

## Strengthen National Machineries and make real impact on gender equality – Thokozile Ruzvidzo

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Addis Ababa, 18 May 2011 (ECA) - The director of the African Centre for Gender and Social Development (ACGSD), Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, has underlined that strengthening national machineries is critical for making a real impact on promoting gender equality in Africa. Ms. Ruzvidzo made the remark on Wednesday, at the ongoing 7th Session of the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) in a presentation on a study that looks at recent trends in national mechanisms for gender equality.

Ruzvidzo informed the meeting that the study presents a situation analysis of the status of national mechanisms in the 53 African Member States over the last five years.

“It argues that contexts, such as economic liberalization policies since the 1980s and the role of the State and political reform have shaped the development and current situation of the mechanisms,” she said and added: “Within these contexts, national mechanisms have evolved in significant ways.”

Ruzvidzo warned that the relationship between the different stakeholders, including ministries, agencies, donors and civil society tends to be ad hoc and not consistent: “They need to be systemized in order to be more beneficial and effective”, she noted.

A recent key trend according to Ruzvidzo is the increasing popularity of ministries or ministerial departments for women as lead institutional mechanisms.

“Instruments to advance gender equality such as legislative reform and gender-responsive budgeting have also become very popular amongst national machineries over the last few years,” she noted.

The main areas of emphasis of institutional mechanisms have been influenced by the Beijing Platform for Action, resulting in continuities and a certain homogenisation in their priorities.

She touched on the financial and human resource deficits that she said are exacerbated by external constraints such as political instability in some countries and a lack of national consensus about the necessity and value of institutional mechanisms.

The study concludes that National mechanisms can reposition themselves to widen their influence and accelerate the achievement of an increasingly complex and challenging gender equality agenda through undertaking specific measures. These include strengthening their resource base, building their technical and other gender-mainstreaming capacities, harmonizing their coordinating roles with other mechanisms, and leveraging their partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including cooperating partners, civil society groupings and the private sector.

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