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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
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REPORT OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE AFRICAN  
UNION SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (STC) ON GENDER  
EQUALITY AND WOMEN,S EMPOWERMENT (GEWE),  
4 • 8 DECEMBER 2017, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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SECOND MINISTERIAL MEETING OF  
THE AFRICAN UNION SPECIALISED  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON GENDER  
EQUALITY AND WOMEN,S EMPOWERMENT  
04 - 08 DECEMBER 2017,  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

STC 2/WGDD/Min/Rpt.  
Original: English

REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

1. The second Ministerial meeting of the African Union (AU) Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was held from 07 - 08 December 2017, at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### ATTENDANCE:

2. The following Member States were in attendance:

Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, The Gambia, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. The meeting was also attended by the following Regional Economic Communities (REC): Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

## SESSION 1: OPENING CEREMONY

Opening remarks by H.E. Dr. Jean A.N. Kalilani, Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Republic of Malawi and Chairperson of the Bureau of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

4. In her Opening remarks, H.E. Dr. Jean A.N. Kalilani, Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Republic of Malawi and Chairperson of the Bureau of the STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment noted that the Second Specialized Technical Committee on Gender and Women Empowerment is very significant as it will review and adopt various reports and frameworks which are critical to the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment across Africa. She urged the Member States to continue addressing the root causes of gender inequalities to attain gender equality and women empowerment and to make Africa a better place for all women, men, girls and boys.

5. Participants were informed that the outcomes of the meeting will be presented at the upcoming African Union Assembly for adoption and subsequent implementation by both the African Union and Member States to facilitate the attainment of gender equality and women empowerment on the continent. She urged all Member States to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders at all levels for effective implementation of the outcome of this meeting. She called upon every one of us to actively contribute to the deliberations and declared the meeting of the Second Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment officially opened.

Welcome Remarks H.E. Demitu Hambisa, Minister of Women and Children Affairs, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

6. In her Welcome Remark, H.E Demitu Hambisa, Minister of Women and Children Affairs, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, welcomed all participants on behalf of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Addis Ababa and to this ministerial meeting of the second Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

7. The Minister congratulated the Women, Gender and Development Directorate for organizing the important meeting and noted that the 2nd STC is coinciding with the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence. GBV, is one of the most widespread and persistent violation of the rights of women and girls. It is embedded in cultural and other forms of social practices that justify violence perpetuated against women. The Minister encouraged the meeting to strengthen strategic partnerships and accelerate efforts to take meaningful action to create an environment where African women and girls lead healthy lives, have quality education, are safe and are treated equally.

8. The Minister underscored that promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights have great positive impact on a country's economic development and called on all to accelerate action in the implementation of commitments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment

Introductory Remarks by Mrs. Mahawa Kaba -Wheeler, Director of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD)

9. The Director welcomed all delegates to the 2nd STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and thanked everyone for contributing to the discussions since the beginning of the STC. She underscored that the STC has been able to mobilise 42 Member States, which is an expression of the will and commitment to fulfil the aspirations of gender equality and women's empowerment. In this regard, she expressed appreciation to UNDP for their financial support towards the meeting.

Statement on behalf of H.E.Mr. Mousa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission

10. Ambassador Hadiza Mustafa, the AU Chairperson's Special Advisor on Peace, Security and Governance, read the statement on behalf of H.E. Mr. Mousa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. She welcomed all participants to the AUC and to this 2nd STC and expressed appreciation for the STC Bureau in the work they are doing in advancing the rights of women.

11. Expressing concerns about the high prevalence of violence against women and girls in Africa, the Chairperson emphasised the necessity, on the occasion of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, to accelerate the implementation of policies that end violence against women and girls on the continent. The AU has prioritised, under Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 to end violence

and discrimination against women and girls as well as to end all harmful social norms and customary practices that promote violence and discrimination against women and girls in Africa. Ministers were encouraged to accelerate the implementation of policies that end violence against women and girls, including those that address concerns such as harmful traditional practices like early child marriage and female genital mutilation; marital rape; domestic violence; child prostitution, sexual harassment and forced sterilization.

12. The Chairperson referred to reports of African migrants being sold in slave markets in Libya and noted the multiple violations that women suffer in such circumstances. While action is taken to assist the voluntary repatriation of migrants, it was noted that urgent action is needed to address the conditions that lead to young people leaving the continent in that manner. Recognising the increased feminisation of migration, the Chairperson called on Ministers to bring policy attention to the specificities that female migrants face and propose effective strategies and concrete action to address this challenge.

13. The meeting was congratulated for the 40 ratifications of the Maputo Protocol and Member States who are yet to ratify were encouraged to do so soon and those who have ratified to accelerate implementation. Regarding the ongoing AU Reforms, the Ministers were encouraged to align the work of the STC with the current reforms.

14. The Chairperson assured the Ministers of his support and commitment to the work of this STC and the gender equality and women's empowerment.

