

CONCEPT NOTE.

TITLE OF PARALLEL EVENT: "Enhancing gender equality, women's land and habitat rights to accelerate poverty eradication and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals".

A major hindrance to women's economic advancement and effective participation in development activities in many parts of the world, especially the global south, is the traditional resistance to women's right to land and habitat. Women and girls in Africa are often denied access to land use, inheritance and control of land and private property.

Access to land, housing, and tenure security for women in Africa is fundamental for the realization of their human rights. Land tenure security is crucial for women's empowerment and a prerequisite for building secure and resilient communities.

It offers women a way out of insecurity and poverty and is the foundation from which women can support themselves and their children and start to create better lives for themselves and their families.

Most importantly, women face discrimination through inheritance under customary practices. Inheritance affects girls and women at two phases in their lives. The first one is inheritance from parents and the second is inheritance from husbands or marital families.

Research have shown so far that laws and policies are not the main problems for women in relation to land and housing. Rather the problem is with the adherence to national and international laws and policies, within families due to deeply entrenched traditions and cultural practices.

In 2015, Member States, adopted the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals. In doing that, they committed to achieving sustainable development for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. They pledged that no one would be left behind and to reach the furthest behind first.

Article 18 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, calls on all States Parties to eliminate every discrimination against women and to ensure the protection of the rights of women as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.

In Article 2, which talks about the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the African States committed to taking corrective and positive action in those areas where discrimination against women in law and in fact continues to exist. They also committed to supporting the local, national, regional, and continental initiatives directed at eradicating all forms of discrimination against women.

The Priority theme for 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women is “Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective”.

To eradicate poverty and achieve the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, it is important that women are guaranteed access, ownership and right to land, housing, and tenure security in Africa.

The main objective for this event is to further throw more light on the key issues and strategies that will accelerate gender equality, ensure women's right to land and habitat, poverty eradication and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This parallel event is a call for all stakeholders, including Member States, civil society organizations, United Nations and their Agencies, international development, and financing institutions, to ensure that women everywhere are guaranteed their rights to land and habitat including their right to equal participation and representation in leadership positions.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. What type of institutional arrangements are needed to address attitudes, norms or customary laws and traditions that have prevented women from inheriting or ownership of land in different African contexts?
2. What role can traditional rulers and community leaders play in addressing customary laws and practices that deny women the right to land, habitat, and inheritance, and to ensure Gender Equality and Poverty Eradication?