

***Africa Ministerial Pre-Consultative Meeting on the Commission on the Status of Women Sixty First (CSW 61<sup>st</sup>) Session on the theme “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work”***

26 - 27 January 2017

**KEY MESSAGES AND STRATEGIES FOR CSW61**

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION:**

On January 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 2017, UN Women, in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and in collaboration with the Africa Union Commission (AUC) convened the Africa Ministerial Pre-Consultation on the Commission on the Status of Women 61<sup>st</sup> Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme ***“Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work”***.

The meeting was attended by two hundred and thirty five (235) participants including forty six (46) Member States represented by Ministers of Gender and Women’s Affairs, senior government officials and Ambassadors to the African Union. Also present were, senior officials from the AUC, the United Nations system, development partners and representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) including youth and young women’s organizations. The participants acknowledged and welcomed the UNSG’s commitment to achieving gender parity and enhancing regional representation in the United Nations.

The participants further affirmed and appreciated the commitments made by African Member States on Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other international, regional and national policies and conventions to advance gender equality and women’s rights to economic empowerment on the continent.

The participants recognized the importance of addressing women’s rights to decent work and full and productive employment and reaffirmed that realizing women’s economic empowerment requires transformative and structural change. It requires macroeconomic and labour market policies that eliminate structural barriers, create decent jobs with living wages, protect workers’ rights, recognize and compensate unpaid care work which is predominantly done by women and promote entrepreneurship to economically benefit women in the changing world of work. These have to be supported by measures to promote early childhood development, primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and technical education and training for young women and women’s access to, control over and ownership of productive resources and services.

In spite of the progress made however, policy actions and commitments at the highest levels are needed, as there are not enough signs for positive trends in support of transformative and structural change. Three-quarters of employed women by the end of this decade are expected to remain working as contributing family workers on farms that they do not own or as own-account workers in the informal sector, with no social safety nets and dismal growth prospects for their income generating activities. Such progress is urgently needed in order to achieve SDG 5 and its targets by 2030, and make significant progress by 2020.

Member States engaged key stakeholders including the private sector, youth, faith based organizations, civil society and development partners on how to support governments to ensure women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work, marked by innovations, technology and data revolution among others.

Recognizing the diverse context of African Countries including those in conflict, post conflict, and humanitarian contexts and their impact on women's economic rights and empowerment, the meeting agreed on the following key messages to inform Africa positioning and advocacy for CSW61 on the theme '*Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*'.

## **PART 2: KEY MESSAGES:**

### **2.1 Strengthening Investments in the demographic dividend of African Women and Youth particularly girls**

- Increase tangible measures to prevent and address all forms of violence against all women and girls including all harmful practices
- Increase concrete measures to prevent and address teenage pregnancy and child marriage
- Ensure safety of girls in educational facilities at all levels
- Promote second chance education for girls who drop out of school prematurely
- Promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and innovation training for girls and protect their intellectual property rights
- Leverage technology to close the knowledge and skills gap affecting women and girls at the same time anticipate technological changes that may benefit or cause challenges for women
- Support young women's entry into the labour market, especially through expanding their participation in tertiary education and active labor market policies and practices such as skills training, job search assistance and entrepreneurship promotion programs
- Ensure girls' access to life skills training and quality reproductive health services for boys and girls with particular attention to HIV and AIDS
- Institutionalization of the one stop center as a good practice for responding to sexual and gender based violence
- Strengthen the role of young people in governance, conflict prevention and peace building to curb radicalization in order to create a peaceful and conducive environment for young people to participate in the economy and nation- building.

