THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the 2013 Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Employment, Education and Entrepreneurship [C/MIN(2013)5/FINAL] which the present Recommendation builds on and aims to complement (Recommendation I/C, I and J);


RECOGNISING the significant foundation already provided by several international instruments on various aspects of gender equality, notably the principles embodied in the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women; and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

RECOGNISING that fostering gender diversity in public-decision making is critical for achieving inclusive growth at all levels of government, as well as anticipating current and future steps needed to increase citizen trust and well-being;

RECOGNISING that achieving gender balance in public leadership requires a deep cultural change at both societal and organisation levels;

RECOGNISING that a whole-of-government approach, supported by effective institutions and robust accountability, is needed to ensure that gender equality efforts are sustainable and that closing gender gaps requires committed leadership, effective institutional frameworks, resources, tools and gender mainstreaming at all levels of governments;

RECOGNISING that gender mainstreaming strategies should occur at all levels of government and in relevant policy and governance areas thus creating a context of shared responsibility across all public institutions;

On the proposal of the Public Governance Committee and in co-operation with the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee:

I. RECOMMENDS that Members and non-Members, having adhered to the Recommendation (i.e. Adherents), mainstream gender equality in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant public policies and budgets.

To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Secure leadership and commit at the highest political level at the appropriate level of government to the development and implementation of a whole-of-government strategy for gender equality and mainstreaming which would enable:
i) setting a rationale, action plans, timelines, objectives, expected outcomes and/or targets, effective policy planning and clear responsibilities across public institutions for promoting gender equality. These measures should be accompanied by educational and media strategies and regular reviews.

ii) sustaining adequate financial and human resources for gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies;

iii) engaging relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including civil society and social partners, to ensure an inclusive and comprehensive coverage of gender equality issues;

iv) identifying priorities and facilitating engagement and co-ordination across government bodies at all levels in pursuing the gender equality agenda.

v) adopting a dual approach to narrowing equality gaps through both gender mainstreaming and specific targeted actions to promote gender equality.

2. Establish an institutional framework to ensure the effective implementation and co-ordination of the strategy for gender equality and mainstreaming, by:

i) ensuring clear roles, responsibilities, mandates and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies in implementing the gender equality. ii) identifying gender equality focal points in governmental bodies and bolstering the capacities and resources of gender institutions to facilitate a consistent response at appropriate levels of government to develop, implement and monitor gender-sensitive sectoral programmes, policies and laws across sectors, based on gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators;

iii) strengthening vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for policy coherence across government bodies and levels of government to ensure the effective implementation of gender equality initiatives.

3. Integrate gender impact assessments and gender considerations at early stages of the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and regulations, in particular:

i) by aligning ex ante gender impact assessments with broader government-wide policy development processes, such as regulatory impact assessment (RIA). This approach should be anchored within public administrative procedures with the explicit support of the highest levels of government. The analysis of gender considerations should be sustained through all phases of the policy cycle and should be based on gender-segregated data and expert consultations; and

ii) into various dimensions of public governance, including access to information regime, public procurement, public consultation and civic engagement, public employment and service delivery management.

4. Consider integration of gender perspective in all phases of the budget cycle, so that transparency regarding gender-relevant resource allocation decisions is maximised, while ensuring that gender equality is promoted as a general principle to be applied across all levels of government and administration.
5. Bolster the capacity of public institutions to mainstream gender equality in their activities by:

   i) increasing capacity within public institutions to conduct systematic gender impact assessments, including by promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres. Changing the culture towards gender-sensitive policy making requires investment of resources in tailored-training to produce gender-sensitive knowledge, leadership and communication.

   ii) providing clear guidelines, tools, communication and expectations to public institutions about the process of the application of gender impact assessments, for example, the requirements to demonstrate the use of such assessments and to regularly report on identified differential gender impacts and the gender performance of major public policies, thus deepening evidence-base and accountability.

II. RECOMMENDS that Adherents strengthen accountability and oversight mechanisms for gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies.

   To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Consider establishing or strengthening capacity of independent institutions (such as Independent Commissions, Supreme Audit Institutions, Ombuds Offices), and advisory bodies (e.g., Government councils), while avoiding heavy oversight, to monitor the implementation of gender equality strategies, mainstream gender issues in policy-making, and facilitate regular reporting, audits and measurement to foster continuous improvement and to track progress in gender equality.

2. Strengthen the evidence base and systematically measure gender equality performance, based on gender impact indicators and measurable outcomes, by:

   i) developing evaluation and measurement frameworks and indicators to assess performance of gender equality strategies and initiatives at appropriate levels of government;

   ii) regularly collecting data on gender equality and mainstreaming policies, to ensure an adequate flow of performance information about proposed and existing projects and strategies;

   iii) actively promoting data dissemination and ensuring affordable, effective and timely access to performance information on gender equality and gender mainstreaming; that allows for tracking results against targets and for comparison with international and other benchmarks; and

   iv) increasing co-ordination among data collecting and producing bodies and collaboration with relevant stakeholders to develop better gender impact indicators.

