



CONCEPT NOTE

The 4th Specialized Technical Committee meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment on the Review of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform Action (STC on Beijing + 25)

28 October - 01 November, 2019

Old Conference Centre, African Union Commission Headquarters

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. Introduction and Background

The 4th African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (STC on GEWE) will be held from 28 October to 01 November 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The main theme of the 4th STC will be the review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after its adoption (Beijing+25 review). In that regard, the STC will serve as the Africa Consultative Conference on Beijing + 25 review and a preparatory meeting for the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64). It will adopt the Africa regional report to be incorporated into the global Beijing + 25 report that will be presented at CSW64. The STC will also consider and adopt key decisions and documents on priority areas of the AU Gender Agenda. The new AU Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (AU GEWE Strategy) will be launched during the STC.

The STC on Beijing + 25 will be convened by the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN), with the support of International Development Partners.

2. Rationale and Justification

The STC on Beijing + 25 is held on the eve of several global and regional milestones on gender equality and women's empowerment.

2.1. Africa Consultative Conference on Beijing + 25 review and a preparatory meeting for the CSW 64th

Globally, the year 2020 marks the 25th anniversary since the world adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), a commitment that provides a framework for achievement of irreversible and measurable progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, without leaving anyone behind. The BPfA underscores commitment made at global, regional and sub- regional levels to ending discrimination, promoting women's rights and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women. These tenets have been acceded to in various continental and international instruments, including, among others, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo

Protocol), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA); and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The year 2020, also marks the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which promotes the effective, equal and full participation of women in peace and security processes. This resolution is aligned to most of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the BPfA, including, among others: women and armed conflict”, “women in power and decision-making” and “human rights of women”. The year also marks the 5th anniversary of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.

At regional level, 2020 marks the end of the African Women’s Decade 2010 – 2020, whose implementation themes mirror some of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the BPfA. The 5th anniversary of the 1st Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 will also be celebrated in 2020. Agenda 2063 is both a vision, endogenous plan and a road map for Africa’s development in fifty years. It builds on and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development. Agenda 2063 has seven aspirations including one where development will be people-driven, relying on the potential of African people especially its women and youth and caring for its children. Agenda 2063 embraces the commitments made in Beijing through BPfA.

Since adoption of the BPfA, Member States have used five year reviews to critically assess progress made, reflect on challenges encountered and provide a roadmap of actions to be undertaken to accelerate implementation. To date, AU Member States have undertaken periodic reviews of progress in 5 year intervals; 1999 (Beijing+5), 2004 (Beijing+10), 2009 (Beijing+15), 2014 (Beijing+20) and the current preparatory review exercise for 2020 (Beijing+25).

The AUC in partnership with UNECA and UNWOMEN, is leading the Africa Beijing Plus 25 review process and develop a synthesis report from 54 AU Member States; which will constitute the Common Africa Position (CAP) to be presented at the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2020, at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Africa Beijing +25 review report will be adopted by AU Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women’s Affairs during the STC on Beijing + 25.

2.2. AU Gender Agenda: adoption of Decisions and documents

The Ministers will be updated, consider and adopt decisions and documents on key priority developments related to the AU Gender Agenda. These include:

a. Roll-out of the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

The STC on Beijing + 25 will be updated on the key documents to facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of the AU GEWE Strategy. These are the GEWE Strategy Results Framework, RECs Harmonization Matrix and the GEWE Communications Strategy.

b. Reports of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)

Ministers will be presented with the Reports of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) for consideration and adoption as well as introduced to the SDGEA online reporting system. Ministers will also discuss and agree on action to be taken to implement

Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.1009 (XXXIII), appealing “to the Member States that are yet to submit their reports to do so urgently.”

c. Consideration of the African Women’s Decade (AWD) and Fund for African Women (FAW)

With the African Women’s Decade coming to an end in 2020, Ministers will assess achievements made over the Decade, identify low-hanging fruits and take a decision on the post - 2020 priority areas and action for the AU Gender Agenda to accelerate implementation of critical commitments. The Fund for African Women, which has been the implementation tool for the Decade will also be considered with specific references to transitional arrangements to be put in place, to facilitate its smooth conversion into a Trust Fund.

d. African Women Leaders Network (AWLN)

Following the operationalization of AWLN through its launch in April 2018 and the briefing to the 3rd STC in May, 2018, this important platform is fully operational under the patronship of the former President of Liberia, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. For example, national and local chapters have been launched in a few Member States with plans to reach 25 national chapters by March 2020 in commemoration of Beijing+ 25. Ministers will agree and take a decision on the implementation of AWLN at a local level, including the accelerated establishment of National Chapters. Consideration will also be made on the implementation of the African Women Leader’s Fund (AWLF).

