



# COMESA GENDER POLICY

*For Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Policies, Structures, Systems, Programs and Activities of COMESA Member States and the Secretariat towards attainment of Gender Equality, Women and Youth Empowerment and Social Development*

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# COMESA GENDER POLICY



## Foreword

This document presents the **Revised COMESA Gender Policy**. Like most other African sub-regions, the COMESA region is characterised by high poverty levels which particularly affect women on account of several gender-related factors. These include lack of or inadequate access to land, credit, markets, and poor educational attainment, inadequate access to appropriate science and technology and information, including poor participation in key decision-making structures at national, sub-national and community levels.

These challenges are compounded by gender-defined roles such as those relating to their work as mothers, home care for sick family members and as workers. In consequence, the triple nature of women's roles affects their productivity in all social and economic sectors relative to their male counterparts. A related challenge is that most of the work that women do, especially in home and community settings, is not paid, let alone reflected in national accounts. In the context of COMESA, these challenges disadvantage women in the sense that they constrain them from taking advantage of available trade opportunities. Culturally-defined gender roles entrench women's dependence on men as the latter predominate in terms of access to productive resources.

In 2002, COMESA developed and launched the COMESA Gender Policy (CGP) with a view to creating an enabling policy framework for addressing gender-related challenges in efforts to attain full and effective regional economic integration. Although a lot of progress has since been achieved, evidence demonstrates that participation by women, youth and people with disabilities in intra-regional trade and investment has not been sub-optimal. In instances where policies and programs have been implemented, these had tended to be done in *silos* and to vary widely between and among Member States in terms of design and impact. This has resulted in, *inter alia*, uncoordinated program implementation, duplication of effort, waste of scarce resources and sub-optimal people-level impacts and outcomes.

This revised Policy is among COMESA's efforts to address gender-related challenges that continue to stymie equal and mutual participation of women in the sustainable development agenda of the region. It starts with the Situation Analysis that discusses the current gender scenario in COMESA region with particular emphasis on the core mandates of COMESA. Later, it outlines the Policy Statement, policy objectives and Intervention measures and ends with institutional, legal, resource mobilisation and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

The key policy priority areas under which intervention measures have been crafted include: Women Economic Empowerment; Women Participation in key Decision-making Structures; Gender Management Systems; Trade; Agriculture; Investment promotion and Private Sector Development; Transport and Telecommunications; Energy;

Science, Technology and Innovations; Environment and Climate Change; Extractive Industry; Peace-building, Conflict Resolution, Transformation and Terrorism; Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights; Maternal Health; Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health; HIV and AIDS; People with Disabilities; Minorities; Human Trafficking; Youth; Child Marriage; and Child Labour. Other areas of focus are: Public Private Partnerships; Implementation Arrangements; Legal Framework; Resource Mobilization; and Monitoring and Evaluation.

It is anticipated that the Policy will be used by COMESA Member States in informing and directing their respective country-level gender policies and gender-mainstreaming initiatives. At the level of the COMESA Secretariat, the Policy will not only act as a formal framework for tracking and reporting on gender-related interventions by Member States but also inform and direct programming of its internal gender promotion strategies and programs across sectors and systems.

**Sindiso Ngwenya**

**SECRETARY GENERAL, COMESA**

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## Working Definitions

**Affirmative Action:** A commitment to creating a state of equality by adopting and implementing deliberate measures that elevate the status of disadvantaged groups or persons.

**Child Labour:** Work being performed by children under the age of 16 that leads to the detriment and endangerment of the child's psychological, physical, social, spiritual and mental development.

**Community:** Refers to a social unit of any size that shares common values.

**Culture:** A whole range of complex and distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional attributes that characterise a society or social group.

**Cultural practices:** Functional roles and rituals that are culturally determined and assigned to both sexes.

**Empowerment:** The process of gaining access to and ownership of resources and developing one's capacities with a view to participating actively in shaping one's own life and that of one's community in economic, socio-cultural, political and religious terms.

**Feminisation of poverty:** A concept used to describe a state of poverty incidence that disproportionately affects women relative to other segments of the population.

**Gender:** Culturally and socially-constructed differences and relations between men and women. These vary widely among societies and cultures and change over time. Gender roles are learned behaviours in a given society or other social group. They condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as appropriate to males and females, respectively. Gender relations are also relations of power which affect who can access and control tangible and intangible resources and make decisions. Gender roles are affected by age, socio-economic class, race/ethnicity, religion, and geographical, economic, political and cultural environments (ILO, ABC of Women Worker's rights and gender equality, 2007).

**Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** An act of aggression intended to cause physical, psychological, economical, social and emotional harm to a person due to their gender in society. Forms of gender-based violence may include rape, defilement, spouse battering, property grabbing, incest and sexual cleansing.

**Gender-disaggregated data:** Presentation of data by male/female classification.

**Gender equality:** A situation where women and men have equal conditions for realising their full Human Rights and potential to contribute to and benefit from socio-economic, cultural and political development of a nation, taking into account their

similarities, differences and varying roles that they play (Government of the Republic of Zambia, National Gender Policy, 2000).

**Gender equity:** Fairness of treatment of different needs and interests of women and men taking into account corresponding rights, duties, obligations, benefits and opportunities (ILO, ABC of Women Workers' Rights, 2007).

**Gender analysis:** Understanding the situation of women and men, boys and girls in terms of their constraints, needs, priorities and interests. It also identifies how public policies or programmes and projects affect women and men differently. Gender analysis results in gathering gender-disaggregated data which is very crucial when planning and implementing development projects and programmes.

**Gender blind:** Ignoring or failing to address the gender issues and concerns.

**Gender gap:** Gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access to resources, rights, remunerations or benefits.

**Gender inequalities/gaps/imbalance:** Discrepancies or differences between women and men, or boys and girls in terms of their conditions of how they access or benefit from resources that arise from their different gender roles.

**Gender issues:** Concerns that are related to injustice and inequality based on gender roles.

**Gender mainstreaming:** The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programme in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences integral dimensions of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (ECOSOC).

