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Economic Commission for Africa
**Conference of African Ministers of Finance,
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African Union
**Specialized Technical Committee on Finance,
Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and
Integration***
First session

**Eighth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union
Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary
Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the
Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African
Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**
Addis Ababa, 25–31 March 2015

Side event

Making Agenda 2063 work for African women: What needs to be done?

I. Introduction

1. The imperative of tackling gender issues and discrimination against women has gained greater momentum in Africa owing to, among other things, the strong body of evidence regarding the benefits the gender dividend brings to the continent's development. Research undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has shown that Africa cannot achieve structural transformation if the role of women in the economy, in society and in governance structures is not fully recognized. The Beijing+20 regional review, conducted at the ninth African Regional Conference on Women, held in Addis Ababa in November 2014, and the Addis Ababa Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: Towards a transformational change for women and girls in Africa, which was adopted at the Conference, strongly emphasize that as the continent strives to transform the structures of its economy, responding to women's socioeconomic and political rights and harnessing their potential and talent should be considered as a priority goal.

2. The bold decision of the African Heads of State and Government to declare 2015, which marks the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, as the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063 sends a powerful message that stresses the central role of women in achieving Agenda 2063. Even more importantly, it emphasizes women's empowerment as one of the preconditions for achieving the continental development framework. The decision draws on the many landmark resolutions and policy frameworks, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, adopted by the African Heads of State in 2003 and 2004, respectively, with a view to charting and accelerating the continent's own path towards women's empowerment and gender equality.

* The Specialized Technical Committee replaces the Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance (CAMEF) and the Conference of African Ministers of Integration (COMAI). The Specialized Technical Committee brings together ministers of finance, monetary affairs, economic planning and integration

3. ECA is determined to support the effective implementation of the decision of the Heads of State by contributing to making women equal actors and beneficiaries of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and of the continent's structural transformation in general. It is against that backdrop that the Commission developed the comprehensive Continent-Wide Initiative for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, adopted in 2014 at the seventh Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance, held in Abuja. The Continent-Wide Initiative comprises three pillars, namely, women's economic empowerment, women's human rights and women's empowerment in the social sector, that speak to the most critical issues facing African women. The implementation of the initiative will be scaled up during this year, 2015, dedicated to the women of the continent.

4. In this vein, ECA will hold a side event on the theme "Making Agenda 2063 work for African women: What needs to be done?" on 28 March 2015 at the margins of the eighth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, to be held from 25 to 31 March 2015 in Addis Ababa.

II. Objective of the side event

5. The event is aimed at reflecting and building consensus on the practical measures that should be taken to ensure that Agenda 2063 responds to women's needs, constraints and priorities.

III. Specific objectives

6. The specific objectives of the side event are as follows:

- To identify women's key priorities in line with the outcome and Declaration of the Beijing+20 review and with the Agenda 2063 priorities and action plan.
- To reflect on the right mix of policies and programmes required to tackle structural and emerging challenges facing women.
- To build a continental consensus on action to be taken and to agree on the next steps, in line with the time frame of Agenda 2063.

IV. Format

7. The side event will take the form of an interactive panel discussion with a moderator who is familiar with Africa's development issues and gender and women's issues on the continent. The event will be moderated by a well-recognized international expert on gender and economic transformation.

8. Panellists will include:

- A representative from a member State
- A representative from the African Union Commission
- A representative from a research institution
- A representative from a civil society organization

9. The multidisciplinary panel will tackle the various priority issues and stimulate reflection on responses that need to be taken. Following the panel discussion, the floor will be given to participants for interactive discussion.

V. Participants

10. The side event targets a wide range of experts and stakeholders, from within and outside of Africa, including senior and mid-level policymakers, development planners, economists, gender experts, African Union Commission officials, ECA and other United Nations officials and the diplomatic community.

VI. Expected outcome

11. The discussion and agreed actions will be captured in an outcome document or a consensus document to be submitted to the Conference of Ministers for adoption.