

# 40<sup>TH</sup>

## GIMAC Pre-Summit CSOs Consultative Meeting

Theme: Educational  
Transformation for Gender  
Equity and Sustainability





## **40th GIMAC Pre-Summit CSOs Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union and Member States**

**African Union Theme: Educate an African fit for the 21st Century:  
Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive,  
lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa**

**GIMAC Network Theme: Educational Transformation for Gender Equity  
and Sustainability**

### **Schedule Of Meetings**

#### **Tue. 13 February 2024**

- GIMAC Young Women Advocacy Training
- EWA Preparatory Meeting

#### **Wed. 14 - Thur. 15 February 2024**

- 40th GIMAC CSO Pre-Summit Meeting

#### **Fri. 16 February 2024**

- GIMAC Steering Committee and Partners Meeting
- EWA High-Level Breakfast Meeting

#### **Sat. 17 - Sun. 18 Feb 2024**

### **37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union**



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Women drive the African economy, managing SMEs that contribute approximately 60% of Africa's GDP.

## Introduction

The 40th GIMAC Pre-Summit CSOs consultative meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union and Member States is scheduled to take place from 13 – 15 February 2024 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The theme of the meeting is **“Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability.”** Education is a fundamental human right and a key driver of women’s empowerment, leading to improved health, economic growth, and the dismantling of harmful gender norms. Aligned with the African Union’s 2024 theme, ‘Educate an African fit for the 21st Century,’ this serves as a strong foundation for promoting peace, tolerance, and sustainable development. The summit is committed to enhancing education systems in Africa to provide increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning. This is guided by Agenda 2063’s vision for inclusive social and economic development, democratic governance, peace and security, as well as SDG 4 on quality education. Our goal is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in Africa.

This year’s AU theme aligns with global, continental, and national education frameworks. These include the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA),<sup>1</sup> and the Gender Equality Strategy for the Continental Education Strategy for

<sup>1</sup> Continental Education Strategy for Africa



Africa (GES4CESA), aimed at reorienting Africa's education to meet its specific needs. It is also in line with the TVET Continental Strategy 16-25, focusing on youth employment, and aligns with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, emphasizing every child's right to education for holistic development .

<sup>2</sup> Despite progress, substantial gender equality gaps persist in African education. Girls face challenges in enrollment, completion, and excellence at secondary and tertiary levels, along with underrepresentation in STEM fields (AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2018-2028).

<sup>3</sup>

Women drive the African economy, managing SMEs that contribute approximately 60% of Africa's GDP. However, their occupational choices are often restricted without primary education, limiting access to higher-earning jobs reserved for men with higher levels of education. Women also bear the burden of unpaid care work. Historical factors like patriarchy, customs, traditions, and laws perpetuate gender inequality, restricting women's access to land and property. Africa is also experiencing rapid growth in its digital economy, with digital education emerging as a key sector. African nations, regional bodies, and the African Union are establishing policies, strategies, and regulations to harness the benefits of digitalization, aiming for an Africa that thrives on science, technology, and innovation.

Africa is adopting a bottom-up approach to promote political and socio-economic development. The AU/CIEFFA is working to bridge the education gap for girls and women in Africa. The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps Program is providing opportunities for young Africans to gain valuable experience and skills.

The WYFEI 2030 initiative is aiming to unlock USD20 billion to empower women and youth economically. This initiative is aligned with the AU Declaration of years 2020 to 2030 as the Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion. The nexus between finance, education, and inclusive development is crucial. WYFEI 2030 can also have a positive impact on education indirectly by creating a more prosperous and equitable society

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<sup>2</sup> Article 11 of the ACRWC

<sup>3</sup> AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment



The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has partnered with the African Union Commission (AUC) to promote digital education and financial literacy, with a strong focus on the crucial role of digitalization. The African Union Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Trade, Industry, and Minerals proposed a Summit decision in January 2019, highlighting the paramount importance of a solid digital identity as a cornerstone for the digital economy. UN Women, ECA and other partners confidently support initiatives like the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI). AGCCI empowers young African girls with coding skills in areas such as animation, gaming, robotics, and artificial intelligence, significantly contributing to the progress of digital education in Africa.



Over 175 million children between the ages of 3 and 6 are still out of school, with sub-Saharan Africa having the highest rate of exclusion.