**Gender perspective:** The views and ideas of both women and men are taken seriously; differentiation is made between the needs and priorities of women and men; action is taken to address inequalities or imbalance between women and men; and implications of decisions on the situation of women relative to men are considered.

**Gender relations:** Socially determined relations between and among women and men or boys and girls in how power is distributed between them.

**Gender responsive:** Being aware of existing gender gaps, disparities and their causes and taking action to address and overcome gender-based inequalities.

**Gender roles:** Functional responsibilities that may be assigned by society to males and females and are influenced by cultural, political, religious or economic situation.



**Human Rights-Based Approach:** A principle that ensures that due regard is given to safeguarding and protecting fundamental Human Rights entitlements in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies, plans, strategies and programmes. Operationalisation of the principle should be accompanied by the identification of Human Rights right-holders and duty bearers.

**Human Rights:** Fundamental Freedoms and Human Rights that every person is entitled to in the Constitution of the Republic of Zambia and international human rights conventions and agreements to which Zambia is party.

**Human Trafficking:** Recruitment, transportation, transferring, harbouring or receiving of a person through force, abduction, threat, coercion, fraud or deception for purposes of exploitation.

**Non-Communicable Disease (NCD)** is a medical condition or disease that is non-infectious and cannot be transmitted from one person to another. NCDs often last for long periods of time and progress slowly. Certain NCDs, such as autoimmune diseases, heart diseases, stroke, cancers, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease and cataracts may result in sudden death.

**Policy:** A statement of goals, objectives and course of action outlined by the government to provide guidance for intended actions.

**Poverty:** The inability of an individual, family or community to attain a minimum standard of living or inability to access basic needs.

**Productive:** Ability to produce value-added goods or services.

**Role stereotypes:** Rigidly held and over generalised beliefs that males and females by virtue of their sex possess distinct traits and characteristics.

**Reproductive:** Refers to the biological process by which new individual organisms/off-springs are produced.

**Sex roles:** The functions that females and males perform on the basis of their reproductive, physiological or biological makeup.

**Sex:** The biological differences between females and males that are naturally defined attributes of an organism.

**Socialisation:** A process through which a person learns all things that he/she needs to know to function as a member of a specific society.

**Traditional Practices:** Acts that are performed by people over and over again and which become part and parcel of one's day-to-day life and are usually subjects of the mainstream society.

**Triple Roles of Women:** Refers to the roles that women play as mothers, home carers and workers.

## List Of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CCC	COMESA Competition Commission
CEDPD with	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against People Disabilities
CGM	COMESA Gender Policy
CMI	COMESA Monetary Institute
CSC	Citizen Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
FAL	Final Act of Lagos
FEMCOM	Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FTA	Free Trade Area
GBV	Gender-Based-Violence
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GSAD	Gender Social Affairs Division
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGMoU	Inter-Governmental Memorandum of Understanding

IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IPPA	International Planned Parenthood Association
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGMs	National Gender Machineries
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
PEPFAR	Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
PTA	Preferential Trade Area
RAERESA	Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa
REC	Regional Economic Community
RESTRAP	Regional Strategy and Strategic Action on Mainstreaming Gender in Agriculture and Climate Change
RIA	Regional Investment Agency
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SGDI	SADC Gender and Development Index
SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
SGP	SADC Gender Policy
SPS	Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary

SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
StC	Save the Children
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
TASO	The AIDS Support Organization
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# CHAPTER **ONE**

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

## 1.1 Introduction

1. The development of this COMESA Gender Policy involved the review of the implementation of the 2002 Gender Policy by Member States, Secretariat and COMESA Institutions, and review of secondary data from various regional, continental and international policy frameworks that Member States have committed to. In addition, the process involved consultations with stakeholders including experts from Member States, UN-Women and other agencies. The Policy took into consideration current priorities towards the achievement of gender equality, women and youth empowerment and social development as stipulated in various regional, continental and international legal and policy frameworks.
2. At regional level, the policy frameworks that informed the process include the COMESA Treaty and COMESA Social Charter. At Continental level, the Gender Policy has been informed by the Maputo Protocol, Agenda 2063, the Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and eliminate Malaria by 2030, the Continental Policy Framework for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). At International level, the Gender Policy is informed by the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent Health 2016-2030, and the 2016 High-Level Resolutions on Gender, Women, Girls and HIV and AIDS and other policy frameworks.

## 1.2 Background

3. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA), which is a successor organisation to the Preferential Trade Area (PTA), is an organisation of free and independent sovereign States. It seeks to achieve sustainable economic and social progress in all Members States through increased regional economic cooperation and integration in all fields of development, particularly in trade, customs and monetary affairs. Other vehicles for regional integration include cooperation in transport, information and communication technology, science and technology, industry, energy, gender, agriculture, environment and natural resource management. The regional body comprises 19 Member States, including Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
4. In pursuing its core mandate of full regional economic integration, with a view to creating an enabling policy framework for addressing gender-related challenges in efforts to ensure participation of women and benefits accruing to both women and men, in 2002, COMESA developed and launched the COMESA Gender Policy (CGP). COMESA also works in support of the realisation of gender equality, women empowerment and social development stipulated in continental and global sustainable human development commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the African Union Agenda 2063 goals and the Beijing +20 Agenda. The COMESA Social Charter is another framework that is used to contribute to the realisation of sustainable and equitable human development.

5. Like at the global level, women in the COMESA region bear the brunt of poverty and other forms of deprivation such as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Women in the region, for instance, continue to have limited access to education, skills training, land and credit, including inadequate inclusion in policy and legislative structures and other key decision-making arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2).
6. This revised Policy is among COMESA's efforts to address gender-related challenges that continue to stymie equal and mutual participation of women in the sustainable development agenda of the region across all sectors to ensure accruing of benefits from the economic gains.
7. The Policy starts with a brief Situation Analysis of gender scenario in COMESA region with particular emphasis on the core mandates of COMESA. Later, it outlines policy objectives and accompanying measures and ends with institutional, legal, resource mobilisation and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
8. It is anticipated that the Policy will be used by COMESA Member States in informing and directing their respective country-level gender policies and gender-mainstreaming initiatives. At the level of the COMESA Secretariat, it is expected that the Policy will not only act as a formal framework for tracking and reporting on gender-related interventions by Member States but also inform and direct programming of its internal gender promotion strategies and programs.

