SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT GENDER STRATEGY

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GENERAL

CONSOLIDATED FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS
Advocacy Training on Human Rights and Consultation on AU Gender Strategy – Interfaith
International Co-operating Partners
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Pan African Meeting on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (Oxfam)
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Rural Women Consultative Meetings (FAO)
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BAHA'I Group Comments
ECOWAS
FAO Headquarters
IFDC
Mckinsey
UN ECA
UN Environment Programme
UN Human Rights
UNFPA
E MAILS TO GENDER LINKS
Association for Progressive Communications
Director WGDD
International Centre For Women Empowerment and Child Development (ICWECD)
JFA/JPA Global Affairs Canada
OXFAM - Nairobi
OXFAM - Women's Economic Empowerment and Care Economic Justice Team
Oxfam Harare
Pan-African Christian Women Alliance in Africa (PACWA) / Alliance des Femmes Evangeliques en Afrique (AFEA) Association of Evangelicals in Africa Women's Commission
Tafadzwa R Muropa
Theology, Family Life & Gender Justice - All Africa Conference of Churches
Uganda Faith Network on Environmental Action
ONLINE
Other
Oxfam Harare

GENERAL APPRECIATION

- Firstly, let me say congratulations on the huge step forward you have taken in developing the strategy. (*Mckinsey*)
- Thank you very much for sharing the attached. The consultants have done a great job. *(UN Human Rights)*
- The strategy is very comprehensive and much needed. It has also included some content on environment-related work. Overall it's great! *UN ENVIRONMENT:*
- This strategy plan is a commendable effort. As a study of the problem of women Empowerment and gender equality (WEGE) in African, it is an outstanding and comprehensive work. *International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development ICWECD*
- The reader will be enriched with discussion of notable international and regional protocols and policies on women empowerment namely; Protocol to the African Charter on Human RIGHTS of Women in African (the Maputo Protocol), Beijing Platform for Action and Beijing plus Twenty Convention for the Elimination OF All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), UNSCR 1325 and subsequent women in peace and security resolutions ,East African Community (EAC) ,Gender Equality Act, Southern African Development Community Of West- African states (ECOWAS) Gender strategy , Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) and Agenda 2063. *International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development ICWECD*
- To its credit also the fundamental elements that are essential in a strategic plan are present in the draft. For instance, it identifies the key priority themes for attaining gender equality and defines a time – frame as well as other vital components of strategic plan such as institutional arrangement, capacity – building, operational plan monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, communications strategy budget and finance etc. As a matter of fact, the identified key priority themes are quite comprehensive and indeed far-reaching. *International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development ICWECD*
- As donors supporting the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) of the African Union Commission (AUC), Australia, Canada, Spain, Sweden and the United States wish to thank WGDD, for the opportunity to comment on the draft of the AU Gender Strategy. We wish to also congratulate you on organising an impressive number of consultations in a very short period of time. We also wish to highlight our appreciation for the continued excellent collaboration with the WGDD team and for the positive interaction with Gender links. *JFA/JPA*
- It is a much welcomed initiative which we are honoured to contribute to. UNECA
- I read this document with interest. It's comprehensive, and also ambitious (20 goals!), but that's needed. This being said, it's encouraging to read this high-level impetus for gender equality!
- Furthermore, we also want to take this opportunity to salute the AUC for its leadership role on gender and for taking a clear and constructive stance on key issues such as child early and forced marriage; the rights of women with regards to marriage, divorce and widowhood; and sexual and reproductive health rights. *JFA/JPA+ COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT AFRICAN UNION GENDER STRATEGY*
- We are so pleased to hear of Gender Links' involvement in updating the AU draft gender strategy, especially at this significant moment for women's rights in the region. *GLOBAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS POLICY LEAD*
- *FAO/RECs/IFAD/CARE Ghana/Pan African Parliament/Ministry of Gender in Ghana and the various rural women's cooperatives and networks* all commend WGDD for this bold step in developing a comprehensive strategy that aims to promote a continental vision for promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and rights in all sectors and spheres of life. The central vision shared by participants was a rural world where women

and men's needs become a reality. As the AU WGDD state, "there is nothing micro about women. Let us think big, bold and macro in our vision for the Africa we want" – Madam Mahawa Wheeler. *FAO/Rural WOMEN*

PROCESS

- The timing for the development of the strategy is not the best. The gender policy of the AU came to an end and it is currently being evaluated. Ideally the findings of the evaluation should inform the new policy or strategy. With the current planned time frame this would not be the case. (*FAO*)
- It is not clear if there will be only a strategy or also a policy for the AU. In case there are plans for a policy, then the strategy, which is currently being developed, needs to inform the policy. The two documents need to be closely related. (*FAO*)
- Some guidance should be provided to the AU Member States as regards the minimum actions to be carried out at national level to advance the AU strategy. Although every country experiences different challenges, some patterns need to be identified and some common actions defined, which cut across the AU membership as a whole. (*FAO*)
- The technical consultations will help define the key priority areas further but some key thematic areas and target groups like rural women, young women, urbanization, trade, growth, knowledge and information that are Africa centric etc which we discourse we will have to address. *Director WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- Finally, I was aware that there was a meeting on Unpaid care work which was convened in Zimbabwe by Oxfam and Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, but in their call to attendance, they did not specify that this was part of the consultative process to draft a new AU Gender strategy. My proposal is that future invitations need to have clear messaging. *Tafadzwa R Muropa, Harare, Zimbabwe*
- There was not enough time given to go through the strategy – only two days therefore feedback cannot be comprehensive. *INTERFAITH*
- Urgent translation of the document to French and Portuguese. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN & PARTNERS*
- The discussions in this training and consultation were a clear evidence that now the world is naturally embracing the principles of equality. It is now a public outcry that men and women should be accorded equal opportunities in all spheres of life. Moreover, the fact that the AU is now seeking the contribution and input from religious organizations is indication enough that religion is and should be part of the remedy to the conditions of the world today. Listening to representatives of different religions, it was clear that we all champion the same cause as everyone spoke from their respective Holy Books even though the question remains whether appropriate systems are in place to ensure that this does not just remain an idea but is fully implemented. Following there is a list of general and specific comments the Baha'i group came up immediately after the consultation. The Baha'i group is glad to continue to work with all the groups to explore the issues more.
- (Research agenda - The strategy has some areas of focus in research, such as feminization of poverty and economic opportunities for women and girls. However, all areas of focus could benefit from a rigorous research agenda that make women and girls a center of inquiry which focuses on the lived experiences of women and girls. (*BAHA'I Group Comments*)

GENERAL COMMENTS ON CONTENT/ STRUCTURE
Length
- My initial reaction is this is a large document, presumably the consultants will produce a shorter more operational version with short, medium and long terms goals that will be

reader friendly and accessible for use by partners and your gender focal points. *(UN Human Rights)*

- Currently the strategy is very long and detailed. To assure an easy implementation, monitoring and reporting of the strategy, it would be advisable to shorten the text considerably and to identify only a few key areas of work for which the AU will stand up for across all levels of implementation and across the continent (*FAO)*

- A practical yet important feedback is on the page length. It is specified in the TORs and all attempts should be made to follow them. Documents that go to policy organs should not exceed 12 pages. The total we have provided for here is a maximum of 30 pages and inclusive of all sub-deliverables. I wish to insist on this because it has implications for the document meeting AU policy organ document standards, costs of translation and making the document appeal to end users, especially those in higher level positions. *Director of WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*

- The strategy is too long and there is need to correct the strategic sequence right. Some areas speak to background more that the 'how' we are going to achieve gender equality in Africa. *INTERFAITH*

- The strategy should focus on the main areas of work, this could be 3-5 major objectives. The aspirations and numerous goals could be prioritized and pitched at a higher level. (*FAO)*

- The document is quite comprehensive and lays out operational plans and identifies actions to be taken at the continental, regional and national level.

- However, we would suggest reviewing the document with the objective of arriving at a tighter, more streamlined strategy with fewer action items to facilitate implementation, monitoring and reporting. This would help the targeted audience to better understand what the AU wants to achieve over the next six years in terms of gender equality.

- The strategy should be a technical document pitched at policy level and not necessarily operational and activity level. *(FAO/ Rural Women)*

Structure

FAO INPUT ON STRUCTURE

- It is not clear if in preparation of the strategy a trends analysis has been carried out which could then influence the identification of the main objectives of the strategy. Important areas of work and trends such as migration, population mobility and population growth are not clearly addressed. (*FA0)*

- Structure is not very clear, the text shows a mix of definitions, long lists of activities under each of the Goals and Aspirations. These lists are still very long and not well structured. It is not clear which activities are of higher or lower importance or urgency. Prioritization is really needed. The strategy should not have more than 20-25 pages. The length suggested should ideally include at least the strategy's overall goals; the list of minimum activities to be carried across ALL of the AU Member States in order to achieve the goals; the mechanisms for gender mainstreaming; the accountability framework; the log frame.

  The long list of goals and aspirations leads to a fragmented impression, the text is build up in small technical areas and it is not easy to show or work on processes and larger challenges which can address bigger trends in Africa. Because of this fragmentation there is also considerable overlap between the different goals and aspirations. The strategy should tell a story where the AU would want to arrive with all the Member States after the 10 years of implementation. This is impossible if the strategy is built around 7 Aspirations and 20 Goals, mirroring Agenda 2063.

Suggestion: Pitch the objectives and goals at a higher level, so that there are maximum 5 or 6 goals, that can be explained in detail and which can cover many of the lower level goals from the current text. A story can be told and then also the implementation and the monitoring and reporting would be possible. The AU would then be able to monitor trends and report on the bigger picture.

A monitoring and an accountability framework is needed.
The institutional arrangements are discussed in a generic manner. However, in order to be able to implement the strategy, accountabilities, indicators, targets etc. need to be developed on each level and for each institution, otherwise the risk is very high that the implementation will be very weak and erratic.
Annex A on definitions could be shorter, no need to list all the different definitions used. It could also be advisable to compile the definitions in a separate document.

Possible structure for the AU Gender Strategy
1) **Women's economic empowerment and transformation of rural areas:** Under this objective the following areas of work could be placed:
   Women's access to and control over productive resources, financial and advisory services, access to markets, equipment and infrastructure and capacity development services (on women's leadership, entrepreneurship and agribusiness) and information. Access to institutions, cooperatives and farmer organizations, to value chains, business centers, or incubators. Reduction of informal rural employment (in 2015 approx. 55% of GDP in Africa is based on informal economic activities. Many women are involved in the informal sector). Etc.

