

40TH

GIMAC Pre-Summit CSOs Consultative Meeting

Theme: Educational
Transformation for Gender
Equity and Sustainability

REPORT





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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
APHRC	Africa Population & Health Research Center
ALF	Africa Leadership Foundation
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Chair
AU RECs	African Union Regional Economic ...
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GIMAC	Gender is my Agenda Campaign
GYWN	Gender Youth Women's Network
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IPC	Initiative for Peace Communication
NAFCOC	National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
OAU	Organization of African Union
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
ROO	Rules of Origin
SCRS	Strengthening Climate Resilient
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

STC	Specialized Technical Committee
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
GEA	Gender Equality in Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STEM	Science Technology E Maths
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNECA	United Nation Economic Commission for Africa
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WYFEI	Women and Youth Financial & Economic Inclusion Initiative
WGYD	Women, Gender and Youth Directorate
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development AF
WRO	Women's Rights Organization
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Network organized its 40th pre-summit consultative meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The main objective of the meeting was to engage African Union (AU) Member States on women's and girls' rights issues in alignment with various treaties, conventions, protocols, charters, strategies, and procedures. The GIMAC network focuses on themes related to the operating articles of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa GIMAC Network's 40th Pre-Summit Consultative Meetings on Gender Mainstreaming at the AU and Member States was a significant step towards addressing women's and girls' rights issues and promoting their inclusion in Education. The GIMAC Network's focus on breaking trade barriers for African women and youth is a commendable effort towards achieving sustainable development and economic growth in Africa. It is imperative that relevant stakeholders and AU organs continue to strengthen partnerships and implement solutions to address the challenges faced by women and girls in access to education. The meeting took place on the 13th to the 15th of February 2024 under the theme "Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability".

This report offers primary analysis and conclusions from the 40th Pre-Summit conference, which focused on the subject "Educational Transformation for Gender Equality." This includes a comparison of the existing standard of education on the African continent to the ideal educational environment required to realise Agenda 2063 - the 50-year vision and action plan for a prosperous and unified Africa. Although Agenda 2063 is an adaptable instrument that may be altered to meet the demands of the moment, this was the first time since the OAU that education was the AU's theme of the year. It was underlined that while Agenda 2063 is an ambitious and comprehensive roadmap for Africa, it confronts significant hurdles. While Agenda 2063 is an ambitious and comprehensive vision for Africa, it confronts significant problems such as insufficient resources for effective and

efficient implementation, as well as a lack of commitment from African leaders and member states. The three-day Summit also emphasised the need of teachers and men to participate in a holistic education approach by empowering students via positive masculinity and getting transformational educational training to prevent harmful stereotypes in the classroom.

The final GIMAC recommendations incorporated outcomes from the 11th GIMAC Youth Advocacy Training which was held on the 13th of February under the theme ... This was not just a symbolic act but personified the essence of the Summit which centred on multilevel partnerships and holistic approaches to transformative education. The GIMAC Network's 2024 education campaign provides a chance to boost political ambition, commitment, and action towards Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1: 'A prosperous Africa based on equitable growth and sustainable development'. The pre-summit meeting concentrated on providing inclusive and equitable quality education concentrating on Pan-Africanism education to develop unity and common identity throughout the continent., simultaneously promoting the implementation of AU policies on women, education, and development. The pre-summit also aimed to monitor and report on AU Member States' progress towards gender equality in education while strengthening education finance mechanisms to provide excellent education for everyone being inclusive of marginalised women and girls.

The pre-summit generated national and continental pledges to improve education, including pledges from CSOs and leaders to increase public participation, visibility, and recognition of marginalized women's and girls' experiences. The Summit also produced an education outcome document with recommendations for the Gender and Youth Summit and the AU Heads of States Summit.



Teachers should be central to this transformation, supporting gender-sensitive, responsive, and progressive quality education tailored to the African context.

1. Introduction

The 40th GIMAC Pre-Summit Meeting theme was “Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability,” and it addressed challenges in education, aligning with the African Union’s Agenda 2063, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and global education agenda, aiming to transform education to improve young women’s access to quality education. The 11th GIMAC Youth Advocacy training aimed to create a platform for young Africans to express their views on education, influence AU, UN, CSOs, and partner organizations, strengthen their knowledge and skills to advocate for education transformation in Africa, and establish a collaborative learning hub for constructive dialogue, best practices exchange, and active participation in education advocacy and innovation. The 11th GIMAC Youth Training held on the first day of the 3-day consultative meetings and focused on Youth-led inclusive Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability with approximately 150 young people physically in attendance and 20 people joining online daily the conservation was representative of the whole of Africa. The GIMAC Young Women Network (GYWN), founded in 2018, empowers

young Africans under 35 to advocate for gender equality. It unites passionate women and allies to advocate for vulnerable women's rights in governance, peace, security, human rights, health, education, economic empowerment, and emerging issues like climate change.

The GIMAC Network is pivotal in creating strategies and roadmap, as well as developing recommendations for advocacy at the AU Summit. This year's training will concentrate on steps that can be taken to improve AU Declarations' coordination and execution at the national and regional levels. Additionally, it will create a virtual community where young Africans can interact with the AU, UN, CSOs, and partner organizations while sharing their educational perspectives. Young Africans will become change agents because of the training, possessing the agency, knowledge, and skills necessary to promote reforms in education. With the purpose of promoting education advocacy and innovation, the GIMAC Network platform cultivates a culture of continuous learning through productive discourse, knowledge sharing, and cooperative action.

The 40th pre-summit consultative meeting was held from 13-15 February 2024 in Addis Ababa, in line with the AU theme for 2024 Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa. Under SDGEA Article 8, Member States have committed to "taking specific measures to ensure the education of girls and literacy of women, especially in the rural areas, to achieve the goal of "Education for All"(EFA)

Brief Summary of Deliberations and Proceedings

The GIMAC Network's 40th Pre-Summit meeting centered on the theme "Educational Transformation for Gender Equality." Discussions and plenary sessions highlighted the crucial role of education, both formal and informal, in fostering progressive development. Speakers and participants agreed that 21st-century problems require 21st-century solutions.

A key takeaway was the importance of allyship between boys, men, and teachers

in achieving gender equality and equity in education. Teachers should be central to this transformation, supporting gender-sensitive, responsive, and progressive quality education tailored to the African context. Representation must be inclusive, reflecting girls and women from all backgrounds, including those in conflict zones.

Discussants and delegates acknowledged the need for more action in Africa to solidify existing policies and ongoing work. While dynamic conversations highlighted efforts to support pregnant girls and adolescent mothers, there was a call for more case studies focusing on rural girls and women. Addressing their access to technology is crucial to ensure their inclusion in the digital revolution and the digital economy.

On the first day, Dr. Helene Yinda, representing the GIMAC Youth Network, reiterated the alignment of the GIMAC theme with the AU's theme for the year. The objective was to establish a collaborative learning space for young Africans to engage effectively. Other speakers noted the unprecedented nature of this theme since the founding of the AU and its predecessor, the OAU.

The need to hold member states accountable was emphasized. Speakers called for consultants to urge states to allocate 20% of national budgets and 6% of GDP to education at the upcoming AU summit. The current state of education on the continent was highlighted as a reason for member states and summit participants to prioritize addressing this issue. Plan International's African Union Liaison Office submitted policy recommendations for the AU. These included youth participation in AU Summits, continued education for girls in rural areas, ambitious funding commitments (20% of national budgets and 6% of GDP), curriculum reform, and gender-responsive education.

Over the course of the pre-summit meetings, other aspects surrounding education and gender equality were discussed. These included the outdated nature of the current curriculum, the critical importance of internet access in modern education, the role of digital tools in education advocacy, the state of education

financing, gender mainstreaming in education, and promoting gender-responsive education. Additionally, recommendations were made to transform education in Africa for gender equality and sustainability, with links to health, peacebuilding, and security. Notably, Haiti-Africa solidarity with GIMAC and Africa was a key recommendation.



