



African Union Gender Policy

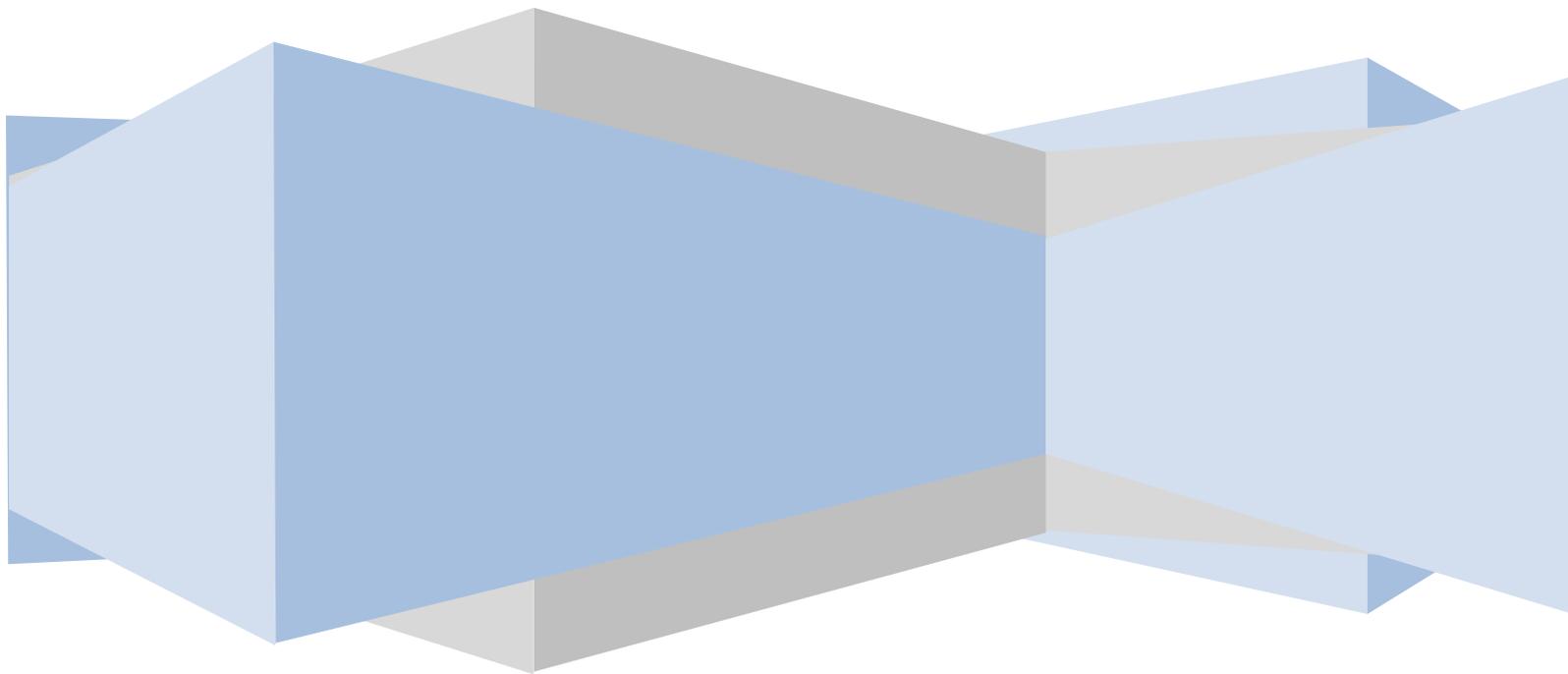


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List of acronyms

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| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| ACHPR | Africa Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights |
| APRM | African Peer Review Mechanism |
| AU | African Union |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| COMESA | Community of East and Southern Africa |
| CS | Commonwealth Secretariat |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| DDR | Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration |
| ECA | Economic Commission for Africa |
| ECCAS | Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EGDC | ECOWAS Gender Development Centre |
| FWCW | Fourth World Conference on Women |
| FP | Focal Point |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| GAD | Gender and Development |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GEM | Gender Empowerment Measure |
| GEWE | Gender Equality and Women Empowerment |
| GFP | Gender Focal Point |
| GMS | Gender Management System |
| GMT | Gender Management Team |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| ICPD | International Conference on Population and Development |
| ICT | Information Communication Technology |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NGOs | Non- governmental Organisations |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| PFA | Plan for Action |
| PLWHA | People living with HIV/AIDS |
| RECs | Regional Economic Communities |
| SDGEA | Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa |
| SADC | Southern Africa Development Community |
| SWCF | Second World Conference on Women |
| TWCW | Third World Conference on Women |
| UEMOA | Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| WAD | Women and Development |
| WID | Women in Development |

Preface

On behalf of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, it is my great honour and pleasure to record the Assembly's satisfaction on the development of the first ever African Union Gender Policy. This document encapsulates Decisions and Declarations of the Assembly and other global commitments on gender and women's empowerment. It also demonstrates the continued leadership of the African Union in advancing gender equality in the Continent. These Assembly Decisions include the adoption of Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union which enshrined the Gender Equality Principle, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

This Gender Policy provides a mandate for the operationalization of Assembly commitments and is accompanied by a comprehensive Gender Action Plan (GAP), which will guide the implementation of these commitments by AU Organs and will be reviewed periodically. It also compliments ongoing implementation of these commitments at the Member States' level and in Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Indeed, this Policy could not have come at a better time as its adoption will facilitate the operationalization of Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.277 (XIV) on the Establishment of the African Women Trust Fund. Furthermore, its adoption coincides with the 15th Anniversary of the Beijing Conference and will further pave way for the implementation of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020), thus providing a road map for the realization of the objectives for the Decade.

I recommend the AU Gender Policy for your appreciation and for use in our various Member States, AU organs and RECs.

H.E. Col. Muammar al Gaddafi

**Leader of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and
Chairperson of the African Union**

Foreword

I am extremely delighted to write the forward the first ever African Union Gender Policy, whose final development phase coincided with my assumption of office as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, making it one of my first policy documents to forward. The Women Gender and Development Directorate, which has developed this document is in my office, so it gives me double honour to carry out this noble and important task.

The development of the AU Gender Policy and its Action Plan has been inspired by the overwhelming political will and commitment demonstrated by African Union Heads of State and Government, who in the last few years have adopted important decisions. These include Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union which has enshrined the Gender Equality Principle, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. The AU Heads of State and Government Summits continue to champion gender equality and empowerment through their subsequent decisions aimed at accelerating the implementation of their own commitments including the Millennium Development Goals in general and in particular MDG 3 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

The AU Gender Policy could not have come at a better time. Its adoption coincides with phase two (2) of the review of the implementation of Horizon 2004-2007 in which the Gender Policy will both guide the Commission's revised phase of the implementation of all its programmes, as it will also constitute the gender Action Plan. The Commission's ambitious plan to establish gender management systems requires programmatic tools and mechanisms needed to raise standards for tracking and eliminating gender discrimination and other inequalities. It is for this reason that the Commission undertook a Gender Audit of the AU Commission, and plans to carry out Gender Audits in other AU Organs and Institutions. With this Gender Policy and its Action Plan in place, the Commission, other AU Organs, RECs and Member States will be able to ensure gender equality, human dignity and peace for all and thereby fulfil the vision of AU.

The Africa Region is committed to socio-economic development which takes into account the diversity in social, cultural, and traditional setting ,and is making efforts to address cultures and practices which militate against the enjoyment of freedom and rights by women and girls. The AU Gender Policy commitments will be used to provide the basis that will eliminate barriers to gender equality in the continent. It will also guide gender equality actions for the Continent in implementing other global commitments on gender including MDG 3 targets.

