KAMPALA DECLARATION ON WOMEN AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA, OCTOBER 2016

Key message: Prioritise Investment in Women and Girls in the Eastern African Sub-Region and Ensure that “Nobody is left Behind”

1. We, the women¹ from Eastern Africa who participated in the first Eastern African sub regional women’s colloquium on the Sustainable Development Goals in Kampala, Uganda from 27th to 28th October 2016 reaffirm our commitment to defend women’s rights and economic empowerment in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

2. We are aware that Gender equality, centered on the principles of human rights, is recognized both as a development goal on its own and as vital to accelerating sustainable development. Unless women and girls are able to fully realize their rights in all spheres of life, human development will not be advanced. The sustainable development agenda will only be fully realized if gender inequality is addressed as both a root cause and consequence of poverty.

3. Critically, women and girls in East and Horn of Africa region still face multiple challenges highlighted by;

   a) Limited participation of women in governance and democracy in Eastern Africa
   (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 3 and SDG 3)

   Women’s participation in formal politics and inclusion has been compromised by patronage and their effectiveness is being questioned. Much as political spaces have been opened up for women’s political activism, patriarchy and ‘masculinist’, power and authority has remained intact.

   b) Limited women’s access to productive resources such as land and other opportunities
   (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 6, SDG 2, AU Agenda 2063)

   Although women are highly entrepreneurial and economically active in the agricultural sector, they have very minimal access to, and control over critical productive resources including land, technology, education, extension and financial services hence imposing heavy costs on the agricultural sector and the broader economies of the region.

¹ 151 representatives from Uganda; 6 from Kenya, 4 from Burundi, 3 representatives from Rwanda; 6 representatives from Tanzania, one from Eritrea
c) **Limited women’s participation in conflict resolution and post conflict reconstruction? (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 5 and SDG 16)**

Eastern Africa has been devastated by armed conflicts leading to heavy loss of life, atrocities against unarmed civilians and acts of sexual violence targeting particularly women and girls. The dynamic nature of conflicts, the rise of non-state actors, as well as the increased threat of terrorism and organized crime poses new threats for the protection of women and children especially girls.

d) **Low participation of women/girls in science and technology (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 2 & 12 and SDG 4)**

Socialization and traditional roles assigned to the girls at birth and during their upbringing have resulted in low of participation in technology and science education or related activities. This is worsened by the stereo types in most education systems in Eastern Africa where women are perceived to assume the caring roles as opposed to venturing into more challenging disciplines of science and technology.

e) **Low women’s participation in trade and entrepreneurship in Eastern Africa (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 7 and SDG number 16)**

Women still experience barriers to trade differently from men and gender-sensitive policies can help ensure that female importers and exporters reap the same benefits from improved trade logistics as their male counterparts.

f) **Low investments in women’s reproductive health and reduction of maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS transmission and women’s cancers (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 6,SDG 2, AU Agenda 2063)**

In sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls account for 60 percent of all HIV infected persons. The inability to negotiate the use of condoms, multiple and concurrent partnerships, age disparate and transactional sex, as well as the incidence of gender-based violence, all of which have a gender component, are propelling the epidemic in the region. Majority of young women lack comprehensive knowledge of HIV transmission and in most cases are unable to access antiretroviral drugs (ARVs).

g) **Low meaningful male involvement in the fight against Gender-Based Violence (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 4 and SDG 5)**

h) In the Eastern African region, violence against women is the most widespread and socially tolerated human rights violation, cutting across borders, race, class, ethnicity and religion. Men and boys are largely viewed as perpetrators of VAW/G and so little attempts have been made to involve them in the fight against the vice. Given the patriarchal nature of the region, it is impossible to win the battle without involving men and boys as champions against VAW/G. **The threat of climate change in East and Horn of Africa (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 11 and SDG 13 & 15)**
There is a strong relationship between climate change and environment-based livelihoods, which, in turn, are closely linked to gender. Women, more than men, are exposed to environment-linked risks, among them is the risk to hunger and the risk of shortage of water for domestic use. Poor women’s predominant role in agriculture and environment-related jobs heightens their risk; many are engaged in the informal sector, without the protection of formal labour market regulation.

i) Unequal women’s status in the work place (Beijing Platform Strategic Objective 6 and SDG 8)

Although women are the majority of the population in East and Horn of Africa, there are still significant gender gaps in labor markets constraining their contribution to measured economy activity and growth. Despite progress toward gender equality there are still gaps in respect to their participation in the labor force, earnings, and the limited number of women in senior management positions.

4. To respond to some of the aforementioned challenges, we the participants of the 1st Eastern Africa sub regional colloquium on SDGs, undertake the following concrete measures;

Policy advocacy

• Advocate for gender-responsive trade policies, facilitation and regional integration to facilitate small-volume traders, many of whom are women, in order to access regional markets.
• Advocate for financial credit systems that favor women to access credit/ finances for example lower interest rates
• Advocate for laws in support of ownership of resources for example land for all women
• Advocating for increased financing for health specifically sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services; communicable and non-communicable diseases including women related cancers, HPV, mental illnesses and supporting training of health workers to become more gender sensitive
• Advocate for harmonization of anti-trafficking laws across the region
• Advocate for the minimum wage in all countries in East and Horn of Africa

Awareness raising

• Support knowledge sharing in order to enhance activism for gender equality in the implementation of SDGs at grassroots level
• Support efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change on women including but not limited to improved food security, increased accessibility, availability and affordability of water, renewable and sustainable energy and other resources.
• Support partnerships towards effective development cooperation towards women’s empowerment and gender equality based on our specific country situations.
• Support gender sensitive interventions are inclusive and responsive to all including girls and women with disabilities
• Address socio cultural norms including gender stereo types in the education systems in order to break the glass ceiling in science and technology for girls

Mobilization

• Support social accountability and advocate for comprehensive and inclusive implementation of the SDGs
• Mobilize other Eastern African women to join the efforts by women in conflict affected regions to call the government to account. This will include engaging all Gender Machineries in the region, Parliaments and Policy makers at all levels to be part of the SDG agenda
• Support meaningful male involvement to counter Violence Against Women (VAW) related challenges in the region
• Support elimination of harmful cultural practices/social vices that undermine women for example Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriages, widow inheritance through legislation, implementation of existing laws and strengthening monitoring and reporting mechanisms at all levels
• Strengthening Resource mobilization to support initiatives to address gender inequalities
• Make use of formal and informal structures at community level for sensitisation towards empowerment of women at all level.

Economic empowerment and capacity building

• Increase access to credit, markets in both formal and informal sector and within and across countries
• Support efforts to skill women for improved economic productivity and productive involvement in the agricultural value chain
• Support/strengthen associations of women at all levels for easy access to credit and other opportunities

Evidence building

• Support data generation and evidence building to inform advocacy within and across countries

Media engagement
• Engage the media as allies in advocacy towards attainment of the gender equality targets under the SDGs
• Embrace/utilise social media and new technologies to improve access to information for all women

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