- **Rational:** According to forecasts and existing population data, for the next 15 years the rural population in Africa is expected to grow considerably. There is an increased need to provide income opportunities for the young rural population, especially women and youth, to avoid that they will move to urban centers or even leave their countries. In order to strengthen the rural areas infrastructural measures (such as electricity, road networks, and information technology), rural advisory services etc. need to be decentralized and the rural population should have easier access to them. In this way the rural young population might be more inclined to find decent jobs close to their homes and rural incomes (reduction of rural outmigration) and food production could be increased. Furthermore there is a major dietary transformation ongoing in Africa characterized by a rapid increase in the consumption of purchased, processed and more perishable food. Such a shift in consumer preferences implies that the post-farm segment of local food systems is becoming increasingly important. In fact, evidence shows a massive rise in MSMEs particularly in the processing and distribution node of the value chain. While supermarkets are increasing dramatically all over Africa, their presence and role is still limited to capitals and large cities. Data seem to suggest that the traditional retailing sector (characterized by small/medium-scale retailers and businesses) will still dominate for many years. This is good news for smallholder farmers! In fact, their future is very much linked to the MSMEs sector. Large firms are not interested in buying from smallholders (too many, too unreliable, and too difficult to organize), they will naturally match with large farms. Etc.
   The background information and rational for this objective could be build up in this way then at least the goals 4, 5, 12 and 17 could be put under this higher level goal.

2) **Access to justice, conducive policies and violence and discrimination against women:**

- National legislation specifically on women and gender issues, special temporary measures for gender equality, harmonization and normative actions bridging formal and customary law systems, ownership and inheritance law
- Gender-sensitive policies, strategies and programmes (incl. investment and food security policies, GBV-related measures and policies, etc.)
- Sex-disaggregated data for policy-making
- Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation frameworks

3) Women and girls have equal access as men to natural and productive resources and assets:
- Land, water, livestock, forestry, fisheries
- Infrastructure (electricity, irrigation, transportation systems)
- Factors of production (seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, production technologies)
- Climate change adaptation/mitigation

4) Women and girls participate equally in decision-making at all levels:
- Participation and voice in organizations (formal/informal, producer organizations/other organizations, local/national/regional)
- Political participation (from village committees to national parliaments)
- Gender transformative processes at household level, incl. redistribution/reduction of women's unpaid work burden, issues related to women's mobility, women's say in the use of household income, etc. (*FAO)*

- I like the holistic / comprehensive nature that you have taken
- When it comes to recommendations against the goals - I felt that the list was very long and the recommendations were often generic - who would do this, how would it get done? One idea could be an objective (s) / goal (s) re gender for each of the AU goals.... this would contain the more generic end state.... and could be supported by actions
- I think that there should be some role for the private sector in the solution
- Lastly, it would be good to have milestones over the next 10 years and even 5 years so that you can declare victory along the way. *(Mckinsey)*
- What about sexual orientation? *(Mckinsey)*
- Would be good to highlight positives vs. negatives on the Situational Analysis. *(Mckinsey)*
- Current format makes the strategy too long. The real information required only starts from page 25/26 but also tool detailed, has a lot of repetition and unclear of what the focus should be. *RECs*
- The concept of aligning to SDGs, Agenda 2063 is accepted however; do not follow that horizontal presentation of the strategy as it makes it long. Synthesise the issues in thematic areas based on core realistic priorities AU should focus on in the next 5 years. *Interfaith*
- Structuring of the strategy needs to be reviewed. Analyse the key issues affecting the continent, synthesis these into four to five specific key priority and thematic areas and page one must have this clear information. *Interfaith*
- REC's Proposed Structure of AU Gender Strategy:
  Vision; mission; Goal; objectives (5); Synopsis of Women's Gender Directorate; Global Context; Continental context; Regional context – Brief synopsis of context and key issues/priorities; brief overview of gender protocols, policies, strategies etc but not getting into too much detail on what they are saying – the information can come from the harmonisation matrics and key issues paper; implementation matrics with strategic goal.

- Have one goal, list specific objectives and for each include target, activities, timelines, responsibility (in this column, detail whether that responsibility is with AU, RECs or member states). *RECs*

Goal				
Specific objectives	Target	Key Actions	Timelines	Who responsible

  The list, to be complete should also include addressing the problem of:
- Burden of domestic work on women
- Girl child labour
- Trafficking in girl child
- Male child preference over the female child
- Honour killing
- Abduction and quasi enslavement of the girl child to work as domestic servant.

  Although it can be said that the issues mentioned list are covered by gender violence, there is need to be spelt out clearly and considering their weighty importance and implications of gender equality. *International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development*

- However it must be pointed out that as a strategy - plan of action, the draft is defective in many important respects. In the first place; it is rather general, it is bulky and not actionable as it is. It therefore cannot be an effective guide for action for member states. Actually it is more like a compilation of strategies rather than a strategy.

  A good strategic plan should be simple. It should not be too large and bulky .Simplicity is necessary so that all those who will be involved in the implementation of the strategy will understand it easily. Without a good understanding of the strategy by the implementers, the implementation is bound to be bungled and in consequence fail. Nobody will implement well what he does not understand. Moreover interventions for the implementation of a strategy should be programmed and bench marked over smaller periods of time within the overall time- frame of the plan to make monitoring and evaluation, management and successful implementation of the strategy easier.

- A strategy plan also needs to be specific and anchored on prevailing realities. It should not be dropped from the sky. It should be developed from the ground. In this way, the problems as they are or their prioritization cannot be mussed or glossed over. It is for this reason that individual member states of AU are in the best position to formulate their respective strategies .Taking due considerations of the specificities of their national gender situations as their resources (Finance, Personnel, Institutions, the generality of their people partners etc.) the individual nations are in a better position to develop the strategic plans suitable to their specific realities and priorities.

  It is therefore in the domain of member states based on their actual circumstances ie the nature of the gender challenges they face, the dimension of the challenges and the totality of the resources they can possibly summon on their own efforts to individually fashion suitable strategy for addressing the problem in all its facets regularly on an annual basis.

  (International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development)

- The different implementing bodies will have different roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the gender strategy, this should be much better elaborated. So far the text covers only the description of the theoretical roles and responsibilities of the different bodies. Different targets, indicators, etc. should be developed for each of the bodies. The definition of roles and responsibilities of the different technical units and

official bodies should be articulated through the elaboration of a detailed accountability system/matrix that could be annexed to the AU strategy. *(FAO)*

- The Beijing Platform for Action promotes a dual approach to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, that is mainstreaming and targeted approaches. Many of the gender policies reflect this dual approach. It is recommended that the strategy should also address activities that are related to gender mainstreaming across the different implementing institutions. A gender strategy needs always to address both, the technical side of the work and the mainstreaming one. For example, a system of Gender Focal Points (GFPs) could be established, nominating GFPs across the different areas of work of the AU as well as the different AU official bodies, as a mechanisms to include throughout the work of the AU. A GFP system could be managed by the AU Women, Gender & Development Unit and GFPs could be nominated within the units dealing with: Agenda 2063; Peace & Security; Political Affairs; Science & Technology; Infrastructure & Energy; Social Affairs; Trade & Industry; Rural Economy & Agriculture; Economic Affairs; Legal Affairs; and Civil Society & Diaspora. (*FAO*)
- So far there is no indication of methods, approaches and also of available resources for the planned activities. Probably a log frame will have to be still developed. (*FAO*)

Positive Achievements

- The analysis needs to reflect both sides of the coin. The focus is very much on what is not working. There are set-backs indeed but there is also a great deal of momentum from what is working and that the timing factor which we need to seize. Women are breaking ground and that makes a strong case for smart economics. This calls for a combination of rights and smart economics. *Director of WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*

Target Groups

- The strategy must be inclusive of women, youth/young people but especially young girls; and ensure women have access to land, resources and essential services to thrive in the value chains. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Involvement of youth is critical and we are glad it is highlighted in the strategy. *Interfaith*
- What about men and boys they seem to be left out – there is need to articulate why. *Interfaith*

GENERAL EDITORIAL

- Cut out Acronyms, glossary, definitions and detail about the current protocol, policies, strategies etc. and all the detail about what these are saying. These could be in an annex for reference. RECS know these instruments and do not need to be briefed on them again. *RECS*
- This initial analysis provides a strong starting point. However, it needs to be deepened by ensuring facts are justified are properly referenced, issues raised are complete in their analysis and they show a relationship to the priorities that will be emphasized. That will also help considerably shorten the text. *Director of WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- Secondary literature research done doesn't appear/show in the document that well. It will be very helpful to reference some key and updated documents from UN, CSO, Private sector, partners academia, etc. It will strengthen the analysis and build the evidence we need to make the case for the priority setting and where AU stands to benefit most from its investments. *Director of WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- Theoretical parts on WID & GID can be moved to the annex. They are very good but page limit will push for hard choices to make. *Director of WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*

- Under the Executive Summary. The first paragraph ending...*gender equality can and must be achieved during this period.* (I propose we replace "must" with "should "; Still under the Executive Summary,,, under the key issues paper we mention that Africa currently has two female Presidents.. (I Propose that we replace it with Africa has had two female Presidents). In the same paragraph we should add the word **"of"** so as to read ....and boasts of the only country in the world (Rwanda). (*Hajjat Sebyala Uganda Faith Network on Environmental Action. Founder Member*)
- There are no Interfaith research documents referenced. *Interfaith*
- Please add a section on how the strategy will influence global strategies – we do not operate in a vacuum. *Interfaith*
- Not user friendly. *Interfaith*
- Not accessible to the various local levels. *Interfaith*
- The strategy should be technical and reflect continental needs. *RECS FEEDBACK*
- As this is Strategic reference document it should be data driven and statements as much as possible to be supported by facts and statistics; there are many statements without no data – and I am sure if we had made some extra efforts in administering questionnaire we will have gotten some data which can serve as our baseline. For example, a statement like … most countries are yet to develop National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 is misleading as it those not apply to West Africa…….. *ECOWAS Commission*
- We should not mention UNSCR 1325 in isolation without reference to the other resolutions that have been adopted after 1325 to further strengthen the implementation of UNSCR 1325 such as 1820… *ECOWAS Commission*
- There is not enough research in some areas – in particular the health section. *INTERFAITH*
- Acknowledgement - change from Regional Economic Commission to Regional economic community? UNECA

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON DRAFT STRATEGY

Acronyms List
These may be annexed so focus is on the strategy. *FAO RURAL WOMEN AND PARTNERS*
There is need to include a definition of terms in the strategy – not everyone is on the same level in terms of gender concepts. *INTERFAITH*

Acknowledgements
- The work from the Interfaith groups related to gender equality has not been referenced in the strategy. *INTERFAITH*

Foreword
- We believe it is relevant to use the existing "normative frameworks" to frame gender actions within Agenda 2063. This way, there is no discussion about new commitments. However, the Strategy may also indicate that this list is not exhaustive (i.e. that countries could choose to perform some other priority gendered actions that fit within Agenda 2063 or REC frameworks). We think that a Preamble about how to use this information and who exactly is the audience of the Strategy would be useful (i.e. several activities only engage MS of specific RECs). *JFA/JPA*

OVERVIEW
- The **Table 3: Normative frameworks for achieving Gender Equality - should indicate that ECOWAS has the "**Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region, 2015 this supersedes the ECOWAS Gender Policy of 2005. *ECOWAS*
- Voice, choice and control are strong guiding principles. *INTERFAITH*
- The strategy is centred on the seven Aspirations which have not been popularised to the citizens. *INTERFAITH*
- African has done well to have a contextualised strategy. However, it need to influence global strategies as well – it is a good strategy. *INTERFAITH*

