

The Arusha Declaration

Arusha, 22 October, 1998

The delegation of Burundian women representing different ethnic groups, different backgrounds and different political parties, made the following declaration of their common position at the meeting in Arusha:

*In view of the important role of women in Burundian society;
Convinced of the importance of women's contribution to the restoration of lasting peace in Burundi; Noting that the bitterness of the social and political crisis that has prevailed since the country achieved independence has resulted in massive violations of even the most elementary of human rights; Convinced that the negotiations in Arusha represent a favourable context for establishing frank and sincere dialogue between the partners in Burundi; The women of Burundi undertake:*

- *to contribute to the favourable progress of the talks among Burundians;*
- *to work for the adoption of new attitudes and a change in behaviour by Burundians, with the aim of fostering a spirit of tolerance and mutual confidence among all the social elements in the country;*
- *to promote greater awareness among the various leaders in Burundian society to remove the obstacles to the peace process, in particular by the immediate cessation of hostilities and the lifting of the embargo;