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**Reports to the Committee on Gender and
Social Development – reporting and
discussion: (b) Subprogramme 6 — Gender
and women in development**

Report of the CGSD on the work of the African Centre for Gender (ACG) **

I. Introduction

1. The African Centre for Gender (ACG) within the Social Development Policy Division aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 as well as international and regional commitments on gender equality such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
2. To achieve this objective, in the biennium, the ACG focusses on evidenced-based research in the areas of women's economic empowerment, women's human rights, and gender-sensitive social protection. This is in line with the ACG's strategic focus, namely, the Continent-Wide Initiative for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The Continent-Wide Initiative for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC)-Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Joint Conference of Ministers of Finance and Economic Development in May 2014. The strategy addresses three interlinked components, namely, women's economic empowerment, protection of women's socio-economic and political rights and the social sector. The Continent-Wide Initiative for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment is aligned with Agendas 2030 and 2063.
3. The African Centre for Gender supports member States to take account of gender as an important determinant in wealth creation and sustainable development processes. The ACG also spearheads the production of tools and knowledge products such as the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI), the African Gender Scorecard (produced for the AUC) and a number of knowledge products on both structural and emerging gender issues. These products have contributed to informing government responses across the continent to prevailing gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls, as well as advancing women's economic empowerment initiatives.

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4. This report on the work of the African Centre for Gender – (Sub-programme 6) aims at providing the Second Session of the Committee of Gender and Social Development (CGSD) with information on the Centre’s interventions and achievements over the last two years. It takes account of the recommendations of the 1st CGSD held in 2015 and highlights key results and lessons learnt from challenges.

II. Highlights of main achievements

5. In the biennium and in line with the Continent-Wide Initiative for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, the main ACG activities were structured as follows: (1) Policy research and knowledge products; (2) Development of tools; (3) Technical support and advisory services to Member States; (4) Implementation of an ECA-wide gender-mainstreaming programme; and (5) Building consensus among African countries on key gender and development issues.

A. Policy research and knowledge products

The African Women’s Report on the theme “Securing women’s rights to social protection in Africa”

6. In the report period, ACG undertook research on **Securing women’s rights to social protection in Africa** in five countries: Chad, Kenya, Namibia, Mauritania and Senegal. The report highlights and explains the gaps in practice regarding African women’s rights to social protection and provides key policy messages and recommendations to close those gaps in order to secure African women’s rights to social protection.

7. The methodology combined desk review and in-country research that provided insights into women’s stories, and their experiences in terms of access to and benefit from social protection schemes.

8. The report shows that less than 10 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa has social protection. This is in a context of historically low levels of gross domestic product (GDP) and a high share of contributory, employment-based social protection when 72 per cent of the population is in informal employment. The coverage of African women is even lower given their lower representation in formal employment and the gendered and segmented nature of informal employment. In addition, the agendas, actors and institutions involved in gender equality and women’s human rights on the one hand and social protection on the other hand continue to work more in parallel than together.

9. The Expert Group meeting reviewing the report, attended by senior government officials from the countries where the research was undertaken, acknowledged the importance of this study. They also recognized that the report would help to mobilize the relevant sectoral ministries to initiate social protection programmes or improve them to be more responsive to women’s specific needs.

Research on Gender and Artisanal mining in Africa

10. ACG, in partnership with the African Minerals Development Center (AMDC) and the UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Region Office, undertook a study on the contributions and challenges facing women in the vital sector of mining in six mineral-rich African countries, namely Ghana and Guinea (West Africa), Tanzania (East Africa), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Central Africa), Zambia and Zimbabwe (Southern Africa). The study aimed to (i) Identify the main constraints facing women in the mining industry

by looking deeply into the legal, policy and regulatory frameworks governing the industry in each of the six countries; (ii) Investigate women's access to finance in the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sub-sector; and (iii) Identify opportunities for collaboration between ASM and large-scale mining corporations.

11. Among other findings, the report noted the need for a review of mining-related legislation and policy frameworks to ensure that women in ASM are given appropriate legal protection in the mining sector. It recommended that affirmative action for women be considered in mining. It emphasized that mining legislation should provide a 30 per cent quota of infrastructure projects in mining for women in ASM and improve access to financing for women in ASM.

12. The findings of the research will be used – especially in the research countries and also by the AMDC – to improve mining policies and programmes that effectively address the concerns of women in artisanal and small-scale mining. AMDC's work is oriented towards (i) Promoting a viable and sustainable mining sector; (ii) Strengthening the capacities of operators; and (iii) Reducing the negative environmental, health and welfare effects. This report on Gender and Artisanal Mining in Africa will give value to these areas of focus.