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EVALUATION
- The findings and lessons learned from the evaluation of the *Gender Policy* could be used in order to make these two documents more complementary. *JFA/JPA*
- Results from the evaluation of the policy may have been ideal to inform what the key priorities should be. Though, the key issues paper being finalised by GL should present the basis for the selection of the key priority areas so that the strategy is thematic based rather than following every aspiration and each of the 20 goals. Current data informing the strategy is also critical. *RECS*
- The missing evaluation document was going to better inform the consultations on what the previous strategy gaps were. *INTERFAITH*
- Can it include what are the gaps not covered by the previous strategy/policy. *INTERFAITH*
- The evaluation report of the previous strategy will assist in identifying gaps to strengthen this strategy. *INTERFAITH*

SWOT ANALYSIS
- Have a strong accountability framework in the implementation plan to ensure the strategy is actually effectively implemented.
- Transformation: The trade and market opportunities expected to result from the continental free trade area could also be mentioned here – I share a brief on gender considerations under the CFTA which could be helpful in informing this. *(UNECA)*

- Funding a current challenge as AU does not implement or provide funding. This must change and RECs and member states supported to implement through specific funds and budgets.
- Gender mainstreaming a current gap in sectors. There is need for capacity building in this.
- Political will, improved gender sensitive decision making and governance should be more effective in owning, internalising and implementing the strategy. Currently there are gaps ensure 10% budget allocations by member states for gender specific projects. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN 7 PARTNERS*
- That there is a document that is available and can be referenced. *Interfaith*
- There is commitment of political leaders *Interfaith*
- The strategy is good on paper – the challenge is that Africa will not have capacity to implement it. *INTERFAITH*
- Consultations are good but the stakeholders need to be assured that what they were consulting on is incorporated. *INTERFAITH*
- There is an ownership variable as reflected in the various consultations held for a larger stakeholder inputs *Interfaith*
- The process is inclusive since there is a cross section of all identifiable groups. *Interfaith*
- It affords mobilization of own resources *Interfaith*
- It enhances unity of purpose *Interfaith*

KEY ISSUES
- Strategy needs the backbone and direction from the key issues paper. It would have also helped if the evaluation of the gender policy was complete so that recommendations are factored into the strategy especially in defining the maximum five strategic priorities. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN AND PARTNERS*
- The key issues paper that accompanies this strategy maps performance against these provisions. *UN Environment Programme*

Economic Justice and Sustainable Development
- Livelihood and resilience
- Entrepreneurship and capacity issues
- Need to mention exploitation of women workers in work places especially in the lower level-like industrial workers, domestic helps, farm helps etc.
- Issues of gender pay gaps
- Under targeting of women by government with public investments in agriculture, and other social economic programmes
- Widening inequality between the rich and the poor
- Micro economic issues - Women who are into trade are taxed more due to informal nature of their trades and poor knowledge of tax issues vis a vie multi nationals who get tax holidays and waivers *(INTERFAITH)*

Social Development
- Enrollment retention and transition issues at basic education levels. *(INTERFAITH)*

Women's Rights and legal framework
- Tripartite legal systems in most African counties
- Land rights are not included in policy formulation and decision making. *(INTERFAITH)*

Governance
- Corruption
- Accountability to gender equality
- Gender budgeting and affirmative action financing *(INTERFAITH)*

Peace and conflict
- Full and equal participation in Conflict prevention and peace building
- Gender responsive humanitarian responses
- Violent extremism particularly using women and girls as soft targets
- We suggest the title to be 'Governance & Politics'.
- Should read 'Women still missing from public, private and policy space and also not participating effectively…….'
- Recognise the shrinking policy space for civil society engagement especially organizations of women or working on issues of women and the vulnerable groups.
- Representation should be expanded to talk about covering women in their diversity and intersecting identities *(INTERFAITH)*

Media and communication
- Women as producers of ICT contents and access to leading ICT solutions
- Changing women's in narrative in the media from victims to agents of change *(INTERFAITH)*

Culture and sports
Women's participation and finance
- Lack of information and alert warning systems on climate change and hazard
- Access to information(poor access to information due to lack of technical skills and opportunities) *(INTERFAITH)*

Gender Management Systems
- Shrinking space for civic engagement
- Repressive NGO Policies and Laws
- Need to say more about the human and financial resourcing of gender management systems. *(INTERFAITH)*

Social
- Lack of patriotic Pan African ideologies and commitment in the curriculum design and communities
- Technology and Infrastructure.
- Youth Segment under Social Development.
- Finance and Economic Justice and Sustainable Development. This should involve women in decision making. For the next decade women should be able to represent economic, peace and security.
- Gender Responsive Institutions (Gender Management Systems and Women's Rights Organisations).
- Women's And Girl Rights (Women's Rights) Add Sexual Exploitation in the Explanation.
- Under Social Development Add Women's' Health Care.
- Under Governance; address the inadequacies of current electoral systems that do not promote gender equality. *(INTERFAITH)*

Input from the Civil Society Organisations
Root Causes
- Neo- liberal micro economic policies
- Extremisms and fundamentalisms
- Militarism
- Patriarchy through socialization processes

- Clear mind set
- Inadequate communication and awareness
- Inadequate availability of resources on favourable term and condition
- Impunity
- Micro-Economic Framework.
- Mismanagement of Resources.
- Lack of Accountability.
- Modernization Of Culture(Valuing Our Indigenous Knowledge)
- Policies and Culture…
- The Way The Political
- Gender is seen as a Women's Issue (Men's Perception On Gender Equality).
- The Issue Of Class And Race
- De-socialisation or Reorientation of Women
- Need to explicitly mention Patriarchy as a root cause.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Participants agree with the shift in narrative and focus from a basic needs to a rights based approach in the strategy. Transformation should be emphasised and the strategy should consider other recent literature such as from FAO 2014/2015 data. It should also be catalytic for inclusive production and productivity. (FAO)
- In a number of places, the document seems to miss opportunities to enhance the idea of gender equality. *JFA/JPA – gender equality*
- Possibly use the **AU Roadmap in Harnessing the Democratic Dividend** as this is a key document with a gender lens. It outlines key pillars that the strategy could use as its overarching priority areas:
  Pillar 1: Employment, economic empowerment and equity
  Pillar 2: Access to Resources
  Pillar 3: Political decision-making
  Pillar 4: Health
  Pillar 5: Education *RECS FEEDBACK*
- Conceptual shifts – In a strategy with many competing priorities we suggest that priority should be given for girls education as educated women shape a better generation. If necessary the 'Girl Child Fund' needs to be established to support parents who cannot send their daughters to school.
- Conceptual shifts – Peace, the foundation for so many other social developments, is unattainable unless women are placed in a leading positions in peace efforts instead of participation. *(BAHA'I Group Comments)*
- The final agreed upon priority should however be informed by analysis of key priority issues in the continent for focus in the next five years. *RECS FEEDBACK*
- Though strategy should consider RECs specific strategies, it should not depend on RECs' but on the key continental issues that need to be addressed. *RECS FEEDBACK*
- As is, the strategy does not seem to be clearly aligned with the *AU Gender Policy.* It could be useful to make clear references to the *AU Gender Policy's* objectives and commitments in section II of the Strategy. *JFA/JPA*
- The fundamental weakness of the strategy is that it conceptualizes gender as women the vulnerable group. The document has repeatedly talked about women, children, the disabled… one should be clear that this is a gender strategy, a strategy that addresses the inequalities and differences between women and men, but not one on vulnerability. The strategy also fails to address **masculinity.** It over-emphasizes on vulnerability, however, it doesn't address enough the root causes of men's dominance in decisions and resources. *UN ENVIRONMENT- masculinity*

- The strategy seems to be leaving out ethnic minorities – a huge cause of conflict in Africa. *INTERFAITH*
- The strategy is currently not quite clear on women with disability in the inclusivity. This may end up being a forgotten target group. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN & PARTNERS*
- Refer to the Geneva Protocol as well. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN & PARTNERS*
- Use of existing legal frameworks means that the strategy is built on what already exists. *Interfaith*
- There is no reference on **how** countries that are behind in gender equality are going to be capacitated to implement the strategy. *Interfaith*
- There is overwhelming interest by women from religious groups to participate in gender equality interventions. However, the barriers need to be addressed in the strategy. *Interfaith*
- Leverage on the resources within the faith sector to popularise the strategy. *Interfaith*
- The strategy needs to acknowledge other service providers such as faith-based providers who have mission health facilities throughout African countries and provide requisite financial resources. *Interfaith*
- The strategy should be considerate of the specific vulnerabilities of different category – considerate of men and young boys. *INTERFAITH*
- The Strategy should focus on the following priorities
  - Peace And Security
  - Health/GBV
  - Agriculture/Climate Change And Renewable Energy
  - Leadership And Governance/Women Political Participation
  - Education/Training And Capacity Building
  - Economic Empowerment Or Entrepreneurship/Technology/Economic Justice *CSO*
- Under Principles - Voices, Choice and Control, women are not homogeneous, (**I Propose we add, Education levels, Exposure and skills**) (*Hajjat Sebyala Uganda Faith Network on Environmental Action. Founder Member*)
- Page 8: under Transformation the inclusion of the following concept may be considered: "The future needs feminine qualities for leadership which women have in abundance. In order to stop war and 'silence the guns' the qualities of unconditional caring and nurturing of people need to come to power with women. The ruling of people through the showing of forces needs to be replaced with the etiquette of service which women have been doing since time immemorial. The qualities women developed through their long history of maintaining the coherence of the family need now to come to the family of humanity at continental/global level. Moreover, Africa still enjoys a culture informed of religious teachings that advocate the importance of treating women equally as men." (*BAHA'I Group Comments*)
  - Principles: page 12 – Women rights are human rights – the reality of human beings is their spirit and spirit has no sex. There is no any justification to treat women as inferior than men. Moreover, humanity is like a bird with two wings. One wing is woman and the other man; if both wings are not strong, the bird of humanity can't fly.
  - **Page 14** - The different realms of power doesn't include 'institutions' specifically (society doesn't necessarily include it).
  - If the strategy can be made short/brief for easier dissemination.
  - There needs to be an exploration to find out African indigenous knowledge that support the importance and equality of women.
  - The extension of Gender Management Systems (GMS) to local level- establishing a local structure to follow up on the strategy (Extending the Ministry of Women at district and country level). Do these systems and instruments already exist? If they exist do they ensure the full involvement of religious groups in the processes?