3. Regularly evaluate and report on the performance of gender equality and mainstreaming strategy and initiatives, and the implementation of gender impact assessments. Consider reviewing the capacity building needs of public institutions based on these evaluations.

4. Encourage greater role of parliaments and parliamentary committees to support progress in gender equality.

5. Encourage engagement and participation of civil society stakeholders in the evaluation of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies.
6. Establish or maintain effective, independent, impartial and efficient complaint and appeal mechanisms to protect rights for gender equality and consider complaints in an efficient, competent and impartial manner.

III. **RECOMMENDS** that Adherents **increase the representation of women in decision making positions in public life** by encouraging greater participation and representation of women in government at all levels, as well as in parliament, judiciary and civil society organisations.

To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Embed a political commitment at the highest level to closing gaps in gender equality in public life by developing a comprehensive framework to increase the representation of women in decision making positions in public institutions by:

   i) introducing or encouraging comprehensive (transitional or correctional) regulatory or voluntary measures to close representation gaps in parliamentary and executive bodies, including in parliamentary committees and leadership posts. For example, based on good practices, these measures can include quotas or voluntary targets, parity laws, zipper list systems, and linking the provision of public funding to parties to gender ratio and among candidates. Considering penalties for non-compliance can be important to ensure the effectiveness of such measures;

   ii) introducing measures to close representation gaps in senior public service and judicial appointments such as disclosure requirements, target setting or quotas, while ensuring a transparent and merit-based approach in judicial and senior public sector appointments through open competition, clear recruitment standards and wide vacancy advertisement;

   iii) mainstreaming work-life balance and family-friendly work practices at the top level in public institutions and promoting gender-sensitive structures and working conditions, for example, by reviewing internal procedures of public institutions, reconsidering traditional working hours, developing schemes to support the reconciliation of family and professional obligations, encouraging targeted measures to increase the involvement of men in sharing family responsibilities;

   iv) facilitating capacity and leadership development opportunities, mentoring, networking and other training programmes in all public institutions and promoting female role models in public life.

2. Systematically monitor and take stock of overall gender balance in public institutions, including in leadership positions, and reassessing its alignment with gender equality objectives and priorities, taking account of the results of evaluations.

3. Tackle the root causes of low representation and barriers to women’s access to decision making positions to promote greater acceptance of women leaders through:

   i) deconstructing gender stereotypes and tackling psychological barriers to women’s empowerment;

   ii) developing awareness-raising programmes about persistent gender-stereotypes and conscious and unconscious biases that influence perception, judgement and behaviour, and providing training on equal opportunities;

   iii) encouraging active engagement of men in promoting gender equality;
iv) improving women’s image in society by developing information campaigns; and

v) identifying and remove other obstacles to equal opportunity in accessing public leadership positions.

IV. RECOMMENDS that Adherents take adequate measures to improve the gender equality in public employment.

To this effect, Adherents should:

1. Promote the flexibility, transparency, and fairness of public employment systems and policies to ensure fair pay, and equal opportunities for women and men with a mix of backgrounds and experience.

2. Develop both comprehensive and more cause-specific measures to address the persisting gender pay gap, and horizontal occupational segregation through:

   i) adopting pay equality and equity laws and regulations, tools, toolkits and regular assessments in public sector institutions, including the identification of the predominantly female and male job classes in the public sector, and the evaluation of compensation differences and of the need for adjustments;

   ii) performing regular, objective and thorough desk audits, targeting low-paid and/or female-dominated sectors to ensure pay equality and equity in the public sector, and implementing policy recommendations based on the results; and

   iii) ensuring effective channels of recourse in challenging the wage gap in the public sector.

3. Monitor progress of female representation in the public sector and raise awareness of gender equality considerations by managers, including through regular data collection on gender balance across employment levels and occupational groups and maximising the use of public service employee surveys by incorporating questions about gender issues. Develop targeted measures based on these evaluations.

4. Promote merit-based recruitment, while instituting positive policies and practices to ensure that women achieve a degree of representation in each occupational group in public sector employment and developing concrete measures to ensure the effective removal of the implicit barriers that continue to exist within hiring and staffing processes.

5. Establish clear institutional roles and responsibilities for promoting gender balance in the public service, including independent recourse and appeal mechanisms, which should be adequately funded, resourced, and linked to executive teams to ensure their effectiveness.

6. Enhance management and executive accountability to ensure gender balance at all levels and occupational groups in the public sector and deal with gender equality issues in workplaces, including through performance management frameworks.

V. RECOMMENDS that Adherents strengthen international co-operation with other governments through continuously sharing knowledge, lessons learned and good practices on gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives in public institutions.

VI. INVITES the Secretary-General to disseminate the Recommendation.

VII. INVITES Adherents to disseminate the Recommendation to all levels of government.
VIII. **INVITES** non-Adherents to take due account of and adhere to the Recommendation.

IX. **INSTRUCTS** the Public Governance Committee to monitor the implementation of this Recommendation, including through benchmark indicators and country reviews and, report thereon to Council at the same time as the report on the Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Employment, Education and Entrepreneurship [C/MIN(2013)5/FINAL], in co-operation with the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee, and, in co-operation with the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee.