



CSO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 61st SESSION ON THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN CSW61

The **Non- Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women /Africa (NGOCSW/Africa)** welcomes the priority theme for 2017 on *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*. And the review theme on *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls* (agreed conclusions of the fifty-eighth session) **The Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women / Africa (NGOCSW/Africa)** appreciates;

The international and regional agreed policy and legal frameworks such as; the Universal Declaration on Human Rights Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and its subsequent reviews (+5 +10+15+20), International Conference on Population on Development (ICPD) Program of Action and follow up actions, several International Labour Organization Conventions including the recent adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

The significant changes in the world of work influenced by innovative information and communication technologies and globalization, climate change, increasing informality and mobility of labour, reduction in public sector spending, privatization of public companies and services, concentration of women in labour intensive jobs characterized by low pay, insecure terms of employment with little or no access to decent work and social protection coupled with the economic hurdle faced by women in conflict and post conflict situations;

Reflecting on the 61CSW theme on *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*, the NGOCSW/Africa urges Government, Civil Society, Private Sector, Religious and Cultural leaders to;

a) Strengthening & enforcement of legal frameworks for full employment and decent work for all women

- Strengthen and enforce laws and policies to eliminate various forms of sexual gender based violence in the home and work place and support the development of the ILO instrument to provide an international standard to address violence and harassment against women in the world of work.
- Support the proposed ILO Convention on gender based violence in the world of work, ratify and domesticate Convention 189 on domestic workers.
- Adopt and enforce legislative policy reforms to ensure women's access, control and ownership over productive resources and assets such as land, and other forms of property credit, inheritance, natural resources and ICTs. And create an enabling environment for women and girls to fully use and benefit from productive resources
- Adopt gender responsive migration policies that protect and promote the safety of migrant workers, regulate the role of private companies and labour brokers and ensure that laws against human trafficking are enforced.
- Ensure that the trade and investment architecture provide the flexibility for all countries to adopt trade and investment regimes including bilateral investment treaties that promote sustainable development and protect the livelihoods of small and medium-scale producers and workers, especially low-cadre workers majority of whom are women and build self-determined industries.
- Review and repeal laws that criminalize voluntary abortion, and remove all legal, social and implementation barriers to ensure access to safe, comprehensive, free and high-quality procedures for pregnancy termination.

b) Implementation of economic and social policies for women's economic empowerment

- Reform the gendered division of labor and undertake deliberate measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work through investment in labour saving equipment, infrastructure, technology and public services such as accessible and quality child care and care facilities for children and other dependents, water harvesting technologies and consideration of unpaid care work in calculation of national GDP.
- Curb Illicit Financial Flows and tax havens which extract resources that could be invested in African economies compromising financing for development in essential sectors like education, water and health among others, and undermining governance through the IFF linkage to corruption and crime. We also call for the establishment of an inclusive intergovernmental UN Global Tax Body - where all countries have a seat at the table and equal say in determining international tax rules for global tax justice.
- Support young and poor women's access to skills and training in new and emerging fields of science technology engineering and mathematical education and digital fluency through the expansion of relevant education, training opportunities and infrastructure
- Public transparency and democratic control of cross-border capital flow. Create mechanisms for full public transparency and democratic control of cross-border capital flow by advancing tax justice and protecting human rights by curtailing criminal activities of money laundering, trafficking of persons and weapons.
- Regulate the extractive industry to minimize large scale land acquisition, mitigate climate change, and land degradation to reduce the impact on economic justice and rights for women and their communities, and promote sustainable development.
- Support women entrepreneurs in small and medium sized enterprises to become economically viable and promote their transition to the formal economy.
- Ensure protection of women workers especially in low cadres, in the formal and informal sector by extending social protection and establishing minimum living wages.

c) Eliminating discriminatory laws, regulations, practices and stereotypes that hinder the protection and progression of women in the world of work

- Establish legislation and regulations to eliminate the gender pay gap and ensure equal pay for equal work and work of equal value;
- Ensure access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, as well as comprehensive sexuality education that is gender sensitive, non-discriminatory and life-skills based
- Eliminate all forms of harmful practices such as early and force marriages, female genital mutilation that further marginalize women and girls economic empowerment and rights give vigorous support to efforts among non-governmental and community organizations and religious institutions to eliminate such practices;
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- Address the underlying structural barriers, discriminatory norms and practices that tend to trap women in low-level jobs with minimal decision-making functions.
- Invest in changing negative attitudes including of men and boys to embracing gender equality starting at an early age to address patriarchal stereotyping during parenting

d) Strengthening women's collective voice, leadership and decision making

- Strengthen the leadership role of women in conflict prevention , resolution and peacebuilding efforts in line with National Action Plans for implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325(2000) on women peace and security.



- Take deliberate measures, including temporary special measures to ensure equal representation of women in decision-making structures and institutions including private companies, cooperatives and trade unions and their participation in regional institutions such as the African union
- Repeal laws that criminalize and limit civic space for women's rights organizations, trade unions and citizens organizing on labour rights and women's economic rights
- End sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls in conflict and post conflict situations in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's commitment to end sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).
- Enact and enforce labour laws to improve the bargaining power and position of women and youth in labour markets

This statement is submitted on behalf of the NGO CSW/Africa by the following organizations:

- a) African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)*
- b) Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA)*
- c) Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD/AFARD)*
- d) Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI)*
- e) Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS)*
- f) Servitas - Cameroon*
- g) Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) West Africa*