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1. THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CABO VERDE

Cabo Verde occupies a privileged geographical position in the heart of the Atlantic Ocean, serving as a strategic link between Africa, Europe, and the Americas. This location facilitates maritime and air trade, making the archipelago an important point for commercial and tourist routes. Additionally, Cabo Verde benefits from remarkable political and social stability compared to other countries in the region, attracting foreign investments and strategic partnerships.

Being a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers numerous advantages to the archipelago. ECOWAS promotes economic integration and cooperation among its members, allowing Cabo Verde access to a regional market of over 350 million people, which facilitates trade and boosts investment in infrastructure and services, creating a conducive environment for economic growth. Participation in ECOWAS also strengthens Cabo Verde's position in international and regional negotiations, increasing its influence on development and security policies in West Africa.

Cabo Verde's accession to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in February 2022 is crucial for its economic development, as it provides access to a market of 1.3 billion consumers, reducing tariffs and trade barriers that facilitate the flow of goods and services. This not only fosters economic diversification, enabling the country to invest in sectors such as tourism and agriculture, but also strengthens regional relations, promoting strategic partnerships and cultural exchanges. Moreover, AfCFTA attracts foreign investments, positioning Cabo Verde as an attractive destination and a gateway to the African market, essential for its sustainable growth and economic resilience.

It is worth noting that the AfCFTA Agreement emphasizes the importance of gender equality in creating an inclusive trade environment. As such, the HerAfCFTA movement, focused on empowering women for success in the AfCFTA, was launched in April 2023 during the inaugural edition of the AfCFTA Business Forum.

2. RATIONALE

In 2025, we will be marking three significant milestones that have contributed to the promotion of women's rights and status:

i. Fifty years of Cabo Verde's independence

While gender inequality and limited access to certain areas, such as positions of power and leadership, still persist, independence was a turning point that laid a solid foundation for the women's rights movement to gain momentum. The ongoing mobilization of civil society and institutions has been crucial in driving this progress.

ii. Fifty years of the United Nations presence in Cabo Verde

The presence of the United Nations in Cabo Verde since the country's early days of independence has brought significant advancements in sustainable development, strengthening government institutions, promoting human rights and gender equality, and improving the health and education sectors. With support from agencies like UNICEF, WHO, and UNDP, Cabo Verde has reduced poverty, expanded access to education, and improved healthcare services, while also solidifying international partnerships and gaining global recognition for its political stability and social progress.

iii. Thirty years of the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women - Beijing, 1995

The Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, was a landmark event in the fight for gender equality, establishing 12 priority areas such as education, health, gender-based violence, and political participation. Over the past 30 years, it has influenced global legislation and policies, promoting women's empowerment and the protection of women's rights.

Thus, in discussions about the important role of women in development and progress, it is essential to recognize the significant advances achieved over the past decades, while acknowledging the challenges that still limit the full potential and contribution of women to sustainable development. Issues such as gender-based violence, political underrepresentation, gender pay gaps, unequal access to education, and employment opportunities are just a few examples of the obstacles that women face in many parts of the world. Furthermore, women bear the majority of unpaid caregiving responsibilities and are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and climate change. These factors demand ongoing efforts to ensure full gender equality and respect for women's rights.

To achieve true progress toward sustainable development, it is essential to address these challenges comprehensively and collaboratively. This requires not only policies and programs that promote gender equality in all areas, from legislation to practical implementation, but also a renewed commitment from all stakeholders, including governments, civil society



organizations, the private sector, and local communities, to work together for a more inclusive and equitable society.

Thus, as we commemorate fifty years of national independence, fifty years of the United Nations' presence in Cabo Verde, and thirty years of the Declaration and Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Declaration), a broad reflection and discussion on women and their contribution to development, both in Cabo Verde and globally, is imperative.

It is in this context that the **First International Forum on Women and the Challenges of Development** is being organized, under the theme “**MORE Participation, BETTER Future**,” to be held in the city of Praia, Cabo Verde, on May 30, 2025.

