naissance de leur fille se doivent de lui construire une maison. Une fois mariée, cette maison est habitée par le couple. Mais en cas de divorce, la maison reviendra à la femme. Concernant les terres agricoles, l'homme peut jouir des terres de sa sœur, celles de sa femme, mais il n'a aucun droit de jouissance sur les terres de sa femme, d'après l'ouvrage de M. Walker (2009).

L'homme pour exister socialement doit avoir fait son Grand mariage dans son village. Il deviendra à ce moment-là « un homme accompli ». A Dembeni, les Accomplis peuvent relever de six classes d'âges, des plus jeunes au plus âgés. Un tiers d'entre eux a acquis le titre de « Rois de la cité » (mfukare ya handa). C'est une étape importante pour l'homme qui peut devenir le fondateur du « trengwe ya daho », signifiant une assemblée de maison composée uniquement d'hommes (Blanchy 2010).

Un autre homme originaire d'Anjouan ou de Mohéli, lorsqu'il accède au pouvoir doit se conformer à ces traditions. C'est la base de la stabilité comorienne. L'actuel président des Comores, Ikililou Dhoinine, originaire de l'île de Mohéli, n'a pas fait l'Anda en Grande Comore. Mais il se doit de respecter le mode de fonctionnement politique autour de ce mariage coutumier. C'est pour les comorien, « un gage de stabilité. » Le village, la région en Grande Comore ont une très forte influence sur les différents modes de fonctionnement de la société. La femme, bien que très privilégiée par son statut historique, ne peut exister socialement, économiquement que si elle fait son Grand mariage comme Mme Toyb l'explique dans son interview. Le statut de son mari lui permettra d'exister socialement. L'objet de cette analyse n'est pas l'Anda. L'Anda permet de mieux comprendre le positionnement de la femme et de l'homme dans la société comorienne.

Les femmes rurales sont en quelque sorte les gardiennes du patrimoine forestier des Comores.

Déforestation

Les Comores vivent un stress hydrique lié entre autres à l'exploitation de la forêt (voir documentaire où vont les Comores avec Anjouan 2008). Chaque année, l'archipel perd en moyenne 500 hectares de forêts suite à l'utilisation entre autres du bois pour la cuisson et pour la confection d'huile essentielle d'Ylang Ylang, la fleur des Comores utilisée pour les parfums de renoms tels J'adore de Dior. Les trois cultures

de rente des Comores sont le girofle, la vanille et l'Ylang Ylang. Pour M. Mohamed Ali (interview Novembre 2014), les Comores envisagent de développer des alambics au solaire pour remplacer l'utilisation du bois pour la distillerie d'Ylang Ylang. Malgré un taux d'analphabétisme élevé, ces femmes, solidaires, ont une approche décomplexée de l'agriculture, un secteur qui peine à être apprécié par la jeunesse. En proie à un avenir meilleur en occident. Les femmes pour le moment ne luttent pas vraiment contre la déforestation. Mais, le gouvernement a mis en place une politique de reboisement suite au sommet de la terre Rio+ 20. Le problème de l'analphabétisme dans l'archipel empêche les comoriens des milieux ruraux notamment de comprendre les conséquences de la déforestation. Depuis le mois de Septembre (interview Mohamed Ali Youssoufa- PNUD- novembre 2014), le PNUD soutient les paysans dans le cadre d'un projet agricole d'adaptation au changement climatique (interview Mohamed Ali Youssoufa- PNUD- novembre 2014).

Retour sur les actions

En 2008, le groupe de femmes Taanzuma présidée par Latufa Said, 26 ans, encadré par un médecin de l'île d'Anjouan, Abdallah Ahmed Allaoui, de l'organisation agricole UGGA, avait lancé un projet ambitieux de cultures maraîchères. Dans le film « Après le débarquement », l'association Taanzuma tenait un élevage de volaille. La culture de rente (Ylang Ylang, girofle, vanille) et maraîchères (manioc, bananes, taro...) sont les principales ressources naturelles des Comores. Or depuis ce film, Mme Said et son association n'ont pas évolué. Elles avaient pourtant pour ambition de mieux éduquer leurs enfants en travaillant. C'est un exemple de manque de reconnaissance à long terme d'un projet impliquant des femmes dans la préservation des ressources naturelles. Un projet laissé à l'abandon qui ne permet pas à ces femmes d'obtenir le soutien sollicité.

