

In June 2004, 53 Heads of State and Government of Member States of the African Union, meeting in Addis Ababa, made a Solemn Declaration to commit to Gender Equality



Gender is My Agenda  
**Newsletter**  
Issue number 2 - June 2007

# WATCH MY AGENDA !



**More Campaign Members Monitor Action**  
• WILDAF Ghana will be ready to implement when the protocol is ratified

Obiageli Ezekwesili, Elizabeth Mataka,  
Ashira Migiro, Segolene Royal :

**Women in Power Commit**



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Gender Is  
My Agenda Campaign

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This Session of the Assembly of Heads of State of Africa will be a defining point in the Continent's journey of development. On the one hand the Continent could continue with an African Union, building up the existing political and economic institutions, and making its institutional bodies more efficient. On the other hand, the Continent could choose to emulate the United States of America, creating an African Union Government, with a federal government and the full integration of all political, administrative, economic, and eventually military institutions.

This remains a difficult and complicated question. However, one thing remains clear: the road from Durban to Accra has demonstrated the resolve of women's civil society to continue its work in advocating for gender parity and gender mainstreaming into all the bodies of the African Union. Whichever form of government the Africa continent adopts, the Gender is My Agenda campaign will continue this work and ensure that the promises made to women by the Heads of State, are kept.

The process of advocating for gender mainstreaming began in 2002, at the first Ordinary Session of the newly established African Union, at Durban, South Africa, and since then many great strides have been made by women's networks. The adoption of 'The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa' (the Protocol) and the adoption of the gender parity principle on the African Union Commission in June 2003 were landmark events.

Other significant achievements include the entry into force of the Protocol in 2006, the elec-

tion of 5 women Commissions, the adoption of the 'Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa' by the African Union, in July 2004, and the inauguration of the African Union's Women's Committee in 2006. These successes owe much to the dedication of Professor Konaré,

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who has been a leading figure in overseeing the implementation of the gender parity principle and gender mainstreaming in the African Union.

These successes demonstrate that if an African Union Government is created, there is hope for women. Africa as a continent has shown its support for gender parity by creating an environment, and the

mechanisms, which are conducive to women's active participation in its structures. Now the work must focus on ensuring that individual states keep that commitment and translate theory into practice by investing in women's potential. The commitment of individual states at this point in time will form a strong basis for gender mainstreaming into any future African Union Government. An African Union

Government which allows women to be integrated into the process and structures will be a stronger entity and the removal of some of the existing obstacles to women's empowerment,





such as trade restrictions, will also be beneficial. The economic empowerment of women and their political development can only aid the Continent as a whole.

However, at this point, much remains to be done. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative meeting, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, members of the Gender is my Agenda campaign presented shadow reports, based on the thematic points of the Solemn Declaration, with the intention of monitoring its implementation by African states. These shadow reports proved crucial. At the ensuing Assembly of the Heads, only ten countries fulfilled their promise of presenting reports on the implementation of the Solemn Declaration and on the measures taken to support it at the national level. Many countries have been slow to implement gender related policies. HIV/Aids continues to be a huge problem with women and girls constituting almost 60% of HIV-positive adults in sub-Saharan Africa whilst sexual violence against women, especially in conflict areas, has become even more prevalent.

The Campaign must continue its vital work. It must focus on ensuring that every country keeps its commitment to report on its efforts at mainstreaming gender. It must also highlight the need for resources and support for countries to

establish National Action Plans, with a budgeting strategy included, so that they implement measures such as the Solemn Declaration.

The road from Durban to Accra has seen remarkable advances in the African Union. If the African Union chooses to follow a different path, we, as civil society, must ensure that it does not forget the promises which were made to women.

### AWDF, a Key Partner

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) is a fundraising and grant-making initiative, which aims to support the work of the African Women's movement. The vision of AWDF is "for African women to live in a changed world in which transformed women can live with integrity and in peace." To realise this vision, the Fund's mission is "To mobilise financial, human and material resources to support local, national and international initiatives for transformation led by African women." The Fund began grant-making in October 2001 and by November 2006, had awarded grants worth nearly US\$5,000,000 to 386 women's organisations in 40 African countries.

#### STRATEGIC GOALS

The strategic goals of the AWDF are:

To support the African Women's Movement through grant-making and technical assistance.

To secure adequate financial resources for all aspects of AWDF's work.

To build a viable and effective institution.

To implement a multi-purpose communications strategy.

To develop and sustain a culture of organisational learning.

#### PHILANTHROPIC GOALS

The goals of the AWDF as a philanthropic institution are:

To invest in the efforts of African women who are engaged in innovative efforts to develop their communities.

To increase the amount of resources available to women's organisations and women's projects in Africa.

To strengthen the capacity and infrastructure of women's organisations.

To advocate with other donors and policy makers, for resources for African women.

To establish alliances and build relationships with other grant-making institutions within and outside Africa, individual donors





# Gender, the Next Revolution

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Gender Is  
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As the Heads of States and Governments were preparing to hold the African Union Summit January 22-30, 2007, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, civil society networks concerned with gender issues and the promotion of Women's Rights in Africa were also getting ready for the 9<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting. The agenda: Gender Mainstreaming at the African Union, January 24-25, 2007, in Addis Ababa.

The overall objective of the Pre-Summit was to discuss and review with women's networks and organizations the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). Among other items on the agenda were the presentation and dissemination of shadow reports produced by civil society; the discussion of the reports produced by AU Member States ; the awareness raising campaign among women grass-roots organizations.

The expected outcomes were the monitoring of leaders' commitment; the strengthening of women's associations; the mobilization for the implementation of SDGEA.

• By Sophie Ly Sow

## Pre-summits, a new and good tradition

Pre-summits, civil society summits are becoming a tradition, a good tradition. It is now safe and fair to say that pre-summits do impact on governments, on governance processes and styles, on civil society, on agendas, on media. As a whole, pre-summits do have an impact on Democracy. The Gender agenda has taken on this tradition and intends to make the most of it by pulling political decision-makers into the civil society summits, so that they commit before institutions and women.

Some may argue that this is power abuse. Is it? Let's take a look at the legitimacy of such a demand and the form it takes.

Across the world, women represent half the population and it is no secret that they are far from getting their fair share of the phenomenal development that our societies have witnessed since the industrial revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, since the French Revolution of 1789, since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in December 1948. Let us borrow these foreign and yet universal references.

The industrial revolution was a major shift of technological, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions that occurred in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century in some Western countries. It began in Britain and spread throughout the world, a process that continues. It is the most far-reaching and influential transformation of human culture since the advent of agriculture eight or ten thousand years ago was the industrial revolution of eighteenth century Europe. The consequences of this

revolution would change irrevocably human labor, consumption, family structure, social structure, and even the very soul and thoughts of the individual. They laid the ground for the definition and proclamation of human rights. What drove the industrial revolution were profound social changes, as Europe moved from a primarily rural, agricultural, family-based economy to an urban, capitalist, industrial-based economy. This required rethinking social obligations and the structure of the family. The industrial revolution is the most dramatic change the world has ever undergone and its impact is still being felt by families today.

## Gender Equality Feeds on Political Will

The benefits to mankind are countless and unfathomed. Yet, women, especially in our part of the world are still denied basic human rights. To name only a few of the most common, widely shared and reported rights abused: injustice, violence, rape, mutilation, disease, economic injustice, lack of education.

Some people say that gender struggle is the new form of class struggle. It may be debatable but it has some solid truth in it: women are the largest contingent of the poor,



women are dominated in diverse situations, excluded of power. Shall we say that a revolution is needed? Actually, it is what is occurring. The Gender revolution is taking place in the new modern, contemporaneous ways, away from blood sheds. There are battles to be won but on the legal front, in the fields of minds and behaviors.

