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**ABRIDGED ELEVENTH SYNTHESIS OF REPORTS OF THE AFRICAN
UNION MEMBER STATES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA (SDGEA)**

**ABRIDGED ELEVENTH REPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION
MEMBER STATES (MS) AND TWELFTH REPORT OF THE AFRICAN
UNION COMMISSION (AUC) CHAIRPERSON ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION SOLEMN DECLARATION
ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA (SDGEA)**

Introduction

1. The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) was adopted at a Special Session of Ministers of Gender, during the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly in July 2004, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. There are two important obligations in the SDGEA. The first is in Paragraph 13, which enjoins the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) to submit an annual report for the consideration of the Heads of State and Government on measures taken to implement the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming per the articles of the SDGEA. The second is in Paragraph 12, which further enjoins African Heads of State and Government to report annually on their progress in gender mainstreaming at the Summit.
3. This condensed report is divided into two parts: Part A, is the twelfth report of the AUC Chairperson on the implementation of the SDGEA for 2016 with the AUC, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Organs. It provides an overview of progress against commitments made and recommendations on actions to further advance gender equality and women's empowerment on the continent.
4. Part B, is the eleventh Synthesis of 2016 reports of twenty-eight (28) Member States (MS) on the implementation of the SDGEA, the highest number of reports received in one year, since the adoption of the Declaration. The MS are: Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The surge in number of reporting countries is traceable to the adoption by the AU Assembly of gender related themes for two consecutive years 2015: "Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063" and 2016: "African Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women". The list of all MS that have submitted SDGEA report since inception is attached as an appendix to this report.

PART A: AUC CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I. Introduction

5. The report provides highlights from AUC Departments and one Regional Economic Community (REC), namely ECOWAS, in implementing commitments related to the SDGEA. The report is also informed by Pledges that AUC Departments and RECs made during the celebrations of International Women's Day on 8 March 2016.

II. Overview of the AUC's progress on the implementation of the SDGEA Articles

Progress on Article 1: Women, HIV/AIDS and Other Related Infectious Disease

6. The Department of Social Affairs (DSA) used the opportunity of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-VI) to organize a High-level panel discussion on Maternal Health in Africa which brought together Ministers, Heads of UN agencies and other high-level policy makers to share experiences on progress made in reducing maternal mortality in Africa. The event placed maternal health within the broader TICAD VI discussions as well as the outcome of the TICAD VI as a critical contributor towards Africa's economic growth and development.

7. The Medical and Health Services Department, conducted voluntary screening for female and male reproductive system cancers and various awareness meetings.

Progress on Article 2: Peace and Security

8. In 2016, the Peace and Security Department (PSD) rolled out the 2016-2020 African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap towards silencing the guns by 2020 and within which gender is a guiding principle

9. The Office of the Special Envoy of the AUC Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) launched the first ever report on the "Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa. The OS-WPS led a delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to encourage women leaders to work together to achieve peace and travelled to South Sudan to continue the campaign to enhance the status of the women and ensure accountability on violence against women and girls. The OS-WPS and UN Women, initiated the establishment of a Network of Journalists and Reporters on WPS in Africa to promote gender-responsive reporting. A Network of Centers of Excellence working on women, peace and security issues was also established.

Progress on Article 4: Gender Based Violence

10. The AU Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa successfully launched the first network of Champions to combat violence against women in Africa. The network will among others contribute to the development of AU guidelines on ending violence against women and use their platforms to raise awareness and disseminate this tool.

11. The PSD supported the Regional Women's Forum of the ICGLR (RWF)¹ held in July, 2016 in Kampala, Uganda to identify best practices and also trained judicial, police, medical and social workers on how to deal with such cases.

Progress on Article 5: Gender Parity in the AU Organs and MS

¹ The RWF is one of the mechanisms set up by Member States of the International Conference of the Great Lakes (ICGLR) peace process for the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development (The Pact). It is a specific mechanism for coordination and monitoring of gender issues in the context of the Pact.

