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DRAFT REPORT OF 7TH GIMAC YOUNG WOMEN ADVOCACY TRAINING

February 2022



38TH GIMAC PRE-SUMMIT CSOS CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE AFRICAN UNION AND MEMBER STATES

African Union Summit:

Theme: 'Building Resilience in Nutrition on the African Continent: Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic Development.'

GIMAC Theme: 'Advancing Women's Access to Economic Resources to Build Our Continent's Resilience in Nutrition.'

Dates: 1-4 February 2022

Hybrid Meeting Addis Ababa/Virtual

01 February 2022 – General Assembly

02 February 2022 – 7th GIMAC Young Women Advocacy Training

03 February 2022 – 38th GIMAC Network Panel Sessions on AU Theme of the Year

04 February 2022 – 38th GIMAC Official Closing of 38GIMAC Pre Summit Meeting



DRAFT REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The African Union Commission Heads of States Assembly marked the year 2022 with the theme ‘Building Resilience in Nutrition on the African Continent: Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic Development’. The theme was informed by Aspiration (1) of Agenda 2063 which envisions for a ‘prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development’ noting the critical significance of developing the human capital and building a healthy and well-nourished population. The declaration asserted nutrition, particularly child nutrition, as the foundation to human capital development and social and economic transformation of Africa.

The AU 2022 theme is also aligned with several instruments of the Union, which seek to amplify, the role of nutrition in improving the lives for individuals, facilitating higher earnings and improved incomes for countries and the fast-tracking ultimate realization of Africa’s socio-economic development. These include the Africa Health Strategy 2016 – 2030; the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2015 – 2025 (ARNS); the Declaration on Nutrition Security for Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa; the Resolution on the Establishment of an Organization of African Unity (OAU) Inter-African Centre for Food Science, Technology and Nutrition; the African Union Continental Scorecard for Nutrition.

It is in this view that the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC Network) is convening its 38th Virtual Pre-summit CSOs Consultative meeting under the theme: Advancing Women’s Access to Economic Resources to Build Our Continent’s Resilience in Nutrition. The 38th GIMAC provided a platform to review and consolidate a common position on the effectiveness and efficiency of the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and Member States in implementing and centering the gender equality agenda in the legal and policy instruments governing nutrition. Discussions during the meeting highlighted the immense contribution women and girls have made to ending hunger and malnutrition as well as their huge contribution in the advancement of the social economic development. Participants and speakers also identified gaps, and challenges in meeting Africa’s nutritional needs.

The Programme Thematic Lead for the 3rd GIMAC Strategic Engagement with the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Partners, was the Institute for Social Transformation (IST), led by its Executive Director Dr. Thelma Awori.

The meeting was supported by GIMAC Steering Committee, AU Commission for Social Affairs, the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, AU Women, Youth, Gender and Development Directorate (AU WGDD). The GIMAC Steering Committee provided overall guidance and leadership on the meeting, with technical and coordination support from the GIMAC Secretariat.

The meeting brought together over 200 delegates from more than 20 countries, representing the AU, United Nations officials, Diplomatic missions, development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector and other interested groups. Key partners that participated in the 3rd GIMAC Strategic Engagement with REC the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Plan International, MSD for Mothers, Oxfam, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Action Aid, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

The 3rd GIMAC was preceded by a High-Level Dialogue on Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal Mortality Rates (MMR) in Africa, which was co-convened by the GIMAC network in collaboration with MSD For Mothers. On 2nd February, GIMAC organized the Young Women's Advocacy Training Workshop. All three events were convened in a hybrid manner (combination of face-to-face and virtual meeting) to provide a reflective space to review and consolidate a common position on the effectiveness and efficiency of the AU and member States in mainstreaming gender equality in efforts towards ensuring that Africa's culture, arts and heritage continue to play a supportive role in its development.

Young people were involved in all aspects of the meeting, participating as panelists in sessions, providing rapporteuring supporting, and presenting the meeting's Call to Action/ Outcome Document. The meeting provided an inclusive and intergenerational platform not only to hear from young women directly but also to co-curate solutions and to their calls to action. Young women's voices and perspectives have been included in the development of this report, its design, and recommendations, contributing to its uniqueness and credibility. During the Youth Advocacy Training, the GIMAC Young Women's Network contributed their perspectives on the roles and contributions of arts in GIMAC's six thematic areas: peace and security; governance; human rights, education; health and economic empowerment. As a result, the report emerges from the deliberate taken by the GIMAC Network to foster the meaningful engagement of young women.

