

## WHY AFRICA NEEDS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

### UN WOMEN'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AFRICA CENTRE FOR TRANSFORMATIVE AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



Africa is experiencing a dynamic and important phase in its development shaped by regional and global megatrends including demographic shift to a younger population, rapid urbanization, shifts in global economic power and an upsurge in technological innovations. The African population especially women and the youth are showing greater adaptability and resilience to the numerous challenges facing the continent including climate change, unemployment, food insecurity, governance, forced migration, social stratification and poverty.

Amid these challenges, the people of Africa have continuously exhibited great potential. The political and economic governance is improving. Governments are using public resources more efficiently and delivering more social services, thanks to regulatory reforms and digital innovations. The versatile economic growth over the last two decades has more than tripled the size of the economy on the continent. We are progressively witnessing more democratic elections on the continent and cases of interstate and intrastate conflicts have been contained to a few fragile states. However, these gains should translate to the transformation of the most vulnerable in society and ensure that we leave no one behind. Continent-wide social

transformation will only happen if we have dynamic, strong, inclusive and visionary leaders at all levels of society. This calls for strong capacity building programmes on transformational leadership.

Through this partnership with Kenyatta University, UN Women seeks to nurture new transformational leaders on the continent. Leaders who will have the tools to mobilize their constituents to change social systems and reform institutions. This will ensure the most vulnerable in society are not separated from the economic and social progress being witnessed, but are included in the development process.

Jointly with the Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership (ACTIL), UN Women is imparting skills to people in leadership positions- both men and women. Leaders who will place people at the center of development and ensure broad-based participation in the social transformation of the African continent, in line with the Africa Union's Agenda 2063. I am confident that this partnership will ensure gender equality in access to social and economic opportunities on the continent.

To achieve gender equality, the challenges of women being underrepresented in political processes and other leadership and decision-making positions must be addressed. UN Women is therefore increasing advocacy efforts to promote the adoption of gender responsive electoral policies, and laws; supporting capacity strengthening of electoral management bodies and political parties to ensure that women are represented in the whole electoral process; improving knowledge and skills of women through trainings and learning exchanges to support their aspiration for leadership and decision-making positions.

Women must be economically empowered to compete on an equal platform. Research has demonstrated that gender equality can reduce poverty and foster a more equitable distribution of income and by extension deliver dramatic gains in human development and well-being for individuals families and societies. UN Women is therefore focused on enhancing women's participation in the formal higher paying economic sectors and disrupting the supply value chains to ensure that companies buy products from women. This is in addition to supporting interventions that promote more women to sit on boards of leading private sector organizations.

Africa is rising and we urge the women to rise with it. UN Women has been part of the process, including; engaging in the development of the AU **African Union's Agenda 2063** which aspires to "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the world" and the SDGs 2030 that aims to "Leave no one behind". This partnership with ACTIL allows us to deepen our engagement with the academia to jointly impart knowledge that will help transform the continent and ensure Gender Equality and Women's Economic empowerment is realized.

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