The critical need for inclusive, affordable education accessible to all, regardless of gender or disability.

- Hon. Commissioner Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie

2. Empowering Young Africans in Education Advocacy

The 11th GIMAC Youth Advocacy Training focused on equipping young people to champion the African Union's (AU) annual theme of Education and GIMAC's objectives of transforming education for gender equality and sustainability.

The training combined plenary sessions with interactive group discussions. Discussions centered on the state of education in Africa, the role of gender equality and inclusion in education reform, and the establishment of a collaborative learning hub for young Africans. Representatives from various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and regional bodies presented their contributions to the global education agenda and the challenges they face. Participants emphasized the importance of youth participation at the AU summit and called for a greater commitment from stakeholders to include young voices.

2.1 Opening Session Highlights: The Pivotal Role of Youth

Doris Munyingi, the East African representative, and Melissa Kubvoruno,

Chairperson of the GIMAC Young Women Network, both highlighted the critical role of youth inclusion in education transformation. They emphasized that meaningful progress can only be achieved through active youth engagement in policy implementation and systemic changes, alongside education stakeholders and governments. Recognizing the importance of youth shaping their educational future, they expressed appreciation for platforms like the biannual GIMAC Network pre-summit consultative meetings.

Melissa Kubvoruno further highlighted the critical issue of internet access as a fundamental barrier to comprehensive learning in the 21st century. She urged addressing the digital divide and advocated for initiatives to reintegrate young mothers into educational systems, ensuring supportive and accommodating learning environments for their needs.

Education Takes Center Stage at 40th GIMAC Pre-Summit: The 40th GIMAC Pre-Summit focused heavily on education, a landmark theme for the African Union (AU). Panelists Dr. Helene Yinda (YWCA), Doris Mpoumou (Executive Director, Plan AULOI), and Chido Mpemba (African Union Special Youth Envoy) explored the critical role education plays in empowering youth and women, particularly in achieving the vision of Agenda 2063.

Transformative Education for Young Mothers: Dr. Yinda highlighted the challenges young mothers face, particularly the pressure to abandon education for childcare. She emphasized the need for transformative learning opportunities, advocating for open schooling models that empower these mothers to contribute to their communities and national economies.

Policy Reform and Youth Engagement: Doris Mpoumou emphasized the importance of translating education policy into action. She commended policy advancements addressing child marriage and sexual health but emphasized the need for further reform. She stressed the importance of youth participation in decision-making processes and called for a curriculum overhaul to equip youth

with the skills required for the 21st century. She also advocated for increased government investment, urging participants to hold their governments accountable for education funding. Additionally, she outlined five key recommendations from Plan AULO:

- Youth Participation in AU Summits
- Continued Education for Girls in Conflict and Rural Areas
- Ambitious Funding Targets
- Curriculum Reform
- Gender-Responsive Education

Chido Mpemba: Youth Champion for Education: The African Union Special Youth Envoy, Chido Mpemba, highlighted her work in advocating for youth participation, most recently pushing for 20 young people to attend the AU Summit. She discussed her campaign for gender-responsive education, citing Sierra Leone's free sanitary pad initiative as a success story. She emphasized the importance of partnerships, citing initiatives like the M.A.D (Make Africa Digital) campaign with Google to bridge the technology gap and upcoming online mental health services for youth. Mpemba also outlined four key initiatives from her office:

1. Advocating for a Specialized Technical Committee on Youth.
2. Appointing Youth Champions in Each Country.
3. Institutionalization of the Special Youth Envoy Office with Rotation.
4. Reviewing and Strengthening the Monitoring Committee for the African Youth Charter.

Keynote Speaker - Hon. Commissioner Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie Sounds Alarm on Girls' Education in Africa

Hon. Commissioner Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, Special Rapporteur on Rights of Women in Africa, painted a stark picture of education access in Sub-Saharan Africa. She highlighted the alarming rate of children out of school, particularly girls lagging behind boys in secondary and tertiary education. Commissioner Sallah-



Njie emphasized the critical need for inclusive, affordable education accessible to all, regardless of gender or disability. She championed gender-responsive education as a key driver of gender equality, arguing that without proper policies, the digital world will only exacerbate existing challenges like digital violence faced by women.

She urged a multi-stakeholder approach, emphasizing the state's obligation to prioritize inclusive, challenge gender norms, and engage all actors. Her closing remarks were a powerful call to action: "You are the women who will drive this transformation forward. Harness collective power, raise your voices, be bold and relentless to create a future where every girl and woman has access to quality education."

"Role of youth in light of the AU Theme of the Year 2024 on Education and beyond"

The panel, led by Edward Makumbe (AU Education Science Technology), opened by highlighting Africa's struggles with achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4

(SDG 4) on quality education. Makumbe pointed out the alarming statistic that 9 out of 10 children lack basic reading and comprehension skills. Despite mandates for increased education spending (20% of budget, 6% of GDP), funds are often diverted to security. Makumbe outlined 10 key goals (“outcomes/declarations”) the AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on education aims to achieve:

1. Improve teacher training and qualifications.
2. Strengthen STEM education and foundational learning.
3. Build capacity for teaching African history at all levels.
4. Accelerate implementation of technical and vocational education (TVET) and higher education strategies.
5. Integrate digital solutions into education systems.
6. Create healthy and conducive learning environments.
7. Protect the rights of marginalized groups, prioritizing girls’ education.
8. Enhance Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and labor market data collection.
9. Promote partnerships for education.
10. Advocate for increased sustainable financing and investment in education.

Youth: Key Players in Implementing the AU Theme: The panelists emphasized the crucial role of youth in achieving the AU’s education goals. They highlighted several areas where youth can contribute:

- **Advocacy:** Pushing for implementation of the theme, innovation in education, and increased budget allocation.
- **Peer Education & Mentorship:** Supporting fellow students and fostering a culture of learning.
- **Decision-Making:** Participating in discussions and influencing education policies such as diversity and inclusion
- **Technology Utilization:** Harnessing technology for educational advancement.

Delegates Raise Concerns: Sexuality, Monitoring, Funding:

Questions from delegates addressed several key issues:

- **Sexuality Education:** The panelists acknowledged the importance of comprehensive sex education but did not elaborate on its inclusion in curricula.
- **Monitoring Progress:** They confirmed the existence of a monitoring framework with reporting templates for member states and partners. Impact assessment would occur after three years, informing future themes.
- **Curriculum Reform:** Panelists advocated for an African-centered curriculum that promotes positive masculinity and dismantles gender stereotypes. They emphasized accessibility of all professions for girls and women regardless of background.

Championing Girls' Education: Honourable Christelle Vuanga highlighted the critical need for menstrual hygiene products as a human rights issue and a public policy priority. She also stressed the importance of private sector involvement in production and affordability of sanitary products.

Challenges and Solutions: A Multi-Layered Approach: The panel discussed the complex challenges hindering education progress:

- **Limited Funding:** Lack of resources for advocacy and curriculum development.
- **Youth Advocacy Skills Gap:** Up to 75% of youth lack training on advocating for their rights.
- **Gender Stereotypes:** Societal norms limit girls' opportunities and aspirations.
- **Intergenerational Disconnect:** Older women leaders don't always translate support to younger generations.

Success Stories and Recommendations: Parliamentary Network: Vuanga shared her experience in establishing a parliamentary network to advocate for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Honourable Judith Alfred Paul highlighted education as the key to peace and rebuilding in South Sudan.
- **Competency-Based Curriculum:** Margaret Waithiegeni emphasized the need for accessible and engaging curriculum that equip students with practical skills.