I am confident that the AU Gender Policy will serve as a point of reference in Policy making and provide overarching leadership in Gender Equality to the Commission and other AU Organs, RECs and Member States.

H.E. Jean Ping
Chairperson

Acknowledgement

The development of the African Union Gender Policy has come a long way. The process started in early 2006, and the possibility of presenting a completed policy to the African Union Summit was envisaged as early as January 2007. Although it has taken the Directorate longer than earlier projected, this milestone has finally been achieved, thanks to a team of dedicated experts consisting of consultants, stakeholders, development partners, United Nations Agencies particularly the UNFPA, ECA and UNIFEM, RECs, AU Organs and CSOs who participated in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Stakeholders Fora on the Gender Policy.

Special gratitude goes to the former Chairperson of the AUC, H. E. Professor Alpha Oumar Konare, for the indispensable role he played in championing the development of various policies in the Commission, including the Gender Policy.

The AU wishes to express its profound gratitude to H.E Jean Ping the current Chairperson of the AUC, who has overwhelmingly supported the work of the Gender Directorate in general and this Gender Policy in particular, from the day he assumed the office of the Chairperson. The overall support from Deputy Chairperson H.E Erastus Mwencha and technical support from all Commissioners have gone a long way in making this policy document a reality.

Finally the AU wishes to thank Gender and Women Affairs Ministers and Experts from Member States, AU staff who participated in the Inter-Directorate retreat, Members of PRC, the AUWC and representatives of AU Organs, for their inputs as well as the Director and staff of the Women Gender and Development and Directorate of the African Union Commission, for their hard work during the entire process.

PART I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE GENDER POLICY AND AU INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

1. Historical Background to the Gender Policy

The AU's commitment to gender equality is rooted in the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. This commitment is reinforced by the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development adopted by the Heads of State and Government in 2006, among others.

Some of the landmark decisions which highlight AU's leadership in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment include

(i) The Declaration on promotion of gender equality as a major goal of the AU- Article 4(L) of the Constitutive Act specifically provides that the African Union “**shall function in accordance with the promotion of gender equality**”, thereby making the promotion of gender equality one of the goals of the AU.

(ii) Location of the gender machinery in the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission- In order to ensure that the principle of promoting gender equality is adhered to, and to facilitate gender mainstreaming within the Commission itself, and the AU as a whole, Article 12(3) of the Statutes of the AU Commission specifically provides that, because “*gender issues are cross-cutting through all the portfolios of the Commission, a special unit shall be established in the Office of the Chairperson to co-ordinate all activities and programmes of the Commission related to gender issues.*” The Statutes thus locate the internal gender machinery of the AU in the highest political and administrative office of the Commission, that is, under the Chairperson of the Commission, who has the ultimate responsibility for gender mainstreaming within the AU.

(iii) The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa- The AU Assembly adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in July 2003 in Maputo Mozambique. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights will monitor implementation of the Protocol through Member States' submission of periodic reports under the African Charter, with the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights being responsible for matters of interpretation arising from the application or implementation of the Protocol.

(iv) The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) was adopted by AU Heads of State and Government at their July 2004 Summit. In the SDGEA, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to: the principle of gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as other existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women's rights. They also committed themselves to continue, to expand and to accelerate efforts to promote gender equality at all levels, and the determination to build on the progress that have been achieved in addressing issues of major concern to the women of Africa.

The instruments above have enabled the RECs and Member States to advance their own legal, administrative and institutional frameworks to make progress on women's rights and gender equality.

In many respects, the AU's approach to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality has been informed by UN frameworks and specific needs of the African Continent, in particular:

i) In the UN, the commitment to gender equality can be traced to the 1948 United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights which states that rights and freedoms will not be limited by a person's gender and establishes that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Since then, the milestones include the 1975 Mexico City 1st Women's Conference, the 1979 adoption of CEDAW, the 1980 Copenhagen 2nd Women's Conference, the 1985 Nairobi 3rd Women's Conference and the 1995 Beijing 4th Women's Conference which adopted instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, Beijing Platform of Action, the outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Humans, and the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At institutional level, the UN has put in place an elaborate institutional mechanism to support the advancement of women and gender equality.

ii) In 1946, the United Nations created the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) to champion women's empowerment and gender equality in order to ensure that women, being half of the world's population enjoy equal rights as well as living in dignity as equal citizens everywhere.

iii) In 1974, the United Nations, through the DAW, declared an International Year of Women, which was globally celebrated by women. The Year ended with the World Conference on Women that was held in Mexico City, Mexico in 1975.

iv) UN Resolution 1325 (2000) is a landmark step that politically legitimises women's role in peace, security in conflict and post conflict management. The Resolution contains actions for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian operations and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). Resolution 1325 has already become a powerful tool which has been domesticated by the AU.

It was realised in Mexico City that one year was not enough to create the awareness on gender imbalances, address gender discrimination and lack of empowerment. Thus, the United Nations declared a Women's Decade at the Mexico City World Conference on Women. Thereafter, successful Women's Decades and their mid-term reviews have been held with full participation of UN Member States. Against this global background and informed by its civil society campaigns and advocacy on women's rights and gender equity, African Union Member States have been actively involved in these Conferences and helped shape the debate on women's empowerment and gender equality, over the past 30 years, starting with the First World Conference on Women (FWCW) held in Mexico City, Mexico (1975), followed by the Second World Conference on Women (SWCW) held in the Copenhagen, Denmark (1980), the Third World Conference on Women (TWCW) held in Nairobi, Kenya (1985) and lastly the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995. While these Conferences have contributed to progressive

strengthening of the legal, economic, social and political dimensions of the role of women, the world is still far from achieving gender equality.

Furthermore, AU Member States are signatories to the UN General Assembly landmark Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979. Implementation challenges still exist around CEDAW on the continent. Although each of these global Conferences gave birth to powerful recognition of the crucial role of women, both rural and urban, at family, community and national levels, women's specific contribution to development has not yet been recognised. The creation of UNIFEM allowed institutional recognition of the need for a focused approach to women's empowerment at global and local levels.

While it is evident that women substantially contribute to economic, social and political development as well as environmental management, they have not benefited from economic growth and development, continue to be outside the decision making sphere and barely enjoy human rights. Progress must be made through fruitful dialogue between civil society and governments, backed by political will, reflecting in changing constitutional, legal and social platforms, through which more women can exercise voice and accountability in decision-making that affects their well-being.¹ Not clear. Nonetheless, women still face discrimination, exclusion, and marginalisation and do not equally share the benefits of production.

The creation of UNIFEM allowed institutional recognition to the need for a focused approach to women's empowerment at global and local levels. The contribution of Africa to global action has been immense and is reflected in the history.

In the 1990s the international community built a momentum and commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women (GAD), drawing from the powerful synergies of the women movement which fuelled the drive towards gender equality for sustainable development to replace the integration of Women in Development approach (WID) of the 1980s. The United Nations (UN) World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 emphasised the importance of gender equality in all areas of social and economic development, as did the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo – ICPD (1994), which emphasised the quality of life of the present and future generations as well as empowerment of women and gender equality. Through Agenda 21, women's role was stressed in the Rio Commitments, which centrally placed women's contribution in environment management, while at the same time acknowledging their suffering due to environmental depletion which now has taken alarming dimensions in the context of climate change; and also intensified pollution driven by wasteful consumption, unprecedented growth in human numbers, persistent poverty, and social and economic inequalities. Gender perspectives were taken into account by governments and civil society.