### 1.3 **Situation Analysis**

(The detailed Situation Analysis is in a separate document).

9. COMESA is committed to the promotion of women's rights and addressing the gaps that exist between women and men and among the various social groups in the region. This is clear in COMESA'S Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and in Articles 154 and 155 of the COMESA Treaty. In 2002, the COMESA Gender Policy was developed and endorsed by the Member States. The main objective of the Gender Policy was to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into all policies, structures, systems, programs and activities of COMESA.
10. Since then (2002) Member States have increasingly realized the need to integrate gender in mainstream development. Some of the countries in the region are doing very well in addressing and reducing gender gaps. The Global Gender Gap Report for 2015, for example, profiles and ranks 145 economies according to how well they are leveraging their female talent pool based on economic, educational, health and political indicators. The report includes profiles for twelve (12) COMESA countries. In terms of achievement, Rwanda was ranked number six (6) in the whole world, (out of 145 countries). There were more women than men in parliament, slightly more women than men were participating in the labour force, while the proportion of women earning an income was just slightly lower than that of men (see Tables 1a and 1b). A number of other countries in the region were ranked quite highly on a global basis, such as Burundi (rank: 23), Kenya (48), Zimbabwe (57), Uganda (58), Malawi (68) and Madagascar (74) (Tables (1a and 1b).



**Table 1 (a): Situation of Women and Men in the COMESA Region**

	Country	Rank out of 145 countries	Labour Force participation		Estimated Earned Income (PPP US\$)		Legislators, Senior officials & Managers	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1	Burundi	23	84	83	695	896	-	-
2	Egypt	136	26	79	5,218	17,353	7	93
3	Ethiopia	124	81	90	1,139	1,862	7	73
4	Kenya	48	63	73	2,800	3,020	--	--
5	Madagascar	74	88	91	1,202	1,673	25	75
6	Malawi	68	85	81	715	9140	-	--
7	Mauritius	120	40	80	11,099	26,280	73	77
8	Rwanda	6	88	86	1,371	1,751	34	66
9	Swaziland	102	45	73	4,428	8,319	--	--
10	Uganda	58	58	77	982	2,448	25	75
11	Zambia	116	73	86	3,206	4,971	19	89
12	Zimbabwe	57	85	91	1,544	2,181	21	80

Source: World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2015.

- Gender inequality is still a great concern in the rest of the COMESA region. In nearly all the countries, men dominate economic power and available opportunities. Men earn more income than women in all countries, including Rwanda; they dominate senior management positions; and there are more men than women in the workforce in nearly all countries. Political power is solidly in the hands of men in both Parliament (except Rwanda) and Cabinet. There is currently no country that is led by a woman Head of State in the region. Only three (3) countries (Burundi, Malawi and Rwanda) have had female Heads of Government for periods ranging from one to two years in the past 50 years (see Tables 1a and 1b).

**Table (1b): Situation of Women and Men in the COMESA Region (Continued)**

	Professional And Technical Workers		Literacy Rate		Women in Parliament		Women in Ministerial positions		Years with Female Head of State	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Burundi	--	--	83	88	36	64	35	65	1	49
Egypt	36	64	86	82	--	--	12	88	0	50
Ethiopia	33	67	41	57	39	61	13	88	0	50
Kenya	--	--	75	81	20	80	30	70	0	50
Madagascar	44	56	63	67	21	79	20	80	0	50
Malawi	--	--	59	73	17	83	11	89	2	48
Mauritius	42	58	88	93	12	88	12	88	0	50
Rwanda	42	58	68	73	64	36	35	65	1	49
Swaziland	--	--	87	87	6	94	26	74	0	50
Uganda	40	60	71	85	35	65	30	70	0	50
Zambia	31	69	56	71	13	87	20	80	0	50
Zimbabwe	47	53	85	89	31	69	12	88	0	50

Source: World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report, 2015

12. Lack of sex disaggregated data on **Trade and the Private Sector Development** makes it extremely difficult to determine the situation of various categories of people including women, men, the youth, people with disabilities and other excluded groups, in the COMESA region. A study which was conducted in 15 countries by Secretariat, in 2008, found that sex disaggregated data was not being collected in these sectors both at the regional and national levels. Only two countries, Madagascar and Sudan had some sex disaggregated on the ownership of companies involved in Intra-COMESA trade. The data showed that women were not participating adequately in intra-COMESA trade in those countries. In Sudan, all the companies involved in the export and import trade/intra-COMESA trade, were owned by men. The situation was slightly better in Madagascar; a number of women were involved in the export and import of goods within the region. About 21% of export and 4.4% of companies involved in the import trade were owned by women. Men on the other hand owned the majority of such companies. The situation may have changed since 2008, but it is still very difficult to find recent sex disaggregated data on trade and the private sector for the region.

13. The situation discussed in sections 10-12 largely explains why, like most other African sub-regions, the COMESA region is characterised by high poverty levels which particularly affect women on account of several gender-related factors including: inadequate participation in intra-COMESA trade, poor educational attainment, inadequate participation in the labour force, high illiteracy rates among women, inadequate access to markets, productive resources such as land, finance and credit; poor participation in key decision-making structures at national, sub-national and community levels; and negative social factors such as gender-based violence, early/child marriage and unequal power relations among other factors. In addition, women lag behind men in the region due to non-implementation of regional, continental and international standards on gender equality and empowerment of women by member States and other development bodies.
14. These challenges are compounded by gender-defined roles such as those relating to their work as mothers, home care for sick family members and as workers. In consequence, the triple nature of women's roles affects their productivity in all social and economic sectors relative to their male counterparts. A related challenge is that most of the work that women do, especially in home and community settings, is not paid, let alone recognized or reflected in national accounts. In the context of COMESA, these challenges disadvantage women because they constrain them from taking advantage of available trade opportunities that can transform their economic and social well-being.