The Gender Agenda is the new major transformation force in society, world wide.

Let us carry the analogy further. The industrial revolution is far from over. We see it with perpetual innovation and second breath materialized by the information revolution. And if we simply take a bare look at the different fortunes and rhythms that industrial revolution has gone through, we understand that any social revolution feeds on time and unfolds over generations.

The human rights revolution is a continuing battle. Definitions, redefinitions, revisions, adaptation to cultures and time, to economic resources, all of these feed the momentum that carries on.

The Gender revolution will take time. It touches on the fabric of societies, on the very essence of our civilization and being, our systems, our ways. It takes consensus, institutions, laws, education. All have a stake in it: leaders, lawyers, civil society, private sector, funders, governments, media, men, women, victims, thinkers, doers, activists. Justice for women can only come about if women are represented and duly represented in all and key instances.

In short, it takes political will and sustained campaigns. Whatever results have been acknowledged, they are only steps on the long journey to a fair world. The Gender is My Agenda Campaign will stand for that.



## Recommendations of the Pre-Summit

The following recommendations were made at the meeting:

- More countries should submit reports on the implementation of the SDGEA to the AU;
- The SDGEA should be adopted as the national framework for the promotion of gender equality and equity at the national level;
- The African Union Commission (AUC), through the AUGD, should develop a standardized reporting format and template for the SDGEA. This way, inter-country and inter-regional comparison will be possible;
- The AUGD and the AU Gender machinery such as the African Union Women's Committee (AUWC) need to be better resourced to effectively deliver their mandates;
- The AU Assembly should encourage and create a conducive environment for the Peace and Security Council to appoint more women as Envoys, Representatives, Rapporteurs and Heads of Peace Negotiations;
- The AU Assembly should devote a large portion of the next Annual Report on the SDGEA on actions, policies and programmes that have been undertaken by Member States in the area of girl child education, HIV/AIDS and women, violence against women and ratification and implementation of the Protocol on Women's Rights;
- The AU Assembly through the AUC, should urgently organize a continental conference on Economic Empowerment of African Women to articulate strategies for the elevation of African women;
- The AU Assembly and the AUC should develop frameworks that will promote brain gain as against brain drain through special programmes and incentives that will bring back African experts and expertise, especially in the area of health care delivery and education;
- The Chairperson of the AUC should formally report on the progress made so far on the establishment of the African Trust Fund for Women and concrete steps should be taken to accelerate the implementation of both the AU and the UN Convention Against Corruption as a way of reducing the level of feminization of poverty and economic disempowerment of women in Africa.



# Progress and Setbacks in SDGEA Implementation

**Presented by Ms. Djima Léontine Konou Idohou of WILDAF and Mr. Ajayi Olumide of ALF**

For Progress made on commitments made through the Protocol and the SDGEA:

## ***Ratification, Entry into Force and Extension of the Protocol on Women's Rights and other legal instruments***

About half of the AU Member countries have ratified the Protocol on Women's Rights (39 signatories in 2006 as opposed to 38 in 2005; 18 ratifications in 2006 as opposed to 17 in 2005).

### ***Violence Against Women***

All member states have in place bills or laws protecting women against violence, although in some countries all forms of violence such as sexual harassment, domestic violence or genital mutilation are not covered.

### ***Rights in Marriage***

All the countries have laws or codes that regulate marriage, even if some are outdated and require revision.

### ***Rights of Access to Justice***

All countries have made an effort in the area in providing access and assistance to legal and judicial services, although there are no specific provisions in any of the countries facilitating women access to justice.

### ***Rights to Participate in Decision-making and Political Processes***

There are no laws discriminating women from participating in these processes in any country, but women are still under represented in both processes.

### ***Right to Peace***

Efforts are being made in many of the countries to establish democracy and good governance, by organizing free and fair elections and respecting basic human rights. However, few countries are reducing military expenditure in favor of social development, particularly the promotion of women.

For the Setbacks on:

## ***1. Entry into Force of Legal Instruments:***

Apart from those in Ministries responsible for Women Affairs, other stakeholders including other government actors, expected to implement the SDGEA know very little about the instrument. Religious and customary beliefs still pose as a resistant force to the implementation of the SDGEA. In some countries, these conservative forces include women. Administrative bottlenecks and political complexities are also responsible for hampering the implementation of the SDGEA. Lack of political will, as well as resources (both material and financial) are also setbacks.

### ***Violence Against Women***

No viable and consistent action plans in place  
Capacity is lacking within the judiciary and other law enforcers  
Civil society initiatives are not adequately supported

### ***Rights in Marriage***

The family codes do not adequately address women's concerns, especially in polygamous forms of marriage

### ***Rights of Access to Justice***

The legal assistance systems put in place are not fully operational and accessible to all women, especially those in the rural areas

### ***Right to Participate in Decision-making and Political Processes***

No measures are taken to encourage women's participation in these processes

### ***Right to Peace***

Principles of democracy and good governance are still not fully implemented

Women do not effectively participate in public affairs

Women do not participate fully in peace processes; do not always serve as special envoys and representatives of the AU

Mr Olumide Ajayi recommended the adoption of the **Index of Status of African Women**, which is a political and social index, as a tool for the measurement of performance in governance and economic empowerment.

The following points emerged from the discussions and contributions geared towards improving the booklet:

Child-bearing mortality should also be given due consideration as it is noted that in Africa, every minute a woman dies from child birth

Indicators and statistics are not enough yardsticks, and other qualitative forms of evaluation such as anthropological and traditional means of research should be adopted

Environmental and cultural realities should be taken into account when dealing with health issues

Adult education programmes for women need to gain wider coverage

More emphasis should be placed on poverty reduction issues

More emphasis should be placed on Malaria control

Women should be at the center of activities and programmes related to Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS

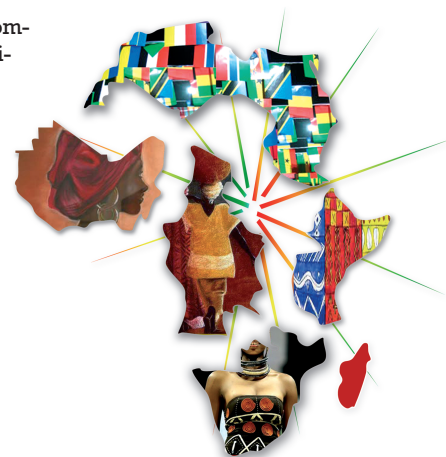
Awareness creation programmes at the grassroots level in countries like Kenya should be looked into

## **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS**

The present phallocratic form of education needs to be reviewed

More recommendations and comments were invited from participants, through the Campaign website, for incorporation into the final version

It was requested that each country which has not yet done so, report on the implementation of the SDGEA, both by government and civil society organizations





### Presentation by Bineta Diop, director of FAS

Ms Diop then gave a genesis of the Campaign and the different processes leading to gender mainstreaming in the AU, from the Beijing Platform for Action, the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa to the SDGEA, highlighting the important roles that women, notably those in the civil society organizations played in these processes, from holding Pre-Summit Meetings to the High-Level Meetings.