Breakout Sessions Deepen the Discussion: The afternoon saw breakout sessions

tackling specific challenges:

- **Integrating Digital Tools:** Challenges include limited internet access, especially in rural areas, and the high cost of technology. A promising solution: an app developed in Mali that disseminates educational information in local languages.
- **Transforming Education Financing:** Recommendations included increased accountability of governments and economic blocks, promoting citizen advocacy, and directing resources towards educational needs.
- **Promoting Gender Responsive Systems:** The need to address gender stereotypes and empower women through digital and financial literacy initiatives was highlighted
- **Unlocking Economic Inclusion for Women and Youth:** The session tackled the critical issue of women's and youth's financial and economic empowerment. Ms. Keiso from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) framed the discussion with a central question: "How do we measure true empowerment for women?"

She then introduced the WYFEI initiative and identified key barriers to women's financial inclusion:

- **Limited Digital Infrastructure:** Lack of policies, legislation, and advocacy around digital connectivity hinders progress.
- **Digital and Financial Literacy Gap:** Women often lack the necessary skills to navigate the digital financial landscape.
- **Exclusion from Traditional Finance:** Women have significantly lower bank account ownership compared to men.
- **Social Norms and Gender Bias:** Cultural norms and gender bias are deeply embedded in financial services and institutions.
- **Underrepresentation in Decision-Making:** Women are largely excluded from leadership roles in the financial and digital sectors.

Ms. Keiso emphasized the need for member states to establish new social contracts that prioritize both digitalization and education. She sees education as the foundation for achieving other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ECA has set an ambitious target: unlocking \$100 billion USD for 10 million women

and youth in Africa. To achieve this goal, Ms. Keiso stressed the importance of:

- **Gender-Inclusive Banking Policies:** Financial services and institutions must cater to the specific needs of women and young people.
- **Building Strong Coalitions:** Collaboration and collective action are crucial to amplify advocacy efforts.

She highlighted a successful capacity-building program in Mauritius, Lesotho, and South Africa, equipping women with skills in cyber-security, online safety, digital marketing, and regional advocacy. However, Ms. Keiso acknowledged the lack of widespread infrastructure and tools needed for women to fully participate in the digital economy, particularly regarding digital content creation and online schooling.

The session concluded by acknowledging the challenges faced by youth and women in securing government support. Ms. Keiso emphasized the importance of credible evidence in advocacy, particularly when navigating the “contested space” of gender and youth issues.

Closing Panel: Entry Points for Youth Engagement and Gender Transformation

The closing panel focused on youth engagement strategies, emphasizing advocacy and raising awareness about existing commitments and data to improve implementation. Key points included:

- **Domesticating existing commitments:** Tailoring existing educational goals and promises to specific national contexts.
- **Monitoring progress:** Tracking results and holding stakeholders accountable for achieving educational commitments.
- **Investing in gender-transformative education:** Promoting initiatives that challenge traditional gender roles and empower girls.
- **Creating spaces for marginalized groups:** Ensuring all voices are heard in

educational decision-making processes.

Dr. Lydia Namatende, a panelist, reiterated the importance of teachers in leading this educational transformation. She highlighted the need for teachers to:

- **Address negative gender stereotypes:** Identify and eliminate biased materials from the curriculum.
- **Support girls re-entering school:** Provide resources and support systems to help pregnant and parenting girls stay in school.
- **Champion sexuality education:** Advocate for culturally sensitive and relevant sex education programs.
- **Embrace an intersectional lens:** Consider the various factors that impact girls' experiences in education, including digital literacy and mental health needs.
- **Build alliances with male teachers and boys:** Promote positive gender norms and dismantle harmful stereotypes.

The panel also stressed the importance of infrastructure, including Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools. They emphasized that gender transformation efforts must be accompanied by investments in basic needs.

Representation was another critical theme. The panel called for inclusive representation that reflects the diversity of girls' and women's experiences. They highlighted the importance of research in informing effective policies at the global and regional levels.

The discussion acknowledged the challenges faced by educational systems in conflict zones, such as North Kivu. The panel called for collective action by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to advocate for peace, recognizing that a peaceful environment is essential for sustainable education. They emphasized the need for a unified message to address these challenges.

Michelle Mutogo, Interim Executive Director of the Rozaria Memorial Trust, reiterated the need to ensure girls and women in marginalized communities benefit from educational reforms. She emphasized the importance of tailoring

educational interventions to the specific contexts of these communities.

Opening 40 GIMAC Pre Summit Meeting

The 40th GIMAC conference kicked off with a powerful message from Dr. Helen Kezie-Nwoha, Executive Director of Women's International Peace and Center and Chair of the GIMAC Network. Education, she declared, is not just a right, it's the key to unlocking all others.

This year's theme, focusing on Educating an African fit for the 21st Century aligns perfectly with Agenda 2063 and the vision of a transformed Africa. Yet, Dr. Kezie-Nwoha painted a stark picture: millions of children, especially girls, remain out of school. She highlighted the critical shortage of teachers – 3.4 million needed to meet UN goals – and the persistent gender gap in STEM fields, particularly troubling in rural areas. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these inequalities, leaving over 175 million children behind. Dr. Nwoha declared: “The 40th GIMAC is here to break down barriers!”

The critical shortage of teachers – 3.4 million needed to meet UN goals – and the persistent gender gap in STEM fields, particularly troubling in rural areas.

- Dr. Kezie-Nwoha



This conference served as a springboard for action for the following:

- **Champion** the rights of girls in STEM, education, and conflict zones.
- **Amplify** the voices of women and girls, especially those with disabilities.
- **Drive** the implementation of policies promoting gender equality in education.
- **Empower** girls to participate in the digital economy.
- **Advocate** for quality education for all, especially in conflict zones and rural areas.

Dr. Kezie-Nwoha emphasized that achieving these goals requires a united front. “This is not just a women’s issue,” she declared, “It’s a call to action for everyone!” The conference serves as a powerful reminder that by working together, we can ensure all children, regardless of gender or background, have access to the education they deserve.

GIMAC Advocacy Makes Waves: The opening ceremony showcased the impact of the GIMAC Network’s advocacy efforts. Dr. Olumide Ajayi, Executive Director of the Africa Leadership Foundation (ALF), highlighted the success of their participation in a crucial consultation on the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade. “Through our continued advocacy for African women and youth in the context of the AfCFTA,” Dr. Ajayi explained, “the GIMAC Network was invited to participate in a crucial stakeholder consultation.” This invitation, he continued, “reflects the growing recognition of GIMAC’s role in ensuring the AfCFTA’s inclusive implementation.”

The consultation, held on January 25-26, 2024, in Durban, South Africa, presented a valuable opportunity. It allowed the GIMAC Network to “shape the provisions of the Protocol and contribute to meaningful participation by women and young Africans in AfCFTA trade,” Dr. Ajayi emphasized. He concluded by quoting a powerful statement: “AU cannot have a protocol on women and youth without engaging us,” Dr. Ajayi declared. “We were mandated to engage the women, and we did.”

Charting the Course for Collaboration: Setting the Stage for the 40th Pre-Summit Meeting- Round table Discussion

The roundtable discussion focused on education financing challenges and emphasized the importance of collaboration among diverse stakeholders. The panel, featuring Catherine Asego, Forum for Africa Women Educationalists (FAWE), Ms. Wangari Kinoti, Global Lead, Women's Rights and Feminist Alternatives, ActionAid, Prof. Sarah Anyang' Agbor, Emeritus Commissioner for Human Resources, Science & Technology, AUC (2017-2022), Ms. Julie Mwabe, Global Partnership for Education stressed the need to move beyond single-issue approaches. They called for a focus on dismantling structural inequalities and understanding the complex interplay of various factors.

Beyond Single Issues: Instead of addressing education financing as a siloed issue, the discussion highlighted the need to tackle **structural inequalities** and the interconnectedness of various challenges. Panelists stressed the crucial role of **domestic resource mobilization**. This includes progressive taxation measures and debt justice to address the African Union's financial constraints.