# CHAPTER **TWO**

VISION, RATIONALE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## 1.1 Vision

15. Gender mainstreamed in all economic, social and governance policies, legislation, structures and strategies of COMESA Member States, Secretariat and COMESA Institutions.

## 1.2 Rationale

16. COMESA recognizes the fact that sustainable economic and social development of the region requires the full and equal participation of women, men and youth. It further realizes that women make significant contributions towards the process of socio-economic transformation and sustainable growth and that it is impossible to implement effective programs for rural transformation without creating a policy and institutional environment that is conducive to the full participation of both women and men. Since its formation, COMESA has increasingly shown commitment to women's economic and social empowerment and the need to integrate gender perspectives in its work.
17. Currently, however, women and youth face a number of challenges that prevent them from participating in intra-regional trade on equal terms as men. Factors that constrain their effective participation include gender-related prejudices and culturally-entrenched beliefs and practices which hinder them from participating in key decision-making structures and access, control over and ownership of vital productive assets such as land, credit, markets and others. Given this background, this revised Policy is an effort at refocusing attention on and addressing gender-related challenges with a view to creating an enabling environment for full and equal participation of women, men and youth in intra-regional trade and investments. The revision was also necessitated by the need to address issues such as the role of women in mining, human trafficking, child labour and child marriage that were omitted in the initial Policy document, as well as to Accelerate attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls); SDG No. 3 (Well-Being) and gender related targets in all the other SDGs; and attainment of gender related goals and targets of the African Agenda 2063.

## 2.3 Guiding Principles

- a) Transparency and Accountability:** Mobilization of and access to economic and social assets should be founded on transparency and accountability.
- b) Human Rights Approach and Equity:** All human beings should enjoy equal status and have equal entitlements and opportunities for the full realization of their Human Rights, making choices and accessing assets, services and public goods without limitations imposed by legislation, policies, gender norms and stereotypes.
- c) Evidence-based policies and programs:** All gender-related policies and programmes should be informed and guided by evidence-based research, data and information.
- d) Gender-responsiveness and equality:** All development programs should be engendered in ways that address concerns and special needs of both women and men.

- e) **People with Disabilities:** Because of their inherent vulnerability, women and girls need targeted socio-economic empowerment policies and programmes.
- f) **Minorities:** Women and girls are among minority populations who are vulnerable and, therefore, require protection.

# CHAPTER **THREE**

OVERALL OBJECTIVE AND POLICY STATEMENT

### 1.1 Overall Objective

18. To create an enabling policy environment for mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies, structures, systems, programs and activities of COMESA Member States and the Secretariat towards gender equality, women and youth empowerment and social development.

### 1.2 Policy Statement

19. In order to achieve the above objective, COMESA is committed to:

- a) Mainstreaming gender perspectives in the conceptualisation, formulation of all policies, planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programs and activities;
- b) Promoting the full, effective, equal and meaningful participation and benefit of women and men in all areas of regional integration and co-operation with emphasis on trade and investment;
- c) Ensuring that policies, programs and activities aimed at eradicating poverty are gender responsive;
- d) Ensuring that regional interventions encourage and support changes in attitudes, structures and mechanisms in order to eliminate gender biases;
- e) Eliminating gender inequalities and ensure women's economic empowerment and equal access to and control of resources and opportunities;
- f) Giving special attention to positive and affirmative action to redress all gender inequalities;
- g) Ensuring that there is sufficient and permanent expertise on gender issues at all levels;
- h) Coordination and linkages between the COMESA Secretariat and member States on policy and practice;
- i) Ensuring adequate financial and other resources for mainstreaming gender perspectives into COMESA activities;
- j) Ensuring that gender analysis is mainstreamed at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels;
- k) Ensuring the generation, collection, analysis and use of sex disaggregated data and information at all levels;
- l) Ensuring the equal representation of women and men in the decision-making of levels in the COMESA Secretariat;
- m) Enhancing the capacity of the COMESA Secretariat to facilitate implementation of



the Gender Policy;

- n) Encouraging the mainstreaming of gender within member States and strengthen member States, COMESA structures and its institutions at all levels;
- o) Addressing the cross-cutting socio-economic issues such as: HIV/AIDS, human rights, environment, drug abuse, peace and security within all policies, plans, strategies and programs of COMESA from a gender perspective;
- p) Promoting the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS and human rights in all its policies and programs;
- q) Integrating the gender policy measures in each sector to ensure the policy is implemented and that the implementation is coordinated, monitored and evaluated;
- r) Promoting mainstreaming of gender concerns in regional and international institutions and initiatives that contribute to the enhancement of the COMESA vision;
- s) Promoting partnerships with the Private Sector, Cooperating Partners, Civil Society, international and regional institutions and other Stakeholders for effective implementation of the Gender Policy.

# CHAPTER **FOUR**

SPECIFIC POLICY OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

## **4.1 Women Economic Empowerment**

### **Objective**

20. Promote gender equity and the empowerment of women and girls at the centre of COMESA's regional integration agenda.

### **Measures**

21. The COMESA stakeholders realise that unless women and girls, the poor and excluded people, are able to fully acquire their rights in all spheres of life, the goal and objectives of the COMESA Mandate will not be fully realised. In order to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Fully involve women in the formulation of national and regional business and trade policies and legislation;
  - ii. Collect and widely disseminate sex disaggregated data in all areas of the COMESA Mandate;
  - iii. Review private sector development/business and trade-related policies and legislation in support of improved female participation in regional trade, private sector development and investments;
  - iv. Ensure access to targeted and affordable business and trade finance such as partnering with banking institutions to establish targeted financial credit packages for women;
  - v. Create enabling gender responsive policy and legal environments for improved access by women to entrepreneurship training and other services;
  - vi. Create platforms where women can network, access information, share knowledge, experiences, and mentorship for business development and growth;
  - vii. Promote equitable access to resources, services and control of benefits;
  - viii. Promote the advancement of women's legal rights and strengthen their access to justice and legal services; and
  - ix. Build and/or improve cross-border facilities with a view to making them gender-friendly.