The success of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing (1995) was the result of fundamental interests that were shown during the African preparatory meeting held in Dakar. This meeting dynamically stimulated networking and solidarity through a synergy of actions which led to an intergenerational transfer of

knowledge and values in the women's movement on gender issues and institutional formations in Africa.

More recently, the adoption of the UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular MDG3 on gender equality and empowerment, has become an effective way to bridge the gender gap in education, combat feminised poverty, and improve health and combat HIV/AIDS, and stimulate other sectors to meet the Millennium Goals by the year 2015. In addition, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 agreed on principles which, if engendered, could accelerate development in general and advance gender equality in particular. Engendering of the Paris Declaration would go a long way in implementing Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; and also Article 2 of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).

This Gender Policy takes into account the AU Policy on Migration, the AU Nutrition Strategy, the African Position on the family, the African Social Policy Framework, the Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health, the African youth charter, the outcome of the African Development Forum on Gender, Empowerment and ending Violence Against Women, the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Programme (CAADP) and other key AU Decisions, Declarations and instruments having a bearing on the advancement of women and gender equality,

A. AU Institutional Profile

The AU has engaged in unprecedented political, social and economic transformation reflections, leading the Continent to a renaissance that engages all in an intense process of reflection and actions leading eventually to a Union Government of Africa. This strategic action creates an opportunity for AU to perfect its mandate, which is primarily to advance political, and socio economic integration, leading to higher living standards and enhancement of its efforts to play a rightful role in globalisation. AU is also leading in conflict resolution and peace building in several countries.

The nature and power of the AU Constitutive Act, AU Organs, the RECs and the 53 Member States, AU Vision and Mission and its Strategic Plan, the new structure, excellent human resource base, (based on the Maputo Declaration of 2003), as well as key programmes of NEPAD and the APRM reflect the African leadership that is committed to ensure a bright future and better life for its people. AU's partnership and cooperation with the United Nations System particularly ECA, UNFPA, UNIFEM and ILO including bilateral and multilateral partners, in sharing visions and mutual beneficial relations are all strategic and enhance Africa's inclusion in important global meetings and agreements. The AU is aware that gender and women perspectives cut across all these issues.

AU has a strong political will for ensuring gender equality and has demonstrated this by adopting a policy of support and making efforts to institutionalise gender mainstreaming and establish a Gender Management System (GMS). The Gender mainstreaming work of the AU Commission is led by the Women and Gender Development Directorate.

Consultative representation of civil society will continue to be a necessity and will allow pan-African and regional organisations with expertise and insight to help inform the AU institutional processes.

B. The AU Commission Level

The Women and Gender Development Directorate (WGDD) was created in 2000 under the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission. It has the overall mandate of ensuring that capacity is built for all AU Organs, RECs and Member States to understand gender, develop skills for achieving gender mainstreaming targets and practices in all policy and programme processes and actions by 2020, in order to close the existing gender gaps and deliver the promise of equality for all African men, women, boys and girls.ⁱⁱ

C. The AU Organs

The AU Organs including, the Assembly of the Union, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representative Committee, the Commission, the Pan African Parliament, the Court of Justice, , t the Specialised Technical Committees, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, the Financial Institutions, have political will to promote gender equality. This is demonstrated in the provisions of various international and regional Conventions, Treaties, Charters, Protocols and Declarations adopted over the years. Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union stipulates that the Union will function in accordance with the principle of gender equality...” By this principle, all AU Organs will address gender equality in their policies and programme.

D. The RECs

1. Majority of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), including the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East Africa Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), have Gender Units.
2. The RECs and their Member States have elaborated Gender Policies, and adopted Gender Declarations, Action Plans and Frameworks, strategic plans, gender audits and gender analysis tools which guide their gender mainstreaming, programming and budgeting. However, the RECs have limited core funds for gender mainstreaming and for special women empowerment activities from partners.

E. AU Member States

To date, 70% of Member States currently have gender policies and yet few of them have been implemented As only a few of them have established Gender

Management Systems (GMS). Member States acknowledge gender mainstreaming as a global, regional and national strategy in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and MDG 3 on Gender Equality. While many of them are committed to implementing global commitments, they face challenges of weak Gender/Women machineries and inadequate resources, in the context of unfulfilled bilateral and multilateral pledges, in general under ODA, with serious budgetary cuts in some sectors resulting in negative gender impacts.

At the regional level, AU Member States adopted SDGEA and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, which encompass core critical issues in the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action and the MDGs. Progress on Member States implementation of SDGEA and the Protocol is submitted every year at the January SummitS of Heads of State and Government

Member States vary in their involvement and consultation mechanisms with National Women's organisations. Some have young civil society organizations (NGOs) while others have fully developed organisations. Experience should be shared through the implementation of this AU Gender Policy using an examination of best practice for involving NGOs.

ECOSOCC provides an opportunity for an evaluation of the essential presence of women, and men's groups to have voice on gender issues, and be present at the pan African and regional levels. A valid contribution is solicited from CSOs for policy, practice, experience and knowledge that can better inform AU processes.

F. AU Governing Principles and Values

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), adopted in 1981 by the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, indicates in Articles 2, 3,5, and 18 the principles and values regarding rights to individual freedom, equality before the law, entitlement for protection of the law, entitlement to respect for life and integrity of persons, and prohibition of slavery, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. The Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (1991) in its Article 3 (g) and (h) recognises the principles and objectives of the OAU Charter regarding human rights and re-affirmed the recognition, promotion and protection of human and people's rights as well laid out principles and values of freedom in the establishment of its legal structure and political framework. This is stipulated in Articles 2, 3, 5, 18. In Article 75, the Treaty called on Member States to put in place mechanisms for the development and value of the African Woman through improvements to her social, economic, legal and cultural conditions and ensure the full participation of women in the development and activities of African Economic Community.

AU Vision

The Vision of African Union is that of an Africa Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful; an Africa Driven by its Own Citizens; and an Africa which is a Dynamic Force in the Global Arena.

AU ensures a just and peaceful environment where men and women live dignified harmonious lives to benefit equally from socio - economic development.

G. AU Mission Statements Include

1. Building capacities for integration
2. Ensuring over-all coherence of the programmes aimed at speeding up the integration process through actions undertaken in two directions (harmonisation and rationalising the RECs and integration.
3. Organise brainstorming and institute strategic watch tower on key issues affecting the future of the Continent, including equality between men and women, boys and girls.
4. Assuming dynamic information and advocacy role for Africa vis-à-vis the World.
5. Play a leadership role in the promotion of peace, human security and good governance on the Continent
6. Stimulate economic, social and cultural development on the Continent. .
7. Establish a standing follow up evaluation mechanism.

Gender perspective is considered as a transversal theme at the level of AU Mission statements.

Part II: THE CONTEXT OF THE AFRICAN UNION GENDER POLICY

Introduction

In an international globalised context where cultural, geographic, economic and social boundaries are dissolved, the respect for human rights and their indivisibility constitute a fundamental principle for all humanity. Moreover, new concepts and development approaches have materialized to ensure increased equality between men and women.

The growing recognition of the leadership role of women in all spheres of development, including their participation in decision-making at the international, regional and national level, are reflected in the creation of platforms of action related to gender. It is in this context that the AU has developed a Gender Policy that focuses on closing the equality gap between men and women in general and particularly addressing gender inequalities which have resulted in women's disempowerments and the feminisation of poverty, in order to have a better understanding of the contribution of women in development.

This Policy provides a framework which will accelerate the realization of gender equality, fairness between men and women, non-discrimination and fundamental rights in Africa. In a more general manner, this Policy is conceived as a tool to facilitate the advancement of Africa's political and social economic integration, guarantee that gender issues are included in the African agenda, accelerate gender mainstreaming, contribute to higher living standards and enhance the efforts exerted by African peoples to play their rightful role in a globalising world.