12. Significant progress has been made over the last four (4) years in achieving gender parity in functional positions and there is a commitment on the part of AUC leadership to implement Article 4L of the Constitutive Act. Gender parity is now reflected at the level of AUC Commissioners and women represent 42% at Director (D1) level from 29% in 2013. Other significant measures have also been taken including a gender assessment of the staff regulations and rules, the establishment of the Office of Ethics, head hunting of women, the inclusion of indicators on gender in the performance management system and in several standard operating policies. In addition, gender disaggregated data on staffing are presented to recruitment and promotions board (APROB) on a consistent basis.

13. During the reporting period, the Directorate of Programming, Budget, Finance and Accounting (PBFA), recruited 15 additional short-term staff members resulting in 73% female and 27% gender representation for short term positions.

14. However, the overall gender representation in the AUC is still much more in favour of men at 66% for men and 34% for women. In addition, the major decision-making organs of the AU are essentially dominated by men, for example, the Assembly is composed of 96.3 % of men and 3.7 % of women, the Executive Council is made up of 81.48% of men and 18.51 % of women and the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) is composed of 88.23 % of men and 11.76 % of women. NEPAD currently operates at 50/50 representation, while the ACHPR and ACERWC are the two organs that have more women at 63% each.

15. To bolster the representation of women in CSOs and Diaspora organizations, the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) established a quota of at least 50% women as a precondition for the signing of any MOU.

Progress on Article 6: Women's Human Rights

16. The Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) in collaboration with the AU Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and UN partners (OHCHR and UN Women) commenced the design of a report 'State of Women's Rights in Africa". The report will be complimentary to existing reports on the subject and will place special emphasis on developments in Law on women's rights in all AU member states and puts a spot light on critical areas of concern but less spoken about such as women in prisons and those living with albinism.

17. The AUC also worked very closely with SADC and MS to facilitate the adoption of the overall resolution of the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which was stalled in the previous year as well as review and promote the draft resolution "women, HIV/AIDS and the girl child for the CSW.

18. The WGDD also successfully convened multi-stakeholder policy platforms on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). These include the AU Gender Pre-Summit (20-21 January 2016) whose outcomes were integrated in the Declaration of the AU Heads of State and Government on the theme of the year; the 3rd High-Level Panel on GEWE, in collaboration with the AU Leadership Academy,(8-9 July 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda) which led to in-country advocacy visits to promote the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol. On International Women's Day (IWD) held on 8 March 2016, AUC Directors and some RECs made pledges to support GEWE and further the goals of Agenda 2063 by implementing at least two high-impact activities on

GEWE. WGDD convened a continuation meeting in January 2016, of the 1st Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on GEWE. Subsequently, the STC Bureau adopted its plan of action to implement its mandate over the two-year term.

19. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) designed “Project 2016”, which outlined all activities to mark the year of human rights and to promote the rights of women. DPA also deployed the historic, first-ever, all-women AU Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) to the Parliamentary elections in the Republic of the Seychelles in an effort to observe elections with a gender lens. During this reporting period, DPA also increased the number of women who participated in the AUEOMs to at least 50%, although most of the observer missions were led by men.

Progress on Article 7: Rights to Land, Property and Inheritance

20. The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) in furtherance of the Malabo Declaration commitment towards gender equality and women’s economic empowerment launched a campaign to promote 30% land rights ownership by women and developed programmes to enhance women’s capacity and access to productive resources. It also provided measures to enhance access of women and youth to land and credits. DREA facilitated the establishment of a Continental Agribusiness Chamber and supported a three-months entrepreneurial training for a group of 20 women farmers and youth in collaboration with the RECs. Substantive innovative financing packages focusing on women and youth were equally developed during this reporting year. DREA also facilitated the creation of Jobs for women within the Framework of the New Alliance Initiative for Food Security and Nutrition.

Progress on Article 8: Education for Girls and Women

21. The Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) organised a high-level dialogue on the rights to education for girls and women in Africa, which recommended the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Girls and Women’s Education.

Progress on Article 9: Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

22. During the reporting period, Algeria, ratified the Maputo Protocol on Women’s Rights thus increasing the total number of ratifications to 38 countries.

23. The AUC Chairperson in commemoration of 16 days of activism against gender based violence wrote letters to all MS who are yet to ratify the Maputo Protocol to enjoin them to achieve this commitment by 2020. This initiative was a follow-up to her ongoing actions to further women’s rights in Africa, including the convening of high level events on the subject.

