The issues beneath: resourcing where it most impacts

AWDF calls upon African governments, Women’s Rights Organisations, donors, philanthropists, national and international agencies, private sector and the media to strengthen partnerships that;

1. **Prioritise African women’s land rights for improved food security and nutrition to prevent NCDs:**

   Poor nutrition is a lead risk factor for NCDs among women in Africa. While a bulk of them bear the food production burden working as majority small holder farmers and involved in food processing and providing labour in the agriculture sector, African women barely access the healthy foods needed to thrive. This exposes them to unhealthy diets that increase blood glucose and obesity among other risks resulting in cardiovascular disease and other NCDs.

   While a bulk of them bear the food production burden working as majority small holder farmers and involved in food processing and providing labour in the agriculture sector, African women barely access the healthy foods needed to thrive.
2. PLACE WOMEN AND GIRLS AT THE CENTRE OF CLEAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS:

In-door air pollution is a high-risk factor for Chronic Respiratory Disease in women. This is due to use of biomass fuels like wood, animal dung, grass, crop residues or charcoal for cooking and/or heating which majority of the women and children who are often the ones cooking food, heating the homes use. This is especially in rural areas and among women and girls from lower socio-economic groups.

3. ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND OTHER INTERSECTIONAL INEQUALITIES TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN ON THE CONTINENT:

For many women, mental health triggers are closely linked to experiences and events directly related to misogyny. These include “gender-based violence, socioeconomic disadvantage [and discrimination], low or subordinate social status and unremitting responsibility for the care of others”.

4. EXPAND PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR NCDS REDRESS:

This includes innovations like the 2018 Defeat NCDs which is a ‘public–private–people’ partnership anchored in the UN primarily focusing on tackling NCDs in low- and middle-income countries as well as offering a new NCDs funding mechanism. Similar partnerships are needed to match the scale of the problem.

Shifting policy and practice to address NCDs among women in Africa

African governments are already underspending on health and funding for NCDs across countries on the continent is an even lower priority.

90% of African countries had an established NCDs unit or department in their Ministry of Health in 2011. However, by 2019, majority still lacked an ample health workforce that is well-trained, well-paid and well-resourced to address NCDs. With these low investments, African governments lose out on the opportunity to maximise returns and boost their economies.

Majority of civil society organisations (more than 80%) reported awareness-raising among women, young girls, and communities as the main type of intervention used to tackle NCDs. Organisations reported disseminating information on prevention, detection, as well as management of NCDs.

FOR EVERY US$ 1 INVESTED IN INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS NCDs IN LOW-AND LOWER-MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES, WHO FOUND A RETURN TO SOCIETY OF AT LEAST US$ 7 IN INCREASED EMPLOYMENT, PRODUCTIVITY AND LONGER LIFE.3

AFRICAN WOMEN LED-ORGANISATIONS ARE WELL POSITIONED TO ADDRESS THE GROWING BURDEN OF NCDS ON THE CONTINENT. HOWEVER, THEY LACK ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO BUILD ALLIANCES, CHAMPION ADVOCACY AND IMPLEMENT THE SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVES NEEDED FOR IMPACT.

1WHO (March 31, 2020) WHO Working Group on COVID-19 and NCDs.
2Also see, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/women-farmers-food-production-land-rights/ on the role of women in Agriculture in Africa