Among these processes on the regional level she cited :

- The Durban, (South Africa) meeting of 2002 of Civil Society Organizations where the groundwork for consultation on gender mainstreaming women's effective participation in the AU was laid down
- The launching of the AU in Durban, in 2002, which gave birth to the establishment of the Gender Directorate within the AU, the inclusion of the gender-parity principle in the Constitutive Act of the AU and the request to appoint a commissioner at the AU devoted to the promotion of women's rights
- The Dakar (Senegal) Strategy of 2003, in which CSO recommended a multiple track approach in the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the AU by establishing a working group comprised of CSOs, the Gender Directorate and technical experts
- Maputo (Mozambique), 2003; Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted. Maputo 2003 also saw the election of five women commissioners within the AU.
- The Maputo 2003 meeting which also recommended the amendment of the PAP Protocol to permit two women representatives out of the five parliamentarians and the need for the establishment of a working group within NEPAD to address gender issues
- The SDGEA adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2004 when Heads of State and Government of the AU committed themselves to the principles and ideals of gender equality and equity and taking onboard such crucial health issues as HIV/AIDS
- The Abuja (Nigeria) 2005 and Tripoli (Libya) 2005 meeting during which CSOs urged AU member states to be committed to the implementation of the SDGEA
- The Banjul (The Gambia) Declaration and Resolution of 2006

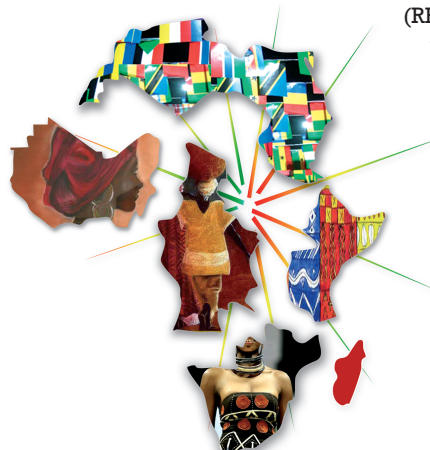
Ms Diop drew attention to the linkages of these processes in their operationality to the Beijing and other international processes.

The Executive Director of FAS then made the following recommendations :

For the AU commissioners to work more closely with women activist groups

- To ensure that the principle of parity is being adequately implemented including at the level of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- To establish an African Trust Fund for Women
- To encourage information exchange between different countries in Africa
- To include women mediators in peace building in Africa.

She ended by paying special homage to the AU, ECA, OSIWA and UNDP for their contribution to the success of the meeting.



## Quotes

- The opening session was chaired by Ms. Gertrude Mongella of the Panafrican Parliament. She *"urged policy makers to take these issues into consideration when developing gender programmes"*. Key recommendations that stood out in her speech were:
  - the need to empower women
  - the need for proper recording and documentation
  - the need to use comprehensible language at the grass-root level
  - the need for the female Commissioners of the AU Commission to play a more proactive role in gender activities and programmes on the continent
  - the need for a periodic or constant review by women of the progress and shortfalls made in the implementation of gender strategies.
- Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, the Representative of ECA called to *"Intensify assistance to member states to mainstream gender concerns in national policies, programmes and strategies"*.
- Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairman of the AU Commission called to *"Urge all African governments to ratify protocol"*.
- Mrs. Hortense Gbaguidi Niamke, Representative of OSIWA called *"For the popularization of the SDGEA so that it is accessible and comprehensible to all stakeholders"* and made a statement on their *"readiness to partner with all activists working on gender issues in Africa"*.
- Ms. Fatoumata Bensouda, Deputy Prosecutor at the ICC reminded the meeting of *"the importance of political will in the implementation of laws and other legal instruments"*.
- Ms. Aminata Diouf Ndiaye, representative of the Minister for Women's Affairs and Gender of Senegal insisted that *"the recommendations of the meeting would be submitted to her government for necessary follow up action"*.
- Ms. Ruby Marks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Africa declared her *"Ministry's support for gender issues in general, and FAS's efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the AU"*.
- Dr. Ajayi Olumide of ALF *"The SDGEA reporting formats should be standardized and the Index on Status of African Women adopted as a monitoring and evaluation tool"*. *"Annual Visitation Teams should be organized to member countries to fully implicate various actors on gender issues"*.
- Mrs. Rosalie Lo of FAS recommended that *"Countries should develop action plans to implement Resolution 1325 and other international mechanisms"*
- Mrs. Djima Leontine Konou Idohou of WILDAF highlighted that *"Proper implementation of the SDGEA can be a positive contributing factor to poverty alleviation"*. *"Administrative bottlenecks in some cases hamper implementation"*. *"The capacity of women concerned should be built"*.
- Mrs. Martha Muhwezi of FAWA called to *"Foster closer relationships with Ministries of Education in the application of best practices"*.

# Key Instruments of Advocacy

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Gender Is  
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**International Women's Day (IWD) which dates back to 1911 is the fruit of a long struggle by women to gain recognition. Although it was only recognized by the UN in 1975, IWD has now become a significant day for women to reflect on their progress, achievements and constraints. From 1911 to date, women have been struggling to for their rights to be seen as equals to men and be justly treated. Much progress has been made; we have seen women in the persons of Bandara Naika, Margaret Thatcher and Angela Merkel, to name a few, who have attained the highest political offices. At the home front we have Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia. Despite these gains, women continue to suffer injustice and inequality. With the increasing number of international conferences and the relentless efforts of civil society movements, there is growing awareness of the fundamental roles women have played and continue to play in society as a whole.**

Thanks to this endeavor, the world at large has come to acknowledge that women's participation in development, democracy advancement and social progress is crucial. The world has also realized that gender equality and women empowerment are both pre-requisites for achieving sustainable development. To this end, the international community over the past years has taken on many commitments later translated into strategic documents such as:

**The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979**  
**Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action (1995)**  
**and the Beijing+5 and Beijing+10**  
**The Dakar Platform for Action 1995**  
**The Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2000**  
**UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (Resolution 1325) 2000**

At the regional level, many declarations and mechanisms to promote gender equality and development came to life. Key among these declarations and instruments are:

**The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women (Protocol on Women's Rights) 2003**  
**The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) 2004**

A great part of the progress to enhance gender equality and equity in Africa is attributable to the relentless efforts of civil society and other pressure groups. The mobilization and advocacy of women pressure groups culminated in the above progressive moves by governments.

**The Durban Declaration (2002)**  
**The Dakar Strategy (2003)**  
**The Maputo Declaration (2003)**  
**The Addis Declaration (2004)**  
**The Abuja Consensual Agreement (2005)**  
**The Tripoli Commitment (2005)**  
**The Dakar Strategic Partnership (2005)**  
**The Banjul Call for Action (2006)**



## OSIWA Stands by the Campaign

• By Nana Tanko, Executive Director

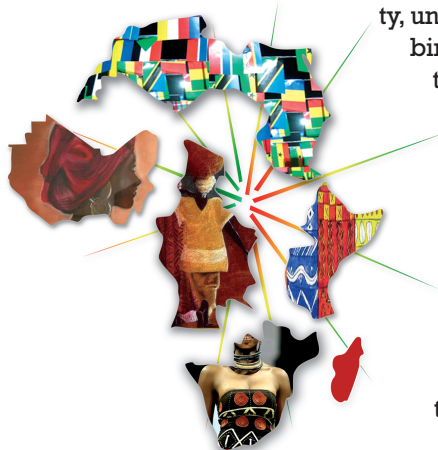
Women still remain one of the constituencies most discriminated against in Africa. To quote Sai, 'the inequitable power relations between women and men, have over the years, created a kind of cage around women which restricts their mobility, ...and their participation in and benefit from development. Women are trapped in a vicious cycle whereby their lower status means they have less opportunity for education and employment, and their lack of education and income security reinforces their dependence on men and their lower status... At a basic level, many men... do not believe that women are equal: they have not seen it in practice because women have not been granted the opportunity to show them.'<sup>1</sup> For a great number of women in Africa, the society remains closed with limited opportunities both within the private and public sphere; and their supposed subordinate status is reinforced by culture, religion, law and family structures. In all areas that contribute to the well being of humans, namely: health, education, economic development, participatory governance and a peaceful environment devoid of violence, *inter alia*, women have remained marginalized and at the receiving end of the worst treatment.

