

CONCEPT NOTE



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39 GIMAC CSOs PRE-SUMMIT CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT THE AFRICAN UNION AND MEMBER STATES

DATES: 12 - 14 FEBRUARY 2023

HYBRID MEETING ADDIS ABABA



#39 GIMAC Pre-summit CSOs Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union and Member States

African Union Theme Of The Year:

“Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Implementation”

39 GIMAC Theme:

“The Implementation of the AfCFTA -Breaking Trade Barriers of African Women and Youth to Ensure their Inclusion.”

Dates:

12 - 14 February 2023

Location:

Addis Ababa
Hybrid Meeting



**Scan for Virtual
Participation**



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“ISSUES OF TRADE ACROSS AFRICAN BORDERS ARE OFTEN DISCUSSED WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS.”

1. Introduction

As one of its activity areas, the Gender Is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC Network) in partnership with African Union Commission (AUC) Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD), AUC Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security, The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UN Women, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), Oxfam Pan-Africa Programme, Plan International, Christian Aid, Action Against

Hunger, Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF) and ActionAid is organising a Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) pre-summit consultative meeting on the margins of the 36th African Union (AU) Summit. The past 38 consultative meetings and 4 Strategic Engagement with AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Partners aimed at engaging AU Member States on African women’s and girls’ rights issues in alignment with various treaties, conventions, protocols, charters, strategies and procedures. The GIMAC Network is organised around the themes related to the operating articles of the Solemn Declaration on



Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA-2004) namely, **Governance, Peace and Security, Human Rights, Health, Education, Agriculture, Climate Change and Economic empowerment and as well as other emerging issues.**

In continuing this effort, the 39th pre-summit consultative meeting will be held from 12- 14 February 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In line with the 2023 AU theme of the year, “Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Implementation”, the pre-summit meeting will be held under the theme “The Implementation of the AfCFTA: Breaking Trade Barriers of African Women and Youth to Ensure their Inclusion”.

The adoption and signing of the agreement establishing the AfCFTA and its subsequent entry into force on 30 May 2021 were major breakthroughs towards creating an integrated Africa. To date, 54 AU Member States have signed and 44 have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement. The AfCFTA is one of Agenda 2063 flagship projects that aims to ‘create an integrated continental market for goods and services facilitated by

movement of persons,’ and ‘contribute to the movement of capital and natural person’ which will enable Africans to use trade more effectively as an engine for growth and sustainable development, mainly through people-driven processes that rely on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth (Aspiration 1 and 6).

To this end, in its 2020 report, the World Bank estimated that the implementation of the AfCFTA would spur larger gains for women, with a 10.5 percent increase (compared to 9.9 percent for men) in their wages. To actualize this estimation, it is important to identify the possible challenges that could hinder the inclusion of women and girls in the implementation of the AfCFTA and potential impacts and implication on their human rights and propose solutions to not only address those challenges but to also enhance partnerships with the relevant AU Organs and stakeholders to curve the unintended consequences of AfCFTA



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“BROADEN INCLUSIVENESS IN THE OPERATION OF THE AFCFTA THROUGH INTERVENTIONS THAT SUPPORT AFRICAN WOMEN”

on girls and women’s human rights.

2. Background and Justification

The AfCFTA anticipates boosting the continent’s income by 450 billion USD and increasing intra-Africa exports by over 81 percent. It is also expected to lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty. In achieving these objectives, the existing structural inequalities that are visible in the economic sector could lead to unequal outcomes for vulnerable populations, including women and girls. Without disregarding the progress made so far, women and girls are yet to have equitable access to productive inputs, such as land, labour as well as capital and they are under-represented in the decision-making structures.

Structural inequalities also obstruct women, youth and girls from resisting external adversities such as the



recent COVID-19 pandemic as well as the persistent threat of climate change and its related consequences. Furthermore, the underlying effects of those restrictive socio-cultural norms, laws, and policy frameworks that are excluding women and youth and causing business-related constraints will not only undermine their economic activities but will continue to affect Africa's trade potential and ultimately the implementation of the AfCFTA. This adverse continental impact will result because women constitute more than 50 percent of the population of the continent and women in poor households make up a large share of informal traders. Additionally, the tendency of women to work as contributing family workers, mostly in agriculture or as survivalist entrepreneurs in the informal sector, is greater.

By recognizing those existing challenges for women in trade such as cross-border traders and those in the informal sector, the AfCFTA considers the importance of gender equality and promotes it as one of its objectives. However, only one provision in the Protocol on Trade in Services references women. This reflects the minimum

consideration given to the gender aspect of the AfCFTA during the negotiations. Considering these pre-identified gaps, including the existing structural inequalities, State Parties of the AfCFTA have also agreed to mobilise resources to improve the export capacity of service suppliers with particular attention being given to women. Additionally, the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU have also committed "to broaden inclusiveness in the operation of the AfCFTA through interventions that support African women". Accordingly, the preparatory work towards the negotiations and development of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade is being undertaken.

However, one should ask if these efforts are sufficient to fill the gaps in the implementation of the AfCFTA. Hence, by recognizing and building upon the previous findings and recommendations of GIMAC Network's Pre-Summit Consultative Meetings, the 39th Pre-Summit consultative meeting will explore those mechanisms that seek to contribute to the inclusion of women, youth and girls in the implementation agreement of the AfCFTA by identi-





“IMPROVE HEALTH AND ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND YOUTH UNDER THE AFCFTA ”

fying gender specific

gaps and challenges.

