

## ECOWAS gender ministers to confer on women's economic empowerment

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**Dakar, le 12 march 2017**

Ministers in charge of Gender and Women Affairs of ECOWAS Member States are set to meet on the margins of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women, scheduled to hold in New York, the United States of America, from 13 to 24 March 2017.

Given the CSW's theme for 2017: "*Women's Economic Empowerment in a Changing World of Work*", Countries at the meeting seek to commit to implementing the 8th Sustainable Development Goal, which is the promotion of a sustainable and inclusive economic growth and a decent and productive work environment for all.

During the session, Ministers in charge of Gender and Women Affairs from five countries namely, Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Niger and Senegal, will give presentations relating to women's economic empowerment, with special emphasis on the distinct circumstances of their respective countries.

The objective of this session is to garner the commitment of ECOWAS Member States towards laying the foundation for a gender-inclusive economic growth that will eradicate poverty and contribute to sustainable development, from the diverse experiences that will be shared.

The meeting will also include discussions on measures to enable the equal participation of women in economic productivity, entrepreneurship, job creation, access to loans and financial aid for trade. The measures will guide in the formulation of ensuing national road maps, especially in the least developed countries.

In line with this 2017 theme of the United Nations, the ECOWAS Commission's Department for Social Affairs and Gender has asked Member States to deliberate on the following theme: "*Challenges to Empowering the West African Woman and Girl-child vis-à-vis Political Participation and Employment Issues: one of the priorities of the ECOWAS Vision 2020*".

By virtue of the importance it places on gender inequality issues in West Africa, ECOWAS had the Heads of State and Government adopt gender policies that will serve as a reference framework for the mainstreaming of gender into all dimensions of sustainable development and the promotion of women's rights.

Among the documents adopted by the West African leaders in 2015, we can cite the Supplementary Act on Equal Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the Community Region; the Action Plan on Gender and Trade, as well as the Action Plan on Gender and Migration.

The ECOWAS Ministers in charge of Gender at a meeting in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 7 to 10 February 2017, validated new documents such as the Action Plan on the Women, Peace and Security component of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, the Regional Action Plan on the fight against Obstetric Fistula, and the Action Plan on Gender and Elections. The different texts form a reflection of the ECOWAS Vision 2020 on gender equality for sustainable development.

Aside from the Ministers, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender, Dr. Fatima Dia Sow, the ECOWAS President's Special Representative to the United Nations, Tanou Léon Koné, and several other distinguished persons are to participate at the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of the Woman.