The meeting was however held against the backdrop of the pandemic seismic shifts triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic in the entire spectrum African people's lives. The meeting noted with concerns, the long-term disruptions caused by the pandemic within the continent's health systems, education, economies, human rights, the governance landscape, as well as in the peace and security arena

2 February 2022

GIMAC Young Women's Advocacy Training



The 7th GIMAC Young Women's Advocacy Training has been supported by several partners since its inception, including Plan International, Oxfam and UN Women. A unique feature about the workshop was its emphasis on women's agency, which is grounded in a collaborative approach that focuses on understanding lived experiences of their communities and co-creating knowledge and responses. Engaging young women is an important component of RAU's work as the organization continues to promote their inclusion and participation in development and governance processes.

4.1 Opening Session

The opening session and plenary session had the following speakers:

- Ms. Karen Ondwasi Olaka, Chairperson, GIMAC Young Women Network;
- Mr. Sam Norgah, Director, Plan International African Union Liaison Office.
- Dr. Hellena (YWCA), on behalf of Dr. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, Member of the GIMAC Steering Committee);
- Ms. Chido Mpemba, AU Youth Envoy and Mandela Washington Fellow (was selected as part of the Global Task Force of the World Economic Forum)
- Dr. Hannah Foster: Executive Director for the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights

The GIMAC Young Women's Network, which now has 134 youth organizations as members, was established to provide space for young people to express themselves and influence policy. The 7th GIMAC Young Women's Advocacy Training provided a platform for participants to also engage with the AU, Member States, policy makers, development partners, and CSO to propose inclusive, effective and efficient strategies that promote nutrition in Africa.

Dr. Hannah Foster says every woman deserves the courage award. She recalled how a group of women came together to establish an organization called Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) to push the gender agenda forward, ensuring that every African woman can play a role in conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding.

Women played a critical role in pushing for the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, better known as the Maputo Protocol (adopted in 2003), and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), adopted in 2004. These instruments seek to advance and safeguard the rights of women and girls across the continent.

Speakers and Facilitators who addressed participants in the GIMAC Young Women's Advocacy Training, highlighted the imperative for inter-generational co-leadership to catalyse the development agenda in Africa. Speakers called for more youth involvement in key decision-making processes. Additionally, there were calls for intergenerational, feminist approaches towards cultural transformation for greater protection of women's rights.

During the Opening Session, the importance of engaging in strategic collaboration to strengthen women and youth participation and maximize their talents and challenge inimical societal norms, was underlined. Speakers reiterated their commitment to strengthening the ability and resourcefulness of young women and girls, as well as advocating for the creation of a space where men and women are treated equally use this time as a springboard for collaboration. There was also a rallying call to change the narrative of girls and young women as victims towards focusing more on their empowerment, was underlined.

Other highlights from the session were as follows:

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- Speakers from YWCA and Plan International highlighted the imperative for creating a world that is free from violence and war, for Africa's young girls to thrive and prosper. The WYCA pillar on gender equality is in line with the GIMAC vision and mission, and equally aligns with the AU Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, especial SGD 5.

- During the 7th GIMAC Young Women's Advocacy Training, it was highlighted that there is need to eradicate hunger and malnutrition as a strategy to build and strengthen the socio-economic resilience of girls and young women, who are mostly on the margins of socio-economic development.



- More than 50% of women in Africa are involved in agriculture, and are pivotal to addressing hunger, malnutrition and. With more than 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in the agriculture sector, women in Africa pivotal towards transforming the continent's food systems.
- Women need to be supported towards realizing the vision of a continent without hunger. Women and girls should have access to resources, hence the need to transform unequal power structures as a way of eradicating hunger in Africa.
- The work of the African Youth Envoy is to engage the African youth and those in the continent to engage in policy influence and inter-generational dialogue. The Office of the African Youth Envoy in a pan-African entity, which is designed to influence the adoption and implementation of progressive policies to provide spaces for young people to build resilient communities.

