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Regional Action Plan for Africa on Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

What is violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)?

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a global pandemic and the most pervasive and widespread human rights violation. It encompasses, but is not limited to, physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family or within the general community and perpetrated or condoned by the State. Other forms of VAWG such as child marriage and FGM/C are also highly prevalent in Africa.

Why the Regional Action Plan for Africa on EVAWG and SRHR?

While there are several instruments and frameworks for the ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) including the AU's Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the implementation of these instruments is still limited. The Regional Action Plan (RAP) for Africa on EVAWG with a monitoring and evaluation framework will therefore be a strategic instrument to enable regional partners and Member States to move from commitment to action on the elimination of violence against women and girls, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights (SRH&RR).

Only 30 countries out of 55 African Union (AU) Member States have National Action Plans (NAP) on VAWG/Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The persistent rates of VAWG in Africa impede regional progress towards gender equality, sustainable development, peace, and prosperity.

The development of this Regional Action Plan is part of the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme (SIARP) partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

The Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme addresses regional bottlenecks and supports regional commitments to eliminate violence against women and girls, including strengthening existing strategies and initiatives, such as the African Union (AU) Gender Strategy, the Gender Observatory, and the AU campaigns to end Child Marriage and AU Initiative on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.

The Regional Action Plan is the result of an extensive internal and external collaborative process with a broad range of organizational, continental, and international stakeholders. It provides a strategic and functional framework for all actors (state and non-state actors) in Africa to come together to implement comprehensive actions and be held accountable for the elimination of VAWG, while ensuring that women and girls play an active part in decision-making processes.

What will the Action Plan do?

By adopting the present Regional Action Plan for Africa on EVAWG, African Union Commission (AUC) member states will be engaged to take all appropriate measures to prevent and respond to all forms of VAWG while contributing to meeting several regional and international human rights commitments around women and girls. It will also serve as a regional framework that will guide regional partners and Member States (MS) to translate global and regional commitments into strategies and actions to be undertaken at regional and national levels through the development of a Regional Action Plan for Africa on EVAWG and SRH&RR.

The Objective of the Regional Action plan for Africa

The Regional Action Plan for Africa aims to guide regional and national stakeholders in facilitating the implementation and actualization of global, African, regional, and national commitments including CEDAW, Maputo Protocol, and the goals and aspirations of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 respectively on the Elimination of all Violence Against Women and Girls through translating those commitments into strategies and actions to be undertaken at regional and national levels. The Action Plan will also serve as monitoring, reporting, and accountability framework for regional and member states' commitment to EVAWG. It will also enhance the commitment of regional and national partners to increase investment in EVAWG including SRH&RR.

The Regional Action Plan was successfully validated with AUC WGYD, RECs, Member States, CSOs, and RUNOs in July 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The RAP is planned to be adopted by the AUC and is expected to be rolled out in early 2023.