- Youth training - the empowerment and raising capacity of the youth to participate in prevalent discourses in society and apply their education not only for their own benefit but for the betterment of society. *(BAHA'I Group Comments)*

THEORY OF CHANGE

- Transformation requires innovation and please don't hesitate to propose innovative solutions. Agenda 2063 fast track projects can be a starting point as well as other success cases that you know of. *Director of WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- The theory of change which we discussed while you were in Addis. The missing link is still the "how" do we achieve gender equality. As the document argues, there is a strong infrastructure of legal and policy tools to use as launching pads, but the launch needs to happen faster and with high impact and scale. The ultimate goal should be achieving goal 6. It is the "how" question which justified this strategy design and therefore the final expected result. As discussed with you while in Addis, WGDD's contributions to the MTP will be based on the "how" which will result from this process. As you heard during the discussions with departments at the AUC "the case for GEWE is made but how do we move from a long wish list to a narrow and focused list of tangible interventions that are doable during the next 10 years, starting now-is still unclear". That is traction piece. *Director WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- The document should link more clearly to an implementation strategy, addressing the "how". For example, the document frequently uses the word "ensure" followed by a statement on rights, but does not explain how or through which methods the rights of women can be ensured. We do note, however, that the AUC will present an action plan after the strategy is approved. We would therefore encourage including tangible and budgeted activities with concrete and realistic expected results. *JFA/JPA*
- Theory of change is well articulated but should be revised in light of final succinct AU Gender Strategy priority focus areas; not necessarily following the 7 aspirations and 20 Goals. The priorities are hidden within the and not really standing out. *FAO/RECs and PATNERS*
- The ToC should consider the key continental issues and should be focused on outcome and impact level initiatives. *FAO/RECs and PATNERS*
- The theory of change captures all AU Agenda 2063 but the outcomes highlight what will be done for women only without involving men and boys. *INTERFAITH*
- Healthy lives is a key outcome that is missing from the theory of change because above all aspects, the gift of a healthy life will enable Africa to attain all the Aspirations. *INTERFAITH*
- The theory of change does not address the SDG's principle of leaving no one behind e.g. persons with disabilities, sex minorities, indigenous people, men and boys. *INTERFAITH*
- The theory of change is a well thought process covering all the Agenda 2063 aspirations, however, some outcomes can surely be achieved earlier than 2063. *INTERFAITH*
- It is not clear how the theory of change will influence change at an individual level to improve gender equality – this is critical for the religious sector as it is the sector closest to the people. *INTERFAITH*
- We are happy that the theory of change highlights sharing of best practices - this will encourage countries that are behind on gender equality to accelerate efforts to achieve gender equality. Also sharing of best practices can be an opportunity to pool scarce resources together. *INTERFAITH*
- The theory of change captures well that actions need to happen at a community level – this is where the interfaith groups will greatly influence the gender activities. *INTERFAITH*
- The structure for making sure that the theory of change is implemented are not highlighted e.g. church bodies, government ministries etc. *INTERFAITH*

- It is true that dominant social norms perpetuate patriarchy. Many women are abused under the auspices of religion and culture. *INTERFAITH*
- Religion plays a critical role to ensure that no one goes to bed hungry yet women still cannot access resources for economic empowerment. The theory of change should challenge the status quo of women always begging for empowerment. *INTERFAITH*
- In each level of the theory of change, we see the role of the interfaith groups in achieving gender equality. *INTERFAITH*
- Add interfaith groups under key-issues as they are also under resourced and overburdened like CSOs and WRO. Many interfaith groups face the burden of providing health and education services which is the government's mandate. *INTERFAITH*
- Outcomes should include a long term vision of a gender equal generation by including the role of youth. *INTERFAITH*
- We would not have imagined the linkage of all seven aspirations to gender equality therefore the theory of change is a well thought results focusses model. *INTERFAITH*
- Select outcomes should include achieving and maintaining peace in Africa – women are most vulnerable in conflict situations and religious extremism makes them even more vulnerable. *INTERFAITH*

APPROACHES
- Adaptive management
- Targeting Gender Responsive Planning And Budgeting
- Target AU Member States around Resource Allocation, Policies and Accountability.
- Stronger Approach on integrating Women's Rights Awareness.
- Integrating: Should add ….. Gender Responsive Budgeting and Public Services,
- Targeting: Include geographical locations for example rural and urban, local and national

STRATEGIES
- Scale up and implement Campaigns (Women's Land Rights Protocol)
- Budgetary allocations for gender impact, increase allocation in various sectors especially Health, Agriculture, and Climate Change.
- Strengthen the position of Gender Institutions and Commissions regarding women's rights issues.
- Establish strategic relationships with civil society organisations promoting women's affairs.
- Ratifying, domesticating and reporting on the Maputo Protocol and the African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- Shift from theoretical to practical systemic solutions.
- Target Women In Diaspora As Additional Resource
- Put In Place Sufficient Educative Incentive
- Put in place practical punitive measures against corruption and corruption tendencies, for example, public auction of property and imprisonment.

KEY OUTCOMES
Aspiration 1:
Redistribution of care work
Accelerate deepening financial inclusion for women using financial technology and other equitable financial mechanisms
Aspiration 2:
Incentivise retention and transition to tertiary education for women by using GDP per capital of working women
*Aspiration 5*:

At least 50% of women participate in conflict prevention, peace building and humanitarian responses in Africa by 2023

Aspiration 6:

50% of all media stories cover women issues and are reported from capability perspective

COMMENTS ON STRATEGY

- The concept of aligning to SDGs, Agenda 2063 is accepted however; do not follow that horizontal presentation of the strategy as it makes it long. Synthesise the issues in thematic areas based on core realistic priorities AU should focus on in the next 5 years.
- It is clear that Agenda 2063 is the framework as agreed. However, the link between the analysis and objectives in Agenda 2063 need to more clear/visible and significantly strengthened. I could not find a reference or trace to the MTPs which further refine Agenda 2063 into actionable programmes. The same applies to the consultations you had with AUC departments and which not yet to show in the document. I would add the AU themes dedicated to GEWE. *Director of WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- The "strategy section" needs considerable work. I have copied and pasted the objectives as stated in the TORs: "The objective of this assignment is to develop a new gender strategy for the African Union for the period 2017-2027. The primary deliverable of this assignment is a new gender strategy document for the AU and which will be grounded in the thematic areas and principles of Agenda 2063 and SDGs-2030; and builds on lessons learnt generated from 2009 AU policy evaluation and closely informed by the AU's current gender architecture. It will define very clearly the priorities and challenges the AU has a comparative advantage in addressing, the business model the AU should follow in delivering its commitments and concrete actions that they AU can implement". Please be guided accordingly. *WGDD Director, Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- Structuring of the strategy needs to be reviewed. Analyse the key issues affecting the continent, synthesis these into four to five specific key priority and thematic areas and page one must have this clear information.
- Objectives are too long and a shopping list and not based on thematic focus priority areas.
- The Gender Strategy is ambitious and far ranging in presenting 20 overall goals and more than 100 specific objectives. Some of the aspirations mix a few areas/sectors and therefore lack focus. We would suggest revising the document to make section II more focused with a clear list of gender initiatives for each aspiration. We would also recommend prioritising some of the areas over others given human resource and financial constraints.
- Strategy to prioritize
    1. Gender and economic justice
    2. Peace and security
    3. Environment and climate change *CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS*
- The strategy should also articulate issues around means of implementation of the strategy focusing on predictable sources of funding and mobilization of resources from both Public and private sources. This issue is missing from in the strategy.

- Furthermore, some actions just appear as titles in section II (i.e. Gender Based Violence) or are often repeated under more than one goal (i.e.: p. 41 bullet 1 and p.34 bullet 2 or p.44 bullet 3 and p.28 bullet 1 under S and T). *JFA/JPA*
- It seems not all of the actions are gendered. For example, SDG 7 is mentioned - Lobby for universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, while mentioning "universal" does not mention equitable. *JFA/JPA*
- The strategy should also have short, medium and long term goals to guide effective implementation as below: *FAO/Rural WOMEN*
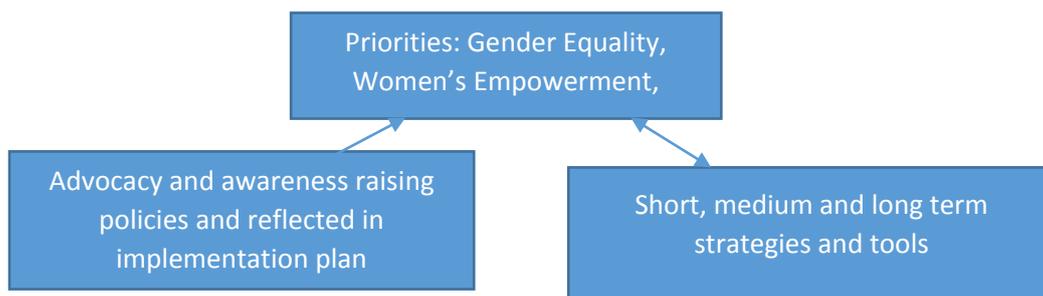
- Though strategy should consider RECs specific strategies, it should not depend on RECs' but on the key continental issues that need to be addressed.
- Objectives - Under objectives there should be items to describe what we actually want to see at the end of the implementation of the strategy. The question answered should be "What would we like to see once we have in place the strategies?" Examples:
- Bring about a 100% success in all efforts of the equality of women and men (when measured through the evaluation tools (THE THINGS WE INCLUDED IN THE INTRODUCTIONS)
- Ensure that gender aspects of Agenda 2063 are articulated, implemented, monitored, evaluated and resourced. (BAHA'I Group Comments)

1. ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- **Economic transformation -**The section on economic transformation needs to strengthen to include a dream Africa in which there is inclusive growth, which means everyone will be economically empowered equally to benefit from the countries resources. Technological advancements are also enhanced in order to allow transformed regional employment, consumption, and global competitiveness. Transformed economy therefore includes these:
  - Reduced unemployment among the youth and persons with disability,
  - Supporting land reforms
  - Increase the citizenry participation in controlling the economy
  - Activating small business and cooperatives
  - Strengthening social justice and conditions for the poor and working class
  - Raising the level of investment
  - Reducing inequality and poverty
  - Dismantling monopoly practices and structures
  - Asserting the African Countries interests in the global economy
  - Improving integration into the African economy
  - Stimulating inclusive growth
  - Regulating institutions in a country that exist and play a role in detecting early warning signs for financial institutions at risk - *INTERFAITH*
  - Economic Empowerment - Many women are excluded from participating in co-operatives even though they worked the land … we referenced this in the AFDB report we helped with. *(Mckinsey)*
  - Land ownership - Any explanation for this? Related to social norms and biases/ access to finance, etc. would be good to explain why this is the case …. Land ownership is not just about legal reform. *(Mckinsey)*
  - An overall comment, is that the linkages between trade and gender could be better reflected in the strategy, which has limited reference to trade in its current form. Please see below for a recent ATPC policy brief on trade and gender which we

prepared for CFTA trade negotiators - this highlights the linkages between trade and gender (assets, sectoral etc.) and the opportunities and challenges the CFTA offers for female traders, along with a set of priority policy recommendations on gender considerations for CFTA negotiators. This could serve as an important input to inform the trade-related elements of the strategy. As Africa's most significant trade reform, and as a flagship programme of the AU's Agenda 2063, it would be good to see the opportunities of the CFTA (including for women) feature more strongly in the strategy. UNECA

Economic Empowerment For Women

It is also one of the effective tools by which the gals of gender equality can be achieved. In this respect there is need to set up a target for micro-credit coverage for member states of the AU. There is also the need to set target for credits for women entrepreneurs in all financial institutions within the continent.