Furthermore, there is an increase in awareness of the crucial role of women in conflict, post conflict situations and in consolidation of peace, reconstruction and reconciliation. There is also a consensus in addressing gender issues in the peacekeeping sector, consequently gender mainstreaming is gaining prominence in the UN and also within the African continent.

The desired effect and impact of this Policy is to offer opportunities for empowerment of women, guarantee their protection against violence and rape, as well as ensure their participation in public and economic life. To achieve this, a paradigm shift is inevitable. The Policy underpins the requisite need for identifying ways and means to foster interventions focused on gender, such as the establishment of the African Women's Trust Fund and the reorientations of existing institutions to pay better attention to gender equality.

This Policy document constitutes four parts namely: Part I presents the historical background to gender issues in Africa; Part II presents the Policy goals, objectives, principles, values and targets; Part III presents the Gender Policy commitments; and Part IV constitutes the Institutional Framework for the implementation of the Policy. The Gender Policy Action Plan to implement the policy commitments is an important Annex to this Policy.

The Mandate of the Gender Policy

The mandate for this gender equality and women empowerment Policy derives from three main factors:

- a) The strong AU commitment to gender equality as established in the various AU basic documents, namely: the AU Constitutive Act (Article 4L); the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; the SDGEA; the NEPAD Framework, etc. Collectively, these instruments form a normative framework that confers a number of commitments and corresponding responsibilities for the promotion of gender equality in Africa.
- b) The aspirations and achievements of the African women's movement have influenced the acceleration of promoting gender equality and women empowerment.
- c) The empirical necessity to consolidate the positive experience that took place in Africa following the adoption of the principle of gender equality, as well as ensuring progress in terms of developing gender equality policies and creating mechanisms for promoting the empowerment of all peoples of Africa.

The Purpose of the Gender Policy

The main purpose of the Gender Policy is to establish a clear vision and make commitments to guide the process of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment to influence policies, procedures and practices which will accelerate the achievement of gender equality, gender justice, non discrimination and fundamental human rights in Africa.

Policy Values and Principles

This Gender Policy will be guided by the values and principles stipulated in the AU's Constitutive Act as well as the commitments of its Organs, Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). These include:

1. The promotion of good governance and the rule of law, which guarantees human rights and rights of women through democratic and transparent institutions;
2. Adherence to the principle of gender equality between men and women, boys and girls in enjoying their rights, sharing of opportunities, benefits and contributions;
3. Strict observance and adherence to the principle of gender equality, which guarantees fairness and equal treatment for all, as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union;
4. Guarantees fairness and equal treatment for all;
5. Strict adherence to the Parity Principle as enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union;
6. The promotion of the principle of shared responsibility, accountability and ownership of the commitments made by the AU;
7. The promotion of regional integration as a vehicle for the advancement of the African Continent and its peoples;

8. The application of the principle of subsidiarity to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the Policy at all levels.

Vision of the AU Gender Policy

The vision of the African Union Gender Policy is to achieve an African society founded on democracy, gender equality, human rights and dignity and recognizes the equal status of women and men, girls and boys, with both sexes thriving together harmoniously, in a peaceful and secure environment characterized by equal partnership in decision-making in the development of the Continent.

Goals of the AU Gender Policy

The overall goal of this Policy is to adopt a rights based approach to development through evidence-based decision-making and the use of sex-disaggregated data and performance indicators for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. It seeks to promote a gender responsive environment and practices and undertake commitments linked to the realisation of gender equality and women's empowerment in Member States, and at the international, continental, regional and national levels.

More specifically, the policy offers a framework to:

1. Accelerate gender mainstreaming in institutional, strategic and political cadres, and programmes and plans at decision-making level;
2. Establish an institutional framework for implementing the diverse commitments related to gender equality and empowerment of women;
3. Develop guidelines and enforcement of standards favouring the creation of a gender responsive environment with a view to ensure empowerment of women;
4. Establish standards and criteria required to monitor, evaluate and ensure the follow up of progress realised in mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in a regular manner; and
5. Promote equitable access for both women and men to resources, knowledge, information and services including basic needs; and facilitate the implementation of corrective measures to address existing inequalities with regard to access to and control over resources as well as other empowerment opportunities.

Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of the Gender Policy are to:

1. Advocate for the promotion of a gender responsive environment and practices as well as the enforcement of human rights, gender equality and women's

empowerment commitments made at international, continental, regional and Member States levels;

2. Initiate and accelerate gender mainstreaming in institutions, legal frameworks, policies, programmes, strategic frameworks and plans, human resources (HR) and performance management systems, resource allocation, and decision-making processes at all levels;
3. Promote the development of guidelines and enforcement of standards against sexual and gender-based violence and gender insensitive language and actions in the workplace (this includes the AU Commission and other Organs, the RECs and Member States);
4. Develop a Gender Management System (GMS) within the AU and promote its adoption by other AU Organs, the RECs and Member States;
5. Address gender-based barriers to the free movement of persons and goods across borders throughout the Continent;
6. Promote equitable access for both women and men to and control over resources, knowledge, information, land and business ownership, and services such as education and training, healthcare, credit, and legal rights; and
7. Facilitate the implementation of remedial measures to address existing inequalities in access to and control over factors of production including land.

In line with operative paragraph 12 of the SDGEA, Member States of the AU have undertaken to report annually on progress made in gender mainstreaming. In the same vein, operative paragraph 13 enjoins the AU Chairperson to report annually to the Summit. Since 2007, synthesis of reports from Member States and reports of the Chairperson have been submitted for the consideration of the Summit.

The AU Gender Policy Commitments will be used to provide the basis to eliminate barriers to gender equality in the Continent. It will also guide gender equality actions for the Continent in implementing other global commitments on gender, including all MDG targets with a priority on goals set out in MDG3.

Rationale for AU Gender Policy

The actualisation of human dignity, development and prosperity for the entire Africa peoples underpin the AU struggle for socio-economic and political development, anchored on a vision of **“an integrated prosperous and peaceful Africa ... driven and managed by its own citizens... and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”**. Both women and men have worked for the liberation of the continent, and for the economic emancipation, solidarity and cohesion necessary for its integration and unity. Therefore, they should participate and benefit equally in development processes. Thus, the quest for gender equality and women’s empowerment should be mainstreamed into all the institutional arrangements at policy and programming levels in all AU Organs, RECs and Member States to address the key issues of:

Economic independence and equal access to resources
Equal participation and access to economic opportunities in a globalizing world
Equal participation in peace and security matters
Equal representation in decision making and good governance and politics
Equal access to education, livelihood and decent work opportunities
Equal access to prevention, care, home based support and treatment of HIV/AIDS
Equal access to ICT infrastructure and Applications, global alliance for IT development and building a sustainable e-future
Eradication of all forms of gender based violence
Improved women's health and reduction of maternal mortality
Elimination of gender stereotypes, sexism and all forms of discrimination
Engendering policies, programmes, budgets and accountability frameworks underpinning AU Organs, RECs and Member States
Participation of the media
Food security and nutrition

Consideration of the African societal context is critical in determining how gender equality should be promoted. The roles that women, girls, men and boys perform are relative to their status, relationship among one another and power- relations in private and public spheres. Concepts and the historic background, such as patriarchy that has shaped the relationship between women and men and boys and girls, are context specific and based on very different value systems and structures in different countries, must be established for gender equality to be achieved. Development is about creating the supporting processes through which women and men are able to realise their full potential. Gender stereotypes, especially unequal power relations, often block this process for men as much as for women. These elements must be considered in AU's gender equality work and contextualised in the regional and universal human rights and women's rights instruments.