## **4.2 Women Participation in key Decision-making Structures**

### **Objective**

22. Promote the equal participation of women, men, and excluded groups in decision-making structures and processes at all levels.

**Measures**

23. Like in other regions in Africa, women are largely excluded from key decision-making structures. In order to address this challenge, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
- i. Ensure that Member States meet all regionally and internationally-agreed targets on women participation in key decision-making structures, such as the 50:50 representation of women and men; and
  - i. Promote equal participation of women, men, and excluded people in decision-making structures and processes at all levels

**4.3 Trade****Objective**

24. Promote the full and effective participation of women, men and youth in regional economic development.

**Measures**

25. In order to ensure gender equity and improve female participation in the COMESA regional trade integration agenda, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, and other Stakeholders shall:
- i. Recognize and take measures on pre-existing gender imbalances at the macro and micro levels that determine the differential impact of trade policies and agreements on women and men as employees, producers, service beneficiaries, tax payers and consumers;
  - i. Review existing trade policies, legislation, regulations, standards and practices to promote equal opportunities and non-discriminatory trade policies and practices;
  - ii. Mainstream gender in the formulation and implementation of national and regional private sector development/business and trade-related policies, laws and regulations;
  - iii. Scale up capacity building programs in business management, trade, finance and export and import procedures including sanitary and phyto sanitary (SPS) standards and requirements for women engaged in business at different levels;
  - iv. Promote product-pooling to ensure critical masses of products for export especially for women entrepreneurs;
  - v. Build or upgrade border-crossing points comprehensively with a view to making them female --friendly;
  - vi. Promote cooperatives for traders especially women to strengthen their participation in regional trade;

- vii. Involve women, men and youth entrepreneurs in development processes of trade-related policies, standards and regulatory frameworks at national and regional levels;
- viii. Develop measures for guaranteeing equal participation of women, men and youth in trade decision-making processes at national and regional levels;
- ix. Ensure conducive environment for small scale cross border traders, and implementation of trade facilitation procedures for SMES;
- x. Mainstream gender in customs and migration procedures;
- xi. Promote the generation and use of gender-disaggregated data for assessing the extent of female and male involvement in national and intra-regional trade including trade by small cross border traders;
- xii. Develop regional gender-related indices and scorecards to enable determination of regional and cross-national comparisons of gender equality; and
- xiii. Establish a regional/central registry on trade and gender.

#### **4.4 Agriculture**

##### **Objective**

- 26. Promote gender equality and equity in access, control over and ownership of agriculture based assets, incomes and markets in different value chains.

##### **Measures**

- 27. Although women account for the largest proportion of agricultural-related labor and food production, they are not fully involved at all levels of agriculture value chains, and decision-making structures. Member States, Secretariat, Institutions, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall address this challenge through:
  - i. Reviewing and/or repealing all legislation that tend to restrict women's access to, control over resources especially of land and credit particularly agricultural credit;
  - ii. Establishment of agricultural credit institutions where women can access loans.
  - iii. Adoption of affirmative and pro-active measures to ensure program resources benefit women and youth;
  - iv. Mainstreaming gender in different agricultural products value chains, standards, policies, programs and projects;
  - v. Promoting gender sensitive agricultural technologies used for production and processing;
  - vi. Ensure gender responsive implementation of Malabo commitments of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP);

- vii. Ensure the establishment clusters to enhance production to meet the critical masses of products for export markets;
- viii. Formulation and implementation of gender-responsive domestic and foreign agromarketing policies paying particular attention to the need to create adequate space and capacity (such as Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary (SPS) standards) to enhance women's participation in available regional markets; and
- ix. Promotion of product pooling as an entry strategy into big regional and international markets.

#### **4.5 Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development**

##### **Objective**

- 28. Promote investment and private sector development policies, programs and activities that take into account special needs of women, men and youth.

##### **Measures**

- 29. COMESA fully acknowledges that, although the majority of women are in the informal sector, women's contribution to the promotion of investments and private sector development in the region is significant and has the potential to exponentially grow. In light of this, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Formulate, review existing policies, legal and regulatory frameworks and, programs such as incentive schemes, banking and financial services, marketing mechanisms, infrastructure support, governance structures and other investment promotion and private sector development initiatives including in the service sector;
  - ii. Take proactive measures or if necessary affirmative action to ensure equitable participation of women, men and youth both in terms of business opportunities, employment and ownership of industries;
  - iii. Put deliberate measures to promote the advancement of women owned small and medium enterprises focusing on the provision of improved access to finance at affordable terms, technology, business information, marketing, networking, and capacity building;
  - iv. Take a deliberate action to increase women's access to education and skills development in order to promote equitable employment opportunities of women, men and youth in high skilled service sectors;
  - v. Ensures equal pay for equal work for both women and men workers in the service sectors;
  - vi. Take action to establish a social safety net to ensure social security;
  - vii. Facilitate the establishment of a dedicated fund to facilitate the participation of women,

- youth and persons with disabilities in investments, private sector development and trade;
- viii. Ensure preferential procurement procedures in favour of women, youth and people with disabilities and other marginalised populations; and
  - ix. Promote the protection of Human Rights and dignity of women and girls and their access to employment opportunities in the private sector.

#### **4.6 Transport and Telecommunications Infrastructure**

##### **Objective**

- 30. Engender transport and telecommunications infrastructure taking into account special needs of women, men and youth.

##### **Measures**

- 31. The role of efficient, accessible and user-friendly transport and telecommunications systems in facilitating women's and youth's involvement in investments and trade cannot be over-emphasized. Consequently, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other stakeholders shall:
  - i. Establish ICT systems accessible by women through training;
  - ii. Engender, review and harmonize national transport and telecommunication policies, laws and regulations to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of women and other disadvantaged groups;
  - iii. Improve regional road, railway, air, water and telecommunications inter-connectivity to enhance women's access to markets;
  - iv. Proactively mainstream gender in transport and telecommunications infrastructure development and maintenance; and
  - v. Improve the capacity and quality of social amenities along major regional transport corridors.

#### **4.7 Energy**

##### **Objective**

- 32. Promote sustainable and reliable supplies of affordable, accessible, renewable and non-renewable

energy, including research into and development of new energy sources.