Progress on Article 10: Establish AIDS Watch Africa

24. Aids Watch Africa (AWA)’s Strategic Framework 2016 - 2030 prioritizes girls and women with regard to HIV prevention. The Department of Social Affairs (DSA) is tracking Progress on Elimination of Mother to Child HIV Transmission (MTCT) and planning to launch an MTCT continental campaign with the Organisation of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS (OAFILA). DSA also published a scorecard on domestic financing for

health in July 2016, the department is also working with PSD to set up health programs in conflict and post conflicts countries

Progress on Article 11: Establish an African Trust Fund for Women

25. In 2016, focus was placed on clearing the backlog projects under the Fund for African Women, which enabled disbursements to competitively selected projects for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 projects. In total, 25 projects received 100% funding and 75 projects have received 80% of approved funding, out of 145 approved projects for the 2011-2013 years. WGDD undertook its first field visit to five countries, namely, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Togo, Mauritania and Cote d'Ivoire to assess the results of the Fund for African Women in the field and generate knowledge on the progress.

26. In terms of capacity building, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) organised training which enabled women and youth to understand entrepreneurship culture as an important driver of inclusive growth. The training provided them with skills in village-Banking Methodology as a way to improve the socio-economic situation of the poor and empower women.

27. The Department of Infrastructure and Energy (DIE) also included women in training programmes of various transport professions including railways especially for the African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network (AIHSRN) flagship project and mainstreamed gender into bioenergy policy development and strategies as well as in projects preparation and development.

Progress on Article 12: Commitment to Annual Reporting

28. The AUC developed and launched two reports during the closing of the 27th Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Kigali. These are the mid-term report of the African Women's Decade (AWD) and the 3rd edition of African gender scorecard (AGSC). The AWD report provides qualitative and quantitative information on progress in MS in implementing their commitments within the context of the decade as well several innovative practices that merit continent and global attention. The AGSC on the other hand is only performance tracking and reporting tool which is now receiving high level political support for gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. The full list of awardees and the two reports are available on the AU website

29. WGDD also introduced the "AU Pledges to gender equality and women's empowerment" during IWD's celebration which has enabled All AUC Departments, Organs and RECs to submit result based report on their commitment to and implementation of GEWE ideals and programmes

30. In accordance with the Assembly Decision AU.DEC.588 (XXVI) to "align all AU programmes and actions with Agenda 2063", WGDD laid the foundation to start the design of a strategy on gender equality in 2017. Taking into account progress and challenges ahead, the strategy will provide results oriented and strategic roadmap which will focus on initiatives that provide traction, are timely are transformative and place emphasis on young women and rural women.

31. An analysis of the response of MS to their reporting obligations showed that 94% (51) of MS had submitted their initial report. Senegal is the most consistent in submitting reports, with seven (7) reports. Three (3) countries namely: Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau are yet to submit any report since 2004. The performance of MS indicates that the capacity building efforts of the WGDD is yielding a great dividend. The current report produced the highest number of reports submitted since 2004.

32. There also recognition that reporting against Agenda 2063 will require the development of a tools to track the full scope and depth of commitments made in this continental policy agenda.

Progress on Article 13: Submission of Annual Progress Reports on SDGEA implementation

33. The AUC Chairperson has complied with the obligation to provide annual reports on the progress of implementation of commitments made under the SDGEA. This is the Chairperson's Twelfth (12th) report to the AU Assembly

III. Overview of progress on the implementation of the SDGEA Articles by Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

34. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was the only REC that submitted the SDGEA report for 2016. The ECOWAS Commission executed the following initiative and programmes in support of the implementation of SDGEA within the West Africa sub-region:

- Strengthening the Role of Women and Community Leaders in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in West Africa: One Regional Workshop was held in 2016 to promote dialogue with communities on countering violent extremism, within the framework of the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The workshop focused on how to strengthen community resilience against harmful ideologies and networks involved in radicalization, and on how to forge greater partnerships between ECOWAS and civil society organizations in the fight against terrorism;
- Draft document on ECOWAS Directive for Gender Assessment in Energy Projects: ECOWAS Commission through the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) conducted a study on, 'Developing a Legal Instrument for Gender Assessment in Energy Infrastructure Planning and Development within ECOWAS. The study revealed that energy sector governance was largely gender-blind which led to development of a "Draft document on ECOWAS Directive for Gender Assessment in Energy Projects" which has undergone some validations.

