

AFRICAN UNION

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ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION

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**DECLARATION ON 2015 YEAR OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AFRICA'S AGENDA 2063
Doc. Assembly/AU/2(XXV)**

We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, having met at our Twenty Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 14 to 15 June 2015, on the 2015 Theme "Year of Women's Empowerment towards Africa's Agenda 2063";

Recalling our previous Decisions and Declarations on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in particular the Protocol on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2003 (Assembly AU/Dec.19(II)), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa in 2004 (Assembly AU/Dec.12 (III)), the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) (Assembly AU/Dec. 229 (XII)), the Fund for African Women (Assembly AU/Dec. 277(XIV)), Malabo Decision on Theme for 2015 Year (Assembly AU/Dec. 539 (XXIII)) and all global policies, namely the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW), and the UN Security Council Resolution Number 1325, among others;

Acknowledging the persistent efforts made in implementation of the AU Gender Architecture above-mentioned at national, regional and continental levels, and the positive and visible results of implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment made by our continent since Beijing 1995;

Also acknowledging the challenges faced in the implementation of many of those Decisions and Declarations, in particular on progress made in attaining the minimum targets of gender equality and women's empowerment in women's socio-economic and political life that should demonstrate Africa's willingness, leadership and commitment to the achievement of goals as enshrined in the 2003 Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa;

Noting with Concern that despite positive achievements registered recently in decision-making, women, the largest proportion of our population, still remain at-risk and impoverished due to the challenges caused by social, economic and political marginalization, gender-based violence and discrimination against women; and **reiterating** our resolve to ending violence against women and girls, and improving access to, and control of, finances, land, education, health, sciences and technology and decision-making in political governance and business enterprises, consistent with our Declaration on Agenda 2063 and our continental Gender Architecture and our commitments on global initiatives;

Reaffirming our resolve towards ensuring that all categories of our populations, in particular women and young girls, must participate and benefit directly from the growth and transformation opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods, with continued positive impact on the lives of our citizenry in rural and urban areas, through deliberate and targeted public support;

Reiterating our commitment to the Addis Ababa Declaration on *Accelerating the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action - Towards a Transformational Change for Women and Girls in Africa*, adopted during the Ninth African Regional Conference on Women in November 2014;

Reflecting that hunger and malnutrition are major causes of risk, impoverishment, and persistent underdevelopment in Africa and causes of poor health, low levels of energy, and mental impairment, all leading to low productivity and low educational attainment, all of which can in turn lead to even greater hunger and malnutrition, and increased economic costs, thereby creating a vicious cycle;

Noting the progress made towards alignment, harmonization and coordination of initiatives and activities of stakeholders and partners with our priorities as defined in the Beijing and Dakar Platforms of Action and **stressing** on the significance of accelerating this momentum;

Recognizing the importance of multi-sectoral engagement and co-ownership of this societal and economic transformation agenda within our public sectors, including agriculture, science and technology, health, peace and security, infrastructure, energy, finance, trade, industry, hence the importance of putting in place a coherent inter-sectoral coordination of the efforts and initiatives in cabinet and other national and regional governance frameworks, for optimizing resource access and control, synergy and maximizing positive outcomes and greater impact;

Further recognizing the complementary roles and responsibilities that should be enhanced among relevant stakeholders, including public sectors, private enterprises – especially with African headquarters, civil society with African leadership, academia, African think-tanks, grassroots and business women, in all formal and informal sectors in driving our shared continental development Agenda 2063;

Reiterating its support to the mandate of the AUC Chairperson's Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security to promote the rights of women during conflict, their participation in the prevention and resolution of conflict, and their protection from sexual and gender-based violence;

Welcoming the Recommendations of the Stakeholder's Consultation with AU Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, GIMAC (Gender is my Agenda Campaign) network of civil society organizations, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and UN System, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 20th to 23rd January 2015 at the AUC Headquarters, and in particular their recommendations calling for our Assembly to consider adopting commitments along specific and concrete priorities.