



## **61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women:**

### **Side Event Hosted by the Government of Nigeria,**

### **Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) and the UN SDG Action Campaign**

#### ***Theme: Women's Property Rights in Africa: Key to Economic Empowerment***

*Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2017, 4.15 pm - 6.00 pm, Conference Room A, UN Headquarters, New York*

### **Concept Note**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In sub-Saharan Africa, customary land tenure systems widely exclude women from ownership or control of land as women represent just 15% of landholders. Under many customary legal systems, women's rights to inherit land are restricted, and they are vulnerable to dispossession on divorce or widowhood. Securing women's property rights can deliver positive development outcomes that benefit society as a whole. The benefits include more productive agriculture, accessible and affordable finance, and most importantly, increasing the rights and decision-making power of women and their overall economic development. Strengthening women's property rights is a complex issue, and it is important that a context-specific approach is used when attempting to tackle the issue.

In December 2016, the Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) in partnership with the African Development Bank launched the WIP Council on Economic Empowerment in Nairobi, Kenya. Female Members of Parliament from 12 African Countries participated in the meeting which focused on Women's Property Rights in Africa. The overall objective of the WIP Council is to ensure that national legislation and policies provide the best possible framework for women to enjoy the same property rights as men, which in turn will support their pursuit for economic empowerment.

For the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission of the Status on Women, the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations, the Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) and the UN SDG Action Campaign seek to organise a side event highlighting the role female Parliamentarians play in safeguarding legal reforms that ensure women's property rights in their country's legal and



institutional arrangements. The discussions of this session will build on the outcomes of the first meeting of the WIP Council on Economic Empowerment held in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2016.

## AIM

- To seek the active involvement of female Parliamentarians in ensuring legal reforms that ensure women’s property rights are adequately reflected in their country’s legal and institutional arrangements.

## OBJECTIVES

- Expand the core group of the WIP Council on Economic Empowerment, focusing on Women’s Property Rights in Africa;
- Forge required new partnerships with MPs as well as with other stakeholder and strengthening existing ones;
- Share of and awareness raising of the state of the laws and related policies, as well as other related measures that should be taken into account at national and regional levels to push for required institutional, legal and policy reforms in Regional Member Countries (in addition to the legal and policy reforms done with MPs);
- Discuss possible solutions and required support;

## ORGANIZERS

**Women in Parliament Global Forum** is an international, independent and non-partisan foundation that focuses on bringing together and creating a network between Women in Parliaments with the purpose of advancing society. It is the global network of female Parliamentarians at national level, including the European Parliament, of whom there currently are around 9000.

The **Government of Nigeria** has played a leading role in the emergence of the SDGs. Beginning from the early stages of the Rio+20 process and the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda to the national consultations as well as citizens’ engagement through the MY World Surveys, Nigeria made significant contributions to the inter-governmental negotiation process. Nigeria canvassed with other state parties on issues that strengthen the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well as the outcomes of the regional



and national consultations in Africa. In order to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs, Nigeria established the Office of the Senior Special Assistance to the President on the SDGs to coordinate national efforts at domestication, mainstreaming, implementation and reviews of the SDGs. The SDGs Office ensures intergovernmental synergies, policy mainstreaming as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships and participation in order that no one is left behind.

**UN SDG Action Campaign** is a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General administered by the UN Development Program and mandated to support the UN system and Member States on advocacy and public engagement in the implementation of the SDGs.

DRAFT



## 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

### Side Event hosted by the Government of Nigeria, Women in Parliaments and the United Nations SDG Action Campaign

#### *Theme: Women's Property Rights in Africa: Key to Economic Empowerment*

*15<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, 4.15-6.00 PM, Conference Room A, UN HQ New York.*

#### Opening Session

##### 15 Minutes **Welcome Remarks**

- **Charge D'Affaires**, Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations
- **Silvana Koch-Mehrin**, Founder, Women in Parliaments Global Forum
- **Mitchell Toomey**, Director, United Nations SDG Action Campaign

##### 5 Minutes **Goodwill Message**

- **Hon Abdulkadir Jobe**, Chairman, African Network of Parliamentarians on the SDGs

#### Technical Session – Perspectives on advancing women's property rights as a tool for enhancing economic empowerment.

##### 40 minutes

- **HE Princess Adejoke-Orelope Adefulire**, Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on the SDGs
- **Hon. Princess Stella Ngwu**, Chairperson, Committee on Women Affairs, House of Representatives, Nigeria
- **Zita Gurmai**, Gender Advisor to the European Union Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development
- **Esther Chilenje-Nkhoma**, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Malawi
- **Florence Mutua**, Member of Parliament, Kenya and WIP Ambassador
- **Cynthia Kamikazi**, Chief Partnership Officer, African Development Bank
- Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations (tbc)
- Representatives of AWEPA (tbc)
- Institutional representatives: UN FAO/World Food Programme/UNDP (tbc)

##### 5 minutes **Closing Statement**

- **Senator Aisha Alhassan**, Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Nigeria