- The African Youth Envoy spoke on the importance of public consultation and highlighted that she was in the first three months of her appointment, which meant that she was conducting listening tour to get to understand the mandate of her office. She expressed hope to interact with young people across Africa. The Africa Youth Envoy congratulated GIMAC Network, the GIMAC Young Women's Network, development partners like Plan International for prioritizing the voices of youth in the continent. She added that young people's health and nutrition are a critical part of the development agenda. Young people must sit on the table and influence decisions on food and nutrition security.
- To this end, young women were urged to engage the other remaining 13 African countries have not yet ratified this important instrument. She urged young women to join the campaign to call for universal ratification so that African leaders remain committed to protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls across Africa. It was also underlined that although ratification of the Protocol is important, its is equally imperative for the Protocol to be implemented, domesticated, resources, monitored and evaluated at Member State level.
- Speakers also underlined the importance of partnerships, and emphasised that CSOs should not and cannot replace the Government. Young people were urged to advocate against such cultures and engage in advocacy campaigns to bring awareness against such cultures. It was further noted that in situations where women and girls' rights are violated, culture, arts and heritage can be used to promote togetherness.
- African leaders should be ready to harness the continent's demographic dividends, because the continent's future and heritage can only be secured only when young people have safe, secure and healthy lives. Given the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and girls, speakers called for the need for gender-sensitive responses to the pandemic.



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When we look at SDG 2, We predicted to end hunger and malnutrition by 2030. As we can see, we are far away from achieving our target to end hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. So as young people, who are majority of the population, we need to pull up our socks and really advocate for better nutrition.

We know that poor nutrition affects every aspect of development in our continent. Its like a whole cycle. Poor nutrition leads to poor health, which leads to poverty and economic dependency, which leads to lack of access to education and before we know it, we are at war , fighting for scarce resources such as food. The role of young people can not be downplayed in building this economy and in the fight on ending poverty and malnutrition.

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KAREN ONDWASI
CHAIR PERSON GIMAC YOUNG WOMEN NETWORK AFRICA

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The conversation on nutrition is timely, and so is the importance of the 7th GIMAC Young Women's Advocacy Training to engage in decision-making and policy-influence on issues that affect young women and those around them.



SAM NORGA,
DIRECTOR, PLAN INTERNATIONAL

I urge young women to challenge and confront societal norms that perpetuate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition

I urge young women to join the campaign to call for universal ratification so that African leaders remain committed to protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls across Africa.

We also urge other development partners to support young women in their quest to be included in strengthening Africa's food systems.

We further noted that in situations where women and girls' rights are violated, culture, arts and heritage can be used to promote togetherness.

African leaders should be ready to harness the continent's demographic dividends, because the continent's future and heritage can only be secured only when young people have safe, secure and healthy lives.

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4.1.2 Orientation to the AU Theme 2022 and GIMAC Network Plan 2022- GIMAC Secretariat



- Dr. Hannah Foster urged young women to remain to remain engaged, and to be empowered, as they seek to advance their rights and the rights of other vulnerable people. She acknowledged that women have become a united and cohesive force, working through networks of civil society actors, professional associations, non-governmental organizations, and government entities, in pursuing a common goal. She urged women to remain united in advancing a significant policy change to improve the rights and women and girls.

- Young women were urged to learn more about the Maputo Protocol and its provisions, in addition to being acquainted with the legal and policy provisions in their countries, so that they can design an effective advocacy strategy on specific issues. Furthermore, partnerships were also highlighted as critical in any advocacy agenda, ensuring that rights holders, duty bearers and advocates work together to co-curate a shared development agenda.

- Legal reform is not enough. There is need for societal transformation at the socio-economic and cultural levels. While laws and policies provide a framework to promote progressive change, it is equally important to engage with the cultural and socio-economic norms that affect women and girls.

4.1.3 Training on Data Collection, Analysis and Management: Anthony Ajayi, African Centre for Population Studies



The Training was premised on the importance of evidence-based analysis for effective advocacy. It recognized that the advocacy work that is undertaken by young women in their various communities and countries requires them to disseminate evidence-based information.