Women's empowerment and gender equality should form the basis of Gender Mainstreaming in the AUC and Other AU Organs and Member States. Men and women should be the socio- economic-political glue for the integration of the African continent.

The aspiration for equality between men and women largely reflects on good governance in Africa. The AU adopted a number of commitments in the domain of democracy and good governance, namely the Durban Declaration on Elections, Governance and Democracy; NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Enterprises Governance; Convention on the Fight Against Corruption; and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The Continent also witnessed synergies between the activities of civil society and pressures by women's organizations in favour of gender equality and empowerment of women. This was to ensure that international institutions extend required support and reinforce the capacity to elaborate policies, action plans and guidelines, in order to accelerate activities targeting women's empowerment and mainstreaming of gender perspective. Despite this high level commitment and interest raised by this issue, mainstreaming the gender dimension has not yet reached the parity required at all levels in society. Institutionalisation efforts to integrate the principle of equality between men and women in the AU, RECS and Member States are very slow.

Analysing the situation across the Continent indicates the existence of disparities between men and women in numerous development domains and important sectors, namely decision-making, policies and distribution of power, economy, trade, agriculture, rural economy, domestic energy, health and peace negotiations. At the same time, it is more and more evident that Africa's capacity to attain sustained economic growth and reduce the endemic levels of poverty obliges us to consecrate all efforts to women and girls.

Despite progressive constitutions across the Continent, only a limited number of development plans contain strong elements in terms of gender equality. Furthermore, numerous national action plans in this domain hardly have any relation to national development strategies or even with accounts/budgets. Weak representation of women in diverse ministerial positions in many States, and even in Parliament as well as in the judicial system, is a major concern and challenge that demands prompt attention. This Policy will provide the necessary framework that could overcome this disparity and accelerate mainstreaming gender issues into all sectors of society.

The AU Gender Policy will be used to accelerate the execution of gender perspectives of mandates of AU Organs to promote the social, economic, political and cultural development of the African Continent and to ensure that women issues are included equally. It will move forward the implementation of the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa by African Heads of State and Government. The Solemn Declaration articulates gender issues and offers a framework for the enhancement of gender equality stated in the policy commitments and principles for the AU Organs, RECs and Member States.

Part III: AU GENDER POLICY COMMITMENTS

Policy Commitments

The Policy commitments are based on AU and international gender equality instruments including the Constitutive Act of the African Union, MDGs, SDGEA, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, BPFA, UN Resolution 1325 (2000) on Peace and Security that emphasizes gender mainstreaming as core in the promotion of culture of peace, democracy, economic and social development and, human rights. The Policy commitments are overarching and anchored on the pillars of AU Organs, RECs and Member States' institutional policy statements, strategic plans, roadmaps and action plans for achieving gender equality and women empowerment targets in **eight** areas as follows:

1. Creating an enabling and stable political environment
2. Legislation and legal protection actions against discrimination, for ensuring gender equality
3. Mobilising stakeholders for implementing the AU Gender Policy
4. Rationalisation and harmonisation of Regional Economic Communities' gender policies and programmes
5. Mobilising resources for implementing the AU Gender Policy
6. Capacity building for gender mainstreaming
7. Implement gender mainstreaming in all sectors.
8. Maintaining peace, security, settlement of conflicts, reconstruction and promote the effective participation of women in peacekeeping and security including efforts aimed at reconciliation in post conflict reconstruction and development.

COMMITMENT 1: CREATING AN ENABLING AND STABLE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The AU Parity Principle represents the most advanced global commitment to equal representation between men and women in decision making. Adopted at the Inaugural Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union held in Durban, South Africa in 2002, its adoption demonstrated the commitment of the newly transformed African Union to address persistent gender inequalities in the continent. Cultivating political will is , therefore, necessary for sustaining an environment that enables the enforcement of the AU 50/50 Gender Parity Principle and the achievement of gender equality in Africa.

A commitment that reaffirmed political will and enabling environment exists for AU Organs, RECs and Member States to achieve MDG Goal 3 Gender Equality by 2015.

AU Organs, RECs and Member States will:

1. Ensure that all political declarations and decisions are geared towards the elimination of persisting barriers that militate against gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. Understand implications of non-compliance in monetary and programmatic terms to gender mainstreaming policies and programmes as evidenced in international/UN socio economic indicators, standards and targets and make declarations to correct the situation.
3. Enforce AU 50/50 Gender Parity and representation in all structures, operational policies and practices, ensure gender parity targets are met and gender perspectives incorporated within strategic thinking - vision and mission of the AU.
4. Ensure that all develop and enforce explicit gender policies (aligned to the UN and AU Gender Policies) emphasising gender justice, gender accountability and transparency principles reforms, emphasising the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women, gender mainstreaming, and recognise differences in responsibilities between men and women at all levels by 2011.
5. Ensure that all AU Assembly Decisions on the SDGEA Implementation are enforced by AU Organs, RECs and Members States, including the establishment, operationalisation and sustainability of a Trust Fund for African Women, as a flagship response to economic empowerment for African women within the PRSP Framework by 2011.
6. Ensure that competent, gender experts are available and utilised. Develop policies that support gender mainstreaming and support capacity building in gender mainstreaming by 2015.
7. Provide political leadership and support for the launching of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) and hosting of the Decade's Secretariat to guide the implementation of the Decade's activities outlined in the road map and mobilize resources for the advancement of Gender equality.
8. Facilitate High Level Policy Dialogues, consultations, **think tank reviews** and technical reviews on aspects of gender equality, gender justice and upliftment for African women; encourage and support annual or bi-annual African Women/Men Support Conferences on thematic issues for the next 3 years

COMMITMENT 2: LEGISLATION AND LEGAL PROTECTION ACTIONS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, FOR ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY

Legal framework is key in implementing protocols and instruments adopted by the AU to protect women's rights. Whilst significant progress has been made in strengthening women's legal and human rights at continental, regional and national levels, a lot still needs to be done. Dual legal systems create contradictions on the rights of women by according women some rights through general law and withholding others on the basis of traditional, customary and some religious beliefs and practices, denying women their fundamental rights.

Weak legal frameworks, institutional infrastructure and non compliance to adopt rights-based legislation continue to hinder progress and empowerment of women in some countries in the Continent, resulting in failure to attain required gender justice and human development targets. Legal education and knowledge and affirmative action laws for gender equality are necessary to deal with discrimination and marginalisation of women. The SDGEA and Women's Rights laws reiterate the need to accelerate awareness of legislation and in-depth legal education, passing, popularizing and enforcing legislation for ensuring the elimination of all forms of gender-based discrimination, abuse and harmful practices,

A commitment that the AU Commission, other AU Organs, RECs and Member States will uphold the rule of law and comply with AU Treaty obligations to ensure the elimination of gender inequalities and abuse at all levels.

AU Organs, RECs and Member States will:

1. Ensure future treaties, declarations, protocols and decisions, are gender responsive.
2. Draft instruments that are gender sensitive and recommend enforcement measures for non-compliance by 2011.
3. Be encouraged that once a human rights treaty has been approved, signed and adopted, to ratify the treaty, including the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.
4. Ensure Member States implement the treaties, conventions and decisions immediately after ratification/adoption.
5. Encourage the early domestication/ implementation of AU and international human rights instruments into national legislation once they enter into force,

COMMITMENT 3: MOBILIZING STAKEHOLDERS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AU GENDER POLICY

The implementation of the AU Gender Policy and its Ten Year Action Plan will require a broad spectrum of actors, partners and advocates. Facilitating strategic partnerships among different stakeholders promoting gender equality in Africa, including governments, civil society, women organizations, development partners, international organizations and other interest groups, the informal sector, the private sector, faith-based groups, etc. to foster dialogue and joint action.