Valoriser pour le bien-être

Les îles Comores sont des îles volcaniques. Le Mont Karthala en Grande Comore est le seul volcan en activité des quatre îles volcaniques de l'archipel. Il existe dans les forêts près du Karthala des minéraux qui forment les roches argileuses. Elles forment de l'argile verte montmorillonite. Les bienfaits de l'argile sur la santé ont été démontrés il y a quelques années par une infirmière française, Line de Coursou (Buruli et Argile- De Coursou 2002).

Les Comores regorgent de ressources naturelles vertes et

de ressources naturelles marines. Les femmes peuvent s'appuyer sur leurs savoirs faire ancestraux méconnus du grand public liés à l'histoire du patrimoine foncier des Comores, mais aussi à la diversité biologique et culturelle de cet Etat. Dans la forêt du Ngoubajou et de Hantsogoma, près du Karthala, il existe des plantes médicinales. La population fait usage régulièrement des produits forestiers tels que (Mboessa) Tambourissa leptophylla, (Mdara) Piper capens et les feuille de (Mfadrabo) Aphloia theaformis. Il n'y a aucune exploitation nationale de la médecine herbale aux Comores. Pourtant, cet état insulaire fait partie des vingt îles dans le monde caractérisées pour sa biodiversité (who.int).

Les femmes peuvent avoir ainsi un rôle de gestionnaire important de ces ressources. Elles peuvent aussi s'appuyer sur l'accompagnement associatif. D'après Zahara Toyb, le RNFD a mis en place des programmes d'alphabétisation à destination des femmes rurales. Une d'entre elles fait partie du Syndicat National des Agriculteurs Comoriens (SNAC). A travers le SNAC, elles peuvent être les gardiennes du patrimoine naturel. Un collectif de la diaspora comorienne en France, le collectif du patrimoine des Comores milite depuis 10 ans pour la reconnaissance des sites naturels et culturels comoriens au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Il pourrait apporter son soutien aux femmes rurales. Le rôle financier de la diaspora comorienne n'est pas négligeable.

La diaspora pourrait contribuer au renforcement du rôle des femmes dans la gestion des forêts. L'ensemble des structures et groupement qui encadre le secteur agricole doit être mis à contribution. Les résultats des différents projets agricoles doivent être expliqués à ces femmes. Les compétences dans les milieux ruraux de ces femmes doivent être valorisées au niveau régional et national. La difficulté résidera encore une fois sur la place du mariage coutumier. Même si d'après l'anthropologue Sophie Blanchy (2010), « la matrilinearité participerait à l'adaptation au milieu écologique et économique, notamment par les groupes de travail féminins contrôlant les ressources. ».

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* L'auteur de cette analyse est une journaliste indépendante franco-comorienne basée à Paris

* Mayotte est sous administration française depuis 1975. C'est aussi un département d'Outre Mer depuis 2010, mais l'île est revendiquée comme faisant partie du giron comorien par

على البلاد الذى خنق طموحاتها، وانتهاك حقوقها.

ففى العام 1997 اصدر الرئيس الامريكى بيل كلنتون القرار رقم 13067 الذى قضى بفرض حظر تجارى على السودان نتج عن هذا الحظر رفض التحويلات وتعطيل الاستثمار ، وفقدان الثقة مع المؤسسات المالية الدولية ، والاقليمية ، والدول المانحة ، وفقد السودان التقدم التكنولوجى نتيجة حظر العون الفنى الامريكى والتكنولوجيا الامريكية المتطورة ، وان من يدفع الثمن هو المواطن البسيط فى ارتفاع موجة الاسعار وارتفاع الضرائب ورفع الدعم عن المحروقات .

