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Concept Note 4th GIMAC RECs Meeting

Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Strengthening agro-food systems, health and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital development'







United Nations Economic Commission for Africa





















Femmes Africa Solidarité

















WITH SUPPORT FROM:



Hybrid Meeting: Lusaka -Zambia

10th July 2022 8th GIMAC Young Women Network Advocacy Training

11th -12th July 2022 GIMAC Network Meeting with the AU and RECs



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INTRODUCTION

The African Union Commission Heads of States Assembly has marked the year 2022 with the theme *"strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Strengthening agro-food systems, health and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital development".* The AU theme of the year has been 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 for human capital development and social and economic transformation of Africa. The theme chosen for the year 2022 echoes legal instruments of the AU dedicated to tackling malnutrition: 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 OAU Inter-African Centre for Food Science, Technology and Nutrition; the African Union Continental Scorecard for Nutrition. AU adopted these instruments to amplify, streamline and connote nutrition as a major pillar to advancing the continent's human capital as a guarantee to ensuring improved lives for individuals, higher earnings and improved incomes for countries and the ultimate realization of Africa's socio-economic development.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls matter for nutrition because they have an important bearing on the three underlying determinants of nutrition which include food security, care practices and health. Women play a critical role as producers and enhance productivity with an implication on food consumption and monetary return at national and household levels. According to FAO in their report on the role of women in agriculture, women make up 43% of the agricultural labour force in the developing world, fiftyseven with the share rising to 50% in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that if women worldwide had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase the yields from their farms by 20% to 30% and total agricultural output by 2.5% to 4% lifting between 100 and 150 million people out of hunger.

It is in this view that the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC Network) is convening its 4th Hybrid strategic engagement meeting with AU, RECs and partners under the theme: Advancing Women's Access to Economic Resources to Build Our Continent's Resilience in Nutrition. The network will provide a platform to review and consolidate a common position on the effectiveness and efficiency of the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and the Member States in implementing and centring the gender equality agenda in the legal and policy instruments governing nutrition. Furthermore, it serves to highlight the immense contribution women and girls have made to ending hunger and malnutrition as well as their huge contribution in the advancement of social-economic development. The deliberations are to identify gaps, provide recommendations, and offer a space for strategic engagement with organs of the AU, RECs, and key stakeholders.

II. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Agenda 2063, aspiration one underlines the importance of nutrition for the "Africa We Want" with goal on "African people have a high standard of living, quality of life, sound health and wellbeing" and goal 3 on "citizens are healthy and well-nourished and enjoying a life expectancy of above 75 years." Article 14 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child also calls for adequate nutrition, care to combat malnutrition and improved knowledge of nutrition, including breastfeeding and human capital development.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls matter for nutrition because they have an important bearing on the three underlying determinants of nutrition which include food security, care practices and health. In addition, women and girls play a critical role as producers and enhancing productivity with an implication on food consumption and economic or monitory return at national and household levels. Women make up 43% of the agricultural labour force in the developing world, 57% with the share rising to 50% in sub-Saharan Africa. Nonetheless, their access to (or control over) natural and productive resources and services such as land, production resources, finance, market, information, government authorities and services including extension and rural

COVID-19

has had an impact on livelihoods and economies and has resulted in an increase in domestic and gender-based violence across Africa and the world.

advisory services are compromised due to stereotypical societal norms. Further, evidence clearly demonstrates that empowering women is central to tackling malnutrition and underlines the need to take a gender transformative approach to enhance women's agency, decision making and leadership (particularly household relationships and community groups) and reformulate structures (such as agriculture and market institutions, land policies, social norms) that govern their lives and choices. Thus, it is critical to fast track the implementation of a Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) with an emphasis on empowering women and girls by tackling underlying discriminatory social norms needs to be embedded in all nutrition programming and policy formulation.

The recommendations from the 38 GIMAC Pre Summit meeting emphasized on the need to address structural and systemic drivers of poverty, gender inequality and socio-economic vulnerability, discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as challenges of corruption, poor governance and limited political participation by women and youth. Further, the Pre-Summit report and Outcome Statement detail what it would take to achieve Agenda 2063, Aspiration 1 as well as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2



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(zero hunger). Overwhelmingly, participants in the meeting identified the need to transform food systems through an integrated approach that acknowledges and takes account of interlinkages between sectors on agriculture, climate change, food security, human rights, health and water.

