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**Eighth African Development Forum (ADF-VIII)
Pre-Event on Gender, Youth and Equity in Natural
Resources Development
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21 October 2012**

Concept Note

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), African Development Bank (AfDB) and other key partners is convening the eight African Development Forum (ADF), from 23rd – 25th October 2012. The ADF is a flagship biennial event created in 1999, as a multi-stakeholder platform for debating, discussing and initiating concrete strategies for Africa's development. ADF presents results of current research and reflections on key development issues to stakeholders so as to define shared goals, priorities and programmes, and determine the environment that will enable African countries to implement these programmes.

The broad theme of the ADF-VIII is "*Governing and harnessing natural resources for Africa's development*". This theme builds on the outcome of the Fifth Session of the Joint AUC-ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in March 2012 in Addis Ababa under the theme "*Unleashing Africa's potential as a pole of global growth*". The Conference endorsed theme of "*Governing and harnessing natural resources for Africa's development*" for ADF-VIII.

ADF-VIII will focus on the extractive natural resources of mineral, land, forest and fishery resources, and the potential roles extractive resources play in the transformation of the continent. ADF-VIII will highlight key aspects of mineral, land, forestry and fishery resources management and development. The focus areas will enable a wider platform for various stakeholders to participate and will emphasize critical issues in each of these areas. Discussions will be organized around the following thematic focus areas:

- a. Policy, legal and regulatory issues
- b. Economic issues, including participation and ownership
- c. Knowledge base, human and institutional capabilities
- d. Environmental, material stewardship and climate change, and
- e. Governance, human rights and social issues.

Gender and youth empowerment will be taken into consideration as crosscutting issues in the discussion of all the above mentioned areas.

2. Towards Equity in Natural Resources Development

Natural resources are critical for wealth creation, financing for poverty reduction, investing in gender equality and financing equitable and sustainable development in Africa. Available data indicates that natural capital accounts for about 26% of total wealth – more than that of produced (man-made) capital - in a number of African countries. While most of the natural capital wealth is

associated with cropland (59%) a significant share is closely related to forestry related resources – including pasture, timber, non-timber forest resources and protected areas.

Unfortunately important natural resources endowments seem to have failed to reduce poverty and inequality in Africa. This failure can be seen as having at least four interlocked components – a lack of focus and investment in natural capital, a lack of civic science, lack of an appropriate distribution of natural assets, and lack of pro poor natural resource markets.

While Africa is endowed, to the extent that, in some countries the national capital arising from natural resources is close to 80%, in a number of countries, the paradox lies in the fact that the same continent has high poverty ratios and women in particular comprise the largest number among the poor. This should not be the case given the contribution of natural resources to the economies of these countries, and the commitment African member states have made towards ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women.

The African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have put in place mechanisms and investment frameworks for harnessing and governing natural resources at a continental and regional level. However, some aspects of human and social development require strengthening especially taking into consideration socially excluded groups like young Africans in the investment environment. In the mining sector for example, women are excluded from procedures and processes mostly realized by multinational corporations. Specifically, countries have adopted codes that take into account the legal aspects that clearly exclude marginalized groups like young people. These include processes associated with obtaining licenses and permits, obligations to invest in the mining sector and engaging in forestry and fishing activities among others.

a) Mining and natural resource extraction – a male domain.

In addition, mining development is often disconnected from the social and environmental problems associated with it. For example, the opportunities for mothers who bear and raise their children in settlements located close to the mine sites are still poor due to lack of infrastructure development, limited opportunities for education (for example, only a primary school) and limited commitment from the mining companies to community development. Thus the mine sites and the associated settlements remain largely masculine places, where a distinctive segregation exists between mineworkers, local residents and tourists.

b) Terms of employment and income:

In terms of employment, women constitute a very small proportion of the sector total, and even much so, they are grossly under-represented in the governance and decision-making structures of mining companies. Although it should be acknowledged that, to some extent, women have benefited from the corporate social responsibility expenditure of mining companies, the evidence seems to suggest that these benefits are limited. For example, the migrant labour system in most of the mineral-rich countries employed males there are laws that prohibited spouses from living together at the mines. Women live in rural areas and work on the land. The separation of families is a deliberate strategy to keep mine wages low. Women essentially subsidize mining companies

because through the use of their unpaid labour in agriculture to subsidize mining operations. Youth are also exploited by natural resource extraction industries as they are employed under irregular contracts, are paid below minimum wage and lack social protection mechanisms.

