



# #37 GIMAC

OUTCOME STATEMENT



OUR COMMITMENT & CALL TO ACTION

**ADVANCING AFRICA'S  
COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY  
AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
THROUGH ARTS, CULTURE AND  
HERITAGE**

37TH GIMAC SUMMIT - 31st Jan - 2 February 2021

We, the participants of the 37TH session of the Gender Is My Agenda (GIMAC) pre-summit meeting, convened virtually from 1-2 February 2021, under the theme “Advancing Africa’s Commitment to Gender Equality and Women’s Rights through Arts, Culture and Heritage,” acknowledge our diversity and common objective of mainstreaming gender and advancing the role of culture and heritage towards achieving Agenda 2063;

CONGRATULATE the GIMAC Network, GIMAC Steering Committee, its members and partners for consistently, qualitatively and solidly sustaining the monitoring of the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol on Women’s Rights), through the GIMAC annual forums aligned with the African Union theme of the year.

APPRECIATE the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, all the Commissioners and specialized institutions of the AU, especially the AU Women, Gender and Development Directorate (AU WGDD) and the special mandate holders particularly the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security; the AU Special Envoy on Youth and the African Union Goodwill Ambassador on Ending Child Marriage for continued commitment and support to ensure that gender equality, women’s rights and empowerment remain high on the political and policy agenda of the African Union and its member states.

WE EXPRESS our sincere appreciation to H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and reassure our commitment to participate and contribute to his new vision Sixth Priority of operationalizing policies in favor of youth and women;

COMMEND the African Union (AU) for recognizing the role arts, culture and heritage hold as catalysts for the socio-economic development and integration of the African continent. We acknowledge that Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063 has a focus on Arts, Culture and Heritage, and embrace the 2021 theme for the AU, which is “Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want’;

**WE CONDEMN** the distortion, looting and abuse of the African heritage and culture through slavery, colonialism where suppression of identity values and norms was a system of conquering, and implications for women's right.

**ARE OUTRAGED** that culture and arts is used to perpetuate patriarchal based value systems that discriminate against women; to rationale and justify violence against women and girls and limit the autonomy of women to seek services and redress. Retrogressive cultural attitudes, norms and behavior also continue to perpetuate violations of human rights against girls and young women through such harmful practices like child marriage, female genital mutilation and breast ironing among others.

**ALSO CELEBRATE** the richness of African arts and culture, including the important role that arts and culture play in mobilizing and unifying people around common ideals and promoting African culture to build the ideals of Pan-Africanism, and recognize that Africa is rich in arts and cultural diversity, which originates from different communities all over Africa. The great artistic and cultural assets can be harnessed for promoting regional integration, development, and continental transformation.

**RECOGNIZE** that the creative sector represents a substantial portion of the economy, in addition to being important tools for the promotion of peace, security and reconciliation processes in conflict fragile and post-conflict societies; good governance; human rights; improved healthcare; and access to education

**FURTHER RECOGNIZE** the power of the arts and culture and of traditional leaders and institutions to transform negative social norms and increase public support for women's rights, address gender-based violence, fight against inimical cultural practices such as early and forced child marriage (ECFM) and forced genital mutilation (FGM).

**HOWEVER, NOTE WITH CONCERN** that as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, the creative industry has suffered because of the lockdown restrictions, and women artists have been most affected. Further concerned the health systems response measures, care and support, continues to rely on women and girls traditional care roles, such as through the self isolation policies, without the requisite protection and support.