IV. Conclusion

35. The 12th SDGEA report of the AUC Chairperson highlights some of the achievements recorded by the AUC and ECOWAS in the implementation of the SDGEA in 2016. Notable achievements include among others, the historic all-women AU Election Observation Mission, the first ever report on the "Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa as well as the establishment of a Continental Agribusiness

Chamber, and the ratification of the Maputo Protocol by Algeria. However, challenges have been observed: The 50/50 parity principle is yet to be fully realized; there is reporting fatigue by MS as the reporting seems to have dropped significantly from initial reports; and the objective of the full ratification of the Maputo Protocol has still not been reached. There is a need to strengthen the recruitment processes to attract competent women in the AUC and AU Organs. Harmonisation of reporting commitments with other instruments should be considered to reduce the number of reports that MS submit, while not compromising the uniqueness of each instrument. More capacity building workshops on reporting should be convened to support MS to comply with their reporting obligations. Advocacy is also required to encourage MS that are yet to ratify the Maputo Protocol to do so and to urge those who have ratified, to accelerate domestication and implementation.

PART B: ELEVENTH SYNTHESIS REPORT OF AU MEMBER STATES

I. Introduction

36. The eleventh (11th) Annual Synthesis Report of the AU Member States is submitted pursuant to the obligation under Article 12 of the SDGEA, that requires MS to report annually and to provide regular updates during their Ordinary Sessions on progress made on gender mainstreaming and to support and champion all issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment at both national and regional levels.

37. This part constitutes Synthesis of 2016 Reports from 28 MS listed in the introduction to this report.

II. Condensed Analysis of Synthesis Report

38. Article 1: HIV/AIDS and Other Related Infectious Diseases: All twenty-eight MS have reported on this article. The reports show that with the implementation of the National Action Plans on HIV/AIDS, there is a reduction in new HIV/AIDS infections, while mother to child infection has also drastically reduced. The UNAIDS 2016 report showed that *"The largest reduction in new adult HIV infections occurred in eastern and southern Africa. There were about 40 000 fewer new adult HIV infections in the region in 2015 than in 2010, a 4% decline"*. Multiple health centres have been created, particularly in the rural areas for the administration of Anti-Retroviral Drugs. Malawi recorded a decline from 14% in 2004 to 9.1% in 2016 while Djibouti recorded a decline from 2.8% prevalence rate in 2003 to 1.67% in 2016. Also in Sudan, HIV/AIDS prevalence rate was estimated around 0.67% of the total population in 2009, now the incidence is about 0.24% (about 2 cases per 1000 population) Countries like Burkina Faso, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe adopted new laws to protect People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs), while Ethiopia focused on the use of Health Extension Programme as a strategy to increase awareness on HIV/AIDS. Senegal introduced a new dimension to combat HIV through the establishment of a Sub-Regional Cross-border Consultation and Coordination Platform on HIV (The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal). Collaboration between TB and HIV programmes was strengthened by the establishment of joint services to combat the two infections, with an increase in HIV testing among tuberculosis patients. These programmes are also supported by efforts to curb tuberculosis and malaria in several MS. In spite of these achievements, HIV remained a highly gendered epidemic driven by social norms which dictate an individual's vulnerability to HIV and ability to access care, support, and treatment. This is clear in the light of UNAIDS 2016 report that showed *that "In sub-*

Saharan Africa, adolescent girls and young women accounted for 25% of new HIV infections among adults, and women accounted for 56% of new HIV infections among adults". Part of the challenge facing women living with HIV/AIDs is insufficient access to Anti-Retroviral Therapy in several government clinics and hospitals. A more effective monitoring machinery will be required on the part of MS to ensure that women are well served in HIV/AIDs treatment and counselling centres. Beyond this is the fact that concerted efforts are required at the MS level to continue to strengthen initiatives that increase capacities of individuals, especially women and children, to protect themselves as they disproportionately suffer from the effects of HIV/AIDS as shown in the UNAIDS report.