التوصيات :

رفع الحظر الاقتصادى المفروض على جميع الدول الافريقية ، لحماية حقوق انسان هذه الدول التى كفلتها المواثيق الدولية

- 1/ حماية المكتسبات القانونية التى حققتها المرأة والسعى من اجل تطويرها
- 2/ العمل على ملاءمة القوانين الوطنية مع الاعلانات والمواثيق الدولية والاقليمية وتفعيل الاتفاقيات المتعلقة بحقوق الانسان ، وحقوق المرأة ، والعادات الضارة ، والعمل على المصادقة عليها
- 3/ انشاء وتفعيل الاليات الوطنية القائمة للرقابة على تطبيق القوانين المتعلقة بحقوق المرأة ، والعادات الضارة
- 4/ العمل على ضمان احتواء دساتير الدول الافريقية على مبدأ المساواة بين الرجل والمرأة بصورة واضحة ومباشرة
- 5/ محو الامية الابدجية والتقنية
- 6/ توسيع نطاق التعليم العام والتعليم العالى وتطوير المناهج لتتضمن مهارات حرفية ومهنية ترتبط باحتياجات سوق العمل
- 7/ تحسين وتطوير التعليم الفنى والتدريب الحرفى
- 8/ تحسين الخدمات الصحية

اعداد محاسن محمد المهدي
امينة امانة التشريعات وحقوق الانسان
الاتحاد العام للمرأة السودانية
الخرطوم 10 نوفمبر 2014

على الاصول و الخدمات الزراعية بتمويل ميسر متوسط المدى فى المشاركة التنفيذية على المستوى القومى مستوى المشاركات فى الوزارات الاتحادية نسبة 6.6 % بواقع (2) من جملة (30) وزيرا ، اما وزراء الدولة بنسبة 7.5 % بواقع (2) من جملة (35) وزير دولة . والمستشارون بنسبة 6.16 % بواقع (2) من جملة (21) مستشارا .

وتواصل للجهود المبذولة فى دعم مبادئ الانصاف والعدالة وترسيخا للمكاسب التى نالتها المرأة نجد ان القاعدة العامة فى قانون الخدمة المدنية لسنة 2007 تولى الوظيفة العامة على اساس الجدارة دون تمييز وراعت لائحة الخدمة المدنية لذات السنة استحقاق المرأة العاملة اجازة وضوح لمدة ثمانية اسابيع باجر كامل واجازة امومة لمدة عامين باجر اساسى. كذلك تخفيض ساعات العمل للمرضعات.

وفى مجال العمل الدبلوماسى نجد العدد الكلى للسفراء (146) منهم (9) نساء بنسبة 4 % اما الدبلوماسيون (266) منهم (42) بنسبة 12 % وقد تم تعيين (45) دبلوماسية فى عام 2008 وتم ترفيع (7) دبلوماسيات الى درجة سفير.

اما فى مجال التعليم يقدر عدد المستوعبين فى مرحلة التعليم المدرسى بحوالى 7.1 مليون اى نسبة 22 % حيث بلغت نسبة البنات 5 % على المستوى القومى ويعكس تعليم البنات فى مرحلة الاساس خلال السنوات الاخيرة تقدم فى معدل نمو استيعاب البنات ويقدر عدد المستوعبات ب 8.1 مليون معدل الاستيعاب يقدر ب (457 - 6507) للنوعين على الترتيب .

وفى التعليم الثانوى تشير البيانات الرسمية الى ان جملة المستوعبين فى الفئة العمرية المستهدفة 9.25 % . اما فى التعليم العالى فقد تساوت النسبة بين الجنسين . اما فى المجال الصحى وتنفيذا لاهداف الالفية الثالثة تم وضع رؤى استراتيجية لخفض وفيات الامهات الى ثلثين بحلول عام 2015 كما تم وضع استراتيجية وطنية للأسرة بمشاركة كافة الجهات ذات الصلة ووضع خطة استرشادية لانزالها الى ارض الواقع . الجدير بالذكر ان هذه المكتسبات نالتها المرأة السودانية بعد نضال خاضته التنظيمات النسوية من بداية الخمسينات تناضل فى مواجهة المعوقات التى من شأنها الحد من حركتها ، الا انها تواجه بالحظر الاقتصادى

مراقبة وتنظيم عملية اتخاذ القرارات وإعادة هيكلة الأجهزة الحكومية.
مراجعة القوانين ومواكبتها للمتغيرات.
نفعيل الأجهزة الرقابية العامة والداخلية وتضمين القانون نصوص رادعة وتفعيل نيابات ومحاكم الفساد الإداري.
نشر الحقائق حول جرائم الفساد عن طريق وسائل الاعلام , وعدم التعطيم على جرائم المفسدين ايا كان وضعهم .