In addition, support for accelerated training for women entrepreneurs and budding female entrepreneurs the continent can help significantly in achieving the goals of gender equality.

This can be realized in many ways, as follows;
- Set-up a **Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) fund**. Such a fund is vital to enable AU to provide meaningful assistance to member states for implementation of their respective national strategies.
- Provide financial and Technical support to Civil Society Organizations in member states to carry out awareness and campaigns directed at governments, other key stakeholders and the public with the aim of audience(s) to understand and support the strategy in all its
- Ramifications and thus create the enabling environment for effective implementation of policies.
- Forge and develop strong partnerships with relevant international organizations and advanced nations. Such partnerships will support the efforts of the AU in the areas of funding and technical matters like capacity building for CSOs and officials of member states, project design and execution etc.
- **Institutionalization;** This entails requiring and assisting member states to build gender management systems ie institutions, laws and capacity building for officials like bureaucrats, politicians, women, law enforcement agencies, media etc. require member states to set up stand-alone gender ministry i.e Ministry of Gender Equality .The ministry will focus 100% on gender matters .
- **Gender Responsive Budget**: Require and encourage member states to adopt gender responsive budget .This means putting in place measures that will ensure that national budgets are made to take account of the needs of women and men on an equal basis.
- **Quota System For Appointments In Government /Mdas:** Require member states to set up, quota system regarding appointment to several positions in the government and MDAS.M& E SY.
- **M&E system**: AU should setup a mechanism that will monitor and evaluate its women empowerment and gender equality administered programmes as well as the implementation of the national programmes of member states. Member states should also be required to set up their respective M&E mechanism as an essential element of their respect national strategies. *(International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development)*

- **Globalisation - Ensure that the negative effects of globalisation and any adverse** effects of the implementation of trade and economic policies and programmes are reduced to the minimum for women. Globalisation is leading to unwanted sexual relations (religious groups need to teach the children and families the proper way of marriage, Imports are destroying local economies, disempowering women, strategies need to be put in place like (re-educating/re-skilling women)
- Make sure that every member of our religious community is well educated, has the relevant skill to be employed, encourage women to work and consider their work as part of their worship', Religious communities need to support girls to have completed basic education and have skill (need to provide support the parents and children), (Avail resources by raising tithes or earmarked funds within the congregation), by the time they have basic education they are mature enough intellectually and physically to bear responsibilities,
- Because of lack of running water and sanitary pads girls don't go to school and can't be competitive (can't have good paying jobs) in the global market,
- Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- Religious community need to teach work is important and children may need to contribute to the family productivity (but should not be forced to work out of the family to generate income),
- Apprenticeship need to stay in a limited hour and type (should not work beyond her/his capacity,
- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women
- Include the disabled women in the process,
- Fathers need to be accountable in improving the income of the women/wives – systems need to be put in place to make sure thatlow-income women are supported,
- Adopt and implement appropriate measures to prohibit any exploitation or degradation of women.
- Religious leaders need to be hold accountable to make sure that women members of their congregation are protected, [not only leaders the institutions themselves need to be hold accountable for exploitation),
- Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies
- Documentation in all forms of travel, Religious communities need to give credential… that women/girl travellers can submit to a religious group,
- Dissemination of the strategies:
- We need a particular institution or structure within religious community that disseminates, follows up/monitor the implementation, and evaluate both the responsible people and the institutions,
- Organize these issues in a curriculum that can be tailored by each religious organization,
- Religious groups should be encouraged to submit their annual plans and achievement report

Extractive industries

- **-** On page 30, there is only one line under Extractive Resources – "Gender Parity in the Extractives Industries". For this section we would recommend adding the following activities:

- o Companies and Governments should not condone, tolerate or perpetuate discrimination against women or girls affected by extractive industries projects.
  - o Companies and Governments should respect the human rights of women, men, girls and boys from communities affected by extractive industries projects.
  - o Involve both women and men in company-community consultation and decision-making processes, recognising that women and men have difference experiences, perspectives, needs and interests.
  - o Ensure that the outcomes of consultation and decision-making processes are gender equitable and that women and men have equal opportunity and equal access to project benefits not only in accessing jobs, but also in CSR projects. *JFI/JPA*

- I noted that Aspiration 1-goal number 4 does address extractives, but it's very broad. Under this section, issues related to protecting the rights of women rights defenders must be prioritised including creating a safe space for women affected by extractives to reclaim for their rights. The state and mining companies are found wanting in this section. The judiciary including the police as well as the gender and human rights commissions must respond to the security needs of the women human rights defenders.
- **Secondly**, Violence against women affected by extractives, either perpetrated by the state or individuals need to be addressed. Various strategies to address specific concerns should be addressed. Let's not cluster violence against women into one group, as women affected by extractives have their own experiences from those living in the urban and peri urban areas. *TAFADZWA MUROPA*
- SRHR - Thirdly, reproductive health rights for women affected by extractives should be prioritised. Mining companies are responsible for polluting water sources especially in the rural areas, where water is limited. Hence women living in the areas where extractives are prevalent, become vulnerable to contract water borne diseases and even succumb to skin rashes and cervical cancer as a result of regular use of contaminated water. *Tafadzwa Muropa, Harare, Zimbabwe*

Women land rights in Africa
- Any land acquisitions or investments that affect women and their communities negatively now and in the future, must be resisted. Women must be in a position to decline or agree on land investments that affect them. *OXFAM*
- Women's land rights must be addressed as a bundle of rights: rights to own, access, control and manage. *OXFAM*
- The African Union through Land Policy Initiative, LPI must develop a specific guiding principle and or framework on women's land rights that take cognisance of the complexity of the issue in different countries in the continent. CSOs will engage and support LPI in this quest. *OXFAM*
- The nature of Women's land rights advocacy work with the shrinking of CSO spaces is difficult and challenging. Donors and development partners should set aside resources for Rapid response advocacy that can be used to maximise sudden and unplanned opportunities to engage. *OXFAM*
- Policy Influencing at the international level must be connected and informed by Continental, regional and national efforts to avoid disjoined efforts and ensure coherence of policy asks. Rural women's voices should be amplified through facilitating rural women to key policy influencing events, *OXFAM*

- CSOs must deliberately map and engage with Regional Economic Blocs through the relevant sector working groups to effectively position the women's land rights agenda within the RECs. *OXFAM*
- Advocacy efforts should also be directed towards to addressing discriminatory laws; both formal and informal. *OXFAM*

UN Environment Programme – Land Ownership, Page 19

- Land ownership: Legislative reforms to close gender gaps in land rights have seen a decrease in formal discrimination against women's land ownership from nine countries in 2012 to five countries in 2014. In some countries, joint land registration initiatives and other programmes (e.g. increasing female legal literacy) also appear to be transforming norms and perceptions of female land and asset ownership. Estimates suggest that women hold substantially fewer agricultural land titles individually or jointly (19%) than men and according to an FAO report, less than 10% in most parts of Africa
- There is a report by FAO 2010 that gives specific data on Africa
- (http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2010-11/en/
- It is a 2010-2011 publication by FAO called Women in Agriculture, closing the gender gap for development.

Agriculture

- I was however a bit disappointed by the limited space given to chapters relating to Agriculture, while the vast majority of African women are still involved in agricultural activities (throughout the agrifood value chains). Goal 5 (page 33) covers this topic, but very briefly and not with clear interventions under subtitles "Agriculture" and "Land".IFDC
- In Agriculture, but also in other areas I guess, young women face double constraints: as women, and as youth. This could be highlighted more strongly.IFDC
- From our experience the workload of rural women is a key constraint. The introduction/promotion of labor-saving tools seems to us very important to free-up time and thus open up new opportunities for rural women. Maybe I missed it in the text, but I have not seen this workload burden much addressed (briefly on page 22).- IFDC
- Women make up 43% of the global agricultural labour force in developing countries and as much as 50% in SSA (FAO source data TBC). Gender equality is an essential dimension for sustainable food systems and the AU Gender Strategy should include focus on *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Zero hunger, food security and nutrition and education in these sectors for food system efficiency including post-harvest strategies. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Promote industrialisation and simplified financial mechanisms in Africa and economic growth for rural women – include energy/electricity in rural areas to improve on efficiency and effectiveness. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Promote resilience in agriculture productivity, profitability, food utilisation and stability. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Distribution of benefits and costs among and different actors in view of strengthening agrifood value chains. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Promote easier regional and continental trade flows – review and strengthen bi-lateral and multi-national trade agreements and investments codes. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Economic value addition is critical in all initiatives to ensure to ensure issues do not continue to be marginalised. Women often have limited decision making power and often find themselves in lower levels in the value chain. Hence the strategy needs to include the promotion of an enabling environment that allows women entrepreneurs to access services, reach markets and reinforce key partnerships and linkages. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*

- FIVE DOMAINS OF EMPOWERMENT - *ONLINE COMMENTS*
  1. Decisions about agricultural production Sole or joint decision-making power over food or cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries, as well as autonomy in agricultural production.
  2. Access to and decision-making power over productive resources: Ownership of, access to, and decision-making power over productive resources (land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit)
  3. Control over use of income: Sole or joint control over income and expenditures.
  4. Leadership in the community ("Community leadership"): Membership in economic or social groups and being comfortable speaking in public.
  5. Time allocation: Allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks, and satisfaction with the time available for leisure activities. *ONLINE COMMENTS*

Gaps in the strategy include:
- Lack of access to credit facilities to buy modern farming equipment for example tractors, combine harvester, planters and farming inputs such as seed, fertilisers and pesticides
- Lack of knowledge and access to information concerning modern farming structures for example insurance.
- Lack of information on best farming practices e.g using poor seed, crop rotation, proper of use of land and understanding of season.
- Poor post-harvest management e.g storage facilities
- Lack of access to both local and international markets
- Unequal distribution of land is not well articulated. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*

- Promote nuanced strategies – consider all aspects of agriculture and animal husbandry including agriculture, beef production, fisheries and animal protein. Food is life and there must be supporting legislation and policies for food security as a right and not a privilege.

