COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 7TH MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN/GENDER AFFAIRS OF IGAD MEMBER STATES

06 DECEMBER 2018, KHARTOUM, SUDAN

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) 7th meeting of Ministers Responsible for Women/Gender Affairs was held on 6th December 2018 in Khartoum, Republic of Sudan, chaired by H.E Widad Yagoub Ibrahim, Minister of Security and Social Development, Republic of Sudan. The meeting deliberated on the main theme: Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment to Enhance Resilience, Regional Integration and Peace for Sustainable Development in the IGAD region and three sub-thematic areas of focus, namely: i) Gender and Drought Resilience, paying special attention to cross-border cooperation; ii) Gender and Migration; and iii) Gender and Peace Support Operations (PSOs).

The meeting was attended by H.E. Mutuuzo Peace Regis, Minister of State for Gender Affairs of the Republic of Uganda; Mme. Mary Kojo Ali, Ag. Director General for Gender, Republic of South Sudan; Dr. Caleb Ongoma, Deputy Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to Sudan; Mr Hassan Ali, Technical Adviser to the Minister of Women and Family, Republic of Djibouti; Mme. Tsige Tadele Biyazen, Adviser to the State Minister for Women, Children and Youth, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; and Mme. Sadia Mohamed Nur, Director for Gender Affairs, Federal Republic of Somalia.

H.E. Mohamed Moussa, IGAD Director of Agriculture and Environment, Representatives of African Union Commission, United Nations Entities (UN Women, UNFPA), and IGAD Development Partners (Netherlands, Norway, Sweden) were also present at the Opening Session.

After consideration of the report of the experts meeting presented by the IGAD Rapporteur and the set of recommendations thereof, the 7th meeting of Ministers;
1. TAKE NOTE of the Declaration of the sixth meeting of the ministers in charge of women/gender affairs of the IGAD member states held in 2010 in Addis Ababa and commitments made thereof, and COMMENDED IGAD Secretariat for progress made in implementing the commitments including adoption of the Regional Action Plan for implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820, and Establishment of the Regional Women Peace and Security Forum among others;

2. EXPRESS CONCERN over gaps and challenges women face in resilience building, migration management and Peace Support Operations including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV); trafficking in persons; low representation in leadership and decision making; traditional, policy, administrative and other barriers;

3. RE-AFFIRM the critical importance of the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, AU Agenda 2063, AU and IGAD gender strategies as well as related frameworks for accelerating action to achieve GEWE, regional integration and peace;

4. CALL FOR strengthened collaboration between AUC Women and Gender Directorate for enhanced synergy in implementation of the AU and IGAD Gender Strategies, mobilization of additional resources and the definition of joint actions for enhanced impact at national level.

5. RECOMMEND strategic re-positioning and strengthening of the Gender Affairs Programme at IGAD Secretariat from a Unit to a Division in line with AU reforms related to the new responsibilities of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). In addition, the Division should be appropriately resourced with requisite personnel and funding for enhanced effectiveness to match the broad portfolio of IGAD as an organization.

6. COMMEND IGAD Secretariat for revitalising the Gender Affairs Ministers Meeting after Eight years since the Sixth Meeting was held.

7. CALL UPON all Ministers Responsible for Gender Affairs to recommit to the forum and ensure full attendance in person for subsequent meetings to be held biennially and as and when called upon.

8. CALL UPON IGAD Secretariat to convene another meeting of Ministers Responsible for Gender Affairs as soon as possible to review the technical experts report at the Seventh meeting in order to come up with a binding declaration.

9. URGE IGAD Secretariat to establish a Regional Center of Excellence for Women’s Economic Empowerment to reinforce Member States’ initiatives in addressing gender based challenges in the context of regional integration, peace and development.

10. FURTHER URGE IGAD and AU to develop a comprehensive and coordinated
system for following up and monitoring implementation of regional and international commitments on gender equality.

11. **STRESS** the need to strengthen legal frameworks for data collection to make disaggregation by sex, disability, and age mandatory.

12. **FURTHER URGE** Member States to take lead in resource mobilization efforts for gender equality and women’s empowerment programmes.

13. **REGISTER APPRECIATION** for the support of IGAD donors and development partners towards efforts to promote GEWE in the region and **CALL FOR** continued and increased technical and financial support to gender machineries at regional and national level to effectively deliver their mandates;

**Gender and Drought Resilience**

14. **UNDERLINE** the need to enact and/or enforce land law reforms by Member States to strengthen women’s land rights especially in drought-prone areas

15. **URGE** IGAD Secretariat to develop an affirmative programme to reinforce innovation driven livelihood strategies by/for women in drought-prone and cross-border areas.

16. **EMPHASIZE** the need to strengthen the use of disaggregated data, gender analysis and involvement of national gender machineries in the revision of IGAD’s regional drought resilience strategy and country programming papers.

17. **FURTHER URGE** Member States to follow-up on domestication of regional and international agreements on enhancing drought resilience; regional integration and peace for sustainable development.

**Gender and Migration**

18. **URGE** Member States to fast-track the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD region to facilitate safe and regular mobility of persons and protect migrants especially women against abuse or exploitation in countries of origin, transit and destination.

19. **REQUEST** IGAD Heads of State and Government to hold a Summit to deliberate upon and issue political decisions on labour migration.

20. **RECOMMEND** that IGAD Secretariat establishes international cross-border mechanisms for timely and coordinated multi-sectoral responses for victims of Sexual and Gender Based Violence, human trafficking and smuggling.

21. **CALL UPON** Member States to develop mechanisms and measures for the protection of vulnerable groups including children, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly and mainstream gender in migration governance.
22. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the importance of promoting cooperation with relevant bodies to strengthen adherence to International Labour Standards on protection of migrant workers especially domestic workers.

**Gender and Peace Support Operations**

23. **CALL FOR** Development of regional unified frameworks, accountability and monitoring mechanisms for integrating gender issues in Peace Support Operation contexts by Member States.

24. **RECOGNISE** the crucial need to provide gender responsive infrastructure and services in peacekeeping missions and, especially during planning and budgeting.

25. **URGE** Member States, Regional Training Centres and Missions to undertake pre-deployment and in-mission gender training for Peace Support Operations.

26. **RECOMMEND** that Member States support training in self-planning skills for female personnel to participate effectively in PSOs.
Signed in Khartoum, 6th December 2018

H.E. Widad Yagoub Ibrahim, Minister of Security and Social Development, Republic of Sudan

H.E. Mutuuzo Peace Regis, Minister of State for Gender Affairs of the Republic of Uganda

Mr Hassan Ali, Technical Adviser to the Minister of Women and Family

Dr. Caleb Ongoma, Deputy Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to Sudan

Mme. Mary Kojo Ali, Ag. Director General for Gender, Republic of South Sudan

Mme. Tsige Tadele Biyazen, Adviser to the State Minister for Women, Children and Youth, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

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