Shift the Narrative: The panel called for a reframing of education. It should be seen as an **investment** in Africa's future, not simply an expense. This necessitates ensuring a **77 billion dollar annual funding gap** is closed to meet SDG 4 targets.

Strengthening Education, Empowering Girls: The discussion focused on specific areas for collaborative action:

Strengthening Education, Empowering Girls: The discussion focused on specific areas for collaborative action:

- **Teacher training:** Invest in upskilling and development programs for educators.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Strengthen gender considerations in education planning and policy.
- **Girls' education:** Increase investment in educating girls, particularly in rural and conflict zones.

- **Cross-border partnerships:** Foster collaboration between governments to leverage expertise and resources

Beyond the Usual: Wangari Kinoti, from ActionAid, highlighted the need to expand the definition of a healthy economy. It should include care economy considerations and prioritize the knowledge and expertise of women farmers.

Transformative Education: The Global Partnership for Education emphasized the importance of alternative economies and measuring societal well-being through



Increase investment in educating girls, particularly in rural and conflict zones.

human and environmental factors. Panelists also cautioned against simply replicating failed education models from other contexts. Instead, they advocated for curricula that are context-specific and address the unique needs of girls and gender equality.

The discussions concluded with a call for the GIMAC Network to engage in active dialogue with decision-makers. This collaboration will be vital in addressing the challenges faced by girls and women in education. By embracing technology, digital platforms, and green energy solutions, stakeholders can empower girls and contribute to achieving the goals of Agenda 2063.

High Level Panel on Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability

This high-level panel tackled a critical issue: achieving gender equity in education for a more sustainable and prosperous Africa. Here are the key takeaways:

- **Closing the Infrastructure Gap:** Ms. Melissa, representing the GIMAC Young Women's Network, highlighted the need for schools, financial literacy programs,

and vocational training in rural and remote areas.

- **Investing in Teachers:** Dr. Sihaka Tsemo of UNAIDS emphasized the importance of well-trained and well-compensated teachers, particularly for comprehensive sex education and combating gender-based violence. UNAIDS Liaison Office to the African Union, highlighted the importance of adolescent women and girls, who account for 63% of new HIV infections. She emphasized the need for comprehensive sexual education, safer practices, and combating GBVF to reduce HIV spread. In 2019, five UN organizations launched the “Education Plus” initiative, a 5-year global strategy involving AU, donors, and girls’ movements. The initiative has gained momentum in 15 African countries, including Ghana, raising the minimum marriage age from 15 to 18 years for women, involving over 11,000 adolescent girls in 18 high-level dialogues, and managing learner pregnancy impacting over 17 million girls aged 10-19. Tsemo emphasized the need for government spending on education as a fundamental human right for a more equitable society
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- **Empowering Girls, Reducing Poverty:** Miss Tikikel, from UN Women, stressed that education is key to reducing poverty for women and girls across Africa. The upcoming Summit of the Future in 2024 is focusing on closing the gender gap in education to address poverty in Africa. Despite African economies growing steadily, there is limited investment in promoting girls and women’s education. Political commitment is essential for funding, and gender-sensitive budgets must be enforced. Barriers to tertiary education, particularly STEM fields, must be closed, and local communities should be empowered to run their own schools. Women should be at the centre of local schools’ leadership, and dropout rates should be reduced. Partnerships with private sector partnerships and gender-responsive education alternatives are needed for consistent funding and a more integrated future for Africans. This will help create a prosperous future for all. She also emphasised the need for gender-responsive budgets and public-private partnerships as essential for consistent funding and educational alternatives.
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Education empowers women, protects human rights, and promotes democracy. However, girls are underrepresented in secondary education and STEM fields.

- Marcel Clement Akpovo



- **STEM Education for Girls:** Mr. Marcel Clement Akpovo called for closing the gap in STEM education, where girls are often underrepresented. Mr Akpovo emphasized the importance of education as a fundamental human right and a key to development. He believes that achieving quality education is essential for reducing poverty and promoting healthy, sustainable lives. Education empowers women, protects human rights, and promotes democracy. However, girls are underrepresented in secondary education and STEM fields, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this issue. Akpovo advocated for legal and policy instruments to address the gender equality gap, sharing lessons learned and advocating for concrete recommendations for member states. He also highlighted the need for political will to address challenges in Africa, as African states have failed to meet their primary obligations. He calls on leaders to prioritize these obligations, even in the face of debt burdens.
- **Scaling Up Solutions and Digital Transformation:** Mme Nefertiti Tshibanda highlighted existing initiatives that can be scaled up, like teacher training and online learning programs. She highlighted that 617 million school-aged children lack basic mathematics competence, which is crucial for employment. She noted that their initiative aimed to create inclusive environments for girls

and boys, improving capacities of stakeholders through teacher training. She noted that scaling up initiatives was necessary, as solutions already exist. She added that they offered mobility programs and online programs for teachers in francophone spaces to enhance learning of the French language and gender sensitivity. The initiative also focuses on digital transformation, training multiple countries, and engaging in dialogue between states to focus on current skills demand, and future fields, connecting youth with employers. Mme Tshibanda also emphasized the need for digital skills training and dialogue between states to ensure curricula meet current and future job demands.

The panel concluded by commending GIMAC Network for its work and stressing the importance of women's participation in achieving gender equality and sustainable development in Africa.

Keynote Speaker - H. E. Mme Bineta Dlop representing **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson, African Union Commission - Education for All: A Call to Action for Africa's Future. Madam Diop, representing the African Union Commission, issued a powerful call to action at the GIMAC conference.** She emphasized the transformative power of education for women's rights and Africa's economic future. However, she acknowledged the stark realities: disparities in access, completion rates, and quality of education, along with critical teacher shortages. **Madam Diop didn't shy away from the challenges.** She called for a **comprehensive education strategy** that addresses the specific needs of girls in fragile countries, those displaced by conflict, and those living with disabilities. She emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of peace within the education system, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. **But her message wasn't just about fixing problems,** it was about creating a brighter future. She envisions a transformed education system that equips all students, regardless of background, with the skills they need to thrive in the digital economy. **Madam Diop concluded by commending GIMAC** for its accountability and its commitment to gender equality. She emphasized that **women's full participation in the peace process** is essential for achieving sustainable development across Africa.

Educational Transformation for Gender Equity and Sustainability

The session moderator Fraciah Kagu, FAWE tackled the complex issue of girls' education in Africa. While the good news is achieving **gender parity in access**, the bad news is **the high dropout rate (45%)** due to unintended pregnancies among girls aged 15-19 (FAWE stats).

The Challenges of Reintegration: Breakfree Alliance and Graca Machel Trust shed light on the struggles girls face when trying to return to school after pregnancy, especially in war zones.

- **Malawi's Success:** Comprehensive sexuality education (Breakfree Alliance) empowered girls with knowledge and access to safe sex resources, boosting their confidence.
- **The Importance of Education:** The Graca Machel Trust emphasized that educating girls improves healthcare and fuels economic growth.

Obstacles to Reintegration: While education is key, there are roadblocks to overcome:

- **Crowded Classrooms:** Packed schools leave little room for personalized learning.
- **Teacher Issues:** Traditional, teacher-centered methods limit student participation.
- **Teacher Shortages:** Low teacher-student ratios make it hard for teachers to give proper attention to everyone.
- **Unmotivated Teachers:** Lack of incentives for teachers can dampen their enthusiasm.

Building a Better System: To overcome these hurdles, community-led solutions in partnership with the government are crucial. The Graca Machel Trust's experience scaling successful programs in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania highlights the need for:

- **Age-appropriate approaches:** Tailoring solutions to girls' specific age needs.
- **Community involvement:** Building on community strengths and initiatives.