Page 20; Environmental, Please Add:
- Women and land: When land is in the hands of women, their decision-making capacity and livelihoods are improved, which is likely to have a positive impact on the health and well-being of their children
- A later study in Ethiopia (Elias et al. 2015) highlighted the biased attitudes of extension workers and underscored linkages between lack of credit access and level of education: extension workers were encouraged to target resource-rich farmers, while women, who typically had poorer access to resources, were neglected.
- Women may have more difficulty than men in recovering from dislocation of communities. If compensation by governments or companies for large-scale project displacement includes consideration for lost employment, women who work in the informal sector and do not have an official employment record will have no basis for a formal claim. If compensation is provided for dislocation of communities due to large-scale energy projects, women are compensated at lower levels – if at all – because of their invisibility in land titling and claims processes. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*
- For women farmers to be more productive, they need equal access to environmentally and socially sustainable agricultural inputs, markets, and (in view of the rapidly changing climate) climate-resilient farming technologies and climate information. Gender equality is essential for improved performance of the agricultural

sector through climate resilience, and thereby to increasing food and nutrition security for all, especially women and girls. *UN Environment Programme*

Environment
- The UN Environment has committed to support gender equality and the empowerment of women, therefore, it would be important to ensure that gender and environment considerations are introduced whenever the opportunity presents. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*
- Nevertheless, the strategy has a narrow understanding on environment. For instance, the gender analysis only talks about climate change (page 20), there is a lack of analysis on the other environment-related issues. It is not clear for instance how women and men are affected by environmental degradation. Desertification, land degradation, deforestation, depletion of lakes and rivers, air pollution, poaching, deteriorating terrestrial and marine biodiversity... all bear different impacts on women and men, girls and boys. Women's dependence on natural resources such as water and biofuel should be stressed. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*
- In terms of actions, on page 33 and under Goal 7, all the activities are grouped under "climate change", which is only part of our environment work. If we are able to extend the gender analysis to broader topics of the environment, the strategy can probably include broader actions here under Goal 7. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*

Care work
- Issues of ICDW are not articulated in the Agenda 2063 even though they are framed within the SDG 5.4 and included in some frameworks like the UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. *OXFAM – UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK*
- WE Care Dreams Project is essentially looking at how unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) which is primarily done by women and girls can be equitably shared by men and boys. The project aims to redress women's and girls's heavy and unequal UCDW through shifting inequitable gender and social norms that perpetuate women's and girls's unequal share of UCDW that also prevent positive changes. *OXFAM; UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK – REGGIS MTUTU*
- In discussion of Care Work, there is no reference to better equalizing work within the household. Instead, the document seems to focus on acknowledging that women do a lot of work, rather than analyzing root causes and moving to actions to address barriers to greater equality. *CARE WORK – JFA/JPA*
- Oxfam welcomes the fact that women's heavy and unequal share of care work ("care") is well recognised in the Draft Gender Strategy's situational analysis, and that in particular care is recognised as a cross-cutting issue that affects or is affected by multiple aspects Agenda 2063 (including women's economic empowerment and decision-making, climate change adaptation, and provision of essential services provision, for example)

However, the recognition of care as an underlying driver of all aspects of gender equality, as recognised by the UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, does not at present carry through into the actual Gender Strategies for each [Agenda 2063] Aspiration and Goal (Draft Gender Strategy pp. 26-49) nor into the accompanying Draft Operational Plan.
We would therefore recommend that:

(a) Draft gender strategy – ensure that care commitments are included in all relevant goals, including Goals 2, 4, 5, 11 and 18 (in addition to the care commitments already included in Goals 1, 3 and 19)

(b) Draft Operational Plan – add specific actions that address care under the relevant goals, including Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 18 (the current draft operational plan does not appear to include any specific actions that address care). *(OXFAM Women's Economic Empowerment and Care Economic Justice Team)*

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Education – adult literacy to improve rural women's education levels, techniques to combat climate change and disseminate best practices (AU could provide platforms for shared learning). *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- The APC Women's Rights programme focuses on the intersection between women's rights, feminism and digital technologies including issues related the gender digital divide, online gender based violence, access amongst other things. *Association for Progressive Communications*
- Governance and leadership of health should be (if not) a mandate of national governments – there has to be structures that take full responsibility of healthcare and be held accountable by AU. *INTERFAITH*
- Leveraging on the faith sector as they have infrastructure for healthcare – though systematic engagement and adequate financing. *INTERFAITH*
- **Education -** The draft is on point looking at it that it encompasses all African countries with diverse needs and specifications. My findings through research is that the re-entry policy in Zambia has seen most girls complete school, however the children to most of these girls are suffering and under nourished, and the death rate among these children are higher than their counter parts. As a way forward, such policies should be accompanied by a funding to give support to such vulnerable children. The situation is pathetic in rural parts of Zambia. *ONLINE COMMENTS*
- The regional blocks have to coordinate for free movement (ECOWAS)
- Well educated women will contribute peaceful Africa, - *Interfaith*
  - o A girl who is taken out of school. will contribute for violence,
  - o If a boy continues to learn the gap in education will continue.
  - o A girl and a boy need to get educated equal. In fact need to be given priority if there are no resources as the girl is the future mother and will educate the next generation,
  - o Traditional views on how we welcome baby girls need to be transformed, [they should be equally welcome- to create stable Africa
  - o When girls are married early – girls get sick, divorce, that creates instability…. The child has less weight/malnourished, she can feed him, the family rejects her so girl flees and become vulnerable for girl trafficking, there must be a law
  - o Their reproductive health need to be catered for to get a stable Africa,
  - o Curriculums need to target the welfare of women/girls
- Women have a natural receptivity to Faith and need to be part of the church's strategy of welfare, Women need to be valued in all religious groups and strategies have to be in place to help them advance, - *Interfaith*
- Boys in the family need to be educated to avoid an aggressive/violent behaviour towards their sisters, (parental education) – *Interfaith*

- **Family Planning**
- This is a vital component of any meaningful strategy to address gender equality. The target can be set to the effect that 35% of women of child bearing age should be supported by AU in partnership with the government in each member state to utilize a family planning method at the end of 2023. It is the case in Africa that lack of family planning is at the heart of problems that undermine the sights of women and endanger

their livelihood for example, the high level of maternal mortality, high level of poverty among women, limitations in the access of women to education and health, poor performance and representation of women in the workplace especially at the senior levels, poor representation of women in the political life of the nation. The problems of child marriage, girl child trafficking, female genital mutilation etc owe much to poor usage of family planning in African countries. . *(International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development)*

- Violence against women- Girls and women often resist violence on individual basis but most cannot go far without a social support/network from local women and girls. Thus, strategies for building social alliances for women are imperative to translate the human rights framework into practical alternative with strategies that are empowering and strengthen both the autonomy and the social alliances of women and girls. *(BAHA'I Group Comments)*

- **Food Security And Nutrition -** Similarly, on Food Security and Nutrition, the document notes the importance of providing women with sources of fuel and a means for producing nutritious food, but does not appear to look at ensuring that the burden of responsibility for the food security of the household is shared by men. *JFA/JPA*
- *Are we specifically calling out women here because of the wage gap and increased prevalence of poverty … if so we should frame as such (Mckinsey)*

   Energy, water and sanitation
- On this also add a point on the role that women play as primary managers in the area of energy, water and sanitation. Find an example below: In most developing countries, women tend to be the primary energy, water and sanitation managers for their households and families in both rural and urban areas. Women and children bear a disproportionate burden with respect to finding and fetching water and fuel. Lack of basic infrastructure, energy, water and sanitation services contribute to time poverty and social, economic pressures. *UN Environment Programme*

- **Page 22 On Water**
   • Food and Energy: Although there has been progress in alleviating poverty and reducing hunger in the world, the number of undernourished people has increased in the last two decades in Africa (to 232.5 million). Those most at risk of going hungry are often directly involved in producing food, the women. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*
   • Closing the gender gap in agriculture would generate significant gains for the agriculture sector and for society. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30%. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4%, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*
   • Closing the gender gap in access to and control over resources such as land and production inputs, and in access to information and technology, would increase agricultural productivity and therefore reduce poverty and hunger. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*
   • The prevalence and nature of food insecurity differ across types of households and within households. Within food-scarce households, women and men typically use different strategies to cope with food insecurity. *UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME*

3. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL RIGHTS

- Promote gender sensitive affirmative actions and quotas for promoting gender mainstreaming, equality and empowerment from a rights based approach. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*

- **Migration**: We note that the proposed gender strategy seems to target women and people who adhere to a sedentary lifestyle. The place given to women and to nomadic or migrant populations seems limited. **Free or forced migration** whether of an economic, political, environmental or cultural nature, is likely to increase in the coming decades and make women extremely vulnerable. We recommend that the migration dynamics of women be better highlighted in the strategy. *JFA/JPA*

- The document could benefit from addressing the statutory vs. customary law challenges experienced by women across Africa. Women are frequently granted rights at the statutory level with customary law often working in direct opposition to this. The strategy should help make progress in terms of holding Governments to account for more than the creation of laws, but also for the process which allows for their implementation. *JFA/JPA*

Violence and discrimination against Women And Girls – *Interfaith*
1) National Level: Reinforce sensitization to men, women. that is communities Reinforce advocacy to political leaders,
Regional Level: Conduct consultation, train and equip, Share experiences and inspire one another
Timeframe: 2020
2) National level: Intentional and targeted advocacy to traditional leaders, Reinforce and enforce laws, policies to protect and to punish trespassers
Continental level: Law enforcement design and strategies
Timeframe: 2027
3) National level:Reinforce free and quality education. Give access to particular social services for women and girls
Timeframe: 2025
4) Intentional and targeted advocacy to traditional chiefs,...
5) National Level: Educate to prevent early pregnancies
 Youth as actors
Regional Level: Youth as actors to end GBV – *Interfaith*

- There seems to be no information regarding the traditional leaders. This is critical in relation to ending harmful tradition practices. *INTERFAITH*
- I think the strategy has identified the most salient issues with regard to the situation of women's rights and gender equality on the continent including right to health/ (access to health services). Perhaps, more could be said on tackling impunity for gender-based crimes including provision of remedies for victims. *(UN Human Rights)*

4. GOOD GOVERNANCE

Political Representation and Participation

- The 1st April 2016 Global Ranking of Women in Parliaments in ECOWAS Countries – ranks Senegal 6th with 42.7% and the next best performing country is Cabo Verde which ranks 71%. Senegal deserves mention in this report like Rwanda. ECOWAS Commission
- Unless there is a good governance in both the secular and religious institutions all the lines of actions that we laid out cannot be enforced
- Faith leaders need to be selfless, women encouraged in all aspects of church activities including governance. Generally
- We need to make sure that a participatory continental structure exist to monitor and evaluate periodically the implementation of the gender strategy,
- The perpetrators of crime against women are the men who are in the positions of power. There must be a system to hold them accountable (whether it is in their hate speech, illegal actions and lavish life styles). Religious leaders need to come forward to critique political leaders,
- The local government structures need to be strengthened so that they can enforce measures that nurture family systems. *Interfaith*

Gender Management systems

- There is need to build capacity of Member States to improve data collection at a national level. *Interfaith*
- Need for capacity building for RECs, member states staff of all organs and institutions. *RECS*
- Capacity building should be done sectorally. *RECS*
- Important to be strategic and collaborate with partners, *RECS*
- Need for more effective communication between AU and RECs. *RECs.*
- AU needs to collaborate better with UN Women and have field missions, visit RECs. This will assist in gaining legitimacy for the implementation of the strategy. *RECs.*
- There should be improved gender mainstreaming within AU to facilitate easier access to funds from other AU sections e.g. Africa Peace and Security Fund accessed by IGAD. *RECs*
- Ensure concrete buy-in is gained for member states to ease and ensure effective implementation. *RECs*
- RECs will work towards ensuring the strategic focus areas and work plans align with the final approved AU Gender Strategy. *RECs*
- The AUC could also consider adding an "internal" goal in section II to elaborate more on the approach of the AUC, the RECs and the Member States (MS) for the integration of gender equality in all activities and expected results. This could also help demonstrate how the AUC and RECs intend to tackle systemic challenges such as the low implementation of gender equality norms and commitments by MS or the fact that Ministries and units responsible for women and gender equality are often under resourced and not a "priority". – *Donors*
- Can include ECA's African Trade Policy Centre here too:
    1) Provide technical support to the AUC on mainstreaming gender into the design, implementation and monitoring of the CFTA
    2) Conduct studies on trade and gender in Africa
    3) Incorporate the principles of the AU Gender Strategy into the day to day work of the centre
       Could also include a role of the CFTA unit in DTI at the AUC, who have been working with the Women, Gender and Development Division to recruit a gender expert to mainstream gender into CFTA – as far as I'm aware Canada will support this. – UNECA