**WE CLAIM our own agency and voice to our heritage, our culture and our arts as gender equality advocates. We are more than 52% of the population as women, we are organized, diverse and present in all the sectors.**

**WE COMMIT to bring our own experience, expertise, resources and networks as we contribute to policy, practice and towards the vision of a prosperous Africa that is at peace with itself by:**

- **Shaping our behaviors, attitudes, practices as individuals and as a collective thus driving the feminist cultural revolution which is rooted in pan Africanism;**
- **Promoting the values of solidarity, Ubuntu, sisterhood, respect for our elders and of each other - we are our grandmother's wildest dreams;**
- **Advancing our knowledge and innovations and go to scale with request for legal and political protections such as indigenous medicine, artifacts;**
- **Branding African, consume African and promote Africa. Africa is female and young, we have a powerful share as consumers;**
- **Rebuilding our African economy through culture and art, and supporting women in the sector, as well as addressing gender biases;**
- **Standing up to fight violence against women and rejecting the use of culture to perpetuate criminal behavior or limit support and services to women survivors of violence;**
- **Advocating for the resourcing, implementation and monitoring of the African Union instruments that advance gender equality and women and girls rights and empowerment.**

# OUR CALL TO ACTION:

**We urge the AU, RECs, African Governments, private sector, civil society and academic institutions; traditional institutions and multilateral partners and donor partners to:**



- Recognize the role played by women during the liberation struggles and fight for colonialism and request that their names and stories be included in national and regional museums of herstory/history and other special documentations by the African Union;
- Create an enabling environment for women to play more decision-making roles in peace-building and conflict resolution, including the structural challenges that women face. Continue to support the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security in her strategic engagement with the arts and cultural community for fostering a culture of peace on the continent;
- Intensify continental, regional and national efforts to end impunity for perpetrators by strengthening the legal and judicial systems and by enacting and enforcing legislation, and provide national justice systems with the necessary resources to prosecute cases of sexual and gender-based violence including the safeguarding of girls from SGBV in school, in line with CESA, GES4CESA and the AU Gender Strategy; provide humanitarian and medical support including life saving sexual and reproductive health services in conflict and complex settings;
- Support the fight against violence on women (young girls) and reject the use of culture to perpetuate criminal behavior or limit support and services to women survivors of violence. Member States should strengthen prevention programs and regulatory framework to curb cyber bullying, sex- slavery of underage children and young women within and outside the continent, including online for porn and avail mental health support and treatment to victims



- Ensure that there are proper gender equality policies in the arts and culture sector and establish transparent cultural governance systems with appropriate policies and mechanisms to support female artists;
- Design policies and program that ensure arts and culture form part of a broader peace and reconciliation strategy alongside traditional peacebuilding processes and interventions.
- Prioritize research on women in the cultural and creative sectors mainly focusing on identifying the gender gaps they face, the causes and drivers for those gaps, and exploring what sort of initiatives that have been taken to address gender gaps in development and implementation of research policy decisions;
- Advance the knowledge production and innovations go to scale with requests related to legal and political protections, working as co-creators and protectors of generations of wisdom; Promote knowledge and research on indigenous /national languages as critical strategy towards achievement of Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063;
- Undertake capacity building efforts for women and girls in schools and communities including budding female artists to enable them explore and generate income from the arts and creative industry;
- Revitalize the African culture and heritage by involving traditional leaders as champions of women and girls' rights;



- Create a hybrid approach to health, which recognizes both traditional and modern medicines. Governments should look to leverage the traditional structures within countries to improve access to quality care by modernizing and integrating these existing structures where appropriate and possible to strengthen the health system response. Over the next 6-12 months governments should work with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and WHO Health System strengthening department to commission a review on reimagining the delivery of Health on the African continent that focuses on leveraging local structures for both service delivery and health literacy that will support the Universal Health Care agenda;
- Appoint prominent African Women artists, cultural and religious leaders, and first ladies to spearhead high level commitment for maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health to promote social accountability for increased funding and resourcing of health systems as outlined in the Maputo plan of Action and Abuja Declaration;
- Recognise and value women's care work especially in public health response through strengthening the community and home based care systems as a continuum of public health and ensure adequate protection and commodities especially in response to COVID19, HIV and other public health challenges;