A commitment that AU Organs, RECs and Member States create policy environments that enable civil society organisations, women organisations and interest groupings to dialogue and build bridges for addressing gender equality perspectives.

AU Organs, RECs and Member States will:

1. Implement advocacy and awareness campaigns and foster engagement and dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment among Africa's societies and citizens.
2. Strengthen the inputs of civil society in the drafting of instruments proposed for adoption.

3. Establish all inclusive, High Level Gender Advisory Group of qualified experienced gender experts from AU Organs, RECs, Member States and Diaspora as a Steering Committee or Think Tank / Council of Female Elders (to serve as a Quick Response Group on Gender and African Women Empowerment Matters) on the continental gender policy, programmes, donor financing and partnership for gender equality and women empowerment in Africa. The Committee will be given a mandate and voice to speak authoritatively on African women Issues.
4. Re-dynamise the African Women's Movement, within the context of the African Women Decade, building on existing experience to deal with old, new and emerging gender issues on the Continent.
5. Create regular platforms for civil society engagement, especially among women organisations, for dialogue, consultations and harnessing women's indigenous knowledge to achieve sustainable gender equality.
6. Develop a communication and popularisation strategy to disseminate information on international and AU human rights instruments.

COMMITMENT 4: RATIONALISATION AND HARMONISATION OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES' GENDER POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

The African Union calls for serious investment into the notion of Regional integration. The Constitutive Act of the African Union recognizes Regional Economic Communities as the building blocs of the African Union. Without integration, scarce resources will continue to be wasted through duplication of efforts, resources and interventions. Promoting best practice in the Continent by facilitating the alignment, harmonisation, and effective implementation of RECs and Member States' gender policies.

A commitment that AU Organs, RECs, other sub - regional organisations and Member States will work more closely together politically, programmatically and share financial and technical expertise. They will forge partnerships for enforcing gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes.

AU Organs, RECs and Member States will:

1. Harmonise and align sub-regional and Member States' gender policies to the AU Gender Policy by 2011, where appropriate.
2. Develop capacity to establish effective Gender Management Systems (GMS) by 2020.
3. Build requisite capacity in Member States and collaborate with civil society and other interest groups for gender mainstreaming and women empowerment, while creating forums on gender related thematic issues in the regions.

COMMITMENT 5: MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AU GENDER POLICY

Mobilising and allocating financial and non-financial resources to implement this Policy and its Ten Year Action Plan is critical and will, among others, include the establishment of the African Women Trust Fund as one mechanism to ensure the Policy's implementation as well as the effective mainstreaming of gender in policies, institutions and programmes at regional, national and local levels.

A commitment to direct organisational resources towards the Gender Policy and project actions that reduce gender inequality and increase equal participation of men and women.

AU Organs, RECs and Member States will:

1. Include gender budgeting principles in annual budgetary processes for effective implementation of the Gender Policy by 2015.
2. Accelerate the implementation of commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment through increased resource allocation by 2015 for capacity development in gender mainstreaming, policies, strategies and action plans.
3. Develop an inter-agency mechanism for ensuring accountability in the use of funds earmarked for promoting gender equality by 2011.
4. Strengthen partnerships with international financial agencies/institutions to increase technical expertise and financial support for the implementation of the Gender Policy.
5. Establish, operationalise and resource the African Women Trust Fund

COMMITMENT 6: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This commitment seeks to build the capacities of the AU Organs, RECs and Member States, with a view to implementing efforts aimed at mainstreaming gender equality. These efforts must also be based on African values and experiences which promote gender equality in order to institutionalise and implement commitments relating to gender mainstreaming and putting in place structures, systems, procedures and programmes in the domains concerned.

A commitment to ensure capacity building for effective gender mainstreaming, through the development of practical tools and training programmes targeting all institutional and strategic stake holders. The AUC, other Organs of the AU and RECs will institutionalise a Pan-African approach to equality between men and women for gender mainstreaming.

The AU Organs, RECs and Member States will:

1. Create organisational structures which are gender sensitive
2. Creating systems and procedures
3. Ensure staff capacity building

4. Ensure strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilisation system
5. Establish strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilisation

COMMITMENT 7 : IMPLEMENT GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ALL SECTORS

This commitment seeks to mainstream gender in all key issues-sectors of development and to adopt regional approaches for lasting solutions with a view to achieving gender equality and women empowerment .Achieving gender equality and women empowerment in all the organs of the AU and RECs and Member States require the implementation of a well-planned gender mainstreaming strategy. The implementation of this Gender Policy and its Action Plan over ten years is based on the outcome of the AU gender mainstreaming. In order to implement one of the key sine qua non conditions for, a multi-sectoral approach is necessary.

A commitment that a multi-sectoral approach will be promoted in gender mainstreaming within all AU Organs, RECs and Members States as well as all AU sectors. AU Organs, RECs and Members States will therefore implement this commitment across sectors.

The AU Commission will mainstream gender in:

1. Chairperson's Bureau and Directorates under the portfolio
2. Deputy Chairperson's Bureau and Directorates under the portfolio
3. Peace and Security
4. Political Affairs
5. Social affairs
6. Human Resources, Science and Technology
7. Economic Affairs
8. Trade and Industry
9. Infrastructure and Energy
10. Rural economy, Agriculture and Food Security and Environment

COMMITMENT 8 : PROMOTING THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PEACEKEEPING AND SECURITY INCLUDING EFFORTS AIMED AT RECONCILIATION IN POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

This commitment seeks to enhance the role of women in creating an enabling, stable and peaceful environment for the pursuit of Africa's development agenda. This involves enhancing and increasing the participation of women in the entire spectrum of peace

building activities such as conflict prevention, conflict management in particular peace support operations, conflict resolution, post conflict reconstruction and development. These are in line with the various AU and international commitments such as the AU Protocol on Peace and Security, the PRCD Policy and the UNSC Resolution 1325.

A commitment to promote effective participation of women in peacekeeping, peace building and security, including post conflict reconciliation and development,

AU Organs, RECs and Members States will:

- 1 Integrate gender in policies, programmes and activities in the peace process, by using the frameworks of UN Resolutions 1325 and 1820.
- 2 Create regional consultative platforms on peace for the exchange of knowledge and information and harmonization of strategies for outcomes.
- 3 Use the Paris Principles and guidelines associated with armed forces or armed groups for planned interventions in Africa.
- 4 Mobilize and include female leaders in mediation processes and reflection groups, as well as post-conflict activities by working with the relevant networks on the Continent.
- 5 Work jointly with relevant UN bodies and other AU Organs in order to create and manage Truth and Reconciliation Structures with a view to bringing to the fore, violations against women and young girls during conflict situations; and accelerate the admission of violation of human rights and find lasting solutions, including the provision of psychological support.
- 6 Guarantee that country Review and Reports on conflict situations presented to AU Ambassadors underscore the problems affecting women and children, and that they are incorporated into the mandates of humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping missions.
- 7 HARDP will facilitate sensitization in the domain of gender and training of peacekeeping forces and civil humanitarian agents, paying adequate attention to problems of violence against women and children.