The Training was premised on the importance of evidence-based analysis for effective advocacy. It recognized that the advocacy work that is undertaken by young women in their various communities and countries requires them to disseminate evidence-based information. It was acknowledged that young women involved in advocacy either jointly or individually deploy considerable efforts to inform policy and advocate for change, and they require some skills that would allow them to examine the various aspects of their socio-economic and social reality

Against this background, this session sought to equip the members of the GIMAC Young Women's Network with skills to conduct research and document issues in to be used to engage duty bearers and policy makers as well as key stakeholders. The training provided a platform for the working groups to accelerate community actions in holding duty bearers in their communities to account. Key insights from the Training were as follows:

- The presenter indicated that research is among the repertoire of approaches to knowing about what is going on in the world. The facilitator, Mr. Anthony Ajayi began by outlining various forms of knowledge including information coming from culture, religion, authorities, and the media.

- However, such knowledge is different from research-based evidence because it is not based on a scientific approach. Such ordinary knowledge is anecdotal and is not based on a systematic and standardized approach. There is no means of verification and corroboration of such knowledge.

- While these are important, they are not characterized as scientific methods. Mr. Ajayi cited the challenge of relying on the media to come up with conclusion, noting that sometimes the media can generate false news or can become polarized and sensationalized. The resource person encouraged participants who use media, especially social media to cross-check the facts.

- On the other hand, science can be questioned and interrogated. In addition, science is systematic, methodical, and rejects the notion that personal authority is the only form of knowledge. Science is inherently skeptical and allows for people to question data and evaluate evidence that can inform policies and support transformation processes in society.

- Research was acknowledged as an important tool in advocacy to enable young women to back their advocacy strategies with evidence and facts. Research is intended to assist in advocacy, that is, efforts to assemble and use information and resources to bring about improvements in people's lives.



- Advocacy is the process of striving to influence policy and practice, and requires ongoing interaction between various actors, as well as the internal and external forces that affect their beliefs and actions. In order to persuade policy makers, legislators or other officials to adopt, reform, implement, laws and policies in advocacy, there will be need for evidence-based information, which is generated through some research.
- Mr. Ajayi defined research as a process of systematic inquiry that entails collection of data; documentation of critical information; and analysis and interpretation of that data/information, in accordance with suitable methodologies. The following benefits of research were highlighted during the research:
 - > Research can generate new knowledge and insights and give advocacy substance. It helps in generating evidence that allows one to make their case during advocacy;
 - > Research can highlight what interventions can address the identified problems or issues. Furthermore, research provide one with anecdotes and stories to use during an advocacy campaign
 - > Research provides the basis an effective advocacy strategy, and a good monitoring and evaluation plan. Additionally, research gives the advocacy campaign some s credibility because those who are being influenced know that they can trust the data and the evidence being presented to them;
 - > Research can lead one to become an expert or authority on the subject matter. The process of conducting research can contribute previously unknown findings pertaining to the campaign issue – for example, reliable data demonstrating that certain forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) are more widespread than generally assumed;

Read More about the presentation here :

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Kge16cjheFoLQDKo9-pvmMuM6LWYEggH/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115033189811641156588&rtpof=true&sd=true>



4.1.4 Breakout Sessions

The Youth training was divided into six sessions in line with the GIMAC thematic areas, which are as follows:

- Peace and Security- Led By ACCORD
- Governance -led AU Youth Division)
- Human Rights - Led by Plan International
- Economic Empowerment- Led by FEMNET
- Education -Led by FAWE

A. Governance Breakout Group

The Governance session highlighted the pillars of Gender equality across the continent in line with The African Union Vision to achieve “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena’. The session highlighted the existing policies and frameworks that govern the continent. From the session, there was a desire by young people to engage in decision making process at regional levels such as the African Union. They however expressed the lack of direction on how to do that

Link to presentation:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FjcDyPgDEhroJSbgsDoYKhjLBMinZ943/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115033189811641156588&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Youth Recommendations from the Governance Session