### Measures

33. Adequate supply of efficient, accessible and reliable energy is critical to sustainable industrial growth. At livelihood level, adequate, efficient and reliable energy allows women and girls time to engage in productive activities and in acquisition of academic and professional skills. Mindful of this, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Mainstream gender in national and regional renewable and non-renewable energy development and distribution;
  - ii. Promote the active involvement of women in the development of energy policies;
  - iii. Promote gender sensitive research in and development of new renewable and non-renewable energy sources;
  - iv. Train women on the use of renewable and non-renewable energies; and
  - v. Promote better access to appropriate and affordable science and technologies, including credit, especially for women, as a way of improving efficiencies in the use of renewable and non-renewable sources of energy.

## 4.8 Science, Technology and Innovations

### Objectives

34. Engender national and regional science and technology policies and promote improved access to the products and application of science and technology tools by women.

### Measures

35. Women and girls often have limited opportunities to participate in science and technology due to various factors. In order to address these challenges, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Formulate new and review existing education and professional training legislation, policies and curricula to create equal opportunities in science and technology for men, women, boys and girls;
  - ii. Mainstream gender in science and technology curricula with a view to increase enrolment rates, and educational and professional attainment among women and girls;
  - iii. Ensure the reduction of actual and perceived culturally-driven prejudices that constrain girls' and women's advancement in science and technology;
  - iv. Establish a special COMESA science and technology bursary scheme for outstanding



- college and university female students;
- v. Recognize women and girls with special awards for outstanding performance in science and technology;
  - vi. Promote access to and use of existing science and technologies to improve women's innovativeness and productivity;
  - vii. Establish Gender committee on science and technology at reputable universities;
  - viii. Establish a COMESA regional gender centre of excellence in science and technology;
  - ix. Build a compendium of female science and technology experts; and
  - x. Establish an annual COMESA science and technology fair for women and men, boys and girls.

#### **4.9 Environment and Climate Change**

##### **Objective**

36. Mainstream gender in environmental and climate change legislation, policies and programmes.

##### **Measures**

37. Negative effects of climate change and environmental degradation result in, among others, national and household food insecurity. Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall, therefore:
  - i. Mainstream gender in environmental, climate change, agricultural and industrial development policies and programs at both national and regional levels;
  - ii. Mitigate social and economic impacts of climate change;
  - iii. Ensure the participation of women and men in setting and leveraging national and regional environmental policies and legislation, and community-based natural resource ownership and management initiatives;
  - iv. Ensure that all national and regional large-scale projects are subjected to thorough and gender responsive Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) prior to commencement; and
  - v. Establish a gender responsive regional rapid disaster management and response mechanism in support of integrated and coordinated responses to environmental threats and disasters.

#### 4.10 Extractive Industry

##### Objective

38. Increase the participation of women and youth in the extractive industry.

##### Measures

39. Efforts to promote women's participation in extractive industry have been compromised by stereotypes that perceive the sector as a natural preserve of men. Due to this, women experience different constraints such as limited access to mining land, credit, technology and markets. Others include gender-blind mining policies and legislation and lack of women's inclusion in mining sector key policy-making structures. In order to address these and other challenges, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
- i. Review existing policies to remove barriers to women's meaningful participation in mining;
  - ii. Pro-actively mainstream gender in mining sector policies, programs and projects;
  - iii. Ensure that women and youth are meaningfully involved in the formulation and implementation of mining sector policies;
  - iv. Take into account the gender dimensions and social impacts when allocating mining plots/quarries;
  - v. Work with banking and financial services institutions in establishing affordable credit schemes in support of improved involvement of women in mining;
  - vi. Mitigate the environmental, social and economic impacts of extractive industries; and
  - vii. Take measures to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence in mines.

#### 4.11 Peace-building, Conflict Resolution, Transformation and Terrorism

##### Objective

40. Establish and strengthen effective and equitable mechanisms for regional peace-building, conflict prevention, resolution, transformation and fighting terrorism.

##### Measures

41. Conflicts and acts of terrorism disrupt economies, break and disperse communities and breach environmental integrity. Effects of conflicts and terrorism particularly impact women, youth and children. In order to address effects of conflicts and terrorism, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:

- i. Build early warning and inclusive prevention systems for conflicts and terrorism threats;
- ii. Increase the number and participation of women in decision-making positions and conflict management bodies;
- iii. Closely work with other regional cooperation bodies in fostering peace and conflict resolution;
- iv. Mainstream gender in the assessment of conflict and post-conflict situations;
- v. Build sustainable and gendered systems and structures for data and information-sharing on conflicts and acts of terrorism;
- vi. Improve institutional capacities of security and defense forces in prevention and management of conflicts and post-conflict social restitution and transformation;
- vii. Create space and opportunities for participation of women and youth in conflict and post-conflict management and fighting terrorism;
- viii. Establish a regional fund for conflict and post-conflict management and socio-economic restitution; and
- ix. Advocate for the establishment of African institutional and legal mechanisms for adjudicating and punishment of perpetrators of conflict and acts of terrorism.

#### **4.12 Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights**

##### **Objective**

42. Protect the sexual and reproductive health rights of women and youth.

##### **Measures**

43. Women and girls should be able to access the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights including sexual and reproductive health services, facilities, goods and information. These services must go beyond access to contraceptive methods to integrate other actions across sectors, such as sexual and reproductive health education, affordability and acceptability of products and services. In order to promote and protect sexual and reproductive health rights of women, COMESA Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Ensure trade and investment agreements are consistent with the protection of the right to sexual and reproductive health;
  - ii. Take measures to enact legislations and policies that promote local production of reproductive health commodities to ensure universal and equitable access to affordable, acceptable, and quality sexual and reproductive goods and services.;

- iii. Ensure the establishment of health posts at the border to strengthen access to sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls traders; and
- iv. Adopt measures which clamp down gender based violence efficiently, including traditional practices which are detrimental to women and girls, e.g. early marriages and female genital mutilation, by promoting cultural practices which are beneficial to women and young girls“.