3. OBJECTIVES

General: To create an inclusive space for reflection, collaboration, and action, bringing together women from various sectors and roles within the country, as well as women from the Cape Verdean diaspora and different nationalities. This forum will explore the intersections between the role of women and socio-economic, political, and cultural progress, while promoting the exchange of experiences and developing joint solutions to the challenges faced by women in diverse contexts.

Specific:

- a) To examine the impact of women's empowerment on economic and social growth.
- b) To identify obstacles and solutions for the full and equal participation of women in socio-political development.
- c) To stimulate dialogue and collaboration among various sectors to drive progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment.
- d) To identify effective actions for promoting gender equality and the inclusion of women in all sectors of society.
- e) To provide women with the opportunity to experience firsthand the lives and experiences of female leaders, using this as an incentive to boost their self-esteem and encourage them to "dream big" and "take more risks." This initiative aims to address a gap that is felt in many areas.

4. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The Forum will be institutionalized, taking place every two years. An official declaration will result from the Forum, summarizing the main conclusions, commitments, and recommendations arising from the discussions held, with the following objectives:

- To summarize the key points addressed, highlighting the most relevant issues.
- To present the commitments made by participants, such as leaders, representatives of governments, NGOs, or international organizations, regarding the topics discussed.
- To propose guidelines or solutions for the challenges identified during the forum.



- To encourage the implementation of measures or the continuation of debates and efforts in specific areas, reinforcing the importance of a collective effort to achieve certain objectives.
- To affirm the values and principles advocated by participants, such as gender equality, sustainable development, or social justice.

5. PARTICIPANTS

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The goal is to have 1,000 participants at the forum, including:

- Women from the 22 municipalities that make up the country
 - b) Women from the Cape Verdean diaspora
 - c) Women from other countries who express interest
 - d) Students in the 11th and 12th grades
 - e) Associations that address gender equity issues
 - f) Community, sports, and cultural associations
 - g) Government members
 - h) National and municipal deputies
 - i) Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and international organizations accredited in Cape Verde
 - j) Municipal Chambers and Assemblies
 - k) Professional Orders and Associations
 - l) Representatives of public and private companies
 - m) NGOs
 - n) National Directories
 - o) National and foreign Development Agencies
 - p) Decentralized State Services
 - q) Religious representatives
 - r) Immigrant communities
 - s) Associations in the diaspora
 - t) Media

6. **VENUE:** Praia, Santiago Island.

7. **DATE:** May 30, 2025

8. FORMAT

The forum will consist of 5 moments:

- A. **Opening Session** presided over by the President of the Republic, Dr. José Maria Neves.
- B. **Inaugural Conference** – Peace and Security – to be delivered by a woman of great prominence.

C. Presentation of three panels and discussions on the following topics:

- I. Media and Female Representation
- II. Economic /Financial Empowerment of Women
- III. Inclusion of Women in the Political Arena as a Factor for Sustainability and World Peace

D. Tribute to 50 Women

A fair, significant, and inspiring tribute that will focus on the first 50 years of independence, guided by pre-defined criteria for selecting the 50 women.

E. Conclusions and Recommendations

F. Closing Session by the Prime Minister of Cape Verde, Dr. Ulisses Correia e Silva.

9. PANELS

1. MEDIA AND FEMALE REPRESENTATION

The media play a crucial role in shaping narratives and perceptions of women's roles in society. However, female representation still faces challenges such as stereotypes, underrepresentation, and unequal opportunities in the media industry.

This panel will discuss the impact of the media on shaping women's images and how female representation can be expanded and strengthened in communication spaces.

Topics for discussion:

- **Women in the media: presence and challenges** – The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in media and the obstacles they face.
- **The construction of the female image in the media** – How the media reinforce or deconstruct gender stereotypes.
- **The role of journalism in promoting gender equality** – The importance of more inclusive and diverse narratives.
- **Women as digital content creators** – How social media and digital platforms enable more women to tell their own stories.
- **Policies and strategies for greater representation** – How to encourage female participation in the media and promote more equitable content.