- That governments promote the active participation and leadership of youth in the gender mainstreaming Agenda, and meaningfully involve them in co-leading and co-curating solutions to development, governance, political dialogues, nutrition, peace and security.
- That government policies promote co-leadership and inter-generational dialogue- For every institution, process and consultation, there should be young women and their voices should be heard. It should be a continuous intergenerational dialogue, characterised by mentorship and Collaboration

Pledges/ Commitments from the Governance Group

- Pledge to hold Governments to the AU Agenda 2063
- Create more awareness on Agenda 063, working with local and international partners



B. Peace and Security Breakout Group

- Conflict is a major driver of food insecurity in the African continent. In countries affected by conflict countries, food insecurity and malnutrition are significantly higher than in countries not in conflict.
- Conflict countries have few resources to implement government policies designed to achieve SDG because they are focused on dealing with violence.
- Conflicts have long-lasting impacts on the food security and nutrition of both affected and surrounding countries in the region.
- The high costs of perpetrating, containing, preventing, and dealing with the consequences of violence undermine their ability to mitigate the decline in living standards.
- The combined disruptions from food insecurity, natural disasters and forced displacement are compounded by state fragility and weak institutions, yielding complex and persistent humanitarian emergencies.

Recommendations from peace and security

- African finding political solutions to conflict and ensuring that they are implemented falls to Member States.
- Provide alternative sources of income for women in conflict, post conflict and fragile contexts
- Need for the WFP aside from distributing food but to also consider giving training and become more resourceful in farming , especially for people who are in refugee camps.
- Government should have a of efficient food supply chain during a time of crisis
- Create an alternate for those special people found containment like women in IDP, Prison like Hand making , Tailoring so that they will be able to support themselves

Pledges from Peace and Security Group

- Dialogue on land accessibility to women where they can grow their own food;
- Conduct a Series of community dialogue on food security and nutrition.



C. Human Rights Breakout Group

The Human rights session discussed the access to food and nutrition as a basic human right. The session highlighted issues of women participation in nutrition and food security. It also highlighted the need for holding leaders accountable on existing policies that affect food production. The participants discussed Article 15 Maputo protocol which speaks towards the right to food security - state parties shall ensure that women have the right to nutrition and adequate food, thus, access to clean drinking water, sources of domestic fuel, land and all means of producing nutritious food and also establish adequate systems of supply and storage to ensure food security

Recommendations from the Human Rights Group

- Participation and empowerment

Sensitization that is geared towards awareness on food security, the right to land, inheritance clean drinking water hence enjoyment of their right to nutrition -Article 15 in particular. We need more women aware that Article 15 and other provisions of this Law therein exist and they can enjoy it. If we need to translate the laws on Nutrition in other African languages, have a movie and song about it that will create more awareness.

- Accountability

Over 40 nations are signed commitment to the Maputo protocol but are weak towards bringing the Articles to light. And so practices like the African Union Continental Score-card for Nutrition should have a gender handle/lens to enable specification on achieving Nutrition based practices for women. Also, This scorecard should have a timed during of 2 or 3 years for every nation to account for achieving accountability.

- Non discrimination

Concerns of race, gender, economic/work identity, forms of disabilities, humanitarian context(refugees) and children have continued to be disadvantaged to access adequate food and their right to nutrition, either because the don't have land, homes, money or their identity, so every identity should be treated like a citizen and a human right holder.



D. Economic Empowerment Breakout Group

The Economic Empowerment Session highlighted the gender discrimination young women face in an attempt to access resources. The youths shared the unique challenges from their own countries that prevent women from economic development. Issues of illiteracy, poor policies, bad governance and cultural practices prevent women from accessing resources such as land, loans and information. The youths also discussed the AFCTA and the opportunities it provides young women. Young people expressed the need to understand and be involved in the ACFTA opportunity.

