

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail - Patrie

MINISTERE DE LA PROMOTION
DE LA FEMME ET DE LA FAMILLE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

COMITE D'ORGANISATION DE LA 59^{EME} EDITION DE LA JOURNEE
DE LA FEMME AFRICAINE 2021

COMMISSION SCIENTIFIQUE ET TRADUCTION

SOUS-COMMISSION SCIENTIFIQUE

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work - Fatherland

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE 59TH EDITION OF
THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY 2021

SCIENTIFIC AND TRANSLATION COMMISSION

SCIENTIFIC SUB-COMMISSION

59th EDITION OF AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY

31 July 2021

Theme:

**“FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF WOMEN: CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES”**

Terms of reference

I – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN’S DAY

Since the Congress of Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), Held in Vienna (Austria) in May 1958, African women saw the need to unite in order to create a continental organisation that could legitimately represent them during women’s international gatherings. It is within this framework that a preparatory committee of this Panafrican Association was convened in Bamako, from 8 to 10 June 1962, to define strategies regarding the approach and modalities of the constitution of African Women’s Union. This Committee brought together women from ten countries: Angola, Cameroon, Dahomey (now called Benin), Ghana, Portuguese Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Tunisia and Tanzania. During this gathering, it was decided that the Association should be given the name African Women’s Conference and for a Constitutive General Assembly to be held in Dar-es-Salam (former-Tanganyika), from 27 to 31 July 1962.

On 31 July 1962, women from the four corners of the African continent met for the first time and created the first Women’s Organisation in Dar-es-Salam, called “the Conference of African Women (CAW)”. Twelve years later, women met again to put in place a more representative organisation: the Panafrican Women’s Organisation (PWO). During the 1st Congress of this structure, held in Dakar (Senegal) in 1974, the date of 31 July was dedicated as the African Women’s Day, a decision that was later approved by African Union.

From inception, the objective of this structure was to enable African women to share ideas and act together so as to speed up their emancipation, promote the unity of African States and establish ties with women across the world for progress, justice and peace. These objectives have since then evolved while taking into account the independence of African States, the advent of democracy and the African Women’s Decade, to integrate aspects relating to sensitisation, education, respect of women’s rights, improvement of their situation and to fight against poverty.

II – CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

On 31 July 2021, Cameroon will join other African countries to celebrate the 59th edition of the African Women’s Day within a context marked by:

- implementation of Agendas 2030 of the United Nations and 2063 of African Union, through actions relating to the promotion and protection of women’s rights, fight against disparities among human beings and gender equality for sustainable development and poverty alleviation ;
- implementation of the National Development Strategy by 2030 (NDS 30);

- beginning of the implementation of the 2nd African Women's Decade 2020-2030 under the theme "**Financial and economic inclusion of women**";
- Implementation of the seven-year mandate of "Greater Opportunities" and the acceleration of major socio-economic construction sites in order to attain emergence ;
- major Guidelines of the Head of State contained in his Message to the Nation, on 31 December 2020, relating to development, peace, security, protection of unity, national solidarity, progress, consolidation of the Rule of law and institutional reforms as well as the protection of the rights of each category;
- strengthening of measures relating to the elimination of violence against women and girls ;
- consolidation of growth, social stability and institutions;
- continuation of the fight against insecurity and threats to territorial integrity ;
- continuation of the fight against COVID-19 pandemic ;
- promotion of living together, bilingualism and multiculturalism ;
- strengthening the collaboration with the civil society, in order to adequately address the problems relating to gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa that is undergoing changes.

The theme of the 59th edition of the African Women's Day in Cameroon falls in line with the continental theme which is as follows : "**Financial inclusion of women: challenges and opportunities**". This theme reflects the determination of the continent to strengthen efforts and mechanisms towards a complete emancipation of women, which is indispensable to the sustainable development of our countries.

The World Bank defines financial inclusion as a possibility for individuals and enterprises to have access at lower cost to a range of products as well as useful and adapted financial services of their needs (transactions, payments, saving, loan and insurance) proposed by low cost and responsible service providers. To the African Development Bank (**AFDB**), financial inclusion embodies all the initiatives aiming at making formal financial services, available, accessible and affordable for the entire population. This requires a special attention for segments of the population that are excluded or poorly served by the formal financial sector. **As concerns Cameroon**, the authorities intend to give considerable importance to the financial inclusion of women in the efforts they make to concretely respond to the socio-economic difficulties of

Cameroonians, especially the most vulnerable groups. Moreover, great importance is given to digital financial innovation so as to boost financial inclusion in a context particularly marked by security crises and the global health crisis. In this regard, there is need to have a definition of financial inclusion that should be adapted to the Cameroonian context which read as follows: **“Financial inclusion consist of giving the population greater access to a range of innovative, adapted, diversified and affordable financial services, serving all Cameroonians, especially women, youths, the rural populations and Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMSE)”**.

As a reminder, the 2nd African Women’s Decade 2020-2030 by focusing on the theme **“financial and economic inclusion of women”**, shows it is of great importance to African women and girls. It helps to create the momentum and to consolidate the achievements obtained over the years regarding the efforts made to bridge the gender gap. The financial inclusion of women during this decade aims at seeking for ways and means that could help them to have access to financial services and the capacity building of actors, especially women living in the rural areas, encourage their access to technology in order to increase productivity in all sectors.