دور المرأة في التنمية :

تعرف التنمية بانها الرفاهية الناتجة عن التحسين المستمر في الاوضاع الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية والسياسية للشعوب .
وبما ان الانسان هو المستفيد الاساسي من عملية التنمية , لا بد ان يكون مشارك رئيسي في وضع السياسات التنموية
ايماناً منها باهمية التنمية , اصدرت الجمعية العامة للامم المتحدة اعلان الحق في التنمية بموجب القرار رقم 128/41 والذي جاءت المادة (8) 1 منه كما يلي : ينبغي للدول ان تتخذ , على الصعيد الوطني , جميع التدابير اللازمة لعمال الحق في التنمية ويجب ان تضمن في جملة امور , تكافؤ الفرص للجميع في امكانية وصولهم الى الموارد الاساسية والتعليم والخدمات الصحية.

والغذاء والاسكان والعمل والتوزيع العادل للدخل وينبغي اتخاذ تدابير فعالة لضمان قيام المرأة بدور نشط في عملية التنمية . وينبغي اجراء اصلاحات اقتصادية واجتماعية مناسبة بقصد استئصال كل المظالم الاجتماعية .
مما تقدم يتضح جليا ان التنمية لا يمكن ان تتحقق الا بشراكة عادلة بين المرأة والرجل تمكن النساء من المشاركة في وضع السياسات التنموية , والاستفادة من مخرجاتها . الشيء الذي يستوجب ادماج احتياجات المرأة في عملية التنمية , عن طريق تضافر الجهود الوطنية وتخصيص الموارد لمجابهة احتياجات المرأة في المجالات الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية والسياسية .

تمكين المرأة :

المقصود بتمكين المرأة هو مقدرتها على اتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بشؤونها الحياتية والتخطيط لانشطتها الخاصة وزيادة ثقتها بنفسها بما يمكنها من حل المشكلات التي تواجهها وتنمية قدرتها على الاعتماد على نفسها , وذلك لتحقيق اهداف المجتمع الدولي المتعلقة بالتنمية وحقوق الانسان.

دمج خبرات المرأة وطاقاتها , يقتضي وضع السياسات التي تمكن من الوصول الى الهدف المنشود , الا وهو اقامة مجتمعات اكثر استقراراً وعدلاً.

- اطلقت مبادرة تمكين المرأة مبادئ تمكين المرأة والتي اثبتت من خلال التجار التي اجرتها المبادرة في بعض المؤسسات ان المساواة تعني تنمية الاعمال . وقد جاءت هذه المبادئ كالآتي :
- 1/ القيادة تعزز المساواة بين الجنسين
 - 2 / المساواة في الفرص , والدمج, وعدم التمييز
 - 3/ الصحة والامان والتحرر من العنف
 - 4/التعليم والتدريب
 - 5 /تنمية المشروعات والممارسات المتعلقة بسلسلة التوريد والتسويق
 - 6/ القيادة والمشاركة المجتمعية
 - 7/ الشفافية والقياس واعداد التقارير

وضع المرأة في السودان:

تعتبر المرأة السودانية كغيرها من النساء في دول العالم الثالث العمود الفقري للأسرة والمجتمع , من خلال دورها الفاعل في بناء المجتمع , وقد ناضلت المرأة السودانية في مواجهة العادات والتقاليد وبذلت الجهود المقدرة عبر التاريخ , في سبيل القيام بالدور المناط بها والمشاركة في تنمية البلاد .وانتزعت حقها في التعليم والعمل والانتخاب والتصويت منذ العام 1960 سابقة بذلك نظيراتها في بعض الدول العربية والافريقية .وقد قامت الحكومة السودانية بانشاء العديد من اليات الحماية مثل وحدة حماية الاسرة والطفل لتحمي المرأة في مواقع النزاعات والحروب , كما اصدرت وزارة العدل عددا من القوانين والمنشورات المطلوبه لحماية النساء وكونت لجنة لمراجعة القوانين لخاصة بالمرأة حتى تتواءم مع التشريعات الدولية التي صادق عليها السودان ,