3. Objectives

The overall objective of the consultative meeting is to provide a platform for civil society to discuss opportunities in which the AfCFTA can create a gender-inclusive implementation and inspire commitment for collegial action with those AU mechanisms responsible for the implementation of the AfCFTA.


In view of this, the meeting will address questions such as: what are the main trade barriers that African women and youth face? What are the specific

impacts of the AfCFTA on the human rights of women and girls? What are the possible challenges in achieving inclusive implementation and how can these challenges be addressed? How can women, youth and girls participating in both the formal and informal sectors benefit from the AfCFTA? What are the



advantages of inclusive implementation of the AfCFTA?

The specific objectives of the meeting are to:

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- Provide an avenue for CSOs and WROs to identify the link between ongoing challenges faced by women in trade, potential new opportunities with the AfCFTA, gaps and challenges in implementing this agreement for the benefit of women and girls
 - Convey the proposals of civil society on the mechanisms to tackle structural inequalities and trade barriers that are distinct to women and youth;
 - Propose approaches that could lead to an inclusive implementation of the AfCFTA by putting inclusivity and the economic empowerment of women and youth as the core of its implementation;
 - Review the implementation arrangement of the AfCFTA, particularly those arrangements concerning the inclusion of women and youth;
 - Re-examine the efforts made and re-strategies on the role and contribution of civil society in the implementation process; and
 - Identifying those strategic entry points that would improve health and enhance the economic empowerment of women and youth under the AfCFTA such as strengthening the access to and representation of women and youth in national implementation committees as well as trade associations promoting the access to productive and financial resources, and creating access to information and knowledge on trade-related issues.



“WHAT DOES THE AFRICAN WOMEN’S MOVEMENT NEED TO DO TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN THE AfCFTA?”

4. Expected Outcomes

- Submission of the GIMAC Network recommendations on the AU theme including in the inclusion of women, youth and girls in the implementation of AfCFTA to the AU Heads of State and Government Summit in February 2023.
- Conference outcome report to support a better understanding of the gender dimension of the AfCFTA under the six GIMAC thematic areas as well as other emerging areas.
- Improved collaboration and partnerships between GIMAC Network partners to undertake projects and advocate for the inclusion of women and youth in the AfCFTA implementation.

5. Proposed Topics

- a. Creating Conducive Environment (infrastructure/technology/rights of girls, youth and women) for Integration of Women and Girls into AfCFTA. What is ‘gender equality’ in Article 3 (e) in the context of the AfCFTA? What does gender equality in AfCFTA look like? Creation of AfCFTA Protocol on



Women and Youth in Trade as a legal framework to guide Member States in the creation of an enabling environment for women and youth to leverage opportunities offered by AfCFTA - Where does this process stand? Any follow up action points?



- b. Role of Inter-Country Product information in the Acceleration of AfCFTA.
- c. Readiness Education and Capacity Building investment, and advocacy to ensure African Women and young people for effective participation in AfCFTA. What does the African women's movement need to do to accelerate progress towards gender equality in the AfCFTA? Where do we start? Do we need country self-assessments? Do we need improvement plans? How do we M & E? How do we consolidate various benchmarks and scorecards to monitor progress towards realising gender equality in AfCFTA
- d. Potential impact of AfCFTA on women's economic rights, such as entrepreneurship, wealth creation and livelihoods in the continent. What does trans-formative financing for gender look like? How can the existing challenges tampering the shift from micro to macro business opportunities for women be resolved?
- e. Role of partnership (such as AUC, CSOs, WROs, private sector, academia, UN) in the Implementation of AfCFTA. What role can the business/private sector play to accelerate gender equality in the context of AfCFTA? The business/private sector case for gender equality in the AfCFTA
- e. Free movement and trade in services under AfCFTA and what does this entail for gender equality?
- f. Other emerging issues affecting women and girls in Africa such as climate change.





6. PROPOSED STRUCTURE

YOUTH TRACK - 12 February 2023

9 GIMAC Young Women Advocacy Training -

Time 08h00 - 17h00 EAT

PRE- SUMMIT - 13 February 2023

39 GIMAC CSOs Pre Summit Meeting

Time: 08h00 - 17h00 EAT

PRE- SUMMIT - 14 February 2023

39 GIMAC CSOs Pre Summit Meeting

Time: 08h00 - 17h00 EAT

CLOSED DOOR MEETINGS - 15 February 2023

GIMAC Network Steering Committee Meeting and Partners Meeting

Time: 10h00 EAT

CLOSED DOOR MEETINGS - 16 February 2023

Empowering Women in Agriculture (EWA) High Breakfast Meeting

Time: 10h 00 EAT

7. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

The meeting will convene African civil society organisations and women rights organisations from the continent as the primary participant group. Also in attendance will be local NGOs, journalists, high level representatives from the Africa Union, UN systems, local governments and member states, policy makers and key stakeholders and other international organizations.





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- United Nations Development Programme (2022). The Engine of Trade in Africa: Amplifying the voices of women across Africa on how to make the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade work for development. UNDP. Available at: [Available here](#)





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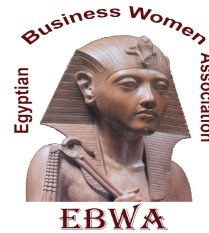


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