## SESSION 2: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

15. The meeting adopted the draft Agenda and draft Programme as amended.

### Organisation of Work .

16. The meeting adopted its organisation of work as follows:

Day 1:	Afternoon: 14.15 • 19.00
Day 2:	Morning: 09.00 • 11.30
	Afternoon: 14.30 • 16.30

## SESSION 3: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS REPORT ON THE 2004 SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA (SDGEA)

### Consideration of the 2016 SDGEA reports

17. The Rapporteur presented the Experts report on the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).

18. Following the presentation, the Ministers:

- a) URGE the Commission to harmonise the four languages;

- b) REQUEST the Commission to insert a Table which outlines the Member States that have submitted reports since 2006;
- c) ENCOURAGE Member States who have not yet submitted their reports for 2016, to do so by no later than 22 December, 2017;
- d) REQUEST the Commission to organise regular workshops in building the capacity of Member States in reporting on SDGEA;
- e) REQUEST the Commission to conduct a study to explore the possibility of reviewing the reporting period from one year to two years,;
- f) FURTHER REQUEST the Commission to circulate the SDGEA reports to all Member States as a way of sharing good practices and experiences;
- g) ADOPT the SDGEA reports in preparation for presentation to the AU Assembly.

#### SDGEA Reporting template

19. The meeting received a presentation of the Experts report on the SDGEA reporting template.

20. Following the presentation, the Ministers:

- a) URGE the Commission to harmonise the four languages;
- b) RECOMMEND the capacity of WGDD to be strengthened with the creation of an STC secretariat with additional staff to be able to discharge duties effectively;
- c) REQUEST the Commission to amend the reporting template to reflect that the reporting template may include any other relevant information,;
- d) ADOPT the SDGEA reporting template.

#### SESSION 4: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS, REPORT ON THE BRIEFINGS AND UPDATES ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> STC

21. The meeting received the Experts report on the Briefings and Updates on the 1st STC.

a. Renaming of the STC

22. Regarding the update of the Experts report on the renaming of the STC, the Ministers:

- a) REQUEST the Commission to harmonise the definition of the different concepts related to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

- b) TAKE NOTE of the change of the name of this STC, now *f*STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which was adopted by the STC on Legal and Justice Affairs.
- b. Fund for African Women
23. Regarding the Expert report on the Fund for African Women, the Ministers:
- a) TAKE NOTE of the update and briefing;
  - b) URGE the Commission to harmonise the four languages;
  - c) REQUEST the Commission to provide a criteria for selection of projects and provide a list of countries that have received funding and names of Civil Society Organisations that have benefitted from the fund.
- c) Report on the Funding Status of Gender Machineries in AU Member States
24. Regarding the Experts report on the Funding Status of Gender Machineries in AU Member States, the Ministers:
- a) TAKE NOTE of the draft report and recommendations of the Funding Status of Gender Machineries in AU Member States;
  - b) REQUEST the Commission to expand the scope of the study to include more Member States.

#### SESSION 5: DECISIONS

25. The meeting received a presentation on the Experts report on the draft Gender Pre-Summit decisions.
26. Following discussions, the Ministers:
- a) DEFER the decision on the renaming of AU buildings to the appropriate Sub-Committee of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC);
  - b) REQUEST the Commission to develop and implement a new reporting tool on progress in achieving gender equality in Africa, which incorporates the aspirations of the SDGEA and AU Agenda 2063;
  - c) ADOPT the decisions of the 9th Gender Pre-Summit.

SESSION 6: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS,  
REPORT ON THE BRIEFINGS AND UPDATES

a. Gender Pre -Summit

27. The meeting was briefed on the Experts report on the 2018 Gender Pre-Summit

28. The Ministers:

- a) TOOK NOTE of the update;
- b) Operationalization of the PAWO into an AU specialized Agency .

29. The meeting received an update on the Experts report on the Operationalization of the PAWO into an AU specialized Agency.

30. Following deliberations, the Ministers:

- a) EXPRESSED concern about the time it will take to negotiate and ratify a treaty, which will transform PAWO into an AU Specialized Agency as per Assembly Decision 621 (XXVIII);
- b) RECOMMEND suspending all discussions on PAWO until further notice when they are available to participate in the deliberations;
- c) REQUEST the Commission to regularly report to this STC on the progress made in operationalizing PAWO and ensure PAWO is available at the next STC meeting.

b. Advocacy/ campaign strategy for the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol.

31. The meeting received an update on the Experts report on the advocacy/ campaign strategy for the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol. The Honourable Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare of South Sudan, Ms. Awut Deng Acuil also informed the STC on the ratification of the Maputo Protocol in October by South Sudan, representing the 40<sup>th</sup> AU Member State to do so.