Policy Targets

1. **Parity Targets:** Put in place policy, institutional mechanisms and processes by 2010 and strive to achieve parity in AU Organs, Member States and RECs by the year 2015.
2. **Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa Targets:** Endeavour to achieve full ratification and enforcement of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa by 2015 and domestication by 2020.
3. **SDGEA Targets:** Achieve the targets in the various commitments set out in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. They are:

- Articles 1. In line with targets set in the Abuja and Maputo Declarations
- Articles 2. Achieve 30% results by 2015 and 50% by 2020 of UN Resolution 1325
- Articles 3. Report compliance to Assembly in January in 2012
- Articles 4. Report compliance to Assembly in January in 2013
- Articles 5. Report compliance to Assembly in January in 2014
- Articles 6. Report on implementation to Assembly in January in 2015
- Articles 7. Report on implementation to Assembly in January in 2016
- Articles 8. In line with Gender targets set in the EFA report on implementation
- Articles 9. In line with PHPRRWA targets, report to Assembly in January 2017
- Articles 10. Report on implementation to Assembly in January in 2016
- Articles 11. Launch and operationalise the African Women Trust Fund by December 2009
- Articles 12. Report annually to the January Assembly

PART IV: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Gender Mainstreaming is accomplished through the establishment of a Gender Management System (GMS) that puts in place structures, mechanisms and processes. Much emphasis is placed on the establishment of appropriate institutional structures as well as frameworks for gender analysis, gender training, monitoring and evaluation. The GMS is intended to advance gender equality through political will, forging partnerships with stakeholders, including governments, development partners, private sector, and civil society, and building capacity and sharing good practices. AU Organs, RECs and Member States will consider establishing GMS along the following broad guidelines with these enabling structures:

- The Executive Management Level (Political will)
- Gender Management Team (GMT)
- Gender Directorate/Division (the Lead Agency)
- Departmental/Sector Focal Points
- Satellite Gender Focal Points in partner institutions, centres of higher learning, Universities, public and private sector institutions
- Gender Commission/Expert committees/Technical working groups/Gender task forces
- Media

Roles and Responsibilities for AU Organs, RECs and Member States

AU Organs, RECs and Member States will share the coordination role, especially relating to donor relations, use of infrastructure and logistics, resource mobilisation, expertise, programme financial and technical support, as required, to implement the AU Gender Policy. All AU Organs, RECs and Member States will establish a GMS in their respective establishments. The AU WGDD will establish a mechanism to track implementation of the GMS and the Gender Policy using a set of benchmarks.

AU Organs will:

1. Implement the AU Gender Policy and its Action Plan by allocating a minimum of 10%, of their budget to Women empowerment and gender equality programme goals, especially measures to enhance women's participation and empowerment programmes.
2. Adopt action plan to promote implementation of AU Decisions, as well as the SDGEA and Protocol, based on CEDAW, BPFA and MDGs.
3. Create work friendly environments that enable women and men to balance work in the workplace, taking into consideration the basic gender differences in their biological roles and needs.

4. Participate and support the implementation of the African Women's Decade and provide resources.
5. Institutionalise continental gender training and find resources to support it.

AU Commission will:

1. Provide the necessary coordination and leadership role in *kick starting* the implementation of the Gender Policy and focus on organising consultative meetings, fund raising, technical briefings, popularising the Policy among interest groups, reporting on progress and review plans.
2. Facilitate High Level Advocacy Platforms to speak to Heads of State and Government Ordinary Session of the AU and make them reaffirm their commitments to accelerate actions to achieve gender equality by 2015, especially in the areas of taking women out of poverty, increase women's participation in politics, removing socio-cultural and legal barriers to gender as in the SDGEA,
3. Establish measures to hold managers accountable for policy implementation and establish sanctions for non compliance with implementing AU Gender Policy.
4. Together with others, establish a mechanism for celebrating African Women and Men Achievers in realising Gender Equality.
5. Develop joint programmes to introduce parliamentary debates on Gender and Social policy, Women's Care work in Africa and linkages to gender equality issues.
6. Ensure that together with the Office of Legal Counsel, African Court of Justice, Pan African Parliament, and other legal networks in civil society, links are forged to develop legal, legislative mechanisms/instruments, procedures to implement the Protocol, SDGEA and Article 4L of Constitutive Act.
7. Review organisational structures to determine their capacity for implementing gender concerns of programmes and/or projects and re-design them appropriately.
8. Ensure that all administrative systems and procedures are reviewed to ensure they are gender sensitive,
9. Implement the AU 50/50 Gender Parity and representation in all structures, operational policies and practices and ensure gender is mainstreamed within strategic thinking - vision and mission by 2010.
10. Make gender training a central feature of staff development programme to include awareness-raising to incorporate gender analysis, gender audit and gender planning skills.
11. Ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality goals are mainstreamed in Departmental policies, strategic plans, programmes, projects, annual plans and all work processes.

12. Establish monitoring and evaluation systems to yield sex disaggregated data, to facilitate analysis of programme/project impacts on women and men.

Regional Economic Communities will:

1. Synchronise and harmonise their gender policies with the AU Gender Policy and ensure that the Policy's content is included in their sub-regional policies.
2. Develop capacity for their Member States' government machineries and civil society in areas of identified needs in order to harmonise national policies with regional and AU level Gender Policy and GMS.
3. Initiate innovative and regional flagship best practice projects and programmes in the sub-regions especially advocacy and campaigns on the acceleration of women's equal participation in development and in regional integration; and a strategy for leadership development and mentoring of young women.
4. Develop capacity for staff and Member States in gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender planning, gender budgeting and track gender equality issues in policy, programming processes and actions.
5. Work with gender tools developed by Member States and development partners.

Member States will:

1. Align/harmonise their gender mainstreaming policies, goals, objectives and programmes with those adopted at the REC level and AU Gender Policy Commitments, focusing on policy actions on government's compliance to domestication and implementation of international instruments.
2. Adopt and domesticate those policies agreed and adopted by the AU and RECs where gender mainstreaming policies, goals, objectives and programmes do not exist.
3. Set up Gender Policy Working Groups, and enable them to harmonise national gender policies with those agreed and adopted by the AU and the RECs, through heads of the national machineries responsible for women and gender and development affairs.
4. Through National Gender Machineries, work with relevant national structures.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil Society Constituencies will work with the ECOSOCC, NEPAD iAPRM initiative and other AU structures on gender mainstreaming actions in AU Organs, RECs and Member States.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEDIA

The media will be encouraged to:

1. Be a platform for dialogue on gender relations and mindset change,

2. Be partners to eliminate sexist languages and stereotypic representation of women.
3. Act as a lobby group to further the gender agenda,
4. Be an effective communication channel for dissemination and sensitisation at the grass root level.
5. Promote gender sensitive media coverage and reporting,
6. Develop codes of conduct and ethics for equal representation in the media and in decision-making,
7. Support media coverage on women's issues.

ROLES OF AFRICAN DIASPORA

The African Diaspora will:

1. Be engaged as an important strategic partner for the attainment of women's empowerment and gender equality.
2. Provide a lobby platform to advance the goals and objectives of the AU Gender Policy and mobilize resources.

ROLES OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Development Partners will:

1. Provide technical assistance and resources to facilitate the implementation of the Gender Policy.
2. Assist in facilitating the exchange of best practices instruments and guidelines between and amongst Member States.