To effectively address these, political will is essential and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa is an instrument that gives strong backing, in addition to others<sup>2</sup>, within the African Union, to tackle the canker of gender inequality. OSIWA is working with Femme African Solidarité (FAS) and other partners on the 'Gender is my Agenda Campaign' to provide the needed impetus from Civil Society for member States to comply with the obligations they willingly accepted to undertake with regards to gender equality, under the Declaration and binding documents such as the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women. As stakeholders in Africa's development meet in Accra at the 9<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, to debate the Union of African States, one of the major goals of the Union, gender parity,

should remain high on the priority list as a major target to be achieved, with all member states committing to set the necessary structures for gender mainstreaming at the national levels to achieve gender equality.

OSIWA, on its part, is wholly committed to the campaign and foresees an Africa where women can hold their place in society on the same footing as men, reach their highest potential and contribute their quota to the development of society. For OSIWA, partnership with other like-minded organizations such as FAS and the 'Gender is My Agenda' Network, the broader CSOs, has become a necessary strategy in facilitating the emergence of an OPEN society where the rights of all individuals, groups and peoples are equally respected and promoted, and the institutional structures ensure their equal participation in a governance process based on the basic principles of the rule of law. It is also necessary that the AU works to open spaces that allow for the effective monitoring of the various commitments by governments, especially given the existing gaps at the national level and for penalties to be provided for non-compliance. We commend the efforts of organizations like FAS and their relentless effort in following up on this process.

The main goal of the Open Society Institute (OSI) and its Network of Foundations and the various International Programs it implements, continues to be that of promoting an open society marked by functioning democracies; respect for the rule of law; respect, promotion and protection of the fundamental human rights of all, based on partnership between governments, the CSOs, as well as, with the Private Sector. Within this broader mandate, we will continue to work towards the promotion of gender equality and equity!



<sup>1</sup> Sai, 'Adam & Eve and the Serpent', The 1994 Aggrey-Fraser Guggisberg Memorial lectures, 50

<sup>2</sup> The decision taken at the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in 2005 to accelerate the implementation of the Solemn Declaration; The adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; The creation of the Social, Economic and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).





Human Rights

## Wildaf Says “Africa, Move On!”

Ghana: Waiting For Ratification



# Profiles of Member Organizations

## **Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA):**

The Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA) was founded and incorporated in 1996 in Dar-Es Salaam, Tanzania, as a network for advocacy on women's issues on the African continent; Ambassador Gertrude Mongella is one of the founder members and its President. The aim of AWA is to create a strong voice for women on the issues of development, peace and equality. Many organizations had already been working in these areas, however AWA's main focus is on advocacy with the following activities: to create a forum for women to raise African women's concerns and influence decisions within major decision-making bodies in Africa; to facilitate contacts, provide a link and bring together people who are committed to speak for and with women in Africa; to promote actions for development, peace and equality with a gender focus; to interpret and analyze social economic and political trends in the continent and their impact on women's advancement and empowerment.

## **Africa Leadership Forum (ALF):**

The Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) is Africa's premier civil society and not-for-profit organization. It grew out of the need to assist in improving the capacity and competency of African leaders to confront development challenges. ALF has been at the forefront, working with and building the capacities of African women for leadership and development, which culminated in the creation of the Africa Women Forum (AWF). The Forum seeks to identify and establish a medium through which it can challenge ideas and create networking opportunities.

## **African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD):**

The African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is an international civil-society organization working throughout Africa to bring appropriate African solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. Recognized by the UN as a model for Africa, its reputation continues to grow and the knowledge and experience of the organization is often called on from as far a field as East Timor, Cyprus and Sao Paolo. ACCORD was founded in 1991.

## **African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS):**

The main objectives of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) are to better compliment the work of the African Commission and to serve the entire African continent more efficiently in its unwavering mission of promoting human rights and democracy through training, action-oriented research, legal service, publications, documentation and networking.

## **African Network for the Campaign on "Education for All" (ANCEFA):**

The African Network for the Campaign on "Education for All" (ANCEFA) is a network aimed at promoting and rein-

forcing African civil society organizations in order to reinforce tools for advocacy and mobilization to facilitate access to free and valuable education for all. It uses the creation of networks and coalitions to help share experience and knowledge and to build stronger partnerships to better influence politics on very critical issues such as HIV/ AIDS.

## **African Women's Development Fund (AWDF):**

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), which was established in June 2000, is the first Africa-wide fundraising and grant-making fund, which aims to support the work of organizations working to promote women's rights in Africa. The AWDF funds local, national, sub-regional and regional organizations in Africa working towards women's empowerment. The objectives of the AWDF are fundraising within and outside Africa, grant making on an Africa-wide basis, communicating the work and achievements of African women's organizations and providing technical assistance to grantees.

## **Association de Lutte contre les Violences Faites aux Femmes (ACOLVF):**

Based in Yaoundé, Brazzaville, Congo, the Association de Lutte contre les Violences Faites aux Femmes (ACOLVF) was founded in 1991 to lead action in support of changed behaviour towards women. Fully recognising that the rate of violence against women is increasing, the association works on the health effects of women victims of violence. It also provides support to adolescents and advises them on responsible sexual behaviour.

## **Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS)**

Since its inception in 1996, FAS has been working to foster, strengthen and promote the leadership role of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution on the African continent. As one of the founding members of the African women's peace movement, the work of FAS is set in the context of a wider campaign to protect and promote women's human rights in Africa. The International Secretariat in Geneva and New York Liaison Office influence and participate in decisions on women at the international level. The Regional Bureau for Africa in Dakar, Senegal advocates for gender equity and mainstreaming in the programmes and policies of regional and national bodies. FAS also works to build the capacity of women's grassroots organizations through solidarity and evaluation missions and advocacy and capacity building training in partnership with the African Union (AU), UN agencies and women's groups. FAS has Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). It is also a member of the New York based NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which monitors implementation of Resolution 1325.

## **Forum for Africa Women Educationalists (FAWE):**

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) was created in 1992 as a response to the slow pace of implementation of Education for All goals in sub-Saharan Africa. FAWE was registered in Kenya as a Pan African NGO in 1993 with a Secretariat in Nairobi. Since then, it has grown into a network of thirty-three national chapters with a wide range of membership that includes women policy makers and male ministers of education who are associate members. FAWE seeks to ensure that girls have access to school, complete their studies and perform well at all levels.





#### **Foundation for Community Development (FDC):**

The Foundation for Community Development (FDC) is a civic organization with no political party affiliation, which seeks to join together the forces of all sectors of society in achieving an ideal for development, democracy and social justice. The Foundation is based on the conviction that poverty is not inevitable; it is the result of a complex mechanism of marginalizing and exploiting the poor; of feeble publicity for scientific and technical knowledge and appropriate technologies; of a system of access to resources which those social strata who do not benefit from education and involvement in formal institutions of society and the economy find hard to use. This series of factors has a negative impact on people's attitude to nature and life and also prevents them from using the resources that are already available for their own benefit in a sustainable way. These structural and psychological obstacles are the root of the poverty that the FDC seeks to combat.

#### **Roll Back Malaria (RBM):**

The Roll Back Malaria (RBM) was launched in 1998 by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank to provide a coordinated global approach to fighting malaria. The RBM Partnership's goal is to halve the burden of malaria by 2010. A key role of the RBM Partnership is to lead continuing advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of malaria at the global, regional, national and community levels, thus keeping malaria high on the development agenda, mobilizing resources for malaria control and for research into new and more effective tools (including a vaccine), and ensuring that vulnerable individuals are key participants in rolling back malaria.