وقد حرصت وزارة الرعاية والضمان الاجتماعي مكتسبات المرأة حتى العام 2008 كما يلي :

بلغت نسبة المشاركة للمرأة في مواقع القرار 7.9% في العام 2007م . ووفقا للمادة 34 من قانون الانتخابات لسنة 2007 بشأن تخصيص كوتة للمرأة في المجلس الوطني والمجالس التشريعية , بلغت 25% وفي القطاع الزراعي بلغت مشاركة المرأة في الريف حوالي 9% , ويتركز نشاط المرأة في الريف في مجال النشاط الانتاجي باشكاله المتعددة في اطار الاسرة والمعيشة اما في مجال التمويل المصرفي تم تمويل (16184) اسرة للمشروعات الصغيرة في اطار التمويل الاصغر في المجال الاقتصادي اصدر مجلس الوزراء قرارا يقضي باجازه سياسات تمكين المرأة من المشاركة الزراعية والتنمية الريفية بجانب تيسير حصول المرأة

مكاسبهم الشخصية, او الى تعقيد الاجراءات الادارية

اسباب تشريعية :

تصدر الاجهزة التشريعية فى الدول قوانين لتنظيم اعمال الجهاز التنفيذى , هذه القوانين تتضمن فى بعض الاحيان ثغرات ينفذ من خلالها الفساد الادارى . كما انه فى بعض الاحيان تكون القوانين غير مواكبة للتغيرات التى تطرأ على الهياكل التنظيمية للجهاز التنفيذى , كذلك هناك نصوص تمنح المسؤولين سلطات جوازية, يمكن ان تقود الى الفساد.

ضعف اجهزة الرقابة الادارية :

تنشئ معظم الدول اجهزة للرقابة على اعمال الادارة بموجب قوانين يحيكها الجهاز التنفيذى , ويجيزها الجهاز التشريعى, ومن الطبيعى ان يتفادى واضع القانون النصوص التى تضيق عليه الخناق , فتجئ هذه الاجهزة ضعيفة لا تمنح العاملين بها سلطات تمكنهم من تطويق الفساد

مما تقدم يتضح ان الفساد يمثل احد المعاول الهدامة للعملية التنموية فى الدول حيث يؤثر سلبا على التنمية الاقتصادية التى تعتبر احد اهم مرتكزات التنمية, كما يتسبب الفساد الادارى فى هدر اموال الدولة وسلب موارد المواطن وتشويه السياسات والحد من الاستثمار , وبالتالي الاضرار بالاقتصاد وتعطيل التنمية

ايضا يتسبب الفساد الادارى فى ضياع اموال الدولة وضعف الميزانيات المخصصة للمشروعات الاجتماعية الموجهة لمحاربة الفقر وزيادة دخل الاسر الفقيرة

مكافحة الفساد الادارى :

تتطلب مكافحة الفساد الادارى تضافر الجهود على جميع المستويات فى الدولة , وبالإضافة الى عمليات اصلاح الادارى التى تعتمدها الدولة , يجب ان تتم بعض الاجراءات لاجتثاث ذلك الوباء الفتاك , نورد ها فيما يلى :

توعية المواطنين بكل فئاتهم ومستوياتهم بمضار ومخاطر الفساد الادارى , ووجوب محاربته , مع تأمين حمايتهم جراء التبليغ بحالات الفساد .

زيادة الاجور بالقدر الذى يفى بمتطلبات الحياة الضرورية.

تبسيط الاجراءات فى الوحدات التى تتعامل مع الجمهور ووضع اللافتات التوجيهية لتفادى الوقوع فى قبضة المفسدين.

ذاتية لنفسه او جماعته) . وتعتبر ظاهرة الفساد الادارى وبائية , فى غالبية دول العالم , على الرغم من صعوبة الاتفاق على معنى دقيق للفساد, الا ان هناك اجماع على ان الفساد يحيل الى افعال يستخدم فيها نفوذ المنصب العام لتحقيق مكاسب خاصة غير مشروعة , وقد تكون هناك انواع من الفساد لا تتطلب استخدام المنصب بصورة مباشرة حيث ان الاشخاص الذين يقومون بهذه الافعال , يستعينون بشاغلى المناصب العامة .