In addition, the STC on Beijing + 25 will receive briefings on developments in the work of the Gender Directorate, including among others, the AU Pan-African Women’s Awards and Advocacy Missions for the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol on Women’s Rights.

3. Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The overall objective of the 4th STC on Beijing + 25 is to review and celebrate the significant progress made in Africa on gender equality and women’s empowerment through global and continental instruments such as the BPfA, AWD, and FAW and to agree on concrete action to be taken to accelerate implementation.

The specific objectives are to:

- Consider and adopt the Africa Beijing + 25 review report;
- Update ministers on documents meant to support accelerated implementation of the AU GEWE Agenda commitments;
- Create public-awareness campaign through high-level media attention across Africa about the Beijing+ 25 review process and the AU GEWE Agenda in general.

The expected outcomes are:

- Africa Beijing + 25 review report adopted
- Ministers updated on the GEWE Agenda documents
- Public awareness campaign conducted and information about the AU GEWE Agenda and the Beijing + 25 review disseminated across Africa

4. Organisation of the meeting

The 4th STC on Beijing + 25 will be convened as follows:

Day 1 and 2: Monday 28 October 2019, AUC:

- A day will be set aside for the Experts meeting to consider priority decisions and documents for the AU Gender Agenda. The meeting will be held at the AUC
- A day and half will be dedicated to the Beijing +25 Stakeholders' Consultation meetings of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs); Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); Young people. The parallel stakeholder consultation meetings will be held while the Experts are meeting.

Day 2 and 3: Tuesday 29 to Wednesday 30 October 2019, AUC:

- Two (2) days will be dedicated to the Experts meeting to consider the draft Africa Beijing + 25 Review Report and contributions from the Beijing +25 stakeholders.
- Continuation of the Experts meeting on Beijing +25 and finalization of the review report to be tabled at the Ministerial meeting
- Wednesday 30 October will also be dedicated to Ministers participation in meetings and side events on AUC gender issues and Beijing+25.

Day 4: Thursday 31 October 2019, AUC:

- Ministerial meeting to adopt the draft Africa Beijing +25 Review Report and launch of the new AU Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Day 5: Friday 01 November 2019, AUC:

- Ministerial meeting to adopt priority decisions and documents on the AU Gender Agenda

5. Side Events

The entire week of the STC and Beijing+ 25 review Conference (Beijing +25 week) will witness a high-level public awareness campaign on Beijing +25 and advocacy on the AU GEWE Agenda. Popularization activities will be conducted and side events convened throughout the week at the AUC which will include among others;

- Exhibition on Beijing+25.
- Barbershops where men will receive haircuts while discussing gender equality issues. The overall purpose of the Barbershops is to motivate "men and boys to commit to upholding gender equality" These barbershops will be the first in Africa focusing on transformative

ideas on promoting GEWE and linked to the #GenerationEquality Campaign. The events will inspire men and boys to discuss how they can promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Shoe-shining and Buna (coffee) moments, similarly to the Barbershops, where men engage and share on gender equality within their own spaces.
- African Games (Genda ball) to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Health corners
- Media campaign
- Screening of a movie "African Eyes on Beijing+25" with 25 young African women and men born in 1995, exhibition on Beijing+25.

6. Profile of Participants

The 4th STC on Beijing + 25 will be attended by AU Ministers in Charge of Gender and Women's Affairs and their Experts; RECs and RMs; CSOs; UN Agencies; Development Partners; staff of UN and AUC; members of the public. The inter-governmental sections of the event will be attended only by Member States and select invited participants.

7. Date and Venue

The 4th STC on Beijing + 25 will be held from 28 October to 01 November 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Stakeholders' Consultation meeting of RECs and RMs, CSOs and Young People will convene on Monday 28 October at the AUC. The Intergovernmental meetings will also be held from 28 October (1st day of the review of the Beijing+25 draft report by experts) to 01 November, at the AUC. The Launch of the AU GEWE Strategy will take place on Thursday 31 October, 2019 at the AUC. Side events and awareness-raising events for the whole Beijing+ 25 week will be convened at the AUC.

8. Organisers

The 4th STC on Beijing + 25 is organised by the AUC, UNWOMEN and UNECA with the support of International Development Partners.

9. Working Languages

Four African Union official languages will be used during the intergovernmental processes, i.e. Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.

For more information, please contact:

Ngone Diop, Chief of Gender, ECA – diopn@un.org

Marie Goretti Nduwayo, Senior Liaison Advisor, UN Women – marie.nduwayo@unwomen.org

Jeanne Flora Kayitesi, Programme Officer, WGDD – kayitesjif@africa-union.org