#### **SaferAfrica**

SaferAfrica is an international independent not-for-profit organization operating in Africa and Latin America since 2001. It aims to provide technical assistance and support to continental, regional and national organizations and governments in the South that will assist in the implementation and delivery of key policies in the field of peace, security, safety and good governance. It works with a broad vision of safety, security and development that allows its peace, safety and governance work to act as a multiplying force for sustainable development.

#### **Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA):**

The Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA) programme seeks to facilitate the sharing of information and experience and to encourage collective and coordinated responses for the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It focuses its studies on sensitive unexplored issues related to social aspects of HIV/AIDS in Western Africa.

#### **Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA):**

The Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA) is an opportunity to define new strategies to preserve the dignity of African women. It follows the global objective of taking into account numerous factors that influence the impact of HIV/AIDS activities in Africa including gender, sexuality, community involvement, NGO capacity, communications tools, stigma and discrimination, human rights, and programme sustainability. It is in charge of developing and implementing effective programmes that address these determinants. It seeks to mobilize African communities at the grassroots level and to establish national policies and strate-

gies for AIDS control among women in Africa.

#### **Tunisian Mothers' Association (TMA):**

The Tunisian Mothers' Association (TMA) provides medical and legal services; it receives, sensitizes and advises maiden mothers; it offers a peaceful welcoming space for mothers from abroad and inside the country. The association also conducts operational researches and studies on mothers' conditions, children and the family and organizes national, regional and international seminars, meetings, workshops and forums. Among its major objectives are the mobilization of information and social mobilization all over the country, using interpersonal communication means through home visits and immediate services for rural illiterate and needy mothers. The association organizes multidisciplinary caravans aimed at solidarity creation and counselling of mothers in need.

#### **West African Women Association (WAWA):**

The West African Women Association (WAWA) is responsible for mobilizing women in order to ensure the gender mainstreaming of all programmes related to setting up integration processes on the African continent. Its actions cover all country members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

#### **Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF):**

At the time of the launching of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), the network consisted of representatives from fifteen countries. The membership then reached ninety individual members and forty organizations. WiLDAF's membership now comprises over 600 organizations, 3,500 individuals in thirty-one countries in Africa, with country networks in twenty-six countries. To date, country networks have been set up in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. WiLDAF was set up in recognition of the importance of creating a critical mass to speak with one voice and increase pressure for change to enable women to take their rightful place in society. WiLDAF has been involved in initiating a number of programmes which bring women's rights and advocacy groups together at national, sub-regional and Pan-African levels in various forums.





## Civil Society asks African Finance Ministers to Remember their Children – Don't Forget Education

At last year's Financing For Development meeting in Abuja, African Finance Ministers made great headway on education, committing to develop 10 year plans to ensure that everyone in their country has access to free quality education. The Finance Ministers gathered for a follow-up meeting in Accra in May 30st 2007, Education For All campaigners said there's real danger that progress and momentum might be lost. In recognition of the commitments made in Abuja in May 2006, a short presentation was made on education in the opening session today. Discussions on energy were planned to take the limelight.

Campaigners from the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC), the African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) have united to voice concern, that there will not be enough time to assess the education plans at this meeting. While they welcome efforts by governments to submit long term plans, they feared that some countries were rushed in doing so. The Ministers need a forum to discuss the quality of the plans thoroughly, and identify ways of mobilising funds from both domestic and external source. including a dialogue with the IMF so that education spending is seen not as merely consumption but as strategic and productive economic investment.

Currently, Africa has 38 million children out of school. Millions more are sitting in classes as large as 50-100 being taught half days and with no resources. To meet the

Millennium Development and Education For All goal of universal primary completion, all children need to enter school by 2009 at the latest.

*"We recognise that energy is a serious problem in Africa, but so is education. It is crucial that the plans are ambitious enough to make sure that everyone gets quality education, that teachers are well paid and respected and no child is taught in a class bigger than 40. Finance Ministers play the pivotal role in ensuring that plans are backed by cash"* said Mr Elijah Agnew Mbwavi, ANCEFA.

Every year, millions around the world put pressure on world leaders to keep their promises on Education during the Global Campaign for Education's Action Week. Just a few weeks ago millions joined hands as they demanded Education Rights for Everyone.

*"As partners in education development, we are tracking progress being made on education since Abuja in May 2006.. We're waiting to see the outcome on education in Accra this year"* said Emmanuel Kuyole, Chair of GNECC.

Gorgui SOW, ANCEFA Regional Coordinator  
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# Women, a Strategic Constituency

• Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of ACCORD

Ever since the inaugural “African Women’s Pre-Summit Meeting” held at the ACCORD offices in Durban, South Africa in 2002, the momentum and advances African women’s movement were never to be underestimated. Since that historical meeting, organized by Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS) and the African Women’s Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD), which was facilitated by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), the African Women’s movement has recorded unprecedented successes for Africa. The recent measures to increase the participation of women in leadership, at a continental level, through the adoption by the African Union (AU) of the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the Rights of Women in Africa; the Heads of State Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa; the AU’s policy on equal participation of women in decision making positions has largely been through the sustained efforts of the African Women’s movement.



As we gather for the 10<sup>th</sup> Women’s Pre-summit meeting, which has become an institutionalized forum for dialogue by Women about important issues affecting the continent, the Movement must be commended for its perseverance and its success. This Summit is important for discussing the Union Government of Africa and, as we are re-crafting the continental Governance architecture, the dialogue is an important one.

Africa is taking responsibility for its conflict and is involved in leading and mediating peace efforts. The decline in conflict that we are witnessing on the

Continent is a result of increased African efforts to end African conflicts. Civil society has a complimentary role to play in these efforts and I urge all of us in partnership to strengthen the peace efforts underway through our various institutions. ACCORD remains committed to engen-

dering peace through its activities in responding to conflict on the Continent, **and especially through mainstreaming the value and role of women in such responses.**

Women remain a strategic constituency for the consolidation and sustainability of peace efforts. Therefore their participation in this arena must be strengthened and supported.

From a Peace and Security perspective, we are convinced that the discussions around the Union Government make the role and contribution of women central to the debate. As the most effective and affected of societal entities, women must find a voice in the deliberations on such important issues as food security; the management of economies; education and training; and other priority issues that form part of the Union Government debate. For these and other priorities to be meaningful and implemented, the role of women should find expression beyond the continental stage but at the same time should be strengthened and at regional and national levels.

All advance thinking on governance architectural change would have to include all relevant role players, especially those whose interaction has an impact on women and their role in society. As we move forward and tackle the challenges ahead, we must take stock of current challenges. As we dream and work side by side to evolve a new governmental structure, we must ask some tough questions that will help us act in unison towards the desired outcome.

The theme for the upcoming summit is the Union Government, and the Women’s movement, through the Women’s Pre-Summit Meeting, is once again pioneering dialogue and discussion to contribute to thinking on an important issue shaping the future of our Continent.



• By Aminata Dieye, Coordinator of the Programme of the Pan-African Centre

The Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace, and Development was created by Femmes Africa Solidarité [**Women Africa Solidarity**] (FAS) to capitalize its ten years of work and experience on issues regarding women's involvement in peace processes.

The Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace, and Development tries to be one of the centres of excellence in Africa proposing highly qualifying trainings on peace and development issues with a special accent on gender perspective. Those trainings are first intended for already experienced persons such as those in charge of programmes within organisations of the civil society, researchers or policy makers concerned about consolidating their expertise in specific areas. Programmes given within the framework of the Centre are particularly innovative since this is the first time training and research institution concentrates all its activities around the gender, peace, and development dialectic, thus highlighting the link between these three priorities and the necessity to comprehend the transversal dimension of the gender factor.