Recommendations from the Economic Empowerment Group

- African Governments should strengthen and enhance access to flexible financing for young people in the agriculture sector, including ensuring that young people have access to land rights for young people
- African Governments must revise financing policies regulation for young women, ensuring that young people have access to business information and tactics
- African Governments must strengthen capacity of young women in SMEs, in business and in management skills, to become entrepreneur
- African Governments, working with private sector partners and development partners as well as CSOs must make agriculture attractive in terms of branding, marketing, presentation, through provision of incentives
- African governments, working with the AUC must invest in technology to enhance agriculture production
- African Governments must involve young people in agricultural planning and in providing access to credit, ensuring that they support innovation and creativity

Pledges from Economic Empowerment Group

- We pledge to work with small farm holders could connect and/ or to be mentored/ or get support from big farm holders as well as investors and different organizations (To produce with consistence, meet the required standards);
- We pledge to promote sustainable farming (by doing farming in our backyards);
- We pledge to support and purchase local farm products and vouch for local (African) farmers;
- We pledge to assess the socio-economic and political determinants of food systems in Africa, and present this data to farmers, communities and governments for a policy change that will deal with the inherent inequalities in the global food systems.



E. Education Group

The session highlighted the linkages between Education and Nutrition.

Nutrition improves education in the following ways:

- School feeding programmes become motivation for children to attend school as they can access a meal. (Food is a pull factor)
- It leads to brain development which allows children to keep up in class and compete with their peers.
- It leads to increased means of production - people who are educated will work
- Leads to innovation- Schools are a nurturing centre and can encourage children to learn and become innovative in food production.
- Nutrition leads to brain development –
- It improves education as children participate as they have the energy

The young people discussed some of the interventions they carry in order to promote education and nutrition. This included offering scholarship programs to less privileged families so that they can access education. Having mother clubs in schools where teen mothers get education on how to feed their children and ensure proper nutrition.

Recommendations from Education Group

- Governments should provide regular/consistent/sustainable school feeding programs in schools which should meet the nutrition standards and contribute to the children developmental needs.
- Comprehensive and practical nutrition education that considers the food that is accessible in the region/environment. There is a need for capacity building for farmers to ensure literacy in food production, harvesting and storage.
- Collaboration and partnership between schools and the ministry of agriculture to incorporate farming/gardening as a life-skills or a taught subject in schools as a way to increase food production and improve nutrition

- Support of agricultural production through resource allocation/inclusion in budget. Training should consider the impact of climate change and of global warming. There is a need to train farmers on proper methods of storage to avoid food wastage and reliance on rains/ seasons and ensure irrigation to counter their harmful impact.
- Innovative methods of meeting schools' fees e.g farmers can bring their produce to schools as a substitute for education to avoid school dropout due to lack of school fees.
- Governments should give free and compulsory basic education to ensure that children can access education and get life skills that will make them employable and able to earn a living.
- Give incentives and subsidies to those in the agricultural sector which will lower the cost of food making it more accessible to children in schools.
- Ensure that there are gender responsive interventions to avoid creating further inequalities. Many women do not have access to farming and where they do they are not the title holders making them vulnerable and unable to use the land as a security to borrow monies to further their production or support their families.



Nutrition, Health and Well-Being Session:

- The African continent is not yet on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 targets to end hunger, ensure safe, nutritious and sufficient food and end all forms of malnutrition for all people.
- **Africa accounts for 55 percent of the global rise in the number of undernourished over the 2014 to 2020 period.** In addition, Eastern and Western Africa account for 83 percent of the Africa-wide increase over the 2014 to 2020 period.
- Research indicates that in 2020, **281.6 million Africans were undernourished, an increase of 89.1 million since 2014 .**
- Food and nutrition insecurity is fueled by overlapping drivers, including conflict, climate variability and extremes, and economic downturns. Falling demand and prices for commodities negatively affected many countries and worsened food security
 - o In some countries, such as Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique, adverse weather conditions were the key driver of food insecurity. **Cyclone Idai, which hit Southern African countries in 2019, especially Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, exacerbated the already precarious food security situation.**
- The threat and challenge of food and nutrition insecurity is often exacerbated by other underlying conditions, such as poverty and inequality.
- Conflict is also a major driver of food insecurity and malnutrition.
 - o In countries such as the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Somalia, conflict, by destroying livelihoods and displacing thousands of people, was a key contributor to food insecurity.
 - o In the DRC, the deterioration of the food security situation was due to the civil conflict and insecurity, which largely affected the Eastern parts of the country since 2013.

