



- Identify the policy implementation and other challenges that countries have faced
- Share experiences, lessons learnt and good practices in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and on eliminating violence against women;
- Define priority actions and mechanisms needed to accelerate progress towards achievement of gender equality, women's empowerment and eliminating violence against women;
- Strengthen and build new strategic alliances and partnerships to take the equality agenda forward.

The forum's thematic areas

ADF VI will focus on twelve thematic clusters:

1. Violence against women
2. HIV and AIDS
3. Health and reproductive rights
4. Education, training and skills development
5. Migration
6. Governance, conflict, peace and security
7. Employment, markets and trade
8. Food security
9. Land and property rights
10. Climate change, water, sanitation and energy
11. Financing for gender equality
12. Gender and ICT

Within each thematic area, the following cross cutting key issues will be discussed. These issues are also essential for creating or strengthening the enabling environment for promoting gender equality:

- Legal reforms, including status of ratification and domestication of the relevant international and regional gender equality and women's empowerment instruments
- Effective policy development and implementation
- Institutional mechanisms
- Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms
- Availability of sex and gender disaggregated data
- Involvement of men and boys
- Capacity building

Expected outcomes and follow-up mechanisms

- A plan of action that provides clear recommendations for Member States and development partners to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment;
- A position statement on African women and emerging issues;
- ADF VI will come up with a proposal for an African decade on gender equality (similar to the recent African decades on water and education) as a follow-up mechanism to ensure implementation of these recommendations. The African decade on gender equality would detail the concrete priority actions to be undertaken by the responsible entities, the performance indicators timeline and clear targets on what is to be achieved for each theme that would be used for assessing progress (including a mid-term review).

- Development of a fully functional regional web based knowledge pool for information sharing on the actions stated from the declaration;
- Strategic mobilization of resources to support post-ADF activities.

Who will participate in the forum?

A broad spectrum of stakeholders will be invited including the following categories: Eminent persons; Role models; African Governments; Regional Economic Communities; African civil society organizations (including community based organizations, research and academic institutions, media networks, special groups such as nomads, indigenous people, persons with disability, persons living with HIV/AIDS, women and girls affected by violence, religious organizations and traditional leadership); International civil society organizations; Private sector organizations; UN partners; Bilateral organizations; International and regional financial institutions; The Diaspora; Representatives of South – South cooperation; and others.

Programme of work

The programme of work will be structured to ensure maximum discussion and feedback on the twelve thematic areas.



19-21 November 2008
United Nations Conference Centre
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

We need your partnership and active participation to make ADF VI another resounding success.

Action on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Ending Violence Against Women in Africa

The Sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI)

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Economic Commission for Africa



African Union



African Development Bank

The African Development Forum: A decade of debate, consensus and achievements

The African Development Forum has over the past decade become a major gathering for the discussion of critical development issues and for mobilizing consensus and building partnerships among the continent's stakeholders. Established by ECA in 1999, the Forum is designed to generate well defined programmes that are within the capacity of African countries to implement.

The first Forum (ADF I) convened in Addis Ababa, in October 1999, focused on "The Challenge to Africa of Globalisation and the Information Age". The conference stimulated rich debate on ways in which the African continent can participate in the world economy through ICT, mobilising major public and private sector interests, and new actions and funding to boost the ECA-led African Information Society Initiative (AIS). AISI targets the formulation of national, sectoral and subregional ICT strategies for improving the livelihood of Africans and combating poverty. In operation since 1996, AISI informed Africa's contribution to the Action Plan of the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and maintains an ever-increasing interactive link with policy makers, parliamentarians, civil society, the academia and the media.

ADF II, held from 3 to 7 December 2000, in Addis Ababa, focused on HIV/AIDS as one of Africa's greatest challenges and how the pandemic could be thoroughly dealt with at all levels and spheres of the African society through effective leadership. ADF II brought together dignitaries, experts and stakeholders from various walks of life, including the then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, several African Heads of State and Government, other UN high officials and leaders of civil society. It was a resounding success that produced the "Addis Ababa Consensus and Plan of Action", a most comprehensive document on AIDS action in the African continent.

The outcomes of ADF II fed directly into the April 2001 Abuja Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other infectious diseases and into the June 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS. ADF II also produced an impetus for further action on the subject as well as other initiatives on HIV/AIDS and related infectious diseases.

One such initiative was on devising an international funding mechanism to face up to the threat of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a role that was taken up the following year, 2002, by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a mechanism that has, to date, committed over **US\$ 10 billion in 136 countries** to support aggressive interventions against all three diseases and continues to sign and disburse new grants for them, especially in developing countries.

Another direct outcome of ADF II was the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa (CHGA) launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2003 and implemented by ECA. It was based on policy consultations in which 20 Commissioners comprising leaders, academics and eminent personalities in development networked with numerous Africans, policymakers, organizations, research institutions, UN agencies, civil society, and people living with AIDS, to verify and advise African governments on the governance impact and development implications of HIV/AIDS, while championing the issue through policy advocacy with them. CHGA published background documents and produced a final report that advances knowledge with key recommendations on HIV/AIDS policy based on its research findings and the views of its wide variety of participants. The report "Securing Our Future", was presented to the UN Secretary-General on 9 June 2008 at the UN Headquarters.

ADF III, was convened in March 2002, under the theme "Defining Priorities for Regional Integration". As the OAU was at that time about to be transformed into the AU, the Forum's discussions shed light on the complexities and implications of implementing the regional integration agenda. The ADF III Consensus Statement emphasizes the overwhelming demand by Africans for their aspirations to unity to be fulfilled through political and economic integration based on common values. It calls upon African leaders to implement this concern as stated in the various treaties, citing failure to achieve economic transformation and development, structural factors, and such governance problems as poor implementation of treaty obligations, conflicts, and non-resolution of political differences as hampering regional integration efforts.



ADF VI: When and where?

The sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI) on "Action on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women in Africa" is being organized by the ECA in partnership with the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). It will take place from 19 to 21 November 2008 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

ADF IV, held from 11 to 15 October 2004, co-sponsored with the African Union Commission (AUC) and African Development Bank (AfDB), focused on the issue of good governance for economic transformation under the theme "Governance for a Progressing Africa". At the time of ADF IV, ECA was preparing the first African Governance Report (AGR I) entitled "Measuring and Monitoring Progress towards Good Governance in Africa" through a study based on household surveys, expert panels and desk research in 28 selected African countries. A synopsis of that report reviewed by ADF IV revealed the strong consensus across Africa on the critical importance of good governance as a precondition for Africa to meet the MDGs. The full African Governance Report 2005 identifies the core elements of good governance endorsed by the Fourth African Development Forum (ADF IV).

ADF V took place on 16-18 November 2006 under the theme of "Youth and Leadership in the 21st Century", bringing together a broad spectrum of stakeholders including governments, youth representatives, NGOs, international partners, media and dignitaries. The Forum was organized by ECA and the African Union in partnership with other United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, ILO and UNFPA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). ADF-V was a milestone event in terms of putting youth issues firmly at the centre of the mainstream development agenda in Africa. The outcome document, the ADF-V Consensus Statement, called for partnerships at all levels and highlighted key actions to be taken by governments, development partners and youth themselves in the areas of strengthening youth capacity and promoting youth participation and empowerment, along with the ratification and operationalization of the African Youth Charter. To ensure follow up to the implementation of the recommendations in the Consensus Statement, ECA, AU and the UN partner agencies continued collaborating on these issues through the Post-ADF-V Steering Committee.

ADF VI: Forum theme background

Links between gender equity and development trends

Although Africa's economic performance, since 1999, has been quite impressive these improvements in economic performance have not yet had a demonstrably meaningful impact on poverty reduction, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Persistent gender inequalities have been advanced as one of the factors explaining the slow progress towards the targets of the MDGs in Africa and overall social development. It is now widely acknowledged that promoting gender equality (women having the same opportunities in life as men) and women's empowerment is essential to achieving human development, poverty eradication and economic growth on the African continent. It is also accepted that promoting women's education and training, and promoting their access to productive assets including land, credit and time-saving technology could significantly contribute to reaching the 7 per cent annual growth rate needed to achieve MDGs in Africa.

Global commitments

Several comprehensive global frameworks were developed to support promotion of gender equality, women's empowerment and elimination of violence against women. African countries have made commitments to address gender equality based on international frameworks that include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for action (BPFA), MDGs, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

The African Union and the regional commitments

At the regional level, the principle of equality and non-discrimination between men and women is enshrined in the founding legal instrument of the African Union and also in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights that provides for the elimination of discrimination against women and for the protection of their rights. The AU's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) endorsed in 2001 by African Heads of States and Heads of Governments spells out gender equality as one of the core principles that underscore the new strategic vision for the long

term-development of the continent. The AU Heads of State and Government have adopted two instruments specifically to address gender issues, namely the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa adopted in 2003 in Maputo; and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) adopted at the AU Heads of States Summit in Addis Ababa in July 2004, which requires States to respect normative standards on women's human rights. To date, 16 Member States have reported on the implementation of the SDGEA. On the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, landmark progress has been made with the coming into force of the Protocol in November 2006. To date, 23 countries have signed and ratified.

In addition, the Chairperson of the AUC launched the African Union Women Committee (AUWC), in 2006. So far, the AUWC has held three meetings and in its last session decided to prepare the next report of the Chairperson for the January 2009 Summit.

ECA's contribution to the advancing the agenda

ECA has also made a notable contribution to the shaping of the gender equality landscape on the continent over the past half century. Notably, to mark the 40th anniversary of the institution, the Commission organized a conference on African women and economic development: investing in our future held from 28 April to 1 May, 1998. Since that 40th Anniversary conference, ECA has been striving to enhance the capacity of policy makers and other stakeholders in member States to use tools and methodologies for ensuring gender-responsive policies and programs. Some of the major achievements made by ECA include the development of the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI); capacity building on gender mainstreaming of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member states; development of a Guidebook to Mainstream Unpaid Work and Household Production into National Statistics, Policies and Budgets; and establishment of an African Women's Rights Observatory to monitor the status of women's rights at the regional level.

Progress since Beijing

The 'Outcome and Way Forward document' that emanated from the "Beijing Plus Ten" review process in 2004 at the Africa regional level indicated achievements made to include increased awareness on gender equality; policy reforms; improved legislative frameworks; and institutional development at the national level in many countries. Positive developments made in some countries include the establishment of national policies and strategies for gender equality; adherence to international and regional instruments for the protection of the human rights of women; increased diversity in the mechanisms promoting and monitoring attention to gender equality; attention to resource allocations through gender-sensitive budgeting; the recognition of the critical role played by NGOs in awareness-raising, advocacy, monitoring and programme delivery; and efforts to engage men and boys more actively in the promotion of gender equality.

But still "Not Yet Uhuru"

Despite these notable improvements in the policy, legal and institutional frameworks, gender inequalities still prevail particularly in accessing: secondary and higher education; technical and professional training; productive resources such as assets which include land, capital, and technology; agriculture and rural development services; basic health services; employment opportunities and decision-making processes. Women and girls are still heavily disadvantaged across the continent. Violence against women and girls in conflicts and situations of insecurity is reaching an alarming stage. The persistence of gender inequality in all sectors compounds the achievement of the MDGs and overall socio-economic development in Africa.

Ending violence against women

One of the areas where time has now come for much more vigorous and direct actions is related to the still very widespread and appalling problems of violence against women and children. These problems persist around the world but the situation in Africa is often quoted to be among the worst on issues like rape and other forms of sexual abuse, domestic violence, crimes and abuses committed by armed forces and police, harmful and exploitative labour and trafficking, harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation and others. It is time we realize that if African women have to live under constant exposure and/or threat of violence, they will never be able to fully realize their potential for growth, health, education and to confidently assume their roles in protecting themselves, their family and to realize their social, economic and political rights. The reasons why these problems seem most pervasive in Africa among others include weak legal and law enforcement systems, patriarchal beliefs and practices, breakdown of civil and traditional protective systems due to armed conflicts and other destructive social developments. Having said this, however, it is also encouraging to notice that there are a wide range of very positive developments in terms of addressing these problems, and the African Development Forum VI will endeavour, as a

ADF VI: Objectives, key themes and modus operandi

It is clear that as ECA marks its 50th anniversary, there is need to reflect on the progress made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment on the continent; identify the challenges constraining implementation of relevant policies and strategies at the national and regional levels; and seek comprehensive solutions to realistically address outstanding areas of gender inequalities.

In that context, the overarching objective of the ADF VI is to review progress made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment with the view of articulating concrete actions and results to hasten the translation of African countries' commitments into reality.

Towards achieving this overarching objective, ADF VI will:

- Reflect on the progress made at national, sub-regional and regional levels to date in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and in addressing violence against women;

special focus, to bring out such good practices and trends and establish avenues for how to scale up, sustain and re-inforce such measures that will, indeed, end violence against women in Africa.

Critical need to address gender dimension of new challenges

Recent regional meetings (the First Joint African Union Commission and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in April 2008 and the 11th African Union Summit) have highlighted the emergence of new challenges on the continent that have the potential to deepen and widen existing gender inequalities. These emerging challenges include issues such as food insecurity that is being exacerbated by the increased food prices, climate change, migration, water and energy. Recent studies have shown that these issues are affecting women in ways that are different to men.

Moving from talk to action

The Decade Review of the implementation of the BPFA suggested that there is need to move from commitments to greater actions in order to bridge the gap between commitments and their implementation. Although many of the international and regional resolutions have been adopted by countries, the implementation and reporting on the resolutions is somewhat lagging. In some countries relevant policies, legislation and effective strategies aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment have been adopted, but they are not being implemented, enforced nor scaled up to promote change on the ground. Many meetings held after the Decade Review of the implementation of the BPFA have emphasized the need to create or enhance the enabling environment to ensure that progress towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is accelerated.