The AU on its part can assist member states in the following;

- The continental body should prioritise two or three themes for special focus and attention every five years. These priority themes should guide the member states in their interventions and influence the latter in developing their annual response plan during the five year period
- For the implementation of the priority themes. The selected priority themes for each 5-year period should be the most pressing and critical challenges at the time of setting the strategy. A scientific study should be conducted to determine the priority themes.
- Set –up a Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) fund. Such a fund is vital to enable the AU to provide for the first 5-year period spanning 2018-2023. The priority themes can be;-
- Awareness creation and Advocacy campaigns
- Family planning (*International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development*)
- Economic Empowerment for women. *(International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development)*
- Accountability mechanisms – Even though the Strategy recognizes weak accountability systems as one of the major barriers in promoting gender equality in the continent, there is less focus on the subject in the various strategic goals. Thus, establishing and maintaining strong accountability mechanisms for the gender equality work of states and private actors should be a priority. *(BAHA'I Group Comments)*

5. PEACE AND SECURITY

- Include focus on women peace and security – the strategy currently considers UNSCR 1325, but must look at this with Resolution 1820 (Rape, Sexual Exploitation and Communication Strategy). *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Why have we chosen the 2063 timeframe yet some things like silencing the gun can be done so easily. *INTERFAITH*
- Most of the sub-items can be merged together and the ones which focus on prevention need to be given priority (eg. nurturing a culture of peace and disarmament than catering for legal migration) – if there is peace there may not be immigration. *INTERFAITH*

6. Media, Communication And Sport

- Media And Political Participation
- Most women do not discuss politics in these Medias. Usually women would want to discuss who did their hair style, who did their nails as an example, as African women, we need to scale up in our intellect and start talking about how our governments. Are not doing well in the issues of governance, economy, and every other sector which is affecting our people for example. When we have such a cadre of women who can speak out on national issues and provide alternative solutions, then we are getting somewhere as women in Africa. So deliberate platforms can be created where women can discuss these issues and be heard. It's disappointing sometimes that women organization are so silent on commenting on national issues. May be we need to change the strategy by creating media platforms for women to discuss issues affecting them in their nations. *ONLINE COMMENTS*
- Media – The Strategy recommends eliminating gender stereotypes and negative portrayal of women and girls in textbooks, syllabuses and the media. It could also benefit from strategies that are devised to break barriers for women and girls working in the media so that they continue to advocate the causes of equality. *(*BAHA'I Group Comments)

- Understanding the nature of the gender digital divide The most recent estimate from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) indicates that the global internet user gender gap has grown from 11% in 2013 to 12% in 2016. Internet penetration rates remain higher for men than for women in all regions in the world, with the gap being more severe in least developed countries (LDCs), where it is 31%, and in Africa, where it is 23%.1 There are even larger variations between countries. Gender disaggregated statistics at the national level are not widely available; however, using Facebook users as an indicator, the company says that in South Africa, for example, there is now gender parity in the number of regular Facebook users, while in Nigeria, only 36% are women, compared to 64% men.2

- Perhaps more importantly, basic measures of internet uptake cannot take into account the full extent of the constraints on women's ability to gain meaningful internet access, as it is strongly affected by factors such as location, economic power, age, racial or ethnic origin, social and cultural norms, sexual orientation, gender identity and education, among other things. For example, gender literacy gaps – including digital literacy – result in uneven capacity among women to use the internet for their needs. Bridging the gender digital divide means bridging not just one digital divide, but multiple digital and non-digital divides. Bridging the underlying and more fundamental gender divides demands an approach that is located within economic, social, political and cultural contexts that recognise existing inequalities.

- The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Best Practice Forum (BPF) on Gender and Access in 2016 conducted a survey to better understand the barriers to women's access to the internet and participation in online life3 and compiled the following framework of constraints:
  - o Availability (e.g. coverage is deficient, or women have no broadband access, public internet centres are in spaces that women do not usually have access to).
  - o Affordability (e.g. insufficient income to pay for data, cannot afford a device).
  - o Culture and norms (e.g. boys prioritised for technology use at home, online gender-based violence, restrictions to movement and limitations on access to devices).
  - o Capacity and skills (e.g. literacy gaps in reading, lack of skills and confidence to access the internet or explore technology).
  - o Relevant content (e.g. language issues, lack of content that speaks to women's contexts, gender-related content is censored/restricted).
  - o Participation in decision-making roles pertaining to the internet and/or in the technology sector (e.g. when women are not able to pursue careers in science and technology, when their participation in relevant policy-making fora is limited).
  - o Relevant policies (e.g. lack of policies with a gender focus and/or that address women's ability to access and benefit from the internet); and/or other systemic barriers.

- The impact of culture and norms that prevent women from accessing and benefiting from the internet was most frequently selected by the BPF's survey respondents: 71% of participants selected it as a barrier. Other important barriers were affordability (67%), women's ability to participate in decision-making roles pertaining to the internet and technology sector (65.3%), lack of capacity and relevant skills necessary to access and benefit from the internet (60%), and the availability of relevant policies (59%). The availability of relevant infrastructure was also important (48% of participants selected it as a barrier), as was the availability of relevant content and applications (41%). Another barrier frequently raised relates to threats pertaining to online abuse and gender-based violence, as well as ("offline") threats

pertaining to the use of ICTs. It can also be noted that these barriers are not mutually exclusive, and often relate to or impact on one another.

- Given women's lower income levels, affordability of access is a key barrier to bringing more women online. Charges for consumer (mobile) broadband services in most countries are based on costly metered data consumption, so fewer women can afford to go online for any significant amount of time. A4AI estimates that 1Gb of data costs an average of 18% of per capita income in Africa.4

- Culture and norms are often overlooked, and are particularly relevant to strategies for bridging the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective. Technology sits in a context affected by a complex interplay of norms that affects issues such as economic empowerment, control over resources, decision-making, mobility and autonomy as well as safety. For example, the barrier is not simply affordability, but whether women are able to exercise decision-making over how money is spent, their domain of control (whether this is seen as primarily within household issues only or have larger implications), and the way in which women are able to relate to technology. Even when women are able to access the internet affordably and have the skills to do so, they may not be fully able to use it to exercise their rights because of deeply rooted societal discrimination against women, and the policies and practices of states and the private sector. This even extends to the production of technologies aimed at safeguarding rights online, such as mobile safety apps – very few are developed by women.

- There is also the very real risk of harassment and threats to personal safety that affect confidence and a sense of ownership over access, ranging from fear of handset theft, calls from strangers and harassment online, to physical safety when visiting an access point, to the acceptability of men checking women's phones or limiting their use, in order to exercise control over them.

- Despite its importance, however, the role of culture as a barrier to internet access is still not well understood, and is one of the areas where further research is called for. A recent workshop held by APC and ISOC on the topic found that more information is needed on the variety of ways in which access may be restricted, such as phone bans or village moral policing.7 More research is also needed in areas such as how the internet may be used to shape or change norms, as well as greater knowledge of measures that can be used to help more women get online. A gender analysis of algorithmic curation (the process used by many online companies to select the data presented to users) is also needed to determine the extent to which this affects diversity and reflects local cultures and norms.8

References:

1 International Telecommunication Union. (2016). ICT Facts and Figures 2016. www.itu.int/en/ITUD/Statistics/Pages/facts/default.aspx The gender gap estimated by the ITU represents the difference between the internet user penetration rates for males and females relative to the internet user penetration rate for males, expressed as a percentage.

2 APC Research May 2017. [Note from Jan -> find the proper citation]

34Van der Spuy, A. (2016). Overcoming Barriers to Enable Women's Meaningful Internet Access. Output document – IGF Best Practice Forum on Gender and Access. www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/3406/437

4http://a4ai.org/affordability-report/report/2017/#executive_summary

5 To give just one example of the prominence of this factor, the second most popular downloaded app in Kenya is for call blocking. Source: BPF on Gender and Access session at the IGF 2016, held in Guadalajara, Mexico.

6 ISOC and APC Workshop on Mainstreaming Gender in Internet Development in the Asia-Pacific Region, Bangkok, Thailand, 2-4 October 2016. http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/3416/148

7 Kovacs, A. (2017). 'Chupke, Chupke': Going Behind the Mobile Phone Bans in North India. Internet Democracy Project. https://genderingsurveillance.internetdemocracy.in/phone_ban
8 Shephard, N. (2016, 5 December). Algorithmic discrimination and the feminist politics of being in the data GenderIT.org. http://www.genderit.org/feminist-talk/algorithmic-discrimination-and-feminist-politics (*APC Women's Programme*)

III. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- RECs focus on regional and continental activities rather than country specific as funds are provided to member states. *RECs*
- RECs build and strengthen international, bi-lateral and multilateral partnerships. *RECs*
- RECs focus on non-traditional donors such as Asian countries and Philanthropies. *RECs*
- AU, RECs, member states and development organisations must all have concerted efforts and collaborate better. Strategic partnership key with traditional donors but also the private sector and non-traditional donors such as MTN who sponsor solar energy use and equipment. AU needs to encourage governments to internalise the strategy and take ownership as this is key for the sustainability of any intervention. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- AU to reconsider its mandate and strategies to ensure a certain level of authority that enables enforcement of commitments declarations made by member countries *Interfaith*
- AU to foster intergovernmental partnerships and networks. *Interfaith*
- **Figure 5: Institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Gender Strategy -** Under Figure 5: it seems for example, that there is restrictions to the type of partnership to be established – From experience one can engage with different international and regional partners the most important aspect is to have coordination and avoid duplication. The assumption also is that support will come from international partners.....I would like to see a strategy that explores how we mobilize internal resources from the **PRIVATE SECTOR** , foundations on the **CONTINENT of AFRICA.** *ECOWAS*
- AU to pronounce itself in relation to the referred protocols and take a stance to guide member countries. *INTERFAITH*
- AU to reconsider its mandate and strategies to ensure a certain level of authority that enables enforcement of commitments declarations made by member countries. *INTERFAITH*
- AU should have frameworks that reinforce African govts to prioritise health and provide enabling environment for quality, accessible, affordable healthcare, especially in hard to reach and disadvantaged places. *INTERFAITH*
- AU to undertake countries' health systems capacity assessments and cascade best practices throughout the continent. *INTERFAITH*
- AU to foster intergovernmental partnerships and networks that allow members to learn from each other. *INTERFAITH*