2. CLIMATE JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women play an essential role in the fight for a fairer and more sustainable world, both in environmental protection and in promoting social equity and opportunities. While they are often among the most affected by climate change, they have also been leading



figures in developing innovative and inclusive solutions—whether in activism, research, sustainable agriculture, or public policy-making.

In sports, female leadership has grown and proven to be a powerful tool for empowerment, inclusion, and social transformation. Sports not only strengthen self-confidence and resilience but also pave the way for gender equality and the breaking of stereotypes. However, challenges persist, from unequal access and recognition to the underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles.

This panel explores how women's empowerment can contribute to climate resilience and women's advancement in different spheres of society, from environmental fields to sports arenas. How can we ensure that women have a stronger voice and more opportunities in these spaces? How do sports and climate justice connect in building more equal and sustainable communities?

Topics for discussion:

- **The impact of climate change on women** – How natural disasters, food insecurity, and forced displacement disproportionately affect women.
- **Climate justice and gender equality** – Strategies to ensure that environmental policies are inclusive and equitable.
- **Access to funding and green technology** – How to guarantee that women have the resources for innovation and climate adaptation.
- **Sports as a tool for empowerment and inclusion** – How female participation and leadership in sports can promote equity, well-being, and community development.
- **The role of women in climate activism and sports** – Inspiring new generations for social and environmental justice through sports and climate advocacy.

3. **WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN POLITICS AS A FACTOR FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND GLOBAL PEACE**

Women's participation in politics is essential for building fairer, more sustainable, and peaceful societies. Studies show that governments with greater female representation tend to adopt more inclusive policies, prioritizing areas such as human rights, education, the environment, and peaceful conflict resolution. However, women still face significant barriers to reaching and exercising political leadership.

This panel will discuss how the inclusion of women in politics can drive sustainable development and promote peace.

Topics for discussion:

- **Women in political leadership: progress and challenges** – The growth of female participation in global politics and the remaining barriers.



- **Public policies with social and environmental impact** – How female presence contributes to more sustainable and inclusive policies.
- **Women in diplomacy and conflict resolution** – The role of women in peacebuilding and mediating global crises.
- **Representation and democracy** – The importance of quotas, incentives, and support networks to increase female political participation.
- **Success stories** – Examples of women leaders who have transformed societies through governance.

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10. SPEAKERS

For the inaugural conference, whose theme is Peace and Security, For the inaugural conference, the theme of which is Peace and Security, we intend to have a woman of international renown.

The speakers for the three panels will be Cape Verdeans or foreigners.

11. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The communication strategy aims to promote the forum, engage the target audience, and foster discussions on the topic, highlighting the importance of women's participation in development.

It will focus on creating a strong presence and attracting a diverse and engaged audience, considering the following elements:

Target Audience: women leaders, professionals, women's organizations, young entrepreneurs, 12th-grade students, university students, NGOs, academics, media, women and associations in the diaspora, representatives of central and local government, international institutions, and the general public.

Communication Channels:

Social Media (Facebook, Instagram): to create events, discussion groups, and share visual content (videos and informative posts).

Official Website: to centralize information about the forum, registrations, and updates.

Media Partnerships: we will engage local and international media to promote and cover the event.

Email Marketing: targeted campaigns to invite participants and inform them about the schedule and speakers.

Press Conferences and Webinars: pre-event activities to generate engagement.



Key Message: we will emphasize the vital role of women in sustainable development, equality of opportunities, and how the forum will discuss solutions to global challenges.

Content and Materials: we will produce interviews, articles, testimonials from female leaders, and promotional videos to highlight the forum's themes and encourage participation.

Monitoring and Feedback: we will use social media metrics and surveys to measure engagement and adjust the strategy as needed.

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12. HONORARY COMMITTEE

Comprising ten members, including prominent personalities from the country, the Honorary Committee's function is to convey seriousness, relevance, and importance to the event, contributing to its visibility and acceptance.

13. ADVISORY COUNCIL

This council will include, in addition to representatives from the promoting entities of the forum, certain personalities who have acted in favor of gender equity and women's empowerment.