KEY CONCEPTS

a) Gender

Social and cultural differences between men and women, boys and girls offer them a value, unequal opportunities and chances in life (Kabeer, 2003). The inequality rests also on masculine and feminine characteristics as well as aptitudes and perspectives concerning the comportment of women and men in society. However, these characteristics are variable and according to a well defined timetable.

b) Gender Equality

Absence of discrimination based on gender in the allocation of resources, benefits and access to services.

c) Gender Equity

Means the just and fair distribution of benefits, rewards and opportunities between women, men, girls and boys.

c) Empowerment

The range of options that create opportunities and reinforce individual and collective capacities to exercise control over the life of individuals and offers them more choices. Empowerment of women is linked to having awareness of themselves, of knowledge, of their skills, their attitude and aptitude to have a voice.

d) Mainstreaming gender

The process for evaluating the consequences of a certain action planned for women and men such as legislation, policies or programmes in all domains and at all levels. It is a strategy aimed at giving an integrated dimension to the extent of the issue to the concerns and experiences of women and men, as well as implementation of monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social fields allowing women and men to equally enjoy benefits and ensuring that inequalities are not maintained. The final objective is to realise gender equality (UN ECOSOC, July 1997).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gender mainstreaming requires in-depth analysis, the development of tools for gender mainstreaming, capacity building of technical teams, the training and sensitization of organs, institutions and beneficiary sectors and skills for monitoring and evaluation, as well as the drafting of reports. Technical terms used to describe this process are defined here below:

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| Assessment | Often used as a synonym for evaluation, and sometimes recommended for approaches that report measurement, without making judgements on the measurements. |
| Baseline data | The set of conditions that exist at the onset of a programme/project. Results are measured or assessed against baseline data and frequently related to the performance indicators. |
| CEDAW | The Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides the basis for realising equality between men and women through ensuring women's access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life; and state parties have agreed to take appropriate measures including legislation and temporary special measures so that women can enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms |
| Development | A process with economic and social dimensions that entails quantitative changes in aggregates such as Gross National Product, as well as changes in institutional, social and administrative structures (Todaro, 1989), with the objective of effecting the material and social advancement of the population. It is also regarded as liberating people (Sen, in Saam, 2002). |
| Empowerment | The process of generating and building capacities to exercise control over one's life through expanded choices. Empowerment is linked with inherent self-confidence, knowledge, skills, attitudes and voice. It is a function of the individual's initiative that is backed up by institutional change. |
| Evaluation | A time bound exercise that aims to assess systematically and objectively the relevance, performance and success of on going and completed programmes and projects. |
| Gender | The socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women, boys and girls, which give them unequal value, opportunities and life chances (Kabeer, 2003). It also refers to typically masculine and feminine characteristics, abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in society. These characters are time bound and changeable. |

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| Gender Analysis | Qualitative and quantitative assessments to determine the differential impacts of development activities on women and men and the effect that gender roles and responsibilities have on development efforts and to trace the historical, political, economic, social and cultural explanations for these differentials (McGregor and Basso, 2001). |
| Gender Awareness | The recognition of the differences in the interests, needs and roles of women and men in society and how they result in differences in power, status and privilege. It also means the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequity and discrimination. |
| Gender Blind | The situation where potentially differential policy impacts on men and women are ignored. |
| Gender Budget | A budgeting method that analyses the incidence of budgets on men and women and girls and boys. Gender budgeting entails analyses of revenue and expenditure impacts so as to avoid or correct gender imbalances. |
| Gender discrimination | Differential treatment to individuals on the grounds of gender. |
| Gender division of labour | Different work roles assigned by society to men and women. For example, women tend to be engaged in unpaid domestic work, low pay, low status and informal sector jobs, while men tend to be employed in higher paid and formal sector work. |
| Gender equality | The absence of discrimination on the basis of one's sex in the allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services. |
| Gender equity | Fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between men and women |
| Gender Gap | A difference in any aspect of the socio-economic status of women and men, arising from the different social roles ascribed by society for women and men. |
| Gender Issues/Concerns | A gender issue/concern arises when there is a discrepancy, discrimination and injustice. |
| Gender Indicator | An indicator that captures gender-related changes in society over time and in relation to a norm (Beck, in Taylor, 1999). |
| Gender Mainstreaming | The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all the areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The |

ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (ECOSOC, July 1997).

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| Gender Neutral | The assumption that policies, programmes and project interventions do not have a gender dimension and therefore affect men and women in the same way. In practice, policies intended to be gender neutral can be gender blind, |
| Gender Policy | An organisation's policy that integrates gender in the mainstream of its programme and activities, where the policy also designates institutional arrangements, responsibilities, management functions and tools/guidelines for mainstreaming. |
| Gender Relations | Relations between men and women in terms of access to resources and decision-making and the relative positions of men and women in the division of resources, responsibilities, benefits, rights, power and privileges. |
| Gender Sensitivity | A mind-set where people recognise or are aware of gender based discrimination which hinders enjoyment of human rights. It is an understanding and routine consideration of the social, cultural and economic factors underlying discrimination based on sex. |
| Gender Stereotyping | Constant portrayal in the media, the press or in the education system, of women and men occupying certain roles according to the socially constructed gender division of labour and expectations in behaviour (African Development Bank, <i>The Gender Policy</i>). |
| Gender Systems | Systems which define attributes, ways of relating, hierarchies, privileges, sanctions and space in which men and women are organised. In most communities in Africa, women are dominated by men via patriarchal power, that has been a traditional and indeed a historical privilege for men. |
| Gender Training | The provision of formal learning experiences and skills in order to increase gender analysis and awareness skills, which serve to recognise and address gender issues in the programming process. Training can include the three dimensions of: a) political- introducing gender concepts and analysis; b) professional- providing staff with "how-to" skills; and c) personal- challenging an individual's gender attitudes and stereotypes. |
| Practical Needs | Needs related to the roles, such as reproduction, production and community, that men and women currently have and which do not necessarily change their relative position in society. |
| Productive Work | Work carried out for the production of goods and services intended for the market. |

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| Sex | The biological state of being a male or female. Sex is not equal to gender. |
| Strategic Interests | Those that help society achieve gender equity and equality. The satisfaction of strategic gender needs improves women's status in relation to the men. |
| Women's Empowerment | This address discrimination and oppression against women by devising programmes and strategies that increase women's capacities, opportunities, access and understanding of their human rights, create conditions for them to become agents of their own development and be able to find sustainable solutions for change at personal, family and civil society levels. Women can then contribute to the reduction of poverty, improve nutrition and seek health care, monitor child survival, prevent HIV/AIDS, stop harmful cultural practices and go to school freely without coercion. |

ⁱ For example, despite the fact that human rights of women as inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights, violence against women continues as an intolerable violation to their rights, in addition to lack of basic needs including food, water, shelter, clothing, education and access to health services in general and reproductive health services in particular. Fundamentally, basic services are essential for women's empowerment and pre-condition for the enjoyment of their rights, personal empowerment and to access equal opportunity. Even though women have made significant advances in many countries in Africa their concerns are still given second priority in development.

ⁱⁱ Since its inception WGDD has achieved useful targets and milestones including (1) Enforcement of Articles 3 and 4 Constitutive Act of the union, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). (2) Conducting Gender Audit in all the Sectors of the Union. The AU Gender Audit undertaken in 2006 revealed that limited progress has been made towards the implementation of these commitments at all levels of the Union. Lack of capacity and the willingness to mainstream gender and ensure women's empowerment were identified as central to the slow implementation of these commitments. (3) Developed a Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan for the African Union covering the period 2008 to 2011 (GMSPAU), which is now being aligned to the AU Gender Policy. The plan aims at operationalising the commitments of the African Union to gender equality, equity and women's empowerment in the next five years. (4) The core responsibilities of the Directorate are gender mainstreaming, coordination, advocacy monitoring and evaluation, capacity building through training and research and women empowerment programming. (5) The Directorate also coordinates activities with internal and external partners such as Sector Departments, and Civil society **voices** through ECOSOC, all AU Organs especially Pan African Parliament, Court of Justice and Financial institutions and mainstreaming gender in all activities are also being coordinated with ECA, UNIFEM, UNFPA, ILO, EU, ADB and Bilateral agencies.