## II. BACKGROUND & JUSTIFICATION

In 2024, the GIMAC Network will lead CSOs in examining gender dynamics across thematic areas including human rights, governance, peace and security, economic empowerment, education, climate change and health, and the AU theme of the year - **Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa**

**Some of the key issues which need the attention of the African Union member states include:**

- **Preschool Education in Africa:** Despite policy positions favoring one year of pre-primary education in many African countries, **less than a third** of Africa's pre-primary age children are enrolled.



- **Pan Africanism Education:** Pan-African organizations use of digital media to produce educational content for both children and adults in an effort to improve learning outcomes across the continent
- **Gender-responsive education policies:** These are **critical existing inequalities** that are exacerbated by factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, which disproportionately affect girls and women.
- **Gender disparities in education:** Despite progress, **persistent gender disparities exist**, impacting girls' enrollment, performance, and completion at all levels.
- **Barriers to education:** Over 175 million children between the ages of 3 and 6 are still out of school, with sub-Saharan Africa having the highest rate of exclusion. Barriers such as poverty, **child marriage, gender-based violence** against girls including those in urban informal settlements, **humanitarian and conflict-afflicted areas**, and health-related issues like **HIV and AIDS** contribute to low retention rates. Therefore, comprehensive strategies addressing these barriers are essential to ensure all children have access to quality education.
- **Underrepresentation in STEM careers:** Women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM fields due to cultural beliefs, biases, and limited exposure to **STEM education** and careers.
- **Education in Crisis Situations:** In times of crisis, conflict, disaster, and fragile contexts, girls are disproportionally affected, and their education is hampered. Such situations further limit access to **quality education**, with damaged infrastructure, displaced teachers, and increased insecurity.
- **Technical and vocational education and training:** There are gendered dynamics within and external to TVET Institutions such as a lack of gender-responsive TVET centers, **non-inclusive teaching practices**, and **poor enrolment** of women and girls in related courses, among others. There is a need to reframe the perception of TVET as a secondary option and invest in the sector given its potential to contribute to the Africa we want.
- **Gender-responsive budgeting and financing** aims to address the specific needs of boys and girls in education by making basic education free and compulsory, including early childhood education, improving school infrastructure, and recruiting qualified teachers. Education financing is



critical to ensuring equal access to education, although challenges remain in financing affordability and full implementation of education rights.



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' by 2030.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)

### III. Objectives

The GIMAC Network's 2024 education campaign presents an opportunity to increase political ambition, commitment, and action towards achieving Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063: 'A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development'. This requires significant investment in education to develop human and social capital through an education and skills revolution that emphasizes innovation, science, and technology. Additionally, it is crucial to note that aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' by 2030. By prioritizing education and investing in human capital, we can achieve sustainable development and prosperity in Africa.

#### **The pre-summit meeting will focus on the following objectives:**

- i. To promote inclusive and equitable quality education for all Africans, with a focus on Pan-Africanism education to foster a sense of unity and shared identity across the continent.
- ii. To advocate for the implementation of AU policies on gender, education, and development.
- iii. To monitor and report on AU Member States' progress in achieving gender equality in education including



- iv. Strengthen education financing systems to ensure adequate resources for quality education for all.
- v. To amplify the voices and experiences of marginalized women and girls in education.

#### **IV. Expected Outcomes**

The expected outcomes of the pre-summit include:

1. National and continental commitments to transform education from various stakeholders;
2. Greater public engagement around and support for transforming education in Africa;
3. Greater visibility and recognition of the voices and experiences of marginalized women and girls in education-;
4. CSO's outcome document capturing the knowledge generated and recommendations by the Summit informing Gender and Youth Summit and the AU Heads of States Summit

#### **V. Proposed Structure**

- 13 February 2024 - 11th GIMAC Young Women Advocacy Training - Full Day 08h00 - 17h00
- 14 February 2024 - 40th GIMAC Network CSO Pre Summit Meeting - Full Day 1 - 08h00 - 17h00
- 15 February 2024 - 40th GIMAC Network CSO Pre Summit Meeting - Day 2 - 08h00 - 17h00
- 16 February 2024 - Empowering Women in Agriculture (EWA) High Breakfast Meeting 07h00 (tbc)
- 16 February 2024 - GIMAC Network Steering Committee Meeting and Partners Meeting 10h00 (tbc)

#### **VI. Proposed 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 representatives from local NGOs, the AUC, UN Organs and other international organisations.



## VII. References

1. Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025)
2. African Union Gender Policy (2009)
3. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)
4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
5. The Charter of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC Charter)



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