- The COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in 2020, and the subsequent containment measures adopted by many governments and regional bodies, amplified to the already existing food and nutrition challenges.
- The growing direct impact of the pandemic is affecting health, in terms of morbidity and mortality, quickly overburdening health care services with negative repercussions for non-COVID-19 related health problems. The pandemic disrupted economic and livelihood activities in service sectors such as tourism, remittances, commodity exports, markets and commodity value chains.
- With food and agriculture systems being highly labour-intensive in most African countries, shortages of workers due to restrictions on people's and labour mobility may compromise the provision of inputs in upstream, farming activities and downstream trading, processing and transportation activities. As a result, efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition were undermined.
- Governments, civil society organizations youth led groups are increasingly becoming aware that sustaining the health and wellbeing of youth, ensuring gender equality policies and providing quality education for adolescence all play an essential part in positive outcomes for young people on the continent.

Health Recommendations

- African Governments must ensure adequate strategic food reserves and storage facilities, including through public-private partnerships, collaborating with CSOs and young people, ensuring that women and girls have access to food and means of production;
- The AU should implement in full the Ministerial Declaration on Food Security and Nutrition During the COVID-19 Pandemic, and support Member states to establish measures to cushion women and girls from the adverse impact of the covid pandemic on food and nutrition security through social protection measures;

- African Governments must prioritize the food and agriculture system as an essential service that must continue to operate during periods of lockdown, emergency, curfew and other health containment measures
- Improve health care for food and nutrition-related non-communicable diseases and address a rising burden of diet-related chronic disease in a situation of persistent food insecurity and undernutrition.
- To catalyze improved food and nutrition security on the continent, the AU, through the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) **should promote the sharing experiences and lessons to motivate the wide recognition, production and investment in local and traditional African crops to facilitate the adoption of diverse and sustainable food systems;**
- Development partners must step up and provide financial and other resources to help countries **that do not have the resources to adequately respond to climate change and pandemic-induced food and nutrition insecurity;**

Youth Pledges from Health and Well-Being Group

- Continue engagement through CSOs, networks and interest bodies in nutrition and food security policy making to ensure policy coherence and provide adequate safety nets, including cash, food, and other relevant social protection measures to support all vulnerable population groups;
- We pledge to ensure that there is consideration of the nutritional quality of the food supply in policy objectives across all development sectors in Africa;
- We pledge to use our spaces such as social media and other youth-led forms to increase awareness of our own African Foods, ensuring that these are brought into the agribusiness domain;
- We pledge to redouble our efforts and concerted actions, in cooperation with other stakeholders, to engage in outreach and education initiatives to ensure food security and nutrition for African citizens
- We pledge to participate actively in the Africa Day on Health and Food Security, and call for Youth-led sessions, and utilize this day as an avenue for raising awareness and advocacy with the AU;





4.1.5 Session on Lobbying and Advocacy: Mr Keith Andere, Africa Youth Commission



This training session focussed on how young people can use social media to convene, engage and influence. The Facilitator, Mr Keith Andere defined advocacy as the process of working with other people and organizations to make a difference. It involves putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem and building support for acting on both the problem and solution.

The facilitator guided the youths on the different forms of advocacy and how young people can make use of them to maximise results.

Read more on the advocacy session here

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JDTdyCHaksrovg8PEXtk5is3KQzz1i73/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115033189811641156588&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Reading of the Outcome Statement from the 7th GIMAC Young Women's Advocacy Training: This was read by Melissa Kubvoruno;

Closing Remarks: Dr. Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, AU goodwill Ambassador on Ending Child Marriage

The Youth Training Session ended by closing Remarks from Dr. Nyaradzai, the African Union Goodwill on Ending Child Marriage. She urged young people to continue with their advocacy efforts and collaborate to ensure their voices are heard. She said ‘

- Advocacy does not end with the training. In fact, it is only the beginning;
- There is a link between food insecurity and gender inequality. Girls who are forced into early marriages are often unable to have access to socio-economic resources;
- We must discuss the care responsibilities of women and girls
- We must not forget the issues faced by young women and girls living with disabilities. GIMAC should have a permanent space for young women and girls with disabilities, and involve them in advocacy efforts on GEWE;’

With support from:



Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations



Draft Report of 7th GIMAC Young Women Advocacy training

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'Gender is my Agenda'