



## 12<sup>th</sup> AFRICAN WOMEN'S AU PRE-SUMMIT CONSULTATION SOLEMN STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We, representatives of African women's organisations and civil society meeting under the umbrella of "Gender Is My Agenda Campaign" on the occasion of the 12<sup>th</sup> African Union (AU) Pre-Summit African Women's Consultation in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt from June 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008, convened by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) with the support of the African Union Commission (AUC), AU Gender Directorate (AUGD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement (SMWIPM), Egyptian Women Business Association, Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), ActionAid International, Department For International Development (DFID), African Development Bank (ADB), African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland;

**Appreciating** the support of H.E Suzanne Mubarak, the first lady of Egypt to the African women agenda, and for her setting the tone of the pre-summit meeting through her keynote address that elaborated on gender challenges, the imperative of expanding women's capabilities, freedoms and dignity, and the role of social protection in promoting and sustaining this empowerment;

**Building** on past achievements of the African women's movement to keep women's priorities on the agenda of the African Union and **appreciative** of the AU's support and acknowledgement of the significance of the African Women Pre-summit consultation mechanism in engendering the Summit agenda;

**Appreciative of the willingness** of the Heads of States and Governments to continuously improve on the livelihood of African citizens through various landmark initiatives, policies and programmes at the continental, regional and national levels;

**Recalling the commitments** of the AU Heads of State and Government to gender equality and women's empowerment as stipulated in the *AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003), *The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* (2004) and other instruments and decisions of the AU;

**Noting and appreciating** the sustained commitment of Africa to gender parity as reflected in the elections of 5 female commissioners in January 2008, the decision to develop operational modalities for the African Women's Fund as provided for in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, and the mandate given to the African Union Women Committee to prepare the Chairpersons report on the SDEA;

**Commending** African initiatives to resolve conflicts across the continent, and significantly, the appointment of a distinguished and eminent African woman-Her Excellency Graca Machel-to the AU Mediation Team in Kenya;

**Cognisant** of our work and commitment to monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of *AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003), *The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* (2004), and other decisions of the AU, commend the ongoing work of the various focal points in supporting Member States in the implementation of these commitments and preparation of their reports as provided for in the SDGEA;

**Appreciating the decision** of the Heads of State and Government to devote their 12<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit to theme of Water and Sanitation which are critical to women livelihoods, economic production and the overall objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and the SDGEA;

**Urge** the 12<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit to adopt the following recommendations:

## **PEACE AND SECURITY**

1. Recognising that peace and security is a prerequisite for sustainable development the meeting urges the African Union to:
  - a) Nominate women mediators and/or special envoys to on-going peace negotiations and conflicts situations in Darfur, Somalia and Zimbabwe in line with the gender parity principle and the UN Res. 1325;
  - b) Ensure increased representation of women in decision making on the prevention, management and transformation of conflicts at the national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms;
  - c) Engendering African capability for peace support operations, in particular to take concrete measures to boost recruitment and retention of women in African security and defence forces, and ensure gender sensitive readiness for all Africa troops before deployment; and
  - d) Prevent impunity and strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms to protect women and girls against violence, particularly during conflicts, ensure prompt prosecution of any perpetrators of such violence, and provide for specialised programmes of support to deal with specific needs of women and children;

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

2. To sustain the progress made in expanding the protection of women's human rights we urge the AU Members States to:
  - a) Encourage Member States that have not ratified all the women human rights instruments such as *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, the Additional Protocol to the African Charter, and the SDGEA, to do so promptly, and to promulgate policies and develop structures for their full and effective implementation;
  - b) Extend cooperation to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of women in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in her mandate to monitor the implementation of Africa's commitments on women's rights at local and national levels;
  - c) Note the regional instruments that were developed in Africa and urge African Leaders to take immediate steps to implement the articles contained in the Ouagadougou Action Plan, adopted during the Ministries Conference on Migration and Development in 2006;
  - d) Take all necessary steps to curb the horrendous of human trafficking especially for exploited labour and the attendant violation of victims particularly of women and children, and to take urgent measures to prevent this horrific crime by involving the private sector as partner to enable them to play their corporate social responsibility role; and
  - e) Support the African women movement and its campaign for gender equality.

## **HEALTH**

3. Noting that the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDs and the persistence of social, cultural and economic factors put women and girls are at higher risk of contracting infection, encourage the AU Members to realise their commitments in the light of the Maputo declaration on Malaria, HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and other related infectious diseases, and to:
  - a) Take all measures to ensure the delivery of efficient health services to women at the local and national levels;
  - b) Avail adequate financing and resourcing for women specific health issues and commodities particularly in emergency situations;
  - c) Enact and effect laws that protect women living with, or affected by, HIV/Aids from discrimination;
  - d) Create mechanisms to engage the full and meaningful participation of affected women in all phases of health care delivery; and

- e) Within the context of enhancing the health status of Africa to vigorously promote girls' education.