39. Article 2: Women in Peace Processes: All twenty-eight MS submitted reported on the women, peace and security commitment. Most MS have taken measures in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. For example, DRC has integrated the UNSC Resolution 1325 into national laws on the functioning of the Congolese National Police, which includes gender mainstreaming in the criteria for recruitment into the police force. Though some improvement was reported on the inclusion of women in peace processes, progress is still slow, with the number of women participating in peace processes still unacceptably low. Angola and Madagascar are still in the process of reforming their security sector and domesticating the UNSCR 1325 while countries like Ethiopia, Mauritania and Sudan are using capacity building training of women leaders to accelerate their participation in peace processes. Others like Burundi, Chad, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal and Zimbabwe have policies in place that are accelerating the recruitment and the ascendancy of women in the Armed/Defense forces with visible roles and responsibilities. The proportional representation of the women in the armed forces ranges between 10%-32% in these countries. MS have reported challenges such as customary and traditional hindrances, as impediments to women's participating effectively in peace processes.

40. Article 3: Child Soldiers and Abuse of the Girl Child: MS like, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo DRC and Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Liberia, Somalia and Sudan have experienced conflicts in the last five (5) or more years and are consciously working on withdrawal of minors from armed forces and groups, their demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration with their families and communities. Chad in particular launched in 2015 the Zero Tolerance Initiative for Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups which led to her removal from the black list of countries with children in their army. The DRC withdrew 2,894 children while Chad also withdrew 1,174 minors under the age of 18 from armed groups and vigilante groups. Sudan absorbed a total of 239,174 child victims of violence and exploitation in areas affected by conflict and displacement into preventive services and response centres in 72 localities. Other MS have also acceded to the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Conflict. Some other countries also have Defence Acts which prohibit a child "under the apparent age of 18" from being recruited into the armed forces without the consent of a parent or a guardian. All MS who reported recognised the challenges of sexual exploitation and early child marriages and have adopted legal measures and established Child Protection Centres to address these concerns. In implementing these measures, MS should ensure that girls from conflict zones are rehabilitated and integrated back to the society with good education. Being a war victim should not preclude these girls from the school system.

41. Article 4: Gender-Based Violence (GBV): All the twenty-eight countries are implementing this article using inter-ministerial committees and coordination to adopt and

implement strategies, policies and legislation that prevent Gender-Based Violence while ensuring that perpetrators are prosecuted, and victims are effectively supported and rehabilitated. Cote D'Ivoire, for example, has made reporting and response to GBV cases easy through the adoption of a National Strategy on GBV and the implementation of inter-ministerial Circular No 016/MJ/MEMMIS/MPRD. Mauritius amended the protection for Domestic Violence Act in 2016 to reinforce protective services for victims of GBV by increasing the powers of enforcement officers as a way of curbing GBV. Burundi promulgated the Law N° 1/13 of 22/09/2016 on the Prevention, Protection of Victims and Abolition of Gender-Based Violence to check the incessant abuse against women. Kenya took a more holistic approach by promulgating the following laws: Protection against GBV Act, 2015; the Marriage Act; 2014; the Children Act Cap 141 Law of Kenya; and the Security Act that criminalizes stripping of women as a way of enforcing an acceptable dress code. Liberia established Criminal Court "E" to deal with GBV cases which has increased the number of cases prosecuted from 9 cases in 2014 to 121 cases in 2015. Zambia also established two fast-track courts for speedy disposal of GBV cases. In addition to this, Zambia, in collaboration with the AUC, hosted Africa's first Girls' Summit to end Child Marriage and subsequently many MS launched the AU Campaign to end child marriage. Seychelles has developed a GBV Curriculum which will be introduced in post-secondary learning institutions in 2017. To complement GBV laws, countries such as Madagascar, Malawi, and Seychelles adopted laws on human trafficking. Zimbabwe also established an Anti-Domestic Violence Council and an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Trafficking. In spite of these examples of good initiatives, there are evidences that there is a rise in GBV in some countries. MS are therefore urged to vigorously start campaigning against these vices among young boys from the school age unto adolescence. It has become necessary that they learn early how to handle and relate with women in their socialization process.

42. Article 5: Gender Parity Principle: Twenty-seven MS reported on this article. Chad, Cameroun and Seychelles specifically mentioned that they are yet to adopt laws on quota for women or gender parity in their electoral system. The Seychelles' 2016 Parliamentary elections decreased women's representation in Parliament from 45% to 16%. However, it should be highlighted that Seychelles is the only country in Africa which has a Women's Rights Ambassador and there are only five (5) countries with such mechanisms in the world.