Research on Women's Economic Empowerment

13. Across the continent, supply and demand factors heavily limit women's participation in formal labour markets for wage employment. The majority of women are self-employed as own-account workers in urban areas or as contributing family workers in rural areas. In each case, women are at the bottom of value chains, with dismal productivity and asset accumulation. Against this background and to help member States identify context-specific policy instruments to raise the productivity of women entrepreneurs as part of their economic empowerment, the African Center for Gender has been undertaking an empirical study on the theme, "Women's Economic Empowerment in Africa: Boosting Female Entrepreneurship". To this end, ACG has identified a wide range of data sources and collected individual, firm and country-level data to enable rigorous analysis of individual and firm-level characteristics of women entrepreneurs, the constraints they face, and the linkages between such constraints and firm performance.

14. The study notes that member States should implement active labour market policies, particularly for entrepreneurship promotion and skills training programmes targeting women entrepreneurs. It also finds that female firm owners are mostly married and yet married women are at a serious disadvantage in terms of legal rights of access to economic opportunities. The study offers a set of policies for governments to respond to the many challenges that impede women's economic empowerment.

15. The report will be used to support policies on women entrepreneurship, initially, in study countries and eventually in all African countries.

The African Development Index (AGDI)

16. The AGDI enables member States to compile data and assess their own performance in terms of achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, both quantitatively and qualitatively. It provides a mechanism for streamlining reporting on all gender-related conventions and commitments.

17. During the reporting period, the AGDI was being rolled out as part of Phase 3 in an additional nine countries – Guinea, Liberia, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, and South Africa; South Africa undertook its second AGDI in 2016. The fourth and final phase of the AGDI was launched in June 2016 with the organization of a Methodology Workshop which was attended by 11 countries – Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea-Bissau,

Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Saô Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan, and Sudan. The participants rated all key areas of the workshop outstanding and 100 per cent of the participants rated it as either relevant or very relevant. Five countries – Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mauritius, and Saô Tomé and Príncipe – are implementing Phase 4 of the AGDI. This brings the number of countries covered by the AGDI to 31.

18. The Cabinet of Ministers of Mauritius underscored that the AGDI was a critical “mechanism to measure the status of women as compared to men in the social, economic and political spheres”. The findings from the AGDI informed the discussion and draft Outcome Statement of the 3rd Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in May 2017. The AGDI is also being used to inform the African Union African Gender Scorecard.

19. Using the AGDI databases, Gender Outlook reports were published for each of the 14 countries of the AGDI Phase II. These report provide an overview of gender gaps using 44 indicators spanning social, economic and political affairs. Each Outlook features key messages and visual aids to showcase data and scoring results. The AGDI Phase II includes Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Kenya, Malawi, Mali and Senegal. Furthermore, three Policy Briefs were produced on each building block of the AGDI, namely the Social, Economic and Political Power blocks. The Briefs outline analytical trends and draw attention to the main areas of major concern that require country action. In addition, the AGDI informed the gender component of the Country Profiles prepared by ECA Sub-Regional Offices.

20. In response to member States recommendations, the African Centre for Gender is currently working with the African Development Bank (AfDB) to merge the ECA’s AGDI with the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index into one Africa-specific gender index. The joint index will take account of the gender-related indicators associated with Agendas 2013 and 2063. It will be piloted in five African countries during the third quarter of 2017 and rolled out across the continent in the second quarter of 2018.

21. **Research on Female Economy at a Glance in Africa:** in collaboration with the Graça Machel Foundation, ACG has produced a Report in the form of a situation analysis that collects and analyzes data on women’s participation and contribution to African economies.

22. The Report uses more than 80 indicators on the Female Economy in Africa, particularly for women’s access to economic opportunities and women’s economic empowerment. The findings suggest that large income losses are incurred by African countries, particularly in North Africa, due to women’s inactivity. Furthermore, early marriage is considered as the ultimate obstacle to tackle in an effort to help future generations of women take full control of their potential. It is expected that research findings will inform member States’ policy actions towards accelerating the advancement of women on the continent.

23. The report was presented at the Graça Machel – Women Advancing Africa Conference on the theme: “Driving social and economic transformation” in Tanzania in August 2017. The conference received the report with great interest since it provides the most up-to-date analysis using a comprehensive set of indicators.

¹ The other 24 countries are: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, the Gambia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia.

B. Technical support and advisory services

1. Technical support to the African Union Commission (AUC)

24. Following the successful launch of the African Gender Scorecard, which ACG developed in 2015 for the African Union, and the momentum it has created, the Centre led the production of the second edition of the Scorecard in 2016 on the theme “Women’s Human Rights. Where does the continent stand?” A two-pronged approach – a gender analysis and a human rights approach – was used to review country progress in implementing global and regional women’s socio-economic and political rights frameworks and conventions.

