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**THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN
AND DEVELOPMENT (CWD)
2009**

Background

The Committee on Women and Development (CWD) is a statutory body of **experts** and **policy makers** that provides guidance and advises the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on women and development. It evolved from the first Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development organized by ECA in Nouakchott, Mauritania in 1977. The Regional Conference recommended the establishment of the African Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC). The ARCC has evolved over the years, culminating in it being renamed the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) during the thirty-second session of the Conference of Ministers of ECA in 1997 (E/ECA/CM.23/12, 27 May 1997, Resolution 826).

Within the context of the ongoing reforms at the ECA, the Conference of Ministers of the ECA, during its fortieth (40th) session (2007) reviewed the Intergovernmental Machinery of the Commission (Resolution 853 (XL)). The Conference emphasised the need to further define the composition and objectives of the proposed structures comprising the intergovernmental machinery. It is in this regard that the CWD is therefore being reconstituted in line with the other six Committees of the ECA Conference of Ministers (Resolution 853 (XL)). CWD continues to exist to help strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment and enables ECA to fulfil its legislative mandate to draw on opinions of experts and policy makers in the public and private sectors and civil society. In this

Justification and objectives of the proposal

The CWD so far, has been at variance with other existing ECA statutory structures, being the sole subsidiary body at ministerial level. This situation effectively puts CWD at the same level with ECA's Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development. In addition, it makes the organisation of meetings quite challenging for various reasons, ranging from accommodating Minister's agenda to combining technical and political issues related to gender and development.

Proposal

In order to harmonise processes related to the constitution of its subsidiary organs, the ECA has had to reflect upon the CWD as it is currently composed. It has proved challenging to engage with the CWD at the technical level, and at the same time, deal with political issues related to gender. ECA is thus proposing a realignment of the CWD to the same structure as the other ECA subsidiary organs. The resultant Committee will cease to have Ministers as members of the Committee.

Mandate of CWD

The CWD will continue to be an advisory forum of **experts** and **policy makers**, providing guidance to the Commission's work on gender equality, women's empowerment and the advancement of women. The proposed revised mandate of CWD is as follows:

- a) Serve as a technical regional forum of experts that deals with gender and women in development issues, as mandated by the UN General Assembly;

- b) Periodically review progress in the implementation of Global and Regional Platforms for Action;
- c) Participate in the five- year sub-regional and regional ministerial review of the Global and Regional Platforms for Action;
- d) Review and evaluate the activities carried out in the region in the framework of the relevant programmes for the advancement of women;
- e) Harmonize and coordinate sub-regionally developed and approved programmes on women in development;
- f) Assist member States to define and promote measures to follow-up the implementation of the regional and globally agreed programmes of action on gender and women in development and encourage the integration of gender dimension into development policies, plans and programmes;
- g) Serve as the regional advisory body of the UNECA and provide guidance to the Commission in formulating its work programmes on Gender, Women in Development on sectoral activities, emerging issues as well as follow-up actions in the implementation of international and regional programmes;
- h) Identify and highlight the major economic and social development issues and concerns with a view to promoting policies and strategies for gender equality and women's advancement in collaboration with the other technical committees of ECA;
- i) Collaborate with the other technical committees of ECA;
- j) Report to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development on the activities and programmes on women in development covered at the sub-regional and regional levels.

Composition of CWD

The Composition of the Committee shall be as follows:

Members of CWD

- ✓ Senior Experts (at least Director's level) from ECA member States representing the National Gender Machineries;
- ✓ Depending on the thematic focus chosen for the sessions of the Committee, Experts from line Ministries.

Resource persons

The Committee shall invite eminent African experts on gender and development issues to serve as resource persons during sessions or meetings.

Observers

The African Union Commission, African inter-governmental organizations, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African academic institutions and research centres, the media, development partners, non-governmental organizations active in gender, women and development, as well as United Nations agencies shall be invited to the meetings of the Committee as observers.

Secretariat

ECA will serve as the Secretariat of the CWD.

Sessions

The CWD shall meet once every two years.

Reporting

The report of each session of the Committee will be submitted to the subsequent ECA's Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development.

Election of the Bureau

The Members of the Committee elect a Bureau consisting of a Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons and two Rapporteurs for a two-year term. The election of the Bureau will be held at the beginning of the Committee's session. The Bureau and members of the CWD, and the Secretariat of the Committee (ECA) shall consult in between sessions on the Bureau of the upcoming session.

The criteria for the election of the officers will be based on geographical representation in accordance with ECA's Subregional Offices coverage as follows:

North Africa

Algeria

Egypt

Libya

Mauritania

Morocco

Sudan

Tunisia

Central Africa

République centrafricaine

République du Congo

Cameroon

Gabon

Guinée Equatoriale

Sao Tomé et Príncipe

Tchad

West Africa

Benin

Burkina Faso

Cap-Vert

Côte d'Ivoire

Gambia

Ghana

Guinée

Guinée Bissau

Liberia

Mali

Niger

Nigeria

Sénégal

Sierra Leone

Togo

East Africa

Burundi

Comoros

Congo (DRC)

Djibouti

Eritrea

Ethiopia

Kenya

Madagascar

Rwanda

Seychelles

Somalia

Tanzania

Uganda

Southern Africa

Angola
Botswana
Lesotho
Malawi
Mauritius

Mozambique

Namibia
South Africa
Swaziland
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Linguistic coverage reflecting Africa's diversity will also be considered.

Members of the Committee shall make nominations.

Duration

The Bureau will serve until the election of the next Bureau. In consultation with the ECA Secretariat, the Bureau may hold meetings in between sessions as deemed necessary.

Venue of meetings

The meetings shall be held at ECA Headquarters. Meetings may also be held in any member States, upon a written invitation by the Government.

Cost of Participation

Member States and agencies shall bear the cost of their attendance of the sessions of the Committee. UNECA's Rules of Procedure shall, where relevant, apply to the sessions of the Committee.