Training modules of the Pan-African Centre are based on the following three main concepts: "Gender and Conflict Resolution", "Leadership and Governance", and "Women's Economic Capacity Building and Development." The first concept on "Gender and Conflict Resolution" has been developed with the support of the University for Peace (UPEACE) with which FAS signed a partnership agreement since November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005.

As regards the implementation of its programmes, the Centre has already organized two training courses:

"Gender and Peace building" in July 2006 there were 30 participants (10 men and 20 women) from 21 nationalities  
"Gender and Conflict : Human Rights and Transitional Justice" in April 2007 with 27 participants (9 men and 19 women) from 14 nationalities

The special feature of these courses is based on the diversity of nationalities and competences but mainly on the fact that study cases experienced in these courses are part of results of the study carried out by FAS and entitled :

"Women's Movement for Peace in Africa : 10 years of practical experience". Furthermore, these different courses enabled the production of teaching materials in the form of CDs and manuals that accompany the work of beneficiaries in the field and enable them to extend training at the grass-roots level.

Network weaving enables us to

# Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace, and Development : a tool for peace building in Africa

carry out monitoring and avoid losses. Indeed, monitoring is carried out every three months through exchanges with beneficiaries on their programmes and activities.

As regards the "Women's Economic Capacity Building" constituent, it will be organised with the Empressa Institute based in Spain and begin in September 2007. The constituent will focus on 25 business women from Senegal, Mozambique, South Africa, the DRC, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. This training will enable them to build their capacities and enjoy mentoring at the same time.

Other courses concerning these various topics will also be provided during the remaining months of the year: governance and leadership, on 1325, Media, Conflict, and Gender will be posted on the website of FAS and partner organisations.

Participation in courses of the Centre occurs through file selection and the Centre receives both men and women involved and interested in building their capacities relating to peace and development issues.

In perspective, the Centre will offer a Master course on "Gender and Peace Building" in partnership with the University for Peace and Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar.

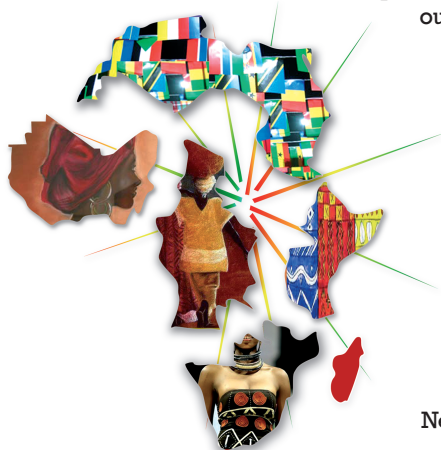
For further information on the Pan-African, please contact us at the following address:

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*Family photo 2nd course on Gender and Conflict: Human Rights and Transitional Justice  
Mbodiène, Senegal, April 2007*





## 2007 Laureate : Rwanda and its Leader, H. E. President Paul Kagame

Every two years the African Gender Award recognizes and rewards an African country and its leader for their outstanding achievements in gender mainstreaming and empowering women. The guidelines for the Award follow the criteria of the SDGEA, which was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union, in Addis Ababa in July 2004.

The 2007 African Gender Award will be presented to Rwanda. H.E. President Paul Kagame was elected by the Award's Selection Committee which was chaired by Hon. Ambassador Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament. The Government of Rwanda has demonstrated its commitment to promoting gender equality in a series of political and legislative reforms, which has made Rwanda an exemplary country, not only for the African Continent but for the entire world.

Rwanda has distinguished itself through its integration of women in the reconstruction process and its fight against gender-based violence. Rwanda is also the only country in the world that can boast 48% of women members in the national Parliament.

The African Gender Award 2007 will be presented during a Gala Dinner. The ceremony will be hosted by H.E. President Wade of Senegal, who received the Award in 2005. The co-laureate of the Award in 2005, H.E. President Mbeki of South Africa, as well as Africa's first elected woman president, H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, are also expected to attend.

The Award also recognizes other stakeholders from the private sector and civil society who are designated from the Award recipient country, for their promotion of peace, gender and development. This year the **Collectif Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe** and the **Banque Populaire pour la Promotion de la Femme** will be honoured at the ceremony.

The African Gender Forum and Award are currently being promoted amongst the private sector and the African Diaspora.



To participate in the AGFA or for further information please contact:

FAS International Secretariat

Tel: +41 22 328 80 50

E-mail: [africangender@fasngo.org](mailto:africangender@fasngo.org)

[www.africangenderawards.org](http://www.africangenderawards.org)



# Gender and Migration

The second edition of the African Gender Forum will feature a dialogue between African women, the African Diaspora, African descendants and other various stakeholders in Africa. The theme of the Forum is Gender and Migration, with the discussions focusing on its economic, social, and political implications.

Regional and international migration plays a critical role in Africa's economic development, peace and stability. Every day, thousands of Africans cross borders and travel overseas in the hope of building a better life. But the impact of this human capital flight is often borne by women who are left behind to care for children. There are also women who migrate independently in search of opportunities abroad.

Africa loses thousands of educated, trained and talented workers to the developed world. The resulting impact of the brain drain faced by health institutions, universities and the societies in general is colossal.

The Forum will bring together women from all walks of life on the continent, including those from remote areas of Africa, to discuss new strategies to mitigate and minimise the negative impact of migration on the continent's development. It will focus on three key issues:

- Women and Migration
- Benefits of Migration: What Added Value for Africa?
- Roles and responsibilities of the various players

The African Gender Forum is organised by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and its PanAfrican Centre for Gender, Peace and Development. The programme is supported by the Governments of Rwanda and Senegal, with expert advice from the International

Organization for Migration. The

project proposal for the

Forum will be submitted to regional organisations including the African Union, and its various organs, NEPAD, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, UNDP and the African Development Bank. The

programme will also be submitted to FAS' development partners including the Governments of Spain, Portugal, Italy and Canada, as well as the European Union.

The Forum will also provide an opportunity to promote the African private sector. Rwandese, Senegalese and other African entrepreneurs will

be able to exchange experiences and best practices and build partnerships which will help them access the global market and maximise their use of tools set by the African Union, AGOA, the Millennium Development Goals, NEPAD and UNDP etc.

Members of the private sector, including the Rwandese Private Sector Federation, the 'Conseil National du Patronat du Sénégal', the 'Confédération National des Entreprises du Sénégal', African Chambers of Commerce, UBS Philanthropy Services and the World Economic Forum, will be invited to attend the Forum.

The private sector event will be hosted by H.E. Mr Macky Sall, Prime Minister of Senegal.



Ndioro Ndiaye, Director of IMO





## Obiageli Ezekwesili

### Education

Obiageli Ezekwesili was born in Lagos, Nigeria. She obtained a B.Sc. in Business Education and a Master of International Law and Diplomacy from the Universities of Nigeria, Nsukka and the University of Lagos, respectively. In 2000, Ms. Ezekwesili was awarded a Masters in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She is also a chartered accountant and begun her career as an auditor and management consultant.

### Work

Committed to the ideals of good governance, development and accountability, Ms Ezekwesili has served on many various boards of national and international organisations which aim to promote these principles. She was a founding member of Transparency International, a German based organisation which promotes transparency and accountability, and formally served as its Finance Director. She also co-founded and co-directed the Centre for Public Policy Priorities in Nigeria.