فى المجتمعات الديمقراطية يتم الفساد الادارى فى ثلاثة مستويات وهى 1 / القادة السياسيون 2 / المشرعون 3 / موظفى الخدمة المدنية . فيقوم القادة السياسيون باتخاذ القرارات حول تخصيص الموارد التى تراعى فقط مصالح ناخبينهم على حساب بقية المواطنين. اما الفساد التشريعى فيكون فى شكل اجازة القوانين بالصورة التى تخدم فئة بعينها . اما موظفو الخدمة المدنية فيقدمون الخدمات المتاحة لكافة المواطنين للموصى لهم من قبل القادة السياسيون.

لابد للشخص الذى يمارس الفساد الادارى ان يتمتع بسلطة تقديرية , التى توجد فى بض التشريعات الادارية , الهدف منها توخى المرونة ومنع الجمود فى بعض التصرفات , حيث ان الادارة الحديثة تتطلب التعامل المرن لتحقيق الاهداف . الا ان السلطة التقديرية تعتمد على شخصية المسئول الذى يتخذ القرار.

هناك اسباب عديدة تؤدى الى تفشى الفساد الادارى نذكر منها :

اسباب اقتصادية :

من اسباب وجود ظاهرة الفساد الادارى الظروف الاقتصادية المتردية المتمثلة فى عجز الدولة عن اشباع حاجات المواطنين , والرواتب المتدنية التى يتقاضاها الموظفون فى الاجهزة الحكومية, التى لاتفى باشباع حاجاتهم ومتطلباتهم المعيشية, و الاسرية, والاجتماعية, ما يولد الضغط عليهم, الشئ الذى يؤدى الى غياب القيم الاخلاقية , ومن ثم يجد الفساد تربه خصبه للنمو والانتشار.

اسباب ادارية :

من اسباب وجود ظاهرة الفساد الادارى ايضا البيروقراطية الناتجة عن طبيعة الهياكل التنظيمية للدولة, وسوء التنظيم الادارى حيث يتعدد القادة الاداريين فى الجهاز الواحد , وتتضارب اختصاصاتهم وصلاحياتهم, يؤدى ذلك اما الى توظيف سلطاتهم للحصول

تمكين المرأة الافريقية من المشاركة فى التنمية ومكافحة الفساد

مقدمه:

معوقات التنمية فى القارة الافريقية:

تعانى معظم الدول فى القارة الافريقية او ما تسمى بالدول الآخذة فى النمو معوقات متشابهة تعيق مسيرة التنمية فيها . هذه المعوقات ناشئة فى غالب الاحيان عن الاستعمار, وما تبعه من حروب اهليه , واوضاع اقتصادية متدنيه تواجه الدول الافريقية مجموعة من التحديات تعوق مسيرة التنمية , نذكر منها :

- 1 / الفقر الذى تعاني منه معظم شعوب القارة الافريقية , مما يؤثر سلبا على الانتاج وتوفير بيئه صالحة لصون حقوق الانسان
 - 2 / الثلاثى المدمر (مرض الايدز مرض الملاريا مرض السل الرئوى)
 - 3 / عدم الاستقرار السياسى, وتنوع انظمة الحكم , الشىء الذى يودى الى ضعف المشاركة الشعبية فى وضع السياسات المتعلقة بالتعليم والصحة وغيره من متطلبات الاستقرار الاجتماعى
- تضمن اعلان الالفية الثالثة الصادر من الامم المتحدة فى سبتمبر 2000 ثمانية اهداف رئيسية, ليتم تحقيقها فى العام 2015 هى :
- القضاء على الفقر المدقع والجوع
تحقيق تعميم التعليم الابتدائى
تعزيز المساواه بين الجنسين وتمكين المرأة

خفض معدلات وفيات الاطفال دون الخامسة,

تحسين صحة الامهات ,
مكافحة مرض نقص المناعة (الايدز)
والملايا وغيرها من الامراض
ضمان الاستدامة البيئية
تطوير شراكة دولية من اجل التنمية

على الرغم من التوجيه الصادر من الامم المتحدة لتحقيق اهداف الالفية حتى العام 2015 الا ان الدول الافريقية لم تتمكن من تحقيق هذه الاهداف , بسبب , الفقر والفساد الادارى , وعدم

استقرار الاوضاع السياسية , تهميش دور المرأة , وانخفاض مستوى التعليم , ارتفاع مستوى الامية الابجدية والامية التقنية , وعدم الاعتراف بحقوق الاقليات.