Multinational corporations that have exclusive rights to mining sites seldom provide appropriate housing for their local or national employees, which imply that women cannot live with their families closer to the work sites of their spouses. In cases where the housing is provided, male workers stay in hostels provided separately from their families, but most women miners are still responsible for childcare and household duties at home. Women therefore find themselves having to commute from their homes to the mines every day. Transportation then becomes another problem, as the mines do not make provision for workers who have to commute on a daily basis to work.

c) Women's participation in mining

Studies have also showered that, *in many African countries*, women engage in a variety of small-scale mining activities such as gold panning, dealing in gemstones, mining and selling industrial minerals such as limestone, dolomite, clay, and many others. Yet, despite their contribution to small-scale mining they remain insignificant in the mainstream mining industry. Women's participation is also constrained by lack of know-how and the technical skills required for mining, the haphazard and unsafe conditions under which most mining activities take place, the lack of knowledge on mineral beneficiation, and the lack of financial resources to invest in mining operations.

d) Equitable Access and Fair Distribution of benefits accrued

Available data indicates that, women and the youth are largely excluded or marginalized from participating and the benefits of the revenue generated from the vast mineral wealth in the continent. They are at the periphery of natural resource development including management, extraction and distribution. They have limited access to mineral wealth in terms of ownership or equity participation and are marginalized in terms of governance as reflected by the tiny minority of women who are on the boards of directors of mining companies and in senior management and supervisory positions.

Revenues and royalties from exploration of natural resources should be used to smooth expenditure over time in order to counter price volatility; and to set aside for the benefit of future generations. In most mineral rich countries of Africa, the cash programmes financed from royalties and other revenue from minerals is not allocated to gender specific needs nor youth programmes that would enhance economic empowerment. It is usually the elite men politically well placed who benefit.

e) Gender Equality in Land and mining

Another emerging issue in the use of land is that of, the use of land for cultivation of crops for bio-fuels, in response to the search for alternative energy sources. The crops include rapeseed, sunflower, soy, palm, coconut or jatropha. The land requirements for the feedstock are usually

very large and will seriously compete with land for the cultivation of food crops. Large tracks of land have been granted for the cultivation of bio-fuels in Benin and there are demands for large tracks in Ghana. Countries in the region may like to seize the market opportunities offered by bio-fuels but the issue requires serious socio-economic analysis to work out the necessary trade-offs between food security, soil fertility and feedstock production. The issue must be addressed at the regional level for broad policy directives, weighing the incentives against the cost. Even during relocation of communities, land is allocated to men as heads of households in many countries, overlooking women and the youth rights. The cultural practices and the traditional land tenure systems also have gender and age discrimination biases especially in decision making processes.

f) Equity in decision making

Women are often left out of community decision making processes, giving them less say in how EI resources are spent. It is important to note that, men and women as well as different age groups have different priorities. However, in discussions and consultations with communities, elder men usually congregate to make decision ignoring women and the younger people and evidence indicates frequently more sustainable outcomes where women have more say in setting priorities for community investments.

a) Small Scale and Artisanal Mining

There are significant risks and social costs associated with small scale and artisanal mining, including occupational health and safety risks, water and soil pollution, public health risks such as sanitation, and environmental degradation¹. Nonetheless artisanal and small scale mining can play a crucial role in poverty alleviation, by providing employment and stimulating local economies by creating demands for goods and services. Small scale and artisanal mining is likely to continue for “as long as poverty makes them necessary”².

b) The health impacts of extractive industries

Majority of the health problems in mining regions are caused due to un standardized regulations in terms of pollution, toxicity, mine tailings and mine disasters. The health and safety problems vary from one mineral to the other, from the technology used, type of mining- open cast to underground - and the size of operations. The lands, water bodies, air and environment are polluted due to constant release of chemical wastes, dust generated by blasting and excavation, and the dumping of mine wastes and over-burden in the surrounding lands and rivers. Women who are either working or not working in the mines are constantly exposed to various respiratory illnesses due to inhalation of dust particles and become victims of skin diseases, experience malfunctioning of various sensory organs, which has a long-term impact on their reproductive health. Noise and dust pollution affects the women most during pregnancy.