We need to work for an inclusive education system in Africa that guarantees access to education for all.

- Mr. Yougbare

- **Learning from others:** Seeking best practices across countries that have successfully implemented these programs.

Civil Society and Policy Advocacy: Mr. Yougbare emphasizes the vital role of civil society organizations (CSOs):

- **National Reports:** CSOs need to develop reports advocating for girls' education at the national level.
- **Policy Alignment:** Ensure national education policies align with the continental African Education Strategy (2016-2025) and AU's gender equality strategy.
- **Stronger Partnerships:** Collaborate with government and other stakeholders to remove barriers for girls and women.
- **Lobbying for Girls:** CSOs must push for the AU's "Africa Educate Her" initiative to ensure girls can return to school after pregnancy.
- **Transforming Education:** We need to work for an inclusive education system in Africa that guarantees access to education for all.

To address the challenges of unintended pregnancies and reintegration, key recommendations emerged from this session including: African Union Member States should

- Prioritize adopting age-appropriate CSE programs to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices.
- Provide more comprehensive training for teachers on delivering accurate and effective CSE, ensuring they feel confident tackling sensitive topics.

- Implement targeted outreach programs specifically designed for diverse geographic locations, ensuring girls from remote areas also have access to vital CSE education and lastly
- The AU should compile a comprehensive report on the current state of CSE education across Africa and
- Establish a follow-up mechanism for a year-end assessment by all stakeholders to track progress and identify areas for improvement on CSE

The recommendations aim to create a more effective and collaborative approach to CSE, empowering young women and ensuring their access to quality education.

3. Women's Voices on Education and Emerging Challenges in Africa

Kilimanjaro Women Speak Up 'The Kili Moments': The Africa Kilimanjaro Women's Farmers Forum (Akiwoff) forum, a platform for African women farmers, held a meeting to discuss the vital role of education in overcoming challenges faced by women farmers on the continent. These women, who make up a staggering 75% of Africa's small-scale farmers, highlighted the need for both education and entrepreneurial skills.

Sudan in Crisis: Ms. Suzan Hussein Alahmar Koko from the Sudanese Women's Development and Environment Organization brought urgent attention to the devastating humanitarian crisis in Sudan. She emphasized the need to prioritize women's rights and address the ongoing violence.



4.2 million

women at risk of sexual violence.

14 million

children needing humanitarian aid



19 million

million school-aged children
potentially missing out on education.

Sudan Hidden Plight

Hidden Plight: The Sudanese crisis has gone largely unreported, leading to human rights abuses like sexual violence, forced child marriages, and mass killings. Millions of women and children are deeply affected, with 4.2 million women at risk of sexual violence, 14 million children needing humanitarian aid, and 19 million school-aged children potentially missing out on education. Sudanese women urged GIMAC network to amplify their voices to:

- End the conflict in Sudan.
- Stop violence against civilians.
- Fund education initiatives for women and girls, both formal and informal.
- Ensure the AU upholds the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Charter on Democracy.

The GIMAC Network stands in solidarity with Sudanese women and calls for innovative solutions for education and gender transformation in conflict zones.

African Women Gender Awards Ceremony

The Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC Network) hosted a luncheon featuring the prestigious African Women Pioneer Awards (AWPA). The ceremony served as a platform to acknowledge exceptional women and men who have championed gender equality across Africa. Karishma Rajoo, General Manager and Vice Chairperson of GIMAC Network and General Manager of Programmes at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), moderated the event.

Dr. Vera Songwe, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), was an honoree. Madame Bineta Diop graciously accepted the award on her behalf.

Other distinguished awardees included Ms. Awa Ndiaye Seck, an independent gender expert and former UN Women Representative, and Ms. Karen Ondwasi, the First Chairperson of the GIMAC Young Women Network.

This ceremony exemplifies GIMAC Network's commitment to fostering a culture of gender equality in Africa. By celebrating these inspiring individuals, GIMAC hopes to encourage continued leadership and action towards a more equitable future.

Breakaway Sessions I: Nutrition Centric Humanitarian Development And Peace Nexus A Link To A Sustainable Education And Health For All

Facilitator John Otieno, Action Against Hunger • Dr Thelma Awori, Board Chair institute for Social Transformation and GIMAC Network Thematic Cluster of Climate Change, German and Dutch Embassy Representatives • Ms. Ritah Kabanyoro- Country Director, Action Against Hunger (ACF)- Uganda Office.

While the title suggested a focus on nutrition and humanitarian development, Breakaway Session I delved deeper, exploring the critical role of gender equality in achieving both education and peace. John Otieno of Action Against Hunger facilitated the discussion, which brought together a diverse group of stakeholders.

The Challenge: Malnutrition's Disproportionate Impact on Girls: A key concern raised was the disproportionate impact of malnutrition on girls. Ms. Ritah Kabanyoro, Country Director of Action Against Hunger (ACF) in Uganda, shared data highlighting how hunger hinders girls' cognitive development and school attendance. This not only limits their educational opportunities but also perpetuates cycles of poverty.

The Solution: Educating Girls Through a Gender Lens: The session then explored a powerful solution: investing in girls' education through a gender-focused lens. Dr. Thelma Awori, Board Chair of the Institute for Social Transformation and GIMAC Network Thematic Cluster of Climate Change, discussed initiatives like the Empowering Women in Agriculture (EWA) program. These programs promote food security and agricultural practices that empower women farmers. By improving household nutrition and supporting women's economic security, such initiatives indirectly support girls' education.

Collaboration is Key: International Efforts and Inclusive Strategies:

Representatives from the German and Dutch embassies highlighted ongoing international efforts. They detailed their financial and technical support for gender-responsive education and nutrition interventions in developing countries. They also mentioned their collaboration with Action Against Hunger to improve health outcomes across Africa.

The session emphasized the importance of integrating these efforts. By fostering collaboration between governments, NGOs, and international donors, participants agreed that more inclusive strategies can be developed. These strategies would empower all children, especially girls, to access quality education and healthcare. Ultimately, this collaborative approach will drive progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a more equitable future.

Breakout Session II: African Feminist Alternatives to Financing a Resilient Education System for Transformative Learning of Women and Girls in Africa.

The panellists during the session were: Ms. Julie Juma a Program Manager for the Education Out Loud Programme at the Global Campaign for Education; Ms. Regina Navuga, Program Coordinator for Tax Justice and DRM at SEATINI Uganda; Ms. Angela Mulenga, the Country Director for CUTS International in Zambia and Dr. Amany Asfour the President Africa Business Council and the board chairperson of FEMNET. The session was moderated by Ms. Grace Namugambe, an Economic and Justice Rights Officer at FEMNET.

The panel tackled the challenges hindering access to education financing for women and girls. They explored how these limitations impact their overall well-being and future prospects.

A central theme emerged: the potential of progressive financing systems, particularly taxation, to bridge the funding gap. The discussion focused on the current shortcomings of African tax systems and, from a Pan-African Feminist perspective, proposed adjustments to fiscal policies. These adjustments aim to achieve transformative education, but not just any kind.

Decolonizing education for the economic empowerment of African women necessitates a complete overhaul. The current system must be questioned and reshaped to ensure it is inclusive, representational, and aligned with the specific needs and ambitions of African women. This means a system that moves beyond colonial legacies and equips women with the knowledge and skills to thrive in the modern African economy.

The panel stressed the importance of strong government fiscal policies that contribute to equitable financing for this gender-transformative education system. With the majority of tax systems in Africa rooted in neoliberalism and colonialism, governments must take a deep look inward. They need to revise their tax structures to ensure they are truly gender-responsive.