32. Following deliberations, the Ministers:

- a) URGE the Commission to conduct the in-country advocacy missions within the framework of the Executive Council's Ministerial Committee on the Challenges of Ratification/ Accession and Implementation of OAU/AU Treaties;
- b) REQUEST the Commission to finalise the advocacy strategy and Member States to review the strategy, with a view to strengthening it, before advocacy missions are conducted;

- c) ENCOURAGE Member States to continue advocating and lobbying their competent national authorities like Parliaments to approve the ratification of the Maputo Protocol;
- d) FURTHER ENCOURAGE Member States to continue raising awareness and educating competent authorities about the Maputo Protocol.

c. African women,s garden and m useum projects

33. The meeting received an update on the Experts report on the African women€s garden and museum projects.

34. Following deliberations, the Ministers:

- a) REQUEST the Commission to develop criteria on the selection of women to be honoured, as well as regarding the selection of the sculptures, portraits and other items;
- b) ENCOURAGE Member States to make proposals on women to be honoured and offer items to be included in the women€s garden and museum projects; such submissions and proposals to be channelled through the AU structures in the respective countries;
- c) REQUEST the Commission to establish a Ministerial Committee to help guide the project, including the approval of criteria and consideration of submissions.

d. Africa Pre -Consultation on the Commiss ion of the Status of Women

35. The meeting received an update on the Africa pre-consultation on the Commission on the Status of Women.

36. Following deliberations, the Ministers:

- a) REQUEST the Commission to ensure that the Africa common position on CSW 62 on priority theme (Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls,) and review theme (participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women,, from the 47th session of the CSW) is agreed to in good time to allow communication with African Ambassadors in New York, so that Africa communicates the same messages during the Session;
- b) REQUEST the Commission to develop and circulate to Member States guidelines for participating in the Africa pre-CSW consultation on the Commission on the Status of Women.

e. Date, Venue and Agenda of next STC

37. The meeting received a presentation on the date, venue and agenda of the next STC which may take place on Monday 7 to Friday 11 May, 2018 at the AU Headquarters, unless a Member State offers to host it. The 3rd STC will elect a new STC Bureau.

38. Following discussions, the Ministers:

- a) TAKE NOTE of the proposed dates and RECOMMEND the Commission in consultation with the STC Bureau to determine the date and venue of the next STC meeting.

SESSION 8: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS, REPORT ON THE UPDATE ON THE NEW AU GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN,S EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY

39. The meeting received a presentation on the Experts report on the update on the new AU Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment strategy and a presentation of the draft strategy.

40. Following the presentations, the Ministers:

- a) TAKE NOTE of the update;
- b) REQUEST the Commission to harmonise the four languages;
- c) RENAME this strategy into *f*Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment strategy,;
- d) REQUEST the Commission to continue to finalize the strategy, with the support of the Gender Strategy Steering Committee that was appointed for this purpose;
- e) REQUEST the Commission to extend the membership of the Steering Committee to include members of the STC and to regularly report to the STC on progress made in finalising the new AU Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment strategy
- f) ENCOURAGE Member States to continue commenting on the strategy;
- g) REQUEST the Commission to circulate to member States Draft three of the Strategy;
- h) REQUEST the Commission to consider feedback on the content;
- i) FURTHER REQUEST the Commission to take into account culture specific and traditional imperatives when defining concepts, including gender and gender equality.

SESSION 9: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS, REPORT ON THE UPDATE ON THE NEW AU GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN,S EMPOWERMENT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

41. The meeting received an update that the communications strategy is currently being developed alongside the gender equality strategy.

42. Following discussions, the Ministers:

- a) RENAME the communications strategy to: gender equality and Women's Empowerment communications strategy;
- b) TAKE NOTE of the update.

SESSION 11: CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT STC REPORT

43. ADOPT the report with amendments.

SESSION 12: CLOSING CEREMONY

44. In her Closing Remarks, Mrs. Mahawa Kaba Wheeler, the WGDD Director, thanked all for their participation at this meeting. She further highlighted that the Commission's commemoration of the 16 days of Activism was a further demonstration of its commitment to GEWE and as the CP has stated previously he looks forward to working with Ministers and all stakeholders in fulfilling his commitment to make women and youth the heartbeat of his mandate. She recognized and thanked all who supported the meeting, including the volunteer translators from Members States namely Angola and Mozambique for Portuguese and Mauritania, Libya and Sudan for Arabic. She expressed appreciation to the Chairperson and Rapporteur of the Experts meeting which prepared for this Ministerial meeting.

45. The STC Bureau Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Jean A.N Kalilani, thanked all delegates for their overwhelming commitment that facilitated the successful completion of this meeting. The outcomes of the meeting will be transmitted for approval to the AU Assembly through appropriate structures. She further highlighted that more advocacy is required on gender equality and women's empowerment work, and in that regard urged Ministers in charge of Gender and Women's Affairs to participate in the STC in person. While appreciating the Secretariat, she also expressed concern at the limited human resources, considering that the work of WGDD is cross-cutting. She further thanked the STC Bureau for their support.

2018-06-29

# Report of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), 4–8 December 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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