14. EXPECTED RESULTS

I. Increased Awareness and Commitment to Gender Equality

The forum is expected to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as drivers of sustainable development, both in Cabo Verde and internationally.

Participants from various sectors will be more informed and engaged in promoting inclusive policies and practices that encourage the full participation of women in socioeconomic and political development.

II. Development of Collaborative Solutions

The forum will create a conducive environment for identifying and developing practical and innovative solutions to the key challenges women face, including barriers to their participation in the labor market, politics, and other areas.

Strategic alliances between Cape Verdean women, the diaspora, and women from other nationalities are expected to be built, resulting in new opportunities for collaboration and exchange.

III. Strengthening of Networks and Cross-Sector Partnerships

The exchange of experiences and interaction among participants from different sectors (government, private sector, NGOs, academia) will strengthen support networks and facilitate partnerships for implementing initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

The establishment of new projects and programs, driven by the cross-sector dialogue fostered at the event, is expected.

IV. Concrete Commitments for Inclusive Public Policies and Business Practices

The forum is expected to result in clear and actionable recommendations for the formulation of public policies and business practices that promote gender equality.

Governments and businesses participating in the forum are expected to commit to implementing specific measures aimed at increasing women's participation in leadership positions and across all sectors of society.

V. Impact on the Diaspora and Local Communities:

The forum is also expected to have a positive impact on the Cape Verdean diaspora by fostering greater involvement of women in creating solutions to the challenges faced by local communities in Cabo Verde and abroad.

The connections established between participants will strengthen continuous dialogue and collaboration between women in the diaspora and those in the country.

15. SPECIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH CAPEVERDEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY



In November 2024, the Cape Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity (ICIEG) will reach a historic milestone: 30 years of existence dedicated to promoting gender equality and defending women's rights in Cape Verde.

Since its creation in 1994, when it began as the Institute for the Status of Women (ICF), ICIEG has been a driving force in the transformation of Cape Verdean society, playing a central role in formulating policies and implementing initiatives aimed at ensuring a fairer and equal society.

16. KEY PARTNERS

1. Organizing Committee for the 50th anniversary of national independence
2. National Assembly
3. Ministry of Finance and Business Development
4. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cape Verde
5. Secretary of State for Business Development
6. United Nations
7. Embassy of the United States of America in Praia
8. World Bank
9. Chambers of Commerce (Sotavento and Barlavento)
10. Town councils
11. Public and private companies
12. Banks
13. Insurance companies
14. Travel agencies

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17. THE PROMOTERS



Founded in 2002 by two Cape Verdean women, **EME - Marketing & Eventos** is the first corporate event planning and organization company set up in Cape Verde.

It also provides consultancy services in communication, branding, research and market studies and publishing for a wide range of clients: national private and state companies, NGOs, Cape Verdean state departments, foreign companies and institutions, universities, embassies and international organizations accredited in Cape Verde.



Cape Verdean association for the fight against gender-based violence - The organization's objectives focus on the prevention and promotion of human rights, education for citizenship, combating and preventing all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, as well as supporting victims of GBV in accessing swift and specialized police, legal and social protection services.

Since its creation in 2015, the Association has developed a recognized work in the fight against the various forms of violence, always seeking to respond to the emerging demands that affect society in this area, despite the scarce economic and human resources, relying only on voluntary service and its members.



Cabo Verde's Association of Democratic Women

It is a political association, not dependent on the party with which it shares its principles, whose main objective is to increase the participation and representation of women in politics.

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The **Association of Business and Professional Women of Cape Verde - AMEPCV** is a non-profit, political or religious association, founded in 1992, which values women in society and in the job market in Cape Verde.

AMEPCV currently represents a universe of 148 professional women and formal business owners.



The **Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Cabo Verde and the Diaspora -(AMES-CD)** is a non-profit organization with no political or religious aims, constituted for an indefinite period of time, governed by its own statutes and published in Official Journal No. 33, Series II, of 14 August 2000.

AMES-CD currently represents a universe of 121 companies led by women who own formal businesses.