This requires a multi-pronged approach:

- **Progressive and gender-responsive tax systems:** Governments need to implement systems that close revenue leakage points. This includes curbing illicit financial flows through measures like anti-corruption efforts, regulating tax incentives and exemptions, and revising tax laws to close loopholes exploited by Multinational Companies for tax avoidance and evasion. Additionally, the wealthy should be taxed equitably.
- **Structured citizen engagement:** Governments should create spaces for open dialogue with citizens, particularly ensuring equal participation and representation of women and girls in these discussions on fiscal policy.
- **Affirmative action for education investment:** Resources must be directed towards both formal and informal education systems. Investments in informal education are just as crucial in empowering women and girls across Africa.

Emphasizing the role of the state remains critical. By ensuring strong government involvement, we can prevent the commodification of education and ensure that the systems available are responsive to the specific needs of women and girls across the continent. Only through a collaborative effort, with a focus on dismantling

Achieving both education and peace rests heavily on ensuring equal opportunities for girls.



colonial legacies and building a truly inclusive education system, can we achieve transformative change for African women and girls.

Presentation from Breakout Sessions and Discussions

Breakout Session I: shared that they explored the critical link between gender equality, education, and peace in Africa. Participants discovered that achieving both education and peace rests heavily on ensuring equal opportunities for girls. Malnutrition disproportionately impacts girls, hindering their ability to learn and attend school. However, the session also identified a powerful solution: investing in girls' education through a gender lens. Programs like EWA demonstrate how empowering women farmers can indirectly support girls' education by improving household nutrition. The participants from the group urged all stakeholders to collaborate on developing inclusive strategies that prioritize gender equality in education.”

Breakout Session II: The session tackled the critical issue of financing a gender-transformative education system for African women and girls. Limited access to funding hinders their well-being and future. However, progressive tax systems

offer a promising solution. By reforming current African tax structures, rooted in colonialism, there is a need to create a more equitable system. But reform alone is not enough. Participants were called to decolonize education itself, ensuring it is inclusive and empowers women with the skills they need to thrive in the modern African economy. A call was made on governments to implement these reforms and actively engage

Recap of Previous Day Ms. Catherine Asego and Mr. Kossi Tsenou, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

Catherine Asego and Mr. Kossi Tsenou discussed the importance of education as an investment and the need for governments to allocate budgets for education instead of security. They also emphasized the need for fair taxation and the need for progressive tax systems across Africa. They also highlighted the stigma surrounding pregnant adolescent women and emphasized the importance of investing in formal education through TVET and VTC.

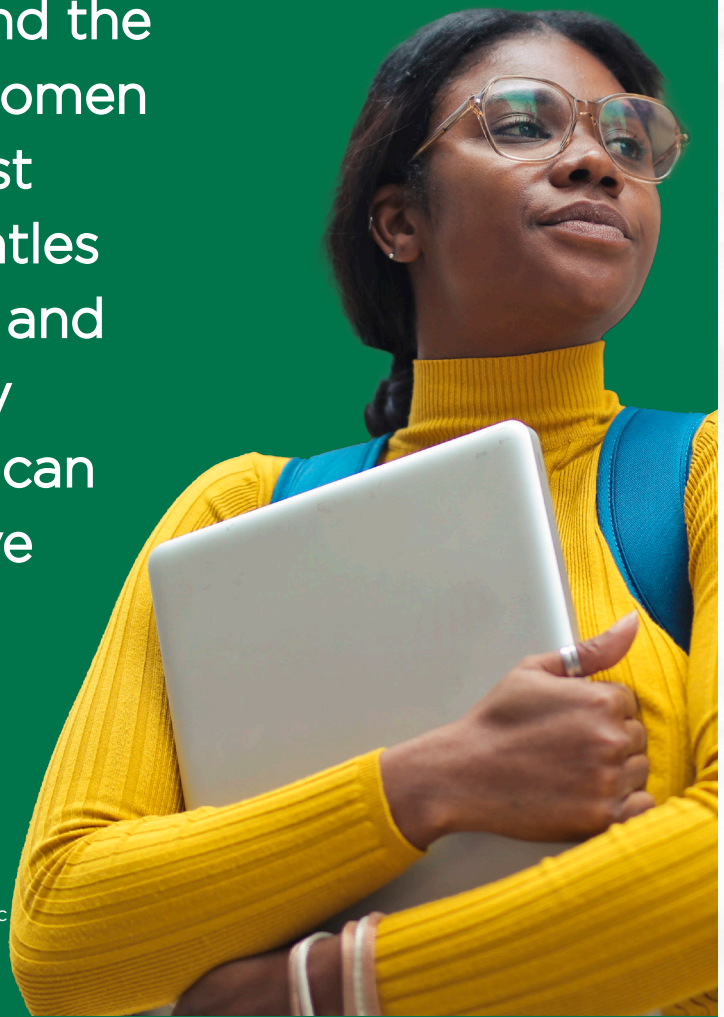
Governance and Leadership Strategies for Gender Transformative and Inclusive Educational System in Africa:

Moderator: Dr Olumide Ajayi, Executive Director, Africa Leadership Foundation and Dr. Mactar Seck, Chief of Section, Innovations & Technologies Section (TCND), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and Ms. Jean Ngobi, Programme Officer, Akina Mama wa Afrika as panelists.

Dr. Mactar Seck, Chief of Section, Innovations & Technologies Section (TCND), United Nations Economic Commission opened his presentation by highlighting the critical role education plays in Africa's development. However, a major obstacle exists: the digital divide. A staggering 500 million people lack legal identification, with women and girls disproportionately affected. This lack of documentation hinders their participation in the digital economy, where women are already underrepresented. Statistics show only 20% of IT professionals and 6.7% of STEM workers are women.

We need to understand the different disparities women face and use a feminist approach that dismantles patriarchal structures and empowers women. By working together, we can create a more inclusive digital future for all African women and girls.

- Dr. Mactar Seck, Chief of Section, Innovations & Technologies Section (TCND), United Nations Economic Commission



The digital divide hits rural areas especially hard. To bridge this gap, Dr. Seck emphasized the need for collaboration between various groups – police, civil society, trainers, and teachers. Equipping teachers with gender-sensitive tools and training on technology integration is crucial. Additionally, learning from successful initiatives like those in Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa can offer valuable insights into best practices for promoting gender equality in digital education.

Dr. Seck then showcased some of the UN Economic Commission for Africa's (ECA) initiatives. Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in the digital economy, they aim to train 50,000 girls aged 12-15 in basic AI, IoT, and 3D printing skills. They've already developed over 300 projects! Another program, Tech Africa Women, empowers women entrepreneurs.

However, Dr. Seck acknowledged challenges like poor policies and inadequate education, with 39% of the population lacking diplomas and struggling to find

jobs. To address this, ECA is supporting the development of the Rwanda African Centre of STEM and an Artificial Intelligence Centre in Congo. Additionally, they promote positive masculinity and responsible technology use.

Dr. Seck concluded by emphasizing the importance of recognizing women's diversity in planning for their inclusion. We need to understand the different disparities women face and use a feminist approach that dismantles patriarchal structures and empowers women. By working together, we can create a more inclusive digital future for all African women and girls.

Ms. Jean Ngobi, Programme Officer at Akina Mama wa Afrika, advocates for a feminist approach to education for a just system for women and girls in Africa. She highlights the issue of 16 million girls being out of school and only 43% female teachers in primary schools. To address gender in education, she suggests examining the root causes of societal oppression, power dynamics, cultural attitudes towards women, and intersectional issues. She also suggests gender budgeting approaches for intersectional needs of all women and girls, political will, intersectionality, accessibility, and inclusive planning. Ngobi emphasizes the need for political leaders to monitor and implement these changes, as well as understanding women across the spectrum.

Peace education as a driver of continental peace and security: the role of civil society.