43. In an effort to support the ascendancy of women and to commemorate the first visit to Africa by the Honourable Right Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, H.E President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, convened a high-level event on women's political participation and peace and security in the capital Monrovia. The high-level panel included H.E President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, H.E the Honourable Right Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Director of WGDD, the UN Women Executive Director, the UN Special Representative on sexual violence against women and other dignitaries. The event was broadcasted locally and internationally and helped raise attention on women's role in nation building and economic growth.

44. MS who reported above 30% representation of women in Parliament/ National Council are Namibia (40.4%), Senegal (42.6%), Angola (36.8%), Mozambique (39%), Sudan (30%) and Zimbabwe (35.4%), while Ethiopia incentivised the promotion of women's participation in political parties by allocating 15% of total budget of political parties to any party that meets the 30% women's representation threshold. Mali also set up a fund for women in political parties. Many MS attributed low women representation on

illiteracy, socio-cultural constraints and gender stereotypes. Another critical inhibition is the lack of alignment between constitutional aspirations, governance structures and the internal management practices of political parties in Africa. This alignment is what has assisted the MS listed above in ensuring effective representation of women. In others, there seem to be a huge disconnect between the internal operations of the political parties and the desire to liberalise the governance structures for women's participation. In a way women are still being denied the opportunity to exercise their rights in the political and electoral sphere in these countries. It thus appears that there is a need to create a conducive environment for effective political participation of women. MS are therefore urged to adopt pragmatic approach that will mandatorily give space to women through reorganisation and adjustment of the regulatory framework being used to control, fund or support political parties in their various countries.

45. Article 6: Women and Girls' Human Rights: Twenty-seven MS reported on this article. Measures taken to promote women's human rights through legislative and policy measures, establishment of institutions like human rights or equal opportunities commissions and Ministries of women were reported. Burundi, Chad, and Sao Tome and Principe created long-term National Gender Plan, while countries like DRC, Liberia and Cameroon strengthened domestic violence laws and penal codes to offer more protection for women and introduced important innovations that have positive impact on the legal status of women. Other MS like Togo, Mauritania, Mauritius, Djibouti, and Madagascar (which recently established its Human Rights Commission) reported on nation-wide training and awareness raising campaigns on women and children's rights. To support women's economic empowerment, Zimbabwe established a Women's Bank while Senegal's National Centre for the Assistance and Training of Women trained over 1500 women in food processing and fabric design and the National Credit Fund for Women financed 489 women's projects. Malawi has established Children's Courts in all geographical regions of the country. Burkina Faso has reported on provision of free healthcare for pregnant women and children under the age of 5 years.

46. Article 7: Rights to Land, Property, Inheritance and Housing: Recognizing the impact of women's land access and ownership on food production and food security, several MS reported notable progress in achieving the Malabo Declaration target of increasing women's land ownership to 30%. They include for example, Burkina Faso's national policy on land tenure which has led to 38.14% of newly-developed land being allocated to women; Cote D'Ivoire's newly-established Rural Land Agency has made it possible for 267 women to be issued with land titles in the first phase. Ethiopia reserved 30% of Federal Housing Scheme for women, while the remaining 70% is distributed equally between men and women. This resulted in 54% of women becoming beneficiaries of housing programmes in the capital city, while 47% of women own houses in regional states and 66% of women in rural areas own houses either alone or jointly with their husbands. Lesotho's Land Administration Authority continues to improve the status of women in land allocation and distribution. Other MS like Angola, Cameroon, Liberia, and Malawi, reported on advocacy and awareness-raising mechanisms to promote understanding of women's rights to land ownership and inheritance. Access to land and housing resources by women in many MS is still restricted and essentially has its root in discriminatory customary practices, weak land governance system, lack of sound legislative and policy support for women land rights. MS should therefore put measures in place that will override existing inequity norms around land use and provide land acquisition incentives and programmes for women

47. Article 8: Education for Girls and Women: As reported in the AU-UNDP-UNECA and AfDB 2015 evaluation report on the MDGs, African has narrowed the gender gap in primary education but progress remains slow in higher levels with more pronounced gender gap in vocational and in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Factors that continue to dwarf progress are unwanted pregnancies among teenagers, the overall quality of educational facilities and relevance of the curriculum. However, MS have taken special measures and put in place policies which increase girls' access and retention in school.