Inclusive finance has always been a global concern. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN said in 2003 that : “the harsh reality is that most of the poorest populations do not still have access to long lasting and reliable financial services, be it saving ,loans or insurance. The major challenge therefore will be for us to eliminate the obstacles that exclude the poorest persons from fully participating in the financial sector...Together, we can and we must put in place inclusive financial sectors which will enable people to improve on their living conditions”.

In the same vein, the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, has used Kofi Annan’s vision to launch the global challenge of “universal financial access by 2020”. An objective which aims at boosting financial inclusion. The various States in the world, which are members of the United Nations have , during the General Assembly of this organisation in September 2015, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the 2016-2030 period, which in its first objective, aims at “putting an end to poverty, in all its forms, across the world” and in the target 1.4 of this objective n°1, intends “ by 2030,to make sure that all men and women , especially the poor and vulnerable persons, are having the same rights to economic resources and access to new technologies as well as adequate financial services, including microfinance”. More than 50 developing countries, including Cameroon, have taken the commitment regarding the targets of financial inclusion.

The areas of priority actions for financial inclusion in Cameroon

Looking at the detailed diagnostic analysis of demand and supply of products and financial services, as well as the major challenges of financial inclusion in Cameroon, a certain number of areas of priority actions are outlined to improve the access to financial services in Cameroon. They include:

- improve the availability as concerns the provision of credit ;
- improve the quality of services and extend the use of digital payment services ;
- facilitate saving in formal institutions ;
- improve the availability of agricultural funding ;
- develop infrastructure to support the provision of financial services, including digital services ;
- improve risk management for clients ;
- support the regulation and taxation favorable to the harmonious development of the micro finance sector ;
- improve financial education and the protection of clients ;
- develop Islamic and social finance.

Target groups

The National Strategy for Financial Inclusion aims at putting in place a certain number of mechanisms to fight against banking and financial exclusion. As such, it concerns all Cameroonians affected by this problem. Furthermore, it has been recalled in the diagnosis of the sector that certain number of the population and target groups are more marginalised than others. In this regard, based on the results obtained by the FinScope 2018 Survey to identify the strata of the population which are underserved, this National Strategy gives priority to four (4) segments of the population to which financial inclusion proves to be particularly important. It concerns notably women, youths, rural populations and Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMSE).

The 2021-2025 National Strategy for Financial Inclusion is based on the priority areas identified in the research mentioned above, which shows the shortcomings and opportunities on the market and that could have a greater positive impact on the welfare of consumers when they are appropriately managed.

For Cameroon, the 58th edition of the African Women's Day shall be used to stress on a greater involvement of all stakeholders as concerns the economic empowerment of Cameroonian women through the taking of ownership of the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion, in order to reduce the obstacles that hinder women's access to financial and non-financial services.

II - OBJECTIVES

II.1 – General objective

Strengthen advocacy for the financial inclusion of women.

II.2 – Specific objectives

- mobilise stakeholders around the inclusive finance of women;
- encourage the putting in place at the level of all sectors target policies aiming at reducing financing constraints ;
- encourage concerted actions so as to improve the conditions of women's access to public finance through partnerships with financial institutions ;
- popularise the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion among women ;
- carry out advocacy so as to put in place funds dedicated to female entrepreneurship.

III – EXPECTED RESULTS

- stakeholders are mobilised around the inclusive finance of women;
- the putting in place at the level of all sectors target policies aiming at reducing financing constraints is encouraged;
- concerted actions so as to improve the conditions of women's access to public finance through partnerships with financial institutions are encouraged ;
- the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion among women is popularised;
- advocacy so as to put in place funds dedicated for female entrepreneurship is carried.

IV - SUB-THEMES

- Financial inclusion of women : role of financial institutions ;
- Financial exclusion of women and poverty ;
- National Strategy for financial inclusion: Stakes and challenges;
- Harmful Cultural Practices to the Financial Inclusion of Women;
- Financial inclusion and development of female entrepreneurship: Stakes and challenges.

V - ACTIVITIES

The 59th edition of the African Women's Day shall be marked in Cameroon by:

- Communication activities (radio and television programmes in the official and national languages, display of posters, target messages written on banners ;

- reflection activities (round table discussions, educative talks, counseling-advice-orientation, socio-legal clinics...) on the theme and the sub themes) ;
- MINPROFF's open door days in the 10 regions ;
- training activities for women in the setting up and management of projects ;
- various support to women and girls so that they can set up Income Generating Activities (IGAs) ;
- formulation of a sensitisation leaflet on the National Strategy of Inclusive Finance ;
- formulation of an action plan ;
- communication of MINPROFF on 31 July 2021.

VI – TARGETS/PARTNERS

- Partner ministries ;
- Technical and financial development partners ;
- Panafrikan Women's Organisation (PWO) ;
- Financial institutions ;
- Women of African communities ;
- NGO ;
- Management Associations for women and girls.

VII – VENUE

Across the national territory.

NB : Activity reports of the African Women's Day should be transmitted to the Minister latest two weeks after the celebration.

The committee may, if necessary call on any external person.