- Support young women's right to organize and participate at all levels
- Develop, finance and implement frameworks and mechanisms that give sufficient economic opportunities to young people through capacity building, access to affordable finance and entrepreneurship development
- Put in place measures and mechanisms to make agriculture/ agribusiness attractive to young people especially young women

## **2.2 Implementing Gender responsive macro-economic policies to realize women's economic empowerment and rights**

- Adopt fiscal and labour market policies that create decent jobs, protect worker rights, promote female entrepreneurship and aim for full and equal employment for women and men.
- Fully account for unpaid care work and include social protection into the formulation, implementation and evaluation of macroeconomic policies
- Regulate business activities to ensure they respect women's rights and meaningful, long-term community investments that promote decent work for women
- Put in place and enforce all necessary legal and regulatory measures to ensure gender-responsive work environment including non-discrimination, livable pay and zero tolerance to violence in the world of work
- Ensure the coordination and integration of gender equality responsiveness in the mandates of relevant Sector Ministries to accelerate women's economic empowerment
- Ensure that regional and national trade policies, especially those with targets that address gender equality and the empowerment of women, support and advance the Sustainable Development goals and Agenda 2063
- Undertake gender impact analysis of tax and other fiscal policies including Collection and use of tax for addressing gender and structural inequality

## **2.3 Strengthening Accountability mechanisms for women's economic empowerment**

- Member states are encouraged to implement the recommendations of the UN SG's High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment to unlock the power of women to work and achieve financial independence
- Take measures to promote gender parity in the workplace especially at decision-making levels
- Develop and expand efforts in collecting sex disaggregated data including on the most vulnerable women and girls to ensure evidence based policy formulation, implementation and evaluation
- Implement and monitor existing accountability mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to systematically support women's economic empowerment and rights to and at work,
- Make a critical analysis on the gendered impacts of resource allocation in fulfilling Member States commitments towards women's economic rights
- Review laws and regulations that affect women's participation in the labor force.

- Address the gaps in enforcement of international, regional and sub-regional legal instruments that integrate gender equality across the legal codes of African countries.
- Invest in research to inform analysis of the gendered impacts of macroeconomic policies
- put in place coordination mechanisms for different sectors for implementation of labour laws
- Curb Illicit Financial Flows and tax havens that take away resources that could be reinvested back into African economies
- Strengthen the capacity and funding for national gender equality mechanisms to effectively support and monitor the mainstreaming of gender perspectives across labour and sustainable development policies

#### **2.4 Ensuring women’s full, equal and effective participation and leadership at all levels of economic, social policy decision making; including peace, security and humanitarian action**

- Put in place and implement labour laws that improve the bargaining power and position of women and youth in labour markets
- Take measures, including temporary special measures to ensure equal representation of women in economic decision-making structures and institutions including private companies, cooperatives and trade unions
- Establish, monitor and evaluate the implementation of quotas on the participation of women in parliament, cabinet, committees of parliament as well as upper echelons of political parties
- Protect women’s economic, social and political rights to organize including the right to freedom of association, networking, assembly and speech both at country and continental level
- Engage rural and indigenous peoples and women’s organizations in regional and national policymaking, particularly where this pertains to investments in infrastructure, mining and extractive industries and trade in goods and services that affect the livelihoods and well-being of indigenous peoples and their ecosystems
- Repeal laws that criminalize and limit civic space for women’s organizations and citizens organizing on labour rights and women’s economic rights
- Strengthen the leadership role of women in conflict, prevention, resolution and peace building efforts in line with UN SCR 1325 National Action Plans (NAPs)
- End sexual exploitation and abuse in conflict and post conflict situations in line with the UN SG’s commitment to end Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)

#### **2.5 Achieving Safe and informed mobility for women locally, nationally, regionally and internationally**

- Develop effective labour migration policies that are gender responsive, protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for women migrant workers,

- Regulate the role of private intermediaries and labour brokers in migration and enforce laws against trafficking while protecting movement of choice.
- Improve or enhance intergovernmental cooperation with transit and destination countries for economic migrants and cross border traders
- Provide access to information and income generation opportunities for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and returnees
- Implement global action and accountability on trafficking of women and girls and push for the adoption of a UN resolution on human trafficking
- Ensure increased financial allocation for the UN Trust Fund to end Violence against Women and Girls to enable it to cater for victims of trafficking

## **2.6 Enhancing social protection policies, infrastructure and public services to enhance women's economic empowerment and rights**