Ms Ezekwesili pushed for accountability and strict compliance to rules within her governmental roles. As the Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria and head of the Budget Monitoring and the Price Intelligence Unit, she sought to institute reforms aimed at eradicating all corrupt forms of business and improving the efficiency of the management of the public treasury. This has done a great deal to increase the confidence of local and foreign investors and companies. She was later appointed the Minister of Solid Minerals Development, overseeing the reform of Nigeria's mining sector, and served as the Chairwoman of the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

In April 2007, Paul Wolfowitz, the former President of the World Bank, announced that Ms Ezekwesili, who was then Minister of Education, had been appointed the new Vice President for the Africa Region. She will be leading the World Bank's programmes in Africa, which lends around 4.7 billion dollars annually to the continent.



## Elizabeth Mataka

The Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki Moon recently appointed Elizabeth Mataka, a national of Botswana who currently resides in Zambia, as the UN Special Envoy for HIV/Aids for Africa. This is a crucial turning point as not only is she the first African to be appointed to this position, she is also the first woman to be dealing with this issue at such a high level. Perhaps the most inspiring of all is that Ms Mataka is the first person from civil society to take up the position of Special Envoy for HIV/Aids - a recognition of her extensive experience of the issue, gained through her work for non-government organisations.



Ms Mataka's wide experience of the issue of HIV/Aids stems from her work in the private sector, with the government and with regional and international non-government organisations. She trained as a social worker and served as the Executive Director of the Family Health Trust from 1990 to 2003. In 1990 also set up Children in Distress (CINDI) - the first community based project of its kind.

Ms Mataka also helped found the Southern African Network of Aids Service Organisation (SANASO), represented civil society on Zambia's national policy making body, known as the Zambia National AIDS Council, and was appointed Vice-Chair of the Board of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria last April. Ms Mataka was working as the Executive Director of the Zambian National Aids Network (ZNAN), where her work involved channelling Global Funds resources to civil society organisations in Zambia, when she was appointed as Special Envoy to the UN.

Ms Mataka's has always strongly advocated for more to be done to help vulnerable groups in the war against HIV/Aids, particularly women. According to UNAIDS, almost half of adults living with HIV and AIDS globally are women, while in sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls make up almost 60 percent of HIV-positive adults. Encouraging economic empowerment, to help reduce women's financial dependence on men may be one policy which will be considered by the Special Advisor.





## Return Letters

In the previous issue of the newsletter, we had highlighted the profiles of rising women figures: Asha Migiro, recently appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Segolene Royal, candidate at the French presidential election of 2007. We were congratulating them, wishing them well and calling them to be champions of the African women cause. They have both responded. We share extracts of their return letters with you.

### Asha Migiro

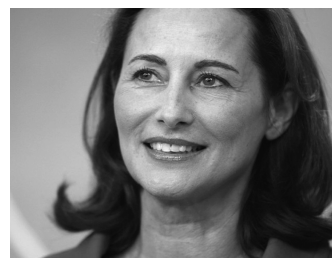
"Thank you for your warm congratulations... on my recent appointment. I would also like to thank you for sharing with me documents on the 9th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union held in January 2007 in Addis Ababa. It is heartening to know that I will be able to count on the support of organizations such as yours in my new role.



By working with our partners, with common vision, I am confident that together we will succeed in meeting the challenges ahead and help build a peaceful, prosperous and just world".

### Segolene Royal

"I wish to thank your organization, Femmes Africa Solidarité, for its support.



Being born in Dakar and having kept ties with Senegal, I have given special attention to Africa in my campaign for presidential election.

As I told Aminata Traoré who was chairing one of my meetings, I am convinced that the development of the African continent will come through African women. They carry most of the burden of farm work, they are dedicated and full of energy. That is why when I become president, I will see that African women's associations receive the resources they need to make their projects come to reality".



**Prior to taking up her post as Special Rapporteur in October 2001, Dr. Melo served as Commissioner responsible for Mozambique with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Dr. Melo is a lawyer by training and has served for numerous years with the Ministry of Justice in Mozambique, in multiple capacities, including human rights responsibilities.**

• By Angela Melo, Special Rapporteur on Women's Human Rights, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

## NGOs and the UN

NGOs to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) enjoy an observer status. In this capacity, they have rights provided for in the rules and regulations of the Commission and obligations established in the instrument they were granted.

Mechanisms created by the African Commission to strengthen its mandate of protecting and promoting human rights in Africa, more particularly that of the Special Rapporteur on women's rights in Africa (SR) need a pro-active work of our partners – NGOs. Women's organisations have demonstrated their mobilisation capacity to defend a cause and their ability to create working synergies with the African Union and UN mechanisms and institutions.

However, it turns out to me that lack of periodic and real information sharing system is a weakness that needs to be remedied. Coordinated actions among NGOs while preserving their independence, specific expertise in each area of women's rights and gender equality issues are collaboration areas to be improved with NGOs.

The Protocol relating to Women's Rights in Africa (the Protocol) came into force since November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Networks must be created at national level, within the territories of States that have not ratified the Protocol for its ratification and implementation;

Those networks should be formed to see to it that the Protocol is implemented based on specialities relating to anticipated areas. Those networks would be the focal point of the Special Rapporteur of Women's Rights in Africa.

The mandate of those networks would be, among others, to share information on the situation of women's rights in each concerned country for the implementation of Protocol.

Sub regional coalitions should be created throughout the continent in each area identified by the latter.

The SR has already designed an institutional framework for the Protocol implementation with the participation of NGOs. Unfortunately, the African Commission has not yet received any funds to operate this mechanism. We hope to have funds to develop these activities.

NGOs should get more involved in the elaboration of periodic reports made by States parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and elaboration of the Protocol. They should point out, where relevant, issues that are not dealt with by States and refer the matter to the Rapporteur.

NGOs should review their status to better adjust their intervention in Protocol implementation.

It would be necessary to have a watchdog, in each country, for the Protocol implementation and send information on its application to the SR.

The SR must be more involved in NGOs' works.

For instance, when she asks for information on some matters, answers take a long time reaching her, and sometimes, there is no answer.

However, some NGOs keep on working with the SR, I thank them. We hope to improve this collaboration.

One last point, some women's NGOs must be specialized within the framework of judicial disputed claims and peaceful dispute resolution. The Commission has no precedent on women's rights violation cases. Cases are not taken to the African Commission or, I think they are not taken to most national courts.

x) I also would like NGOs to specialize in training judges and prosecutors with relation to the Protocol application. I know that Wildaf West Africa did it, so did Wildaf Nigeria and most probably other NGOs. However, I would like Wildaf and others to intervene in other sub regions and evaluate carried out training. I offered the Cape Verde Supreme Court training for magistrates and Prosecutors. The Honourable Presiding judge of the Cape Verde Supreme Court agreed to a training in Portuguese-speaking countries. This initiative will enable Magistrates and prosecutors to acquire knowledge on international precedents and act efficiently when women's rights guaranteed by the Protocol are infringed in Africa.

3) Implementation of the Declaration on gender equality in Africa has not made any significant progress. According to information I got, if it is correct, only ten States or so have presented their reports at the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. This indicates that commitments are not always honoured. It must also be admitted that the number of reports to be presented by our States to regional and international institutions has to be rationalized. Regarding periodic reports, would it not be enough if each Government lived up to its obligations in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Protocol?

Couldn't guidelines for the elaboration of reports on the African Union's Gender Declaration be incorporated in the same guidelines for the Protocol? I think so.

In my opinion, reports presented at the Conference of Heads of State and Government deal with an evaluation by peers. The expected result might be better.

Thank you very much for this interview.

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Gender Is  
My Agenda Campaign



## Ratification state of the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, relating to women's rights in Africa*

• By Angela Melo

Twenty (20) countries have ratified the Protocols: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Comoros, Djibouti, the Gambia, Libya, Lesotho, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, the Seychelles, Togo, and Zambia.