They identified a range of actions towards achieving food system transformation including sustainable agriculture and agro-ecology, improved agriculture research and innovation, and recognizing and ensuring the rights of youth, women and the marginalised and vulnerable groups. Also, Furthermore, COVID-19 has had an impact on livelihoods and economies and has resulted in an increase in domestic and genderbased violence across Africa and the world. Consequently, COVID-19 has accentuated the hardships faced by women and girls across the continent. The African Union theme of the year is an opportunity to advance the advocacy for a GTA to malnutrition. It offers the space to engage in robust transformation of values and for positive positioning of values and redesigning structures that promote women's access and control to productive and financial resources, participation in decision making and leadership, access to gender centred government incentives and structures. The AU existing instruments and campaign such as Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy, The AU Health Strategy, the Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion for African Women, AU Flagship projects African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the campaign on eliminating gender-based violence, child marriage and maternal mortality are strategic entry points for this transformative agenda. Moreover, the Decade on Financial Inclusion for African Women is an equally strategic lever for sustaining the theme of the year within a multi-year process related to the economic empowerment of women.

The 4th GIMAC Strategic Engagement Meeting aims to take stock of the achievements so far, outline the challenges, and table proposals on how the AU, RECs and other key stakeholders can, in their collective capacities, guarantee the realization of the initiatives. This will require leveraging strategic partnerships and building institutional capacities to conduct the outlined actions and monitor and evaluate them. Hence, 4th GIMAC will be a space for women and girl's rights organizations to articulate their proposition that is gender-responsive, efficient, and practical for Africa.

III. OBJECTIVES

The Pre-Summit Consultation aims to:

- A. Consolidate CSOs review of the AU legal and strategic framework on food security and nutrition taking a GTA approach and focusing on achievements and critical gaps towards implementation;
- B. Propose rights-based, inclusive, effective and efficient strategies that enhance and utilize the agency and role of women and girls in realizing the vision for hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food especially for the marginalised and vulnerable groups;
- C. Strengthen intergenerational and gender transformative approach towards transformation of societal norms and institutional structures that guarantee a conducive environment for women's human and economic rights;
- D. Provide space for African CSO's strategic engagement with AU, RECs, UN Agencies, International Organizations, and other stakeholders.

IV. Activities

The 4th GIMAC's Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners on the AU Theme of the Year will be held on the margins of the 4th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting pf the African Union and the RECs as follows:

- GIMAC Young Women Network Advocacy Training 10 July 2022
- 4th GIMAC's Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners Meeting – 11th and 12th July 2022
- Launching of various advocacy campaigns, reports and studies focusing on the various aspects and themes of the Solemn Declaration.

The proposed key topics for discussion during the meeting will be guided by GIMAC Network's eight (8) thematic clusters, namely: Governance, Peace and Security, Human Rights, Health, Education, Agriculture, Climate Change and Economic Empowerment. Further, the network wil support various key initiatives directly impacting women and girls through significant voice of civil society and women's networks, such as the rural women and women in agriculture to influence the AU and RECs policy frameworks.

The expected outcome of the event will be a set of key recommendations that will be utilized in advocacy towards the AU, RECs RMs coordination meeting and for the GIMAC Network to outline its roadmap and strategies with specific action points to inform effective coordination and implementation of AU Declarations at the RECs and national levels;

V. Specific results

Specific results will be:

- Development and submission of GIMAC Network recommendations and priorities to the AU and RECs Member States on the AU theme focusing on the nexus between gender equality, food security, nutrition, and contribution towards Agenda 2063;
- Enhance coordination and collaboration amongst the GIMAC Network partners for collective programmes and advocacy on women's rights, food security and nutrition;
- Knowledge, skills and analysis strengthened among the GIMAC Network members especially for the young people on feminist Pan African Perspectives and intersectionality of gender equality with food security and nutrition;
- Combat the gender prejudices, violations and cultural biases that prevent women of African descent from achieving their full potential.

VI. References

- Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: https:// reliefweb.int/report/world/africa-regional-overview-foodsecurityand-nutrition-2021
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- The importance of women's status for child nutrition in developing countries: http://catalog.ihsn.org/citations/8759
- The role of women in Agriculture: https://www.fao.org/3/am307e/ am307e00.pdf
- To advance nutrition we cannot ignore violence against women: https:// www.nutritionintl.org/news/all-blog-posts/to-advancenutrition-wecannot-ignore-violence-against-women/