The **Cape Verdean Association of Women Jurists (AMJ)** is a non-governmental, non-profit organization set up on July 27, 2000, by a group of visionary women jurists committed to the cause of human rights.

AMJ's fundamental objectives are the promotion and protection of human rights, with special emphasis on women's and children's rights, the realization of gender equality at all levels, as well as the promotion of awareness, dissemination of rights and the denunciation of violations.

AMJ is an active voice in the fight for justice, equality and equity in Cape Verde.



Gender and Family Research and Training Center of the University of Cape Verde - CIGEF's mission is to contribute, through studies, research and outreach activities, to the design, dissemination and implementation of programs, projects and policy measures aimed at the balanced development of gender relations in the social, economic, political, scientific and cultural spheres.



The **National Federation of PAICV Women - FNMP** is the organization of women who are PAICV (Cabo Verde African Independence Party) activists and its main objective is to promote effective equality of rights between women and men, as well as equal participation in all areas of political, economic, social and cultural life and in PAICV activities.

The Federation is a nationwide organization, governed by its own statutes and enjoying organizational and action autonomy, bringing together militant women and friends of the PAICV, operating in strict compliance with the Party's principles and statutes.



MORABI – Cape Verdean Association for the Self-Promotion of Women – established in 1992, is dedicated to promoting and strengthening the social status of Cape Verdean women.

Its mission is to prioritize the inclusion and improvement of women's social standing from a gender perspective, by encouraging their participation in the economic, social, and community development of the country, with the aim of improving family living conditions.

Its vision upholds that the development of the Cape Verdean Nation depends on the inclusion and promotion of women's potential in the economic, social, and political spheres, enabling them to play an active role in all processes of personal and community development.

Main areas of intervention:

- Institutional Strengthening Program
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Program
- Community Development Program



The **Organization of Women of Cabo Verde (OMCV)** is a non-governmental organization, established on March 27, 1981, with a social character, endowed with legal personality and administrative, financial, and property autonomy.

Its vision is the social, economic, and cultural well-being of women, families, and Cape Verdean society as a whole, through the defense and promotion of women's rights integrated into a gender perspective.

The areas of intervention of the OMCV are as follows:

- Health
- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Women's Rights
- Training and Professional Capacity Building
- Legal Advice
- Preschool Education
- New Information and Communication Technologies
- Microcredit
- Income-Generating Activities, Gender, Population, and Development
- Women's Entrepreneurship
- Emigration and Remittances
- Handicrafts
- Environment.



The **Network of Cape Verdean Women Parliamentarians (RMPCV)** is a parliamentary structure made up of all women parliamentarians in office, who are united and influential, working together, regardless of party affiliation, in favor of gender equality, particularly with regard to parity in political participation and leadership positions in the country.



Cape Verdean Association for the Protection of the Family - VERDEFAM, a private non-profit organization founded in 1995.

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The **African Renaissance – West African Women's Association (RAMAO)** is the Cape Verdean branch of the **West African Women's Association (AFAO)**, a regional NGO founded in 2005 and based in Dakar, which promotes the economic status of women in the 15 ECOWAS countries and Mauritania.

Established in 2007 in Cidade Velha, Santiago, RAMAO aims to foster the socioeconomic development of women, reduce poverty, and promote social inclusion in Cape Verde. For 18 years, it has been advocating for women's rights and empowerment, focusing on preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and promoting citizenship, tolerance, and solidarity, particularly among rural and coastal women, as well as immigrant women from West Africa.



Launched on March 21, 2025, Voz do Archipelago is a new name, a new home, a new identity for the fortnightly newspaper Fogo Business, which was born in February 2022 and whose mission was to promote the businesses of the island of Fogo and its economic, tourist and artistic-cultural potential.

Fogo Business has since repositioned itself in the market, transitioning to a daily, online newspaper with national coverage, Voz do Archipelago, owned by Hibiscus Editora, which, reflecting Cape Verde's cultural, social and economic diversity and different political and social currents, will promote democratic debate and inclusion.