25. In 2017, the Scorecard created a strong positive momentum and renewed willingness of African Heads of State to accelerate achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Award given to Heads of States whose countries had recorded good performance has turned out to be an important incentive for member States to seek accountability from ministries of Gender and Women’s Affairs to deliver on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

2. Technical support to Governments

26. During the reporting period, ACG provided tailored technical support and advisory services to Mauritania’s Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Family in the implementation of the National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. Hands-on training on the strategy was facilitated for the ministry’s middle and senior-level staff who familiarized themselves with the strategy, and better understood their role in its implementation. A five-year action plan was developed to operationalize the National Gender Mainstreaming Strategy.

27. ACG provided support to Liberia in its African Peer Review Mechanism self-assessment, helping in the analysis of the gender and development aspects within the socio-economic section.

28. Technical support was also provided to sector ministries of Tanzania in partnership with UN Women and UNDP. The support aimed to strengthen national capacity for generating and using gender statistics and data for SDG localisation. Government departments involved included the Gender Mainstreaming Working Group-Macro Policy Department of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC) Department. ACG also provided support to reinforce understanding of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the context of Tanzania, including exploring the significance of gender targets and indicators in achieving all other SDGs. This resulted from recognition by representatives of sector ministries and departments of the need for coordination of SDG implementation in Tanzania.

29. In partnership with the UN system in Tanzania, ACG provided support to the Government of Zanzibar to ensure that the SDGs and targets, especially Goal 5, are included in Zanzibar’s Strategy for Economic and Social Transformation.

3. Capacity building for Government Officers

30. In line with the ACG’s continued support to member States to strengthen their work in gender and macro-economic development, the sub-programme in the reporting period co-facilitated the training of trainers (TOT) on gender and economic policy management (GEPMI) at the Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in Dakar, Senegal. The objective of the TOTs was to provide African middle- and senior-level economic planners with the frameworks and tools to mainstream gender into economic policy-making and implementation processes.

31. More than 20 middle- and senior-level officers (economic planners, statisticians, gender experts, etc.) participated in the training sessions and acquired the methodologies and tools to factor gender into their national development planning processes. In addition, the trained experts supplemented the IDEP pool of experts who can support their countries and from which the ECA and IDEP can draw to respond to member States' request for technical support.

III. In-house Gender Mainstreaming Programme

32. Gender mainstreaming is critical to the work of ECA to ensure that outputs delivered to member States address issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. A three pronged programme on gender has been introduced in the Commission. The programme's components are ECA Gender Policy; the Gender Parity Marker; and a Capacity Development Programme on Gender Mainstreaming.

33. In line with the strategy and to strengthen the capacity of ECA staff to deliver effectively on gender equality and women's empowerment, Commission-wide gender mainstreaming training was undertaken in the reporting period. The training aimed at creating awareness and building the capacity of all ECA staff to integrate gender into programmes and operations. The design of the programme took into account the needs of both professional and support staff members within Divisions and Sub-Regional Offices (SROs). Thus, the training was customized and tailored to take account of the specific mandate of each division and SRO so as to ensure thematic relevance and focus, as well as filling the knowledge gaps on gender mainstreaming.

34. Over 80 per cent of ECA staff members were trained on gender mainstreaming with a view to ensure gender-balanced programming and gender-responsive operations within the Commission. As a result, divisional outputs are increasingly embracing a comprehensive gender perspective.

35. The Gender Mainstreaming Capacity Development Programme has triggered actions in ECA divisions and SROs that indicate a positive shift and more consciousness of the need to integrate gender into divisional outputs and knowledge products for member States.

36. As part of the in-house gender mainstreaming programme, a **Gender Equality Marker** was introduced in ECA in the reporting period. The Gender Equality Marker is a monitoring tool developed by the UN to track the amount and types of investments and resources dedicated to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment by each output, activity or project. The Marker is intended to track and allocate resources for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment and promote gender-responsive programming. The results of the Marker show that more work needs to be done for ECA to address equality and women's empowerment effectively in the outputs delivered to member States.

37. During the reporting period, the ECA Gender Policy to articulate the strategic actions to be undertaken by ECA to institutionalize gender equality was produced and is being reviewed internally. The policy outlines ECA commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment within the context of the organizational mandate, and articulates a clear strategy, accountability framework and set of actions for mainstreaming gender in ECA programmes and operations. An action plan has also been defined, outlining clear roles and responsibilities as well as time-lines for operationalizing the gender policy to ensure compliance by all ECA staff members and management.