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- RECs have to come up with an implementation plan. *Interfaith*
- The actions listed in the strategy section need not to repeat what is already being done, not to be vague and difficult to achieve (for example- under aspiration 1 you cited Maputo Protocol article 35 as actionable point- promote equality of access to employment-) how will that be done? As we discussed, we need low hanging fruits and actions that are within our reach during the implementation period. *Director WGDD – Mahawa Kaba Wheeler*
- It is important for initiatives in the implementation of the strategy to focus on innovative actions that boost technical and technological dimensions. For instance there is need for new economic concepts for tools and implements that help with the anatomy of women, and that help them influence demand, supply adequately and deliver on quality over quantity. Prioritise primary prevention rather than secondary prevention alone. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- In implementing the strategy, AU, RECs governments should have concerted efforts in building, scaling up and strengthening economic and social infrastructure. Success stories and best practices need to be scaled up and unnecessary bottle necks and many bureaucratic processes need to be relooked for efficiency and effectiveness. Scale up incubators and Centres of Excellence models for training, mentorship, coaching and supporting women. Movement across countries should be made easier. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- The document does not seem to adequately address the need for implementation or "signing on" at multiple levels of government. In many African countries, the state and local level actors are just as important, if not more important for the implementation of codified systems (such as CEDAW etc.). There is a reference to the national and local levels in Figure 4 (p.25), but it could be mentioned more systematically throughout the document. **We believe that an African Union Gender Strategy should expressly include the need to address the buy-in of actors/stakeholders at multiple levels.** *JFA/JPA*
- I would also like to see an AU WGGD DATABASE as a key OUTCOME of this strategy document. AUWGGD as a repository of knowledge based products - To have Well Developed and Resourced Database at the AUWGGD is recommended as a targeted intervention. WEB-BASED M & E – in which Member states can up-date information and it can be live system……that is automated. *ECOWAS Commission*
- The strategy invokes two key implementation principles that include tipping point leadership and fair process. These implementation principles are essential for leaders to overcome the four key organizational hurdles that can prevent even the best strategies from being executed. The four key hurdles comprise the cognitive, resource, motivational and political hurdles that prevent people involved in strategy execution from understanding the need to break from status quo, finding the resources to implement the new strategic shift, keeping your people committed to implementing the new strategy, and from overcoming the powerful vested interests that may block the change. *INTERFATIH*
- Women need access to finance and access to innovative technology mechanisms. Implementation should factor in: *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*
- Gender audits and relevance of gender analysis in sectors.
- Foster South-South exchanges.
- Incorporate gender considerations in all intervention strategies
- Inclusive - focus on gender equality for women, men, girls and boys, young people
- Urban migration, growth, nutrition and promoting proper sanitation.
- Climate resilient innovative projects. *FAO/RURAL WOMEN*

- Lack of implementation and effective monitoring and evaluation systems for the strategy.
- The strategy provides room for innovation in terms of gender equality – it is critical to have gender equality and innovation in the SDG era. *Interfaith*
- The strategy will strengthen gender mainstreaming efforts in Africa. *Interfaith*
- Implementation Plan
- There will be five 10 year plans within the horizon of Agenda 2063... (I think this cannot be true for the Gender Strategy because the first plan will be only 5 years 2018 - 2013 so there will be four ten years plans and one 5 year plan at the beginning) (*Hajjat Sebyala Uganda Faith Network on Environmental Action. Founder Member*)

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

- **Gender Stats**: As a recommendation, bring out the importance of gender statistics, which includes importance of countries providing gender disaggregated data. *UN ENVIRONMENT Programme*
- All RECs differ in reporting – ECOWAS has quarterly reporting with work plans updated and shared for the next quarter, SADC is annual reporting against SADC protocol MERF - *RECs*
- RECs do not report to AU but share information as requested in preparation for AU reporting. *RECs*
- The Abuja declaration outlines how RECs should work and reporting lines. *RECs*
- There is need for an overarching reporting framework at regional and continental levels. *RECs*
- AU should build on current achievements. *RECs*
- ECOWAS has quarterly reporting and work plans. *RECs*
- AU Gender Strategy M&E Framework should be online and link with Gender Score Card. *RECs*
- Reporting should be systematised and have a framework mechanism with clear timelines. *RECs*
- The strategy needs to defined what progress will be measured and how. *Interfaith*
- A periodic review of the strategy itself could be beneficial and help ensure the strategy continues to align with any changes might be desirable? *RECs*
- Data and harmonisation of RECs MER tools and frameworks where available is essential. *RECs*
- Align AU Gender Strategy M&E with the Africa Gender and Development Index (AGDI) and possibly harmonise the key indicators for easier reporting from RECs and Member States. *RECs*
- AU to have a clear M&E Framework for monitoring and reporting within AU and with RECs and member states; provide clear tools, guidelines and reporting guides. *RECs*
- M&E should focus on Outcome and Impact level reporting rather including detailed Outputs and activity levels reporting. *RECs*
- There need to be a coordinating mechanism for the MER with clear actions and reporting calendar. *RECs*
- How does the AU see this fitting in with the other commitments mentioned in the document (e.g. Maputo, SADC, Solemn Declaration etc.)? How will reporting on the strategy be conducted? Will it be duplication of other processes? How will this fit in with the work of regional actors (e.g. ECOWAS)? *JFA/JAP*

BUDGET AND FINANCE ARRANGEMENT

- It seems the strategy will need proper gender responsive budgeting. *Interfaith*
- Gender responsive budgeting is key for the implementation of the strategy. *Interfaith*
- PRIVATE SECTOR**:** Emphasis and focus on the Private Sector not as a source for resource mobilization only but as an active player in the attainment of gender equality on the continent. There is sufficient data to show that countries that have successfully streamlined and leveraged gender in their work place, business and investment operations and promotion have achieved extremely positive results in private sector productivity and overall national growth. *ECOWAS*
- AU Strategy needs to be prioritised and popularised and funds are needed for this at regional and continental levels. *RECS*
- Capacity building funds and technical support/training on GRB needed. *RECS*
- Cross cutting issues are not adequately prioritised especially in specific budgeting and even within other sectors. *RECs*
- Gender is currently not prioritised and budgeted enough as implementation is done by member states and some thematic issues and not their country context priorities e.g FGM in Sierra Leone. This results in lack of political will affecting implementation and impactful/outcome achievements AU would report on. *RECs*
- No gender specific budgets but funds sourced from external donors e.g bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors. *RECs*
- Financial Flow, JFA/JPA
- On page 34, the points on Financial Flows and Credit are extremely limited and could be expanded. For trade, some of the strategies related to economic capacity (not just for low income women) could also apply (i.e. the use of women's indigenous knowledge, equal rights to economic resources, strengthen women's economic capacity, etc.). *ONLINE COMMENTS*

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: DEFINITIONS

- There is need to include a definition of terms in the strategy – not everyone is on the same level in terms of gender concepts. *Interfaith*
- "Gender statistics are defined as statistics that adequately reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life… First, gender statistics have to reflect gender issues, that is, questions, problems and concerns related to all aspects of women's and men's lives, including their specific needs, opportunities and contributions to society. In every society, there are differences between what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman and what is expected, allowed and valued in a man. These differences have a specific impact on women's and men's lives throughout all life stages and determine, for example, differences in health, education, work, family life or general well-being. Producing gender statistics entails disaggregating data by sex and other characteristics to reveal those differences or inequalities and collecting data on specific issues that affect one sex more than the other or relate to gender relations between women and men. Second, gender statistics should adequately reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men. In other words, concepts and definitions used in data collection must be developed in such a way as to ensure that the diversity of various groups of women and men and their specific activities and challenges are captured. In addition, data collection methods that induce gender bias in data collection, such as underreporting of women's economic activity, underreporting of violence against women and undercounting of girls, their births and their deaths should be avoided. *UN ENVIRONMENT Programme*

ANNEX B: AU GENDER STRATEGY ALIGNED TO AGENDA 2063 AND THE SDGS

ANNEX C: SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS
1. Key Issues Paper

2. Mapping Of Normative Frameworks
Other ECOWAS Normative Frameworks Which You May Need To Take Note Of Include:
- ECOWAS Plan of Action on Gender and Trade, 2015
- ECOWAS Framework and Plan of Action on Gender and Migration,2015
- Women, Peace and Security Action of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) 2017
- ECOWAS Gender and Elections Strategic Framework and Action Plan, 2017.
- ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for Control of Obstetric Fistula in West Africa, 2017. *ECOWAS Commission*
- ECOWAS Protocol on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development could be add here. i will forward the soft copy of the text. *Online Comment*

3. Results Framework
- IFPRI has developed a tool entitled Women Empower in Agriculture Index (WEAI) that could be maybe useful to consult and inform the result framework. The tool has 5 domains that can be measure. *Online Comments*

4. Operational Plan
Conclusion: I would have liked to see that we focus on strategic **priorities** from 2018 and 2023 and then assess how we have done. But the strategies listed under each aspiration are too many and reading through you will find many repetitions because of the inter-relationship between many of the issues. *ECOWAS Commission*
- However it must be pointed out that as a strategy - plan of action, the draft is defective in many important respects. In the first place; it is rather general, it is bulky and not actionable as it is. It therefore cannot be an effective guide for action for member states. Actually it is more like a compilation of strategies rather than a strategy.
A good strategic plan should be simple. It should not be too large and bulky .Simplicity is necessary so that all those who will be involved in the implementation of the strategy will understand it easily. Without a good understanding of the strategy by the implementers, the implementation is bound to be bungled and in consequence fail. Nobody will implement well what he does not understand. Moreover interventions for the implementation of a strategy should be programmed and bench marked over smaller periods of time within the overall time- frame of the plan to make monitoring and evaluation, management and successful implementation of the strategy easier.
- A strategy plan also needs to be specific and anchored on prevailing realities. It should not be dropped from the sky. It should be developed from the ground. In this way, the problems as they are or their prioritization cannot be mussed or glossed over. It is for this reason that individual member states of AU are in the best position to formulate their respective strategies .Taking due considerations of the specificities of their national gender situations as their resources (Finance, Personnel, Institutions, the generality of their people partners etc.) the individual nations are in a better position to develop the strategic plans suitable to their specific realities and priorities.

It is therefore in the domain of member states based on their actual circumstances ie the nature of the gender challenges they face, the dimension of the challenges and the totality of the resources they can possibly summon on their own efforts to individually fashion suitable strategy for addressing the problem in all its facets regularly on an annual basis.
(International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development)

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

<u>AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS</u>

The objective should be that all segments of society including government officials, religious and traditional leaders etc are well aware of the importance of women empowerment and gender equality. The principal tools for the prosecution of the campaigns should be CSOs and the media. It is therefore necessary that the personnel of CSOs and Media that will be used for the campaigns should be adequately trained to understand the subject ie gender equality as well as in the techniques for effective sensitization and advocacy campaigns. There should also be provided necessary financial assistance to prosecute the campaigns.
(International Centre for Women Empowerment and Child Development)