Twenty five (25) countries have signed but not ratified the Protocol: Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Niger, The Arab Democratic Republic of Sahrawi, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Eight (8) countries have not signed: Botswana, Sudan, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Eritrea, Egypt, the Central African Republic, and Angola.

South Africa expressed three reserves. A reserve was expressed in article 4 j) because death penalty was abolished. Another reserve was expressed in article 6 (d) on marriage registration, since marriage must be registered in accordance with national laws in order to be recognized. Another reserve was expressed in article 6 h) relating to equality between men and women as regards nationality of their children, because national laws on citizenship are more favourable for children than the Protocol provision.

South Africa has also formulated positive interpretive declarations. It stated that the definition of violence against women in article 1 f) of the protocol has the same meaning and range as the one provided and interpreted by the Constitution. Article 31, explaining that the Protocol shall in no way breach national laws more favourable to women, has also been interpreted so as to see to it that national laws shall not adversely affect rights guaranteed in the protocol. That is to say the Government of South Africa stated that

women's rights shall always receive the most favourable interpretation, whether in accordance with the Protocol or national laws.

According to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties: "the expression "**reserve**" means a unilateral declaration, however phrased or named, made by a State when it signs, ratifies, accepts or approves a treaty or subscribe to it, through which it aims to **exclude or modify** the legal effect of some provisions of the treaty in their enforcement to that State"<sup>1</sup>. According to the doctrine, an **interpretative declaration** "is a unilateral declaration, however phrased or named, made by a State, through which it aims to specify or clarify the meaning or range of the international treaty or some of its provisions"<sup>2</sup>.

I am of the opinion that the appellation "reserve" given here to comments made by South Africa needs to be clarified. It should be pointed out that reserves formulated by South Africa are of a positive nature, because though they aim to modify the legal effect of the Protocol, they have the effect of giving more rights than the Protocol does.

In addition, expressed reserves comply with article 31 of the Protocol, pursuant to which no provision of the Protocol shall affect provisions that are more favourable to women's rights included in national legislations of States or in any other regional, continental or international conventions, treaties or agreements applicable in those States.

For these reasons, the three reserves expressed by South Africa and referred to in paragraph 5 of this report should be lifted or converted into interpretative declarations.

<sup>1</sup> The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, art2.

<sup>2</sup> Pellet, Alain, in « Comments at The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties» Comments put together by Erika Grossrieder (**Reference publications:** Malanczuk, Peter, Akehurst's modern introduction to international Law, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2002, Routledge, London ; Cahier du séminaire de Droit international public [**Notebook of the Seminar on Public International law**] , prof. Distefano, Geneva University, 2001-2002 ; Notes de séminaire de Droit international public, [**Notes of the Seminar on Public International Law**] prof Chetail, IUHEI, Geneva, 2003)







## SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA

We, the Heads of State and Government of Member States of the African Union, meeting in the Third Ordinary Session of our Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 6-8 July 2004 :

Reaffirming our commitment to the principle of gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (1) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as other existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women's rights, including the Dakar Platform for Action (1994), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW

- 1979), the African Plan of Action to Accelerate the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action for the Advancement of Women (1999); the Outcome Document of the Twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000); UN Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security; and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); Standing by our Decision on gender parity taken at the Inaugural Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa implemented during the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, 2003 through the election of five female and five male Commissioners ;

Noting with satisfaction that our Decision on gender parity is a historic achievement that does not yet exist in any other continent or regional organizations ; Re-affirming our commitment to continue, expand and accelerate efforts to promote gender equality at all levels ;

Determined to build on the progress that we have achieved in addressing issues of major concern to the women of Africa ;

Taking cognizance of the landmark decision to adopt the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa during the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, 2003 ;

Noting the decision of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to transform the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) into the African Union Women's Committee (AUWC), which will be located in the Gender Directorate and serve as an Advisory Body to the Chairperson on

Gender and Development ;

Recognizing that major challenges and obstacles to gender equality still remain and require concerted and collective leadership and efforts from all of us including networks working on gender and development ;

Deeply concerned about the status of women and the negative impacts on women of issues such the high incidence of HIV/AIDS among girls and women, conflict, poverty, harmful traditional practices, high population of refugee women and internally displaced women, violence against women, women's exclusion from politics and decision-making, and illiteracy, limited access of girls to education ;

Aware of the policies and programmes we have put in place to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as the current challenges in this campaign ;

Concerned that, while women and children bear the brunt of conflicts and internal displacement, including rapes and killings, they are largely excluded from conflict prevention, peace-negotiation, and peace-building processes in spite of African women's experience in peace-building;

Aware of the fact that low levels of women's representation in social, economic and political decision-making structures and feminisation of poverty impact negatively on women's ability to derive full benefit from the economies of their countries and the democratization process;

Aware of the digital divide between the North and the South, men and women and the role of information telecommunication technologies (ICTS) in the advancement of the gender issue as stated in the e-gender Forum Declaration of Tunis, May 2004 in preparation for the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) 2005;

HEREBY AGREE TO :

1. Accelerate the implementation of gender specific economic, social, and legal measures aimed at combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic and effectively implement both Abuja and Maputo Declarations on

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## SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA

Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Disease. More specifically we will ensure that treatment and social services are available to women at the local level making it more responsive to the needs of families that are providing care; enact legislation to end discrimination against women living with HIV/AIDS and for the protection and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, particularly women; increase budgetary allocations in these sectors so as to alleviate women's burden of care ;

2. Ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace process including the prevention, resolution, management of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa as stipulated in UN Resolution 1325 (2000) and to also appoint women as Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the African Union ;

3. Launch, within the next one year, a campaign for systematic prohibition of the recruitment of child soldiers and abuse of girl children as wives and sex slaves in violation of their Rights as enshrined in the African Charter on Rights of the Child;

4. Initiate, launch and engage within two years sustained public campaigns against gender based violence as well as the problem of trafficking in women and girls ;

Reinforce legal mechanisms that will protect women at the national level and end impunity of crimes committed against women in a manner that will change and positively alter the attitude and behaviour of the African society ;

5. Expand and Promote the gender parity principle that we have adopted regarding the Commission of the African Union to all the other organs of the African Union, including its NEPAD programme, to the Regional Economic Communities, and to the national and local levels in collaboration with political parties and the National parliaments in our countries ;

6. Ensure the active promotion and protection of all human rights for women and girls including the right to development by raising awareness or by legislation where necessary ;

7. Actively promote the implementation of legislation to guarantee women's land, property and inheritance rights including their rights to housing ;

8. Take specific measures to ensure the education of girls and literacy of women, especially in the rural areas, to achieve the goal of "Education for All" (EFA) ;

9. Undertake to Sign and ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa by the end of 2004 and

to support the launching of public campaigns aimed at ensuring its entry into force by 2005 and usher in an era of domesticating and implementing the Protocol as well as other national, regional and international instruments on gender equality by all States Parties ;

10. Establish AIDS Watch Africa as a unit within the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission who should render annual report on HIV/AIDS situation in the continent during annual Summits; and promote the local production of anti-retroviral drugs in our countries ;

11. Accept to establish an African Trust Fund for Women for the purpose of building the capacity of African women and further request the African Union Commission to work out the modalities for the operationalisation of the Fund with special focus on women in both urban and rural areas ;

12. Commit ourselves to report annually on progress made in terms of gender mainstreaming and to support and champion all issues raised in this Declaration, both at the national and regional levels, and regularly provide each other with updates on progress made during our Ordinary Sessions ;

13. We request the chairperson of the African Union Commission to submit, for our consideration, an annual report, during our ordinary sessions, on measures taken to implement the principle of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and all issues raised in this Declaration both at the national and regional levels.