IV. Regional consensus building

38. ACG supports African member State preparations for the annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) sessions that take place in New York. In the biennium, ACG in partnership with UNWomen organized the Africa Ministerial Consultative Meeting prior to the CSW60 and CSW61 sessions to support Ministers in charge of Gender and Women's Empowerment to identify and build consensus on Africa's priorities related to the themes of CSW. In 2016, the theme was *Women's Empowerment and its Link to Sustainable Development – Towards the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063*. In 2017, the theme was *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*. The meetings adopted outcome documents with specific recommendations on key issues to inform the contributions of member States in the discussions and negotiations at the CSW. Each consultative meeting was supported by a background paper produced by ACG that set the stage and identified priority focus issues.

39. The outcome documents and key messages of both meetings constituted key negotiation tools for African Ministers and their delegations at the CSW sessions in New York, enabling them to influence the global outcome document. Member States have noted that these ACG Africa Ministerial Consultative Meeting are important in assisting them to be better prepared for the CSW sessions.

Building and strengthening strategic partnerships

40. In implementing its work programme, ACG has developed and strengthened strategic partnerships within ECA, with the AUC, UN agencies, bilateral organizations, academia, research institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs) to create synergy in a cost-effective manner.

41. The partnership with the AUC has been strengthened with the provision of ACG technical support to the AUC Directorate of Women and Gender. Of great significance is the production of the Africa Gender Scorecard, an easy-to-use policy action and monitoring tool which enables the AUC to assess country performance in implementing global and regional gender equality and women's empowerment commitments. ACG is also supporting the AUC in the development of its gender strategy.

42. ACG has built strategic partnerships with UN WOMEN, UNFPA, and other UN agencies, AfDB and the Regional Economic Communities, fostering the spirit of working as one to deliver on Africa's gender equality and women's empowerment agenda.

43. ACG has started developing partnerships with universities and research institutions. In this vein, in 2016, it organized in the biennium a Consultative Forum on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment – The Role of Research Institutions and Universities in Harnessing the Potential of Agendas 2030 and 2063. The forum brought together over 30 experts, researchers and scholars from African universities, research institutes and think tanks working on gender and social development issues, as well UN agencies and the AU Commission. The meeting forged a strategic partnership with African universities, research institutes and think tanks on gender equality research agenda-setting. It also defined a clear strategy for capacity building and for strengthening a common research agenda in the context of Agendas 2030 and 2063.

44. Furthermore, ACG continued to partner with and provide technical support to the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC), a leading African women's civil society network dedicated to the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the respective thematic areas. Such partnerships enabled the Centre to maximize its CSO outreach approach in order to elevate women's voice and agency on the continent.

45. Within ECA, ACG worked with and supported all ECA divisions and SROs in the implementation of the in-house gender-mainstreaming programme. In addition, the Centre collaborated with the African Minerals Development Center in the research project on Gender and Artisanal Mining; and on Gender and Climate Change with the Special Initiative Division. The ACG developed partnerships with the Land Policy Initiative of the Regional Integration and Trade Division and worked with the Macroeconomic Policy Division. The Centre contributed to the Economic Report on Africa (ERA), the Africa Report on Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 for consultations at the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD), in preparation for the global High Level Forum on SDGs.

Planned activities for the 2018-2019 biennium

46. In the upcoming biennium, the ACG – sub-programme 6 will continue supporting member States, the African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities in adopting and implementing gender-responsive policies, programmes and strategies to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Given the cross-cutting nature of gender, emphasis will be placed on the adoption and strengthening of sound policies, enforceable legislation, initiatives with gender perspectives and specific indicators for women. A special focus will be on Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063.

47. Technical support will continue to be provided to member States, especially national gender machineries so that the implementation of Agendas 2063 and 2030 are in harmony with the outcome document of the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The work of the sub-programme will also be informed by the outcomes of the first and second sessions of the Committee on Gender and Social Development, 2015 and 2017 respectively.

48. The sub-programme will further strengthen evidence-based research to inform policy in the areas of women's economic empowerment, women's rights and social protection in line with the Commission's strategic focus and the continent-wide initiative on gender equality and women's empowerment. It will also use existing tools such as the African Gender Development Index, the African Gender Index and the Women's Empowerment Scorecard. In collaboration with the Commission's African Centre for Statistics, the sub-programme will develop new tools to support and strengthen the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated, gender-responsive data and statistics and the monitoring of commitments relating to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

49. Current partnerships will be strengthened and new ones forged in response to the sub-programme's areas of focus in the biennium.

Conclusion

50. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is complex and challenging work characterized by gains and setbacks because of the deep-rooted social constructs in Africa that shape women's and men's roles, responsibilities and entitlements. The work on gender requires appropriate financial and human resources which unfortunately the sub-programme does not always have.

51. The ACG will continue supporting member States and will continue to expect the member States to respond more timely and adequately to requests for information from the Centre.