العلاقة بين التنمية والفساد:

جاء فى تعريف منظمة الشفافية الدولية للفساد الادارى بانه (كل عمل يتضمن سوء استخدام المنصب العام لتحقيق مصلحة خاصة

من المعلوم ان مفهوم التنمية يفتقر الى تعريف مقبول عالميا الا انه من المتفق عليه انه مرتبط برفاهية الانسان من خلال توفير الرعاية الصحية , التعليم , الحد من الفقر , التاهب للكوادر , البنية التحتية , حقوق الانسان , والبيئة , يتطلب الامر , لنجاح التنمية فى اى دولة لابد من الاقتصاد القوى والحكم الرشيد القادر على وضع السياسات الاقتصادية واختيار المشروعات التى تفي بمتطلبات التنمية . وقد تم التركيز فى الاونة الاخيرة على المشاريع التى تهدف نحو تمكين المرأة , وبناء الاقتصادات المحلية , ورعاية البيئة .

تمكين المرأة لكى تشارك بفعالية فى الحياة الاقتصادية , من خلال القطاعات المختلفة , وعلى جميع المستويات , امر حيوى لضمان تحقيق الاهداف التنموية المنشودة .

هناك مجموعة من التحديات تواجه مسيرة التنمية , اهمها واطرها الفساد الادارى , عليه تم التركيز فى هذه الورقة الفساد الادارى كاحد معوقات التنمية , كما تناولت الورقة حقوق المرأة وتمكينها للقيام بالدور المناط بها .

ايضا تناولت الورقة وضع المرأة السودانية والمكاسب التى نالتها , ونوهنا الى الحظر الاقتصادى على السودان واثره على حقوق الانسان فى السودان

حقوق المرأة :

حقوق المرأة معترف بها ومضمونة من قبل كافة المواثيق الدولية لحقوق الإنسان وخاصة الإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان , والعهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية , والعهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية , واتفاقية القضاء على جميع أشكال التمييز ضد المرأة وبروتوكولها الاختياري , والميثاق الأفريقي لحقوق ورفاهية الطفل , وجميع الاتفاقيات والمعاهدات الدولية الأخرى المتعلقة بحقوق المرأة كجزء من حقوق الإنسان غير القابلة للتصرف والمترابطة وغير القابلة للتجزئة , كما تم التأكيد على حقوق المرأة ودورها الضروري في التنمية في خطط الأمم المتحدة للعمل حول البيئة والتنمية لعام 1992 , وحول حقوق الإنسان لعام 1993 , وحول السكان والتنمية لعام 1994 , وحول التنمية الاجتماعية لعام 1995.

بالاضافة الى التشريعات الوطنية الصادرة بناء على مصادقه على الاتفاقيات والمواثيق الدولية والاقليمية . الا أنه رغم تصديق غالبية الدول الأعضاء على الميثاق الأفريقي لحقوق الإنسان والشعوب ومواثيق دولية أخرى لحقوق الإنسان وإعلانها رسميا الالتزام بالقضاء على جميع أشكال التمييز والممارسات الضارة ضد المرأة , فإن المرأة في أفريقيا لا تزال ضحية التمييز والممارسات التقليدية الضارة.

Production Team:

Publishing Director

Habiba Mejri Cheikh:

Director of Information and Communication
habibam@africa-union.org

AU Echo edited and compiled by

Wynne Musabayana:

Deputy Head of Communication and Information Division
MusabayanaW@africa-union.org

Binyam Misgina

Layout Design & Print

AMEYIB Communication & Marketing Plc

info@acm.com.et, <http://www.acm.com.et> / +251 911 64 71 88



Directorate of Information and Communication

African Union Commission

P. O. Box: 3243 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

E:mail:dinfo@africa-union.org

Website:<http://www.au.int>

Facebook:<http://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Youtube:<http://www.youtube.com/AUCommission>

Flicker:<http://flickr.com/photos/africanunioncommission>

Twitter:http://twitter.com/_AfricanUnion

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