## **EDUCATION**

- 4. Although significant progress has been made in the girl-child's access to schooling, there are enormous challenges relating to retention and completion of studies at higher levels. We urge the AU to recommit itself to achieving the 6 objectives of Education for All (EFA) as well as the Millennium Development Goals. More specifically, we urge this summit to:
  - a) Enact, reinforce or amend domestic legislation in accordance with AU standards in the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* and the additional Protocol to the African Charter to protect girls from violence in schools and set the minimum ages of both marriage and consent for women and men at 18 years;
  - b) Allocate a minimum of 20% of national budgets to education, with at least 3% dedicated to alphabetization and non-formal education; and
  - c) Reinforce gender perspective in education.

## **LAND AND PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES**

- 5. Recognising the effort of the Heads of State and Government in implementing the Declaration of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) of 2006 through the African Union's (AU), United Nation's Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Africa Development Bank (ADB) led ***Africa Land Policy and Land Reform Framework and Guidelines*** particularly commitments towards securing African women's rights to land and productive resources in Africa, we call upon the AU to ensure that the women's rights are integrated in the African Land Policy and Land Reform Framework and Guidelines, and to:
  - a) Mandate the AUC, in cooperation with the women's movement to convene a continental round table on women's access, control and ownership of land/natural and productive resources in Africa in 2008, to discuss and develop indicators and benchmarks for the AU Land Framework and Guidelines before their adoption by the AU Summit in 2009;
  - b) Mandate the gender directorate to mainstream women's rights into the Draft AU Land Framework and Guidelines; and
  - c) Urge the Member States to prioritise women's rights in the ongoing land reform process in their countries.

## **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

- 6. Recognising the centrality of economic empowerment of women to Africa's development agenda, the meeting urges the AU Member States to:
  - a) Create enabling environment including legislative, policy and administrative frameworks to promote and protect women's rights to engage in economic activities at all levels;
  - b) Cooperate with the private sector to avail capacity building opportunities to women entrepreneurs, including information and skills around access to credit, licensing, product development and markets;
  - c) Facilitate the launch of the AFRICAN WOMEN'S TRUST FUND as specified in the SDGEA and the recommendations and outcome of the AU Continental Conference on Economic Empowerment of African Women within the context of integration, held in Lilongwe Malawi, on 17-19<sup>th</sup> March 2008; and
  - d) Tap into the Egypt best practices of Social development funds and adapt these in the efforts to promote a culture of entrepreneurship among African women.

## **THE SECOND HEADS OF STATE GENDER SUMMIT**

7. Noting the significance of regular monitoring and review of progress, we commend the Members of the African Union that have submitted their reports on SDGEA, and call on the AU to:
  - a) Mandate the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) to initiate a process towards the convening of the Second Heads of State and Government Gender Summit for July 2009, to review and further strengthen African commitments to gender equality as provided for in the SDGEA and other related instruments; and
  - b) Urge Member States that have not submitted their reports on the status of gender mainstreaming to do so promptly and ahead of this summit.
  
8. The 12<sup>th</sup> African Women AU Pre-Summit Consultation also deliberated and made recommendations on the current crisis situations in Zimbabwe and Sudan and other issues:
  - a) **ON THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN ZIMBABWE:** we call on the AU to:
    - i) Support the decision of the Gender is My Agenda Network to undertake a Women Solidarity mission to Zimbabwe in support the women of that country after the Presidential Run-off scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008;
    - ii) Undertake all measures necessary to:
      - Protect women and girls that were affected and displaced following the violence that engulfed the country after the March 2008 elections;
      - Facilitate humanitarian access to people in need of basic livelihood items like food, shelter and medical services, and in this regard to call on the Government of Zimbabwe to review its ban on humanitarian organizations operating within the country;
      - Call on all leaders in Zimbabwe, and all other actors involved from the regional and the international community to commit themselves to peaceful resolution of the crisis in that country; and
      - Urge the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure the safety and protection of all its citizens and guarantee their rights to participate in all aspects of life without fear.
  - b) **ON THE DARFUR SITUATION:** we call on the African Union to:
    - i) Immediately intervene to end the dispute between Sudan and Chad, and ensure that the peace accord signed between the two governments in Dakar in March 2008 is fully implemented;
    - ii) Demonstrate leadership in supporting the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement;
    - iii) Ensure the involvement of women in the Darfur peace process as equal participants in line with the SDGEA and the UN Res. 1325;
    - iv) Support UNAMID in the fulfilment of all the aspects of its mandate, especially on civilians' protection, particularly for women and children;
    - v) Urge the Government of Sudan to implement and institutionalize the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, and to sign and ratify the additional protocol on women's rights.

**c) ON OTHER ISSUES**

Appreciating the initiative by Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia, to convene together with Her Excellency Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, an International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security, in March 2009, in Monrovia, Liberia, we pledge our support to the women of Liberia for their continued commitment to peace building and call on the African Union to:

- i) Provide all necessary arrangements to ensure the success of the Colloquium.

**Gender is My Agenda Campaign Secretariat,  
Sharma El Sheikh, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008**