#### **4.13 Maternal Health**

##### **Objective:**

- 44. Improve maternal health.

##### **Measures**

- 45. Due to their combined reproductive and productive roles, women traders experience special challenges compared to their male counterparts. Consequently, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Engender national cross-border trade policies taking into account maternal health-related needs of women;
  - ii. Improve availability of maternal health-related infrastructure along intra-regional transport corridors and hard-to-reach areas;
  - iii. Take action to increase access to maternal and reproductive health-related information among customs and immigration officials;
  - iv. Ensure full domestication and implementation of internationally-agreed conventions on maternity protection (such as the ILO Recommendation 183 and Recommendation 191) and support for workers with family responsibilities; and
  - v. Promote and support initiatives that are targeted at addressing emerging maternal health-related challenges such as cervical and breast cancer.

#### **4.14 Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health**

##### **Objective**

- 46. Improve the sexual and reproductive health status of adolescents.

##### **Measures**

- 47. In order to address the multitude of sexual and reproductive health-related challenges which

prevent adolescents, particularly girls, from realising their full social and economic potentials, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:

- i. Mainstream sexual and reproductive health education in school and college curricula;
- ii. Mainstream sexual and reproductive health rights of young women and men in COMESA programs;
- iii. Adopt a multi-sectoral approach in addressing negative aspects of social and cultural norms and practices, including harmful traditional practices such as child marriages;
- iv. Adopt and enforce gender responsive policies, legislation and other measures, including actions on age-appropriate reproductive health education, as a means of addressing teenage pregnancy, forced marriages, elopement, and other forms of abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation; and
- v. Reinforce legislation and punishment for rape, defilement, elopement and abduction.

#### **4.15 HIV and AIDS**

##### **Objective**

48. Reduce infections and address the socio-economic impact of HIV and AIDS in the region.

##### **Measures**

49. HIV and AIDS issues are cross-cutting and have a veritable potential to reverse socio-economic gains at both national and regional levels and to seriously compromise the capacity of Member States to attain most of the SDGs. Mindful of this, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Mainstream HIV and AIDS and gender in all COMESA priority sector policies and programmes to contribute to the realisation of the UN system's goals of "No AIDS-related Deaths by 2030";
  - ii. Ensure domestication and implementation of regional, internationally-agreed conventions and policies on HIV and AIDS, and especially the ILO Recommendation Concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work of 2000 (No. 200) and the ILO Code of Practice on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, the UNAIDS fast track to end AIDS by 2030, the African Union Catalytic Frame work on AIDS and the COMESA Regional HIV and AIDS Policy;
  - iii. Ensure coordination, sharing of good practices, monitoring and evaluate of regional and national-level HIV and AIDS policies and programmes; and
  - iv. Ensure documentation of progress and sharing of information on good practices on HIV and AIDS in the region.

#### 4.16 People with Disabilities

##### Objective

50. Mainstream gender and disability in COMESA policies and programs and ensure effective and equal participation of people with disabilities in regional trade and investments.

##### Measures

51. Although disability does not mean inability, people with disabilities, especially women, nevertheless, experience monumental challenges in their participation in domestic and cross-border trade. Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall, therefore, ensure that:
- i. Domestic and implement the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) with Optional Protocol<sup>1</sup>;
  - ii. People with disabilities are fully involved in setting and leveraging policies and legislation that affect their welfare;
  - iii. Provide manufacturers, exporters and importers of orthopaedic equipment and gadgets with appropriate fiscal incentives; and
  - iv. Border-crossing points have user-friendly and gender sensitive amenities and other facilities for the convenience of people with disabilities.

#### 4.17 Minorities

##### Objective

52. Promote the protection of Human Rights of minorities, their full participation and benefit from regional trade, investments and infrastructure development.

##### Measures

53. Minorities are category of people differentiated due to cultural, race, nationality and physical characteristics are singled out from the others. Within the minorities, women and girls often face gender related injustices such as discrimination and isolation. In order to address challenges faced by minorities, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
- i. Mainstream Minority Protection and gender in policies and legislation for managing minorities;
  - ii. Strengthen and engender national and regional data and information-sharing mechanisms on minorities; and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

- iii. Closely collaborate and work with specialised UN agencies and other relevant multilateral bodies that deal with minorities.

#### **4.18 Human Trafficking**

##### **Objective**

- 54. Establish effective gender-responsive mechanisms for regional cooperation and information-sharing in the fight against human trafficking.

##### **Measures**

- 55. The COMESA region is facing an increasing challenge of human trafficking. Citizens from different COMESA member States are trafficked and a number of COMESA countries are used as transit routes. Women and children are the prime victim of trafficking. To address this challenge, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Review, harmonise and engender policies and legislation on human trafficking;
  - ii. Establish a regional cooperation mechanism to fight human trafficking in the COMESA region;
  - iii. Establish a central database for collecting and storing sex-disaggregated data on human trafficking in the region and link it to other regional and international databases;  
  
Ensure availability of comprehensive support services for victims of human trafficking; and
  - iv. Ensure training of immigration, customs and Police officials in modern and gender-sensitive methods of combating human trafficking.

#### **4.19 Youth**

##### **Objective**

- 56. Promote effective participation of youth in regional trade and investments.

##### **Measures**

- 57. Although the youth are the majority of the population in the COMESA region and are key in driving economic growth, circumstances on the ground are that their participation especially of young women in regional trade and investments is sub-optimal. In order to address this challenge, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
  - i. Take measures to ensure the participation of young men and women in regional trade policy development;

- ii. Accelerate implementation of the COMESA Youth Program, African Youth Charter and the UN World Programme of Action for Youth;
- iii. Strengthen and engender national and regional youth empowerment structures;
- iv. Design and implement gender responsive national and regional youth economic empowerment schemes tailored towards the needs of young women and men;
- v. Establish a regional youth skills training centre;
- vi. Establish an annual regional youth entrepreneurship fair; and
- vii. Promote African youth leadership training schemes.