48. For instance: Malawi enacted and implemented the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act 2015 which facilitated the withdrawal of underage girls from their current marriages and their integration back in the school system. Some of these girls were among the 2,465 girls who went back to school with the support of the mother groups in 2016. Sao Tome and Principe used an Administrative Resolution to enable pregnant adolescents to attend evening classes, and after giving birth, they can resume classes during the day. It launched the 2012-2022 EFA Strategy and Plan of Action and adopted measures for the protection of girls in schools including procedures for sanctioning cases of sexual abuse, harassment and early pregnancies in schools. Zambia also formulated and implemented Re-Entry Policy that allows expectant teenage mothers to go back to school after delivery. Cote D'Ivoire launched her Strategic Plan for Acceleration of Girls' Education (PSAEF) 2016-2018 which is giving more access to young girls to school while Swaziland introduced the "Take your Daughter to work" initiative to expose girls to different career options available. Some other MS established school feeding programmes, special bursaries for female students, girls and mothers' clubs, as well as other incentives to encourage young girls to continue their education. While these measures and initiatives are good pointers to what the MS are doing and can do more, its however important for MS to focus more on the design and promotion of sustainable framework that gives equal access to education, or equal retention of girls and boys, women and men in schools.

49. Article 9: Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: : During the reporting period, 38 out of 54 MS had ratified the Maputo Protocol and preliminary data from the State of Women's Rights in Africa report show that at least 33 MS have taken steps towards domesticating several key provisions, including marital violence, child marriage, inheritance and land rights.

50. To cite a few: Togo and Liberia, reported on their vigorous awareness campaigns to educate the public on the provisions of the Protocol and how it promotes the rights of women in all spheres of life. Malawi used the Protocol to review its National Gender Policy, develop and enact the Trafficking in Persons Act 2015; Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act 2015; and the Gender Equality Act 2013 which has now informed the formulation of the National Plan of Action to combat Gender Based Violence (2015-2020). In the same manner the Government of Zambia enacted the Gender Equity and Equality Act No.22 of 2015 to promote rights of women in the country

III. Conclusion

51. The 11th SDGEA MS Synthesis report records good progress made by MS in delivering on their gender equality and women's empowerment commitments. The MS as well as the USAIDS 2016 reports suggest a percentage reduction in new HIV/AIDS infections although young girls still carry higher risk of infection than men. Good progress is also noted on the domestication of UNSC Resolution 1325, which will support the

inclusion of women in peace processes. MS who have come out of conflicts are taking measures to ensure that child soldiers are integrated back into society. The challenges of early marriage are also being tackled, however, more efforts are needed to ensure that this practice is totally eradicated.

52. Legal instruments are also being created on the rights of women, while sensitization and capacity building programmes are on-going to ensure these rights replace cultural practices that undermine the human rights of women. It was also observed that despite legislative and constitutional guarantees, there is still a considerable deficit on women's rights to land ownership and inheritance. MS need to accelerate efforts to ensure that these rights are realized. More attention is also needed in the area of women's political participation. While progress is recorded in some MS where women's representation in Parliament has increased, some drawbacks have been experienced in countries like Seychelles, which dropped to 16% representation.

53. Overall, the 28 MS that have submitted their reports demonstrate very good progress and should be commended for the efforts made in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Assembly is called upon to:

- **ENDORSE** the reports on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), for onward transmission to the Heads of States and Government;
- **APPEAL** to the three (3) Member States that are yet to submit their initial reports to do so urgently. These are: Cape Verde, Central African Republic, and Guinea Bissau;
- **ALSO APPEAL** to Member States which have not yet done so, to ratify the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights and those who have ratified, to accelerate domestication and implementation;
- **CALL ON** Member States to implement all the commitments made in the SDGEA.
- **CALL ON** the AUC to accelerate the alignment of its policies, programmes and reporting tools for gender equality with Agenda 2063.

2018-01-26

Abridged Eleventh Synthesis of Reports of the African Union Member States on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGGEA)

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