

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS BY AFRICAN CSOS TO THE 60TH COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

We the representatives of African women's rights organizations, CSOs, academia and media working to ensure **gender equality and women's empowerment** in Africa met in Nairobi, Kenya from 10 - 12 February 2016 to develop a common position and roadmap for engaging with African governments prior to, during and after the CSW60.

CSW60

Commission on the
Status of Women
14-24 March 2016

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Policy Recommendations by African CSOs to the 60th Commission on the Status of Women

Recognizing the commitments to gender equality in existing regional and international instruments and development frameworks endorsed by African governments which include: the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ICPD Program of Action, Beijing Platform for Action, Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), UN Security Council Resolution 1325, Africa Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome our government's' commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the African Ministerial Pre-Consultative Meeting on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60) which identifies enabling conditions for gender responsive implementation for the 2030 Agenda. In the same spirit, we welcome CSW60's priority theme on **Women's Empowerment and its Link to Sustainable Development** and the review theme that builds on CSW57 agreed conclusions on **the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women (VAW) and girls**.

We re-affirm the role of civil society organizations as key actors in the implementation of Agenda 2030, contributing to the goal of achieving gender equality and women empowerment. As such, we recommend the following policy actions:

- 1. Adequate, accessible and sustainable financing for gender equality to implement SDG 5 and other gender related targets in other goals.**
 - Provide adequate, accessible and sustainable financing for gender machineries UN Women, AU gender directorate, gender ministries and women's rights organizations.
 - Mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment into all national, sub-national and sector policies, plans, programs and budgetary frameworks.
 - Call for ministries of finance and planning to lead the gender-responsive budgetary allocations and implementation in line with Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda).
 - Mobilize domestic resources and revenues lost through illicit financial flows, corruption and military expenditures for the promotion of gender equality and advancement of women.
- 2. Address existing gaps between laws and practice to accelerate the implementation of progressive laws at national, regional and global levels to prevent and eliminate VAW.**
 - Repeal laws that perpetuate structural violence against women such as child and forced marriage, criminalizing sex work, minority groups, abortion, HIV transmission or exposure which result in increased marginalization of and discrimination against certain groups of women and girls.
 - Establish reparation mechanisms for survivors of violence against women (VAW).
 - Adopt and implement legislation, policies and measures that prevent, punish and eradicate gender based violence within and outside of the family, as well as in conflict and post-conflict situations.
 - Revise Laws that exonerate perpetrators of violence against women and girls, including provisions that allow them to evade punishment if they marry the victim, or are the partners or husbands of the victims.
- 3. Strengthen evidence on gender equality to inform policies and actions aimed at achieving gender equality.**
 - Through national statistics bureaus, generate and disseminate research-based analysis of quantitative and qualitative gender and sex disaggregated data across all indicators of SDGs.
 - Strengthen collaboration of national statistics bureaus, research institutes, gender ministries and CSOs to collectively review/ adopt SDG indicators.
 - Ongoing efforts to measure violence against women and girls across and within countries should be supported, with routine monitoring strengthened and research extended into important yet largely unaddressed issues such as the number of people living in conditions of sustained fear, causes of violence and the effectiveness of interventions, laws and systems for the protection and recovery of victims/survivors.

4. **Guarantee the realization of women's full and active enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms including their sexual and reproductive health rights without discrimination.**
 - Support and monitor the implementation of Maputo Protocol.
 - Encourage the removal of treaty reservations that create barriers to women and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services.
5. **Implementation of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) without compromising international human rights principles and national efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.**
 - Provide an environment that facilitates civil society engagement in the establishment and implementation of PPPs.
 - Ensuring that PPPs benefit the vulnerable groups including women, people with disabilities and the youth.
6. **Proactively respond to the shrinking space and resources for civil society particularly those working on women's rights, affirming the need for a vibrant, strong and free civil society that is essential for sustainable development.**
 - Repeal punitive laws that restrict or increase marginalization of CSOs operations at national level.
 - Create a conducive environment for CSOs working in fragile countries/regions including resourcing and protection.
7. **Accelerate the implementation of Resolution 1325 that affirms the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction.**
 - Balance between military spending and social service provision to ensure the protection of gender equality and women's rights.
 - Adherence to the rule of law and good governance to prevent conflict situations that have adverse effect on sustainable development.
 - Adapt humanitarian assistance to local contexts with adherence to human rights and gender equality principles taking into account provision of essential sexual and reproductive health services.
 - Sexual violence should be eliminated from post-conflict amnesty provisions within the framework of strengthened legislation and enforcement to end impunity.
8. **Invest in infrastructure and time-saving technologies to reduce and redistribute the burden of women's unpaid care work.**
 - Increase women's participation in decent work through family-friendly practices and workplaces and public care services for children and the elderly.
 - CSOs to speak with one voice in support of the resolution on Women and Girls and HIV at CSW60 (to be tabled by Botswana) and its agreed conclusions, recognizing that this resolution will be a critical strategy for empowering women and achieving Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063.
9. **Meaningful, inclusive and effective participation of women in social, economic and political development.**
 - Ensure equal opportunities for women to contribute to society as leaders, managers, and decision-makers, granting them access to positions of power that is equal to those of men in all sectors of public life to ensure women and girls full and effective participation towards the realization of Agenda 2030.
10. **Eradication of harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)**
 - States should preserve the dignity and rights of women and girls by eradicating all harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriages through integrated multi-sector strategies including the universal adoption and enforcement of laws that criminalize marriage below age 18, and through widespread campaigns to create awareness around the harmful health and life consequences of early marriages, supporting national targets and incentives to eliminate this practice;
 - States should develop, support and implement comprehensive and integrated strategies for the eradication of FGM/C, including the training of social workers, medical personnel, community and religious leaders and relevant professionals, and ensure that they provide competent, supportive services and care to women and girls who are at risk of, or who have undergone, FGM/C, and establish formal mechanisms for reporting to the appropriate authorities cases in which they believe women or girls are at risk, and ensure that health professionals are able to recognize and address health complications arising from FGM/C.
11. **Invest and leverage the use of ICTs as an alternative means for the delivery of education and training particularly to women and girls.**
 - Create policies and enabling environment that prevent the use of social media and other forms of media as instruments of violence against women and girls (cyber violence).



The African Women's
Development and
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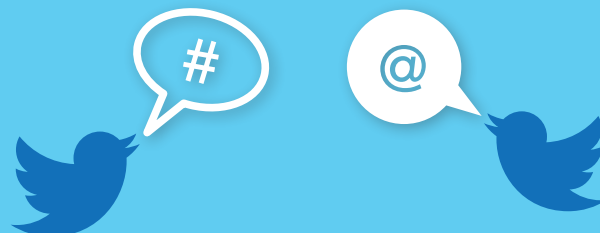


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