Moderator: Ms. Coumba Fall Venn, Executive Director, Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), Ms Blantine (Yerimia), Initiative for Peace Communication, Ms Lwandile Moyo, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Mr Mars NAAHP Advisory Board, Former Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism and President of Danielle Saint-Lot Haiti Women's Foundation Ms. Danielle Saint-Lôt. Haitian Women, **Ms. Rizalatou Santanna ep Attoh, Women in Law, and Development (WILDAF) - West Africa**

Africa is vulnerable due to its rapid population pace, impacting education. Initiative for Peace Communication (IPC) in Erimia, South Sudan, has trained local people and established peace structures, including peace schools for conflict resolution.

Women networks have been trained and established at national and local levels, enabling them to lobby, advocate, and present to regional and international bodies. Early warning systems have been developed through community respondents, and a peace working group has been established to bring together local government and civil society. However, the capacity of women-led and youth organizations must be enhanced for effective community engagement and continued sensitization. Funding is crucial for supporting women led CSOs.

Ms Lwandile Moyo from the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) highlighted the 31 peace initiatives supported by 31 women peace builders across Africa. These initiatives focus on local peace building, promoting soft skills, infrastructural support, and policy knowledge. However, language barriers and data and internet access remain challenges, necessitating peer-to-peer learning and localization of policy training.

Mr Mars represented the NAAHP Advisory Board, Former Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism and President of Danielle Saint-Lot Haiti Women's Foundation Ms. Danielle Saint-Lôt. Haitian Women discussed how Haiti was still in the democratization process as there has been a rise in gangsterism because of the lack of the state/armed forces which was dismantled in 1995 and most of the country is controlled by gangs. The Haitian government had requested international assistance, including 300 Kenyan police officers, to address the ongoing stalemate of kidnappings. The goal of the Haitian delegation was to break isolation and build relationships while also learning best case examples. "Engaging Haitian women in politics is also crucial, as 40% of single households are led by women" said Mr Mars and he noted that a police mission should not be the defining relationship between Haiti and Africa.

The report recommends petitioning the peace and security head at the AU to intervene in Haiti's ongoing conflict and extreme gangsterism. It emphasizes the need for African solidarity through GIMAC and across African states. Strategic collaboration is key for policy adoption, advocating with nation decision-makers.

The report also highlights the importance of building strategic relationships through discussions on platforms like GIMAC. Training youth on conflict prevention and education in a peace context is suggested. Networks like GIMAC can be used for training, implementation, and advocacy on specialized initiatives. The report also suggests considering two languages as continental languages to reduce conflict and disparities in educational transformation.

Inclusion and Gender Equality: Education as a Human Right!

Moderator: Ms. Hannah Forster, Executive Director, African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS).

Marta Teshome, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasizes the importance of the right to education as a fundamental human and socio-economic right. She believes that governments should be held accountable for their policies, as it supports all other rights. The right to education is also an empowerment right, allowing parents to take their children to institutions that support their religious rights and academic freedom for teachers and students. Governments are the primary executors of this right, but multisectoral regional bodies and civic society can also enforce it as a human right.

The SRHR Trust Africa Trust Malawi's country coordinator, Judith Pangani, highlights the value of education as a human right and works to ensure that everyone has access to it as stipulated by legal regional and national treaties. She promotes high-quality sexual reproduction education for youth by highlighting the connection between SRHR and education. Pangani also highlighted the 40 teenage girls and young people who have taken the lead locally in promoting gender equality, calling on the government to support laws that advance gender equality, and encouraging equal power across all sectors.

The recommendations include addressing issues with WASH facilities in schools, addressing secondary enrolment dominated by boys, allocating government budgets for WASH infrastructure, and constructing disability-friendly infrastructure,



20 million

children are out of school due to poor teacher quality, lack of tools, and inadequate access to education, exacerbated by the digital divide.

- Rizalatou Santanna ep Attoh of The Women in Law and Development (WILDAF)

while bringing policy and practice into the discussion for implementation.

Ms. Rizalatou Santanna ep Attoh of The Women in Law and Development (WILDAF) - West Africa campaign, “Equality in Sahel,” aims to empower women and girls in West Africa by promoting their rights to essential services, targeting state and development partners, and training influencers to advocate for their access to SRHR.

Over 20 million Nigerian 20 million children are out of school due to poor teacher quality, lack of tools, and inadequate access to education, exacerbated by the digital divide. The recommendations include promoting gender-sensitive education, creating digital platforms for women to see models, and monitoring and highlighting local realities using human rights mechanisms. Schools should integrate human education into their curriculum, and citizens should be informed about institutions protecting human rights. CSOs and states should raise awareness about human rights laws and treaties, and budgets should be gender sensitive. States should modernize education and respect the advancements made in transformational and modern education, ensuring that young girls and women are aware of these rights.

Promoting Gender Equality in Africa: A Holistic Approach through Education, Sustainable Agriculture, and Climate Change Mitigation

Dr. Amany Asfour, President of the Africa Business Council and Egyptian Business Women Association, emphasized the triad of personal empowerment which

is programs, policies and productivity and the need for a holistic approach to financial inclusion, including addressing 40% of government procurement going to the private sector inclusive of SMEs women and youth, and changing mindsets



We want economic and empowerment because we want power of choice and voice.

across society, the state, and schools regarding gender equality and climate justice.

To address women's issues in the agricultural sector, Dr. Hirut Bekele Haile, a key player in the Strengthening Climate Resilient (SCRS) WaSH project, emphasizes the significance of incorporating indigenous methods in education. He suggests that collaborations with a range of stakeholders—such as donor organizations, the private sector, governments, and technology institutes—can guarantee that women farmers engage in the field and advance intelligent farming. To support learning and accessibility in the marketplace, he also emphasizes the need for creative skills, supportive policies, financial services, and technology institutions. The lead for Oxfam's transformative education policy and program in Africa, Eduard Beukman, highlights the importance of robust educational systems and the relationship between food security and climate rights. He proposes using digital technology to give educators and community organizations the tools they need to address inequality in TVETs and build new networks. Beukman also emphasizes the significance of dispelling myths and helping with access in the wake of the event.

Lily Singelengele, CEO of the Green Agriculture Youth Organization (Zambia), highlighted the significance of gender transformation in agriculture. She promotes women's active participation in the creation of public policy and raises awareness

of climate change. She places a strong emphasis on the necessity of giving women farmers a voice via forums and associations as well as mentoring to transfer skills. She also promotes innovation and thought leadership while fighting for equal rights for women in farming. She draws attention to the ways in which donor organizations and multisectoral partners—such as the government and civil society—amplify their voices and offer technical support.

The National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC) Chairperson, Chwayita Zituta, highlighted the significance of giving women access to accurate and pertinent information. Even in the face of abuse, she thinks that teaching women business development skills can boost their self-esteem and lower their chance of experiencing abuse.)

Launching of Transforming Education Financing in Africa Briefing Paper: Susan Otieno, Country Director, ActionAid Kenya

Ms. Otieno from Action Aid Kenya discussed the challenges faced by Kenya's free primary education system, particularly in addressing gender concerns. Despite government commitments to 100% transition, infrastructure remains a challenge. The adoption of free sanitary towels and materials is subject to availability, which often impacts girls. The competency-based curriculum is being adopted, but secondary schools are not yet prepared to accommodate younger students. The affirmative agenda law aims to ensure significant female teachers and leaders. The policy on returning pregnant girls to school is crucial, but monitoring and tracking the experiences of these girls is also important. Infrastructure and human infrastructure must be considered, as well as parents' income and alternative support for out-of-school girls. Accelerated learning, catch-up centres, and TVET should be established to support mothers with children. Insecurity in Africa impacts education for girls, and leaders must address issues such as closing schools, tribalism, child rape, and climate change. The conversation should shift from adaptation to carbon credit, linking it to neocolonialism.