- Recognize, reduce and redistribute women's burden of unpaid care and domestic work
- Quantify, give value and remunerate the unpaid care work of women particularly through enacting, revising or ensuring consistent implementation of equitable marital property regimes
- Put in place accessible and quality care facilities for children and other dependents
- Improve social infrastructure and extend social protection programmes including cash transfers to reach the poorest of the poor
- Address the lack of social protection and labour rights for women in informal sector including domestic workers and aging population
- Document and share lessons learnt and good practices from countries that have successfully organized their informal sectors
- promote transition of women in informal employment to formal employment in line with ILO Recommendation no. 204 and by extending some of the formal sector programs to them
- Address the needs of women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of inequalities, discrimination and marginalization including women with disabilities, women caring for persons with disabilities, women living with HIV and AIDS, elderly persons, internally displaced and refugee women to enhance their resilience
- Increase investment in affordable/ renewable energy, transport and water infrastructure to reduce the burden of unpaid work on families in general and women in particular

## **2.7 Ensuring Women's full access to and control over productive resources services and markets**

- Support and accelerate women's right to own, access and use land, including collective and user rights to land and common property.
- Develop and finance gender responsive strategies to prevent, mitigate and manage the impact of climate in line with international and regional agreements

- Regulate the extractive industry to address the impact that climate change and land degradation has on the economy and women's empowerment and rights
- Invest in technology to enhance agricultural, marine economy and tourism outputs through robust value addition, access to market and cooperatives
- Ensure women's financial inclusion through access to financial information, financial literacy and credit
- Adopt measures to relax/waive discriminatory requirements for women to qualify for access to financial products and services
- Ensure women's access to time and labor-saving technologies, digital, information and communications technologies for value addition and access to markets;
- Invest in research and technology for women and girls to address the gendered digital divide and enable women leverage on technology for entrepreneurship and economic development to enhance women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work.
- Encourage the adoption of affirmative Public procurement measures in favor of women owned businesses
- Increase the share of trade and procurement from women-owned enterprises and female cooperatives in both the public and private sector

## **2.8. Eliminating Discriminatory laws, regulations, practices and stereotypes that hinder the protection and progression of women in the world of work**

- Encourage Member States to ratify, domesticate, and fully implement international and regional instruments such as CEDAW, ILO Convention 189 (2011) on domestic workers and the Maputo Protocol and revise all relevant legislation to bring it into line with these instruments, and monitor and evaluate their effective implementation, taking into account the different categories of women, to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These laws include but not limited to labour, trade and investment, land, and social protection laws.
- Put in place legislation and regulations to eliminate the gender pay gap and ensure equal pay for equal work and work of equal value
- Eliminate discriminatory social and cultural norms that hamper women's access to decent employment, impeding their economic empowerment
- Invest in changing negative attitudes of men and boys to embrace gender equality starting at an early age using the HeForShe campaign as a vehicle to address patriarchal stereotyping during parenting
- Encourage Member States to strengthen partnerships with religious leadership and faith based organizations to embrace gender equality and economic empowerment of women
- Educate workers and disseminate information on labour rights and laws

### **PART 3: STRATEGIES FOR A UNIFIED POSITION AT CSW61 IN NEW YORK**

- 3.1 Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs to share the agreed key messages with Ministers of Foreign Affairs for further dissemination with Africa Group in New York and other relevant Sector Ministries.
- 3.2 AUC to convene Africa Group dialogues prior to and post CSW61 in close partnership with UN Women and UNECA offices in New York.
- 3.3 Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs through the AU STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), to continue regular convening in close collaboration with the African Group Missions in New York during the negotiations of the CSW61 Outcome Document.
- 3.4 Africa women's movement to work closely with member states and CSOs to include the key messages in their CSO Advocacy Messages.
- 3.5 ECA will create an online platform to share updated information on CSW61 side events and work programme which will be accessible to all African member states.
- 3.6 Africa to speak with one voice to the key messages stated in the outcome document
- 3.7 Member States statements and presentations at the CSW61 to be informed by these key messages.