#### **4.20 Child Marriage**

##### **Objective**

58. Stop child marriage and protect Human Rights of girl children.

##### **Measures**

59. Child marriage is a violation of Human Rights and compromises the normal physical, psychological and social growth, and the future of the affected children and that of their families. Female children are more adversely affected than boys by this practice. Member States shall therefore:
- i. Enforce the registration of birth and marriages to support effective implementation of minimum age for marriage;
  - ii. Amend or introduce new legislation on child marriage and enforcement mechanism where necessary in accordance with national law;
  - iii. Ensure improvement of data monitoring systems of national laws and policies on child marriage, and education;
  - iv. Introduce compulsory education for girls and boys up to senior secondary school level;
  - v. Take measures to enforce stiff penalties against the adult spouses involved in child marriages; and
  - vi. Ensure stakeholder involvement in the fight against child marriages and other negative practices that disadvantage girls and boys.



## **4.21 Child Labour**

### **Objective**

60. Establish mechanisms for fighting all forms of child labour.

### **Measures**

61. Child labour robs children of the opportunity and space to grow into educated, productive, industrious and responsible adults. Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders are urged to commit to address factors that fuel child labour and therefore, shall:
- i. Accelerate the domestication of internationally-agreed conventions on combating all forms of child labour and exploitation, such as the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), CEDAW, ILO Conventions and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
  - ii. Review, engender and harmonise national labour laws with a view to, among others, eliminating elements that fuel child labour;
  - iii. Take measure to stiffen punishment of child labour-related offences;
  - iv. Establish gender sensitive national centres for restitution of victims of worst forms of child labour and exploitation; and
  - v. Ensure availability of social security system for vulnerable families or households.

## **4.22 Public Private Partnerships**

### **Objective**

62. Create an enabling and gender responsive policy environment for the promotion of Public Private Partnerships in investments.

### **Measures**

63. Given the scarcity of public sector resources, there is need to leverage private sector resources and, therefore, Member States, Secretariat, Cooperating Partners, CSOs and other Stakeholders shall:
- i. Review existing company and business legislation with a view to promoting public private partnerships and making them gender responsive;
  - ii. Review existing public private partnership-related tax and other fiscal regimes with a view to making PPPs attractive to the private sector to address the varying needs and concerns of women, men, girls and boys such as availing reproductive health commodities;

# CHAPTER **FIVE**

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

## **5.1 Institutional Framework**

64. Effective implementation of this Policy will be determined by the extent to which Member States will individually and collectively commit themselves to mainstreaming gender in national and regional development agenda. In this regard, it is expected that:
- i. Member States will strengthen gender accountability system across sectors;
  - ii. COMESA governing organs shall be fully utilized and made to mainstream gender in their operations;
  - iii. COMESA shall increase its annual budgetary allocations to gender, youth and social development programming;
  - iv. It shall be ensured that there is a gender balance in the staffing of the COMESA Secretariat;
  - v. There will be improved collaboration and work with gender-related CSOs and bilateral and multilateral agencies; and
  - vi. Cooperating Partners will promote and support gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women and youth in all the programmes hold implementers accountable.

## **5.2 Gender Management Systems**

### **Objective**

65. Strengthen gender management systems at regional and Member State levels.

### **Measures**

66. Weak gender management systems are among the major factors that constrain effective and sustainable mainstreaming of gender in national and regional development planning frameworks. In order to improve the situation, Secretariat, Member States and other stakeholders will undertake the following interventions:
- i. Create /Establish gender management systems in the Secretariat and at Member State levels;
  - ii. Create linkages among regional and national gender machineries, CSOs and stakeholders;
  - iii. Establish gender mainstreaming accountability system at the management level of the Secretariat and Member States; and
  - iv. Ensure availability of sex disaggregated data at member States and Secretariat.

## **5.3 Legal Framework**

67. The formulation of this Policy was inspired by Article 110 of the COMESA Treaty. Consequently, its implementation shall be informed and guided by the Article and national and regional gender-related legal and regulatory frameworks.

#### **5.4 Resource Mobilisation**

68. In COMESA, funding for gender-related programs has largely been constrained by low funding which, in turn, is explained by the low prioritisation of gender in national budgeting frameworks. Competing priorities have also compromised funding for gender and gender-related programs. In order to address these challenges, concerted efforts shall be made to ensure that Member States recommit themselves to improved monetary and other resource contributions to the Secretariat's Gender and Social Affairs Division. Member States shall, in addition, proactively leverage resources from cooperating partners.

#### **5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

69. Currently, there is no discernible evidence of well-established, sustainable and robust gender-related monitoring and evaluation systems at both national and regional levels. Consequently, it is practically difficult to realistically ascertain the extent to which Member States have individually and collectively mainstreamed gender in national socio-economic and regional economic integration policies and programs. The result is that it is not possible to fathom, for example, the degree to which men, women and the youth are involved in regional trade and investments. Apart from the absence of robust monitoring and evaluation systems, there is the absence of gender-disaggregated data which makes it practically impossible to develop gender-disaggregated databases in support of improved monitoring and evaluation of the status of implementation of gender policies and programs in the region.
70. In order to address these challenges, the COMESA Secretariat shall mobilise resources from internal and external sources for use in the establishment of a robust in-house monitoring and evaluation system. To achieve this, the Secretariat shall design gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation frameworks and reporting systems with a view to ensuring timely reporting by Member States and Secretariat on the status of implementation of gender-related and social development programs and activities within the COMESA region. Other measures shall include generation and use of sex-disaggregated data for use in determining the impact of COMESA interventions on women, men and youth. COMESA shall further regional gender indices and a score card for use in cross-national assessment of gender equality.

#### **5.6 Conclusion**

71. The Gender Policy calls on all stakeholders to mainstream gender, report on progress to ensure accountability towards the attainment of gender equality, women empowerment and social development. To ensure successful implementation of intervention measures, there will be need to address all the critical areas through comprehensive programming by all key stakeholders. One of the most critical determinants of successful policy and program implementation in general,

and gender responsive programming in particular, is the commitment and accountability of all stakeholders. Policy success will depend on program/project formulation, implementation, co-ordination, monitoring, evaluation and resource mobilization.





