



via email: PresidentRSA@presidency.gov.za
cc: mike@presidency.gov.za; charmaine@presidency.gov.za; olive@presidency.gov.za

10 February 2020

His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South Africa
The Union Building
Government Avenue
Pretoria
0001

Honorable President,

Re: Chairmanship at African Union

On behalf of The Wise Collective (dba Wise 4 Afrika) we are writing to congratulate you on your ascending to the Chairmanship of the African Union (AU). We are encouraged by your inaugural speech, in particular reference to issues on gender equality and equity.

Meanwhile, in the history of the AU, your speech stands out in its bold declarations with regards to gender parity and women's economic power. More specifically, we draw attention to your call for women representation at 50% in political leadership and invite you to take a close look at the [Women's Power Index](#) which shows African countries are still far below this goal, sometimes as low as 4%.

Furthermore, your commitment to address gender based violence at the continental level is much welcomed and most needed to drive a comprehensive and cohesive agenda that seeks to end the impunity and scourge of violence against women.

Lastly, we seek your leadership in responding to the following matters previously raised with the AU body as they're consistent with the issues laid out in your speech and critical to the delivery of the goals set forth. These are:

1. The pending matter of sexual harassment and sex for jobs scandal within the AU must be addressed and concluded in a manner that demonstrates commitment to zero tolerance for violence against women starting at the institution itself to ensure credibility to lead on this issue elsewhere. A letter dated January 10, 2018 was sent through #TheTotalShutdown on this matter and never received a response despite follow-up by The Wise Collective which has since assumed the matter.

2. We are bringing to your attention the need to address the abandonment of about 60,000 children in Liberia by the peacekeepers deployed during the transition from conflict in the country. We therefore request that you lead the AU to engage with The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in addressing this matter and ensuring accountability. The abdication of financial responsibility by men towards their children is one of the key issues that fuel the feminization of poverty and undermines economic empowerment efforts for women.

Once again, congratulations! Thank you for your leadership and we thank you in advance for attending and responding to these matters.

Sincerely,



Brenda Madumise-Pajibo
Director, Policy & Advocacy



Onica Nonhlanhla Makwakwa
Director, Partnership