- Scale up and invest cultural innovations, that transform social norms and address stigma that impede access to SRH and information especially for young women and girls through empowering safe spaces that offered an empowering space for sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as family education such as the Nhangas, Egumini, Chinamwali and others, offering in age appropriate and culturally sensitive comprehensive sexuality education, and leverage existing cultural in addressing teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortion and harmful traditional practices; Revive government's commitments and policies to implement comprehensive life skills and sexuality education in the school curriculum that integrates arts, shared African cultural values and heritage, denounces harmful cultural practices and promotes gender equality, agency and empowerment of young people
- Deepen and strengthen community approaches to psychosocial support and continue to destigmatize mental health, by removing some of the cultural myths and taboos that limit access to mental health seeking behaviours and perpetuate the cycle of trauma;

Inculcate the spirit of Pan-Africanism by tapping into Africa's rich heritage and culture to ensure that the creative arts are major contributors to Africa's economic growth and transformation. Further promote African know-how in products made from domestic raw materials ;



- Reform laws and policies to remove the cultural barriers that limit women's ownership of, access to and control over land, capital, technology and other productive resources;
- Enhance capacity building and support for women and girls in the creative industry in Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), copyrights, patents, and trademarks, to protect their innovative creations while securing their livelihoods and increasing their incomes;
- Address the gendered impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the arts and creative industry. Protect the social and economic rights of artists in helping the creative sector recover from the pandemic; Address the challenges that women artists face in a male-dominated cultural environment, including GBV, harassment, unequal opportunities, unequal remuneration and poor working conditions;
- Invest in agroecological approaches to farming practices and promote the production and value addition of traditional and indigenous food and fruits which has nutritional, economic and environmental benefits to the family and to society;
- Support and invest in technology that helps to reduce time spent on UCW and provide gender responsive public services to their citizens;
- Scale up implementation and monitoring of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage and the Saleema Initiative on Ending Female Genital mutilation through the arts for prevention, changing social norms and behaviours and supporting girls who experienced child marriage to rebuild their lives;



- Formulate and effectively monitor the implementation of an Accountability Framework for the Saleema Initiative, the AU commitment to Ending Child Marriage as well as other key initiatives in place. As well establish and operationalize a knowledge platform for experience sharing of best practices on what is working in legal and judicial architecture, and tools for the elimination of FGM and Child Marriage;
- Conduct a regional review of the implementation of existing regional policy frameworks that guarantee women's rights and empowerment- including the Maputo Protocol and Plan of Action and propose concrete plans to accelerate their implementation;
- Foster strategic and transformative partnerships with the traditional leaders and cultural institutions for progressive legislative agenda that advance women's rights and gender equality, fight harmful practices and scale up community innovations such as the Bylaws on Ending Child Marriage at community, country, regional and continental levels;
- Continue to support the work of the African Union special mandate holders especially the Rapporteur on Women's Human Rights, the Rapporteur on Ending Child Marriage; the African Union Goodwill Ambassador on Ending Child Marriage to strengthen their strategic collaborations with arts and cultural institutions in order to accelerate the respect and protection of women's human rights;

- Strengthen the human right approach to focuses on the health of those who are most marginalized, excluded or discriminated against by analyzing the impact of gender norms, different forms of discrimination and power imbalances to ensure that interventions reach the most marginalized segment of the population;
- Document the role of women in peace and security processes, including highlighting their leadership in peacebuilding, dialogue and reconciliation; Document oral histories, popularise and share narratives of African women's lives, and their contributions to culture and the arts;
- Enhance the partnership between various stakeholders to advance women and girls issues to co-create solutions for integrating culture and heritage in development processes;
- Ensure that governments leverage cultural practices and are led and informed by science and evidence so that we can objectively elevate solutions and practices that are positive to the growth and well-being of Africans, and to inform the understanding of the global community. Conversely, governments should take guidance from science and evidence on harmful practices that they need to take action to eradicate. To accomplish this we'd recommend that governments should commission a systematic review of current evidence on cultural practices affecting health and education, prioritize areas of interventions for action with recommendations to the heads of state over the next 6-12 months.





**Virtual, convening,  
31 January -2 February 2021**