



## **YOUR VOICE, YOUR ACTION, YOUR PLATFORM** **A DIALOGUE SERIES ON GENDER EQUALITY** **AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**



### CONCEPT NOTE

## **Africa Rising Dialogues: “Your Voice, Your Action Your Platform!”**

*An Innovative Interactive Dialogue Series Platform on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Africa*

### **I. Background**

Over many decades, the United Nations has made significant progress in advancing gender equality (GE), including through landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, the United Nations has in the past decades faced serious challenges in its efforts to promote gender equality globally, including inadequate funding and no single recognized driver to guide, coordinate and direct UN activities on gender equality issues. UN Women was created in July 2010 to address such challenges, and with the key objective to raise, influence and position the discourse on gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) and engage initiatives that transform mindsets to appreciate that gender equality and women’s empowerment can bring real change to the lives of women, girls, and men and boys, and that investing in and adopting gender responsive approaches to development can significantly contribute to increased growth rates. In its 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development, the World Bank points to fostering innovation and learning as part key recommendations in the global agenda for greater gender equality



One of the many challenges, in the African context, is the lack of understanding on how investment in GEWE brings about changed lives. Going beyond advocacy, there is a real need for expanded dialogue among policy makers, GE advocates, professionals, media and communities, and the development community on the ‘what and how’ of this change, and for creating spaces for pertinent public information and exchange on the potential benefits, progress and challenges on GEWE. Furthermore, women and young girls themselves face many challenges in accessing information when it relates to their basic rights,

their health, their education, or on their role and participation in all spheres of their communities and societies, including during political processes, conflicts or humanitarian crises. Interactive dialogue platforms would provide the space to inform, exchange and influence mindsets, attitudes and practices in favor of GEWE.

## **II. Context and Justification**

Interactive Dialogue platforms are particularly important at this point in time because we are at a defining moment in global processes. In 2015, the development agenda defined by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) comes to an end, and a new agenda is in discussion, probably under the title of sustainable development goals. Interactive Dialogue Platforms will be structured to increase citizen participation in processes and their implementation with a particular focus on GEWE. In order to capitalize on this interest, and with the important work and advocacy already engaged on positioning gender equality in the post 2015 development agenda, it is important that an organization such as UN Women presents progress and challenges as well as opportunities in a manner which demonstrates the impact and results of ongoing and existing interventions; policies and pilot programs, both within normative and operational frameworks, and the actual and potential change by bringing into the debate lived experiences, engaged men and boys, outstanding advocates and community role models among others. Innovative communications platforms, i.e. initiatives, that provide and use information with a clearly defined objective, are pivotal in this regard.

It is within this context that “Africa Rising” was developed by UN Women as a game changer through an innovative Dialogue series platform on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment which will take place in different contextual settings in Africa, and go further in seeking new and nontraditional audiences and partnerships to carry the messages. This platform draws both on internet resources and more specifically new and social media, but will also go out to communities both in urban and rural settings in the form of an open, organized Platform for interactive dialogue sessions.

## **III. General Objective:**

To raise the public discourse, positioning and visibility of results in the area of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment through the engagement of new audiences and partnerships across the African continent

## **IV. Specific Objectives:**

1. To bring together a community of leaders, high level profile and change makers to present, discuss and exchange on thematic issues and actions on advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa
2. To raise the knowledge, advocacy and awareness and sensitize the general public on specific gender equality and women’s priorities (e.g.: Violence against women and girls, Women in peace and security , Rural women in agriculture) through effective and innovative communications channels such as new and social media which can positively influence key mechanisms and decision making at regional, national and local levels within communities
3. To encourage community ideas to be well integrated in policy debates and to present successful and innovative action to multiple stakeholders including funders and donors in a more interactive setting
4. To elevate the advocacy and voices of actors who have made an impact, including community actors, young women, men and boys on advancing GEWE at regional, national and local levels

## **V. Formats**

### **1. Physical Platforms**

- ✓ The physical platforms should be between 80 to 100 people for an event up to 3 hours in duration
- ✓ A public figure or a renowned public profile is invited as a flagship presenter/moderator; moderation is ensured
- ✓ One or more media partners provide coverage or retransmission. The session of questions and answers ensures a strong interaction with the public

### **2. Virtual Platforms**

These shall be acted upon between physical platforms by one or more partners on a selected topic within the mandate of the platform (Example: Google Hangouts, Twitter Chats, Facebook events). The idea is to maximize the interaction with a specific audience on a topic for a period.

3. Discussions / Community

These will take place in the context of a specific community or locality (urban or rural) and are rebroadcast by the partner in the form of media clips (audio or video) which will allow debates fora, exchanges and online discussions to take place via a program (radio / TV)