¹ Hardre, Bernd Dreschler –, MMSD Research, Topic 1. Final Report, (August 2001)

² Hentschel T, Hruschka F, and Priester M. Artisanal and Small Scale Mining –Challenges and Opportunities. MMSD. International Institute for Environment and Development and WBCSD(2003)

HIV/AIDS and other STDs are a particular problem both in mining communities, as well as for families of mine workers, who may be far from mine sites. Studies conducted in mining communities indicate that, incidences of HIV/AIDS and other STDs often rise for workers who visit prostitutes, but then also infect women, typically, who become infected by husbands who engaged in extramarital sex. Also, where men have migrated to work on EI operations for long stretches of time, they often bring the disease back to their families when they return home. Rising incidences of HIV/AIDS increases the burden of care, typically on women including non-infected women – reducing their ability to work, and in turn disadvantaging the rest of the family who rely largely on women as caretakers.

c) *Gender equity in employment and human resource development for efficient use of Natural resource*

The ‘flexibilization’ of labour that hits women the hardest; lack of protection frequently for women from sexual harassment and violence at work; unfair discrimination on the basis of a woman’s pregnancy; the inattention to women’s special health needs; the vulnerability of migrant women workers that sometimes subjects them to exploitation as sex workers; the overbearing workload endured by women because of unpaid work in the home. Furthermore, there is the reality of the gendered nature of the public-private dichotomy of wage labour, which excludes work generally done by women in the private sphere from remunerated labour, even though men freely benefit from these kinds of work. In other instances like in cases of re-forestation projects, laws do not always provide for fair compensation, at market value and in some countries, resettlements are not done the families, affecting mostly youth and women. Other examples are cited in instances where young people are paid below minimum wage because they do not possess regular or formal contracts and are not provided with social protection mechanisms like health insurance while at work. Such examples indicate that management, distribution and extraction of natural resources present challenges that can be turned into opportunities for young people and women.

3. THE PRE-EVENT

In order to ensure a systematic approach in addressing the above mentioned equity issues and seek for a responsive outcome of the ADF VIII and that equity issues are addressed in all the sessions of ADF VIII, it is essential that a platform is provided for all stakeholders to reflect further on specific issues and better inform the main ADF discussions. A pre-event is therefore being organized in order to discuss and come up with inputs into the main event. The pre-event is being organized by UNECA in partnership with the members of the UN cluster on Social Development. The theme of the pre-event is “*Towards Equity in Natural resource Development in Africa*”.

3.1. PURPOSE OF THE PRE-ADF VIII EVENT

It is generally acknowledged that, the design of effective programs that promote sustainable and equitable natural resource development in Africa is an imperative necessary for socioeconomic equity and sustainable development. However, given the complexity of equity issues, deliberate efforts have to be made to ensure integration of these issues into the mainstream discussions of

natural resource development. Hence the planned pre-event activity look at equity issues as they refer to women and youth.

3.1.1. Overall objective

The overall purpose of the pre-event is to provide a platform for experts in government, civil society, the academia and all stakeholders to discuss issues of equity (especially focussing on women and youth) in natural resource development, share experiences and develop strategies to ensure effective integration of equity issues (especially focussing on women and youth) into the discussions and outcome of the main ADF VIII meeting.

3.2. Specific Objectives

The pre-event will provide a deeper understanding of key issues relating to women and youth in the context of the mining sector in Africa, with the following specific objectives

- Identify issues that relate to gender (addressing women's concerns specifically) and youth in addressing mineral, land, fisheries and forest resources.
- Address equity issues especially in relation to access to and use of natural resources,
- Deliberate on the (as much as is possible) on the themes of the main ADF VIII and come up with recommendations for mainstreaming in the main forum. and
- Debate strategies and appropriate governance structures for ensuring that sustainable natural resources development that makes a greater contribution to overall development that addresses equity issues;

3.3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

3.3.1. Outcomes

More specifically, the ADF VIII pre-event on **Equity in Natural Resources Development** will accomplish the following:

- Create a broader understanding of the centrality of equity in the policies, legal and regulatory frameworks for the management and development of natural resources in the African, created with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in preparation to ADF-VIII;
- Systematically integrate equity issues, more specifically gender equality, issues that affect women and youth in all the themes of the Forum.
- Contribute to the development of a framework through which equity issues as they relate specifically to women and young people can be integrated in the policy and legal frameworks formulated to guide the Governance and harnessing of natural resources for Africa's development to be discussed at the forum; and

- Systematically integrate issues of women' and young people's s rights to land and property in the context of natural resource management and development policies in Africa

3.3.2. Outputs

The expected outputs of this ADF VIII pre-event will include the following:

- i. A Pre-event report
- ii. Issues papers
- iii. Key recommendations for inclusion in all the themes and the outcome document of ADF VIII

4. Partnerships, Roles and Responsibilities

This activity is being organized by the Regional Coordination mechanism – Human and Social Development cluster.