Comprehensive Education: A Strategy for Advancing Gender Equity and Sustainability

Moderator: Mary Kimemia, IPAS Africa Alliance. Panelists Ms. Chwayita Zituta, Chairperson. National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC), Ms. Isabellah Mutuku, Communications Officer, Africa Population & Health Research Center (APHRC), Ms. Alice Mirimo Kabetsi, Directrice Générale du Fonds National de Promotion et de Service Social (FNPSS) DRC - ONLINE

The Africa Population & Health Research Center (APHRC) communications officer, Ms. Isabellah Mutuku, reported that 49% of students dropout of school because of family conflict, poverty, and a lack of preventative measures. While three-quarters of these girls do not want to attend the same school, half of them do want to return. The following are essential to address this: financial support, socio-psychological support, accurate sexual reproduction materials, health and sexual reproduction education, WASH, SRHR, and access to healthcare systems. Leader Malado of Mali is an advocate for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education for children 13 years of age and up, with the goal of lowering the risk of unintended pregnancy. She stresses how crucial it is for parents to have open and honest conversations about sex and sexual reproduction with their kids. It is recommended that parents talk about menstrual cycles before talking about SRH. In addition, cooperation is sought for inclusive education, guidance, counselling, and psycho-social and mental health support policies. To implement CSC in keeping with the AU theme, it also aims to collaborate with teachers and increase awareness among elders, religious, and traditional leaders. It is recommended that parents become more aware of sexual violence because it can result in teenage pregnancy.

The National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NAFCOC) Chairperson, Chwayita Zituta, highlights the value of cooperation and partnerships in advancing women's rights. She recommends collaborating with traditional leaders and reviewing laws that restrict women's access to land ownership. Advocates and teacher collaboration are two ways that Isabellah Mutuku, Communications Officer at the Africa Population & Health Research Center

(APHRC), suggests keeping schools open. Her three recommendations are to empower community-based organizations, obtain concrete evidence from all relevant parties, and engage in vigorous advocacy. To eradicate stigma, she also stresses the significance of working in conjunction with healthcare professionals in rural and distant areas. She also supports the creation of safe spaces and the protection of young girls. She advocates for inclusive research, bettering education results, and lowering the number of young marriages. She recommends establishing laws that make menstrual hygiene.

Closing Ceremony and Presentation of Recommendations to AUC Representatives

The 40th GIMAC Pre-Summit concluded with a powerful message from Mme Prudence Ngwenya, Director of the AUC Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate. She emphasized the critical need for gender equality in education, acknowledging the remaining challenges despite progress made. Millions of girls across Africa still lack access to schooling.

While commending African governments' commitment through Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, the Director praised innovative initiatives like WYFEI 2030 and the 1Million Next Level program. However, she stressed the crucial role of civil society organizations such as GIMAC Network, in advocating for change, implementing programs, and holding governments accountable.

The AUC WGY Directorate pledged to escalate the recommendations from the 3-days gathering to various AUC policy processes and platforms. Ms Ngwenya urged all stakeholders to “participate in this endeavor, not just as participants, but as leaders. By working together, sharing best practices, and holding ourselves accountable, we can achieve gender equality, empower girls and women, and deliver transformative education for every child in Africa. The future is bright, but

action is needed. Let us build it together!”

The closing ceremony echoed the call for renewed efforts to keep girls in school, ensure quality education for all, and empower women educators. Strong collaboration between stakeholders is essential to achieve gender equality in education and unlock its transformative potential for Africa’s future.

Recommendation key points: on Haiti Africa solidarity with GIMAC Network:

1. Getting Haiti on the African Union Agenda:

- Engage with Madam Diop to discuss how to raise Haiti’s profile within the African Union.
- Explore avenues for formal inclusion, such as proposing Haiti-related sessions or resolutions during AU meetings.

2. Understanding Kenya’s Involvement in Haiti:

- Investigate why Kenya is going to Haiti and who authorized their mission.
- Gather intelligence on Kenya’s mandate and objectives in Haiti.

3. African Women’s Mission to Haiti:

- Leverage the UN Mission in the North as a safe space for African women’s engagement in Haiti.
- Promote collaboration between African women leaders and Haitian counterparts.

4. Citizen and Diaspora Directive (CIDO):

- Utilize the CIDO directorate within the AU as an entry point for Haiti-related initiatives.
- Advocate for diaspora involvement in Haiti’s development.

5. GIMAC Network Report and African Union Radar:

- Highlight Haiti’s presence on the AU radar through the GIMAC report.
- Identify allies and champions within the AU who can advocate for Haiti.

6. Engaging with Francophone Partners:

- Recognize the critical role of Francophone countries in bridging AU-Haiti relations.
- Foster engagement with Francophone trade unions and leaders.

7. Online Meetings and Strategic Direction:

- Emphasize the importance of online meetings to bolster strategy.
- Seek strategic direction from Madam Diop and compile a report with actionable recommendations.

8. Mapping International Actors:

- Identify key international actors involved in Haiti's development.
- Collaborate with organizations like Action Against Hunger.

9. High-Level Meetings:

- Arrange meetings with President Madam Joyce Banda to discuss Haiti-Africa cooperation.
- Explore potential meetings with former Nigerian President Obasanjo and President Sirleaf Ellen Johnson.

10. Long-Term Perspective:

- Consider long-term security, dialogue, and economic opportunities in Haiti-Africa relations.

Annex

40 GIMAC Outcome Statement accessed here <https://www.genderismyagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Outcome-Document.pdf>

Conclusion

The GIMAC network has observed progress in the implementation of their recommendations, particularly when member states and Regional Economic Communities work together towards achieving Agenda 2063's goal of making the continent a global, inclusive, and sustainable powerhouse. However, the challenge remains of how to compel member states to stick to and implement the African Union's decisions, resolutions, and positions. The GIMAC Network has shared over 40 outcome statements with the African Union Women, Gender and Youth Directorate for discussion at the Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Meetings. These recommendations have been shared with key decision-making bodies of the AU and member states for consideration in major policy spaces, and members have used them as advocacy tools in various decision-making spaces, including AU Summits and AU-RECs Coordination Meetings.

The efforts of the network have resulted in key milestone achievements, including the adoption of the SDGEA by the Heads of State at their July 2004 Summit, the appointment of the first female chair of the African Union Commission in 2013, and the appointment of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security (2014) and AU Envoy for the Youth (2018). However, it is important to continue tracking and monitoring the effectiveness of the network's advocacy efforts by evaluating the level of recognition, adoption, and endorsement of the recommendations in continental and regional policy decisions and analysing their impact in creating desired policy changes at the national level.

About the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign

GIMAC: Making Gender Equality a Reality in Africa

The GIMAC network isn't just talking the talk – they're walking the walk! We've seen real progress on our recommendations when African nations work together. We are talking powerhouse progress towards Agenda 2063's goals: a continent that's global, inclusive, and sustainable – with women and youth at the wheel! But the fight is not over. We still need member states to truly embrace the power of these decisions. That is why GIMAC Network has delivered over 40 recommendations straight to the AU's decision-makers. Imagine that – over 40 chances to make a real difference for women and girls across Africa!

And guess what? It's working! We have seen **historic milestones** achieved such as the creation of **crucial roles for women in peace and security and youth envoy**. These aren't just titles – they're making a real difference. We are also seeing progress on the ground, with the **AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade** meaningful and the drafting of a **powerful Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa**. Change is happening!

Here is the thing: progress is great, but it is not enough. We need to keep pushing, keep measuring our impact, and keep making sure these changes reach every corner of Africa.

GIMAC Network: We are more than a network – we are a movement. A movement for a future where gender equality is not a dream BUT a reality.

Join us! Lend your voice to the cause. Because together, we can make Gender Everyone's Agenda.

Email: info@genderismyagenda.org Website: www.genderismyagenda.com

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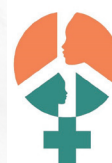
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