PRESS REEASE

GIABA/EGDC REGIONAL ROUND TABLE AND WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION WORKSHOP ON TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

Combating a global phenomenon like transnational organized crime requires partnerships at all levels. As such, governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations and the populace representing all walks of life have a part to play, particularly women.

Based on this observation, ECOWAS Vision 2050 emphasizes the challenges of gender inequality in the ECOWAS region; and Pillar 5 on social inclusion places "...in particular women, children and young people, and all vulnerable people (including people with disabilities and the elderly) at the hub of the development and the integration process ".

It is against this backdrop that the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) and the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC) will be organizing ***a Regional Round Table and Women's Mobilization Workshop on Transnational Economic and Financial Crime in Lomé, Republic of Togo, from 12th to 14th December 2023.***

The overall objective is to raise women's awareness on the gender dimensions of the impact of money laundering and terrorist financing (ML/TF); to reach a consensus on the prospects for mainstreaming women's issues in the fight against transnational organized economic and financial crime and related issues within the ECOWAS region.

Specifically, this workshop has been designed to conduct a critical assessment of the ML/TF situation and their gender dimensions in West Africa; facilitate the sharing of knowledge, experiences and bets practices of ECOWAS Member States on mainstreaming the gender dimension in policies, strategies and programs aimed at combating transnational organized economic and financial crime and related issues; build consensus on prospects of defining the main strategic and operational issues and mechanisms relevant to the fight against transnational organized economic and financial crime and related issues from a gender perspective within the ECOWAS region.

Various research reports have estimated the volume of transnational organized crime at $870 billion, or approximately 1.5% of global GDP. Studies have significantly revealed the vulnerability of women to transnational organized criminal groups. Recently, women have been implicated as willing partners and high-level managers in certain criminal organizations. Case studies have revealed that they willingly participate in such crimes. Women being the grass

roots of the community, it is crucial for the fight against these crimes to reach women at all social strata, particularly at the grassroots level.

The over forty participants in this regional workshop will be delegates from ministries responsible for Gender/Youth issues, civil society organizations, ECOWAS Institutions/Agencies and technical and financial partners of the fifteen (15) ECOWAS Member States.

The Lomé workshop is expected to adopt a key document for the mainstreaming of women's perspectives in efforts to combat economic and financial crime in West Africa; enhance women's understanding of their role in the prevention of financial and economic crimes and their active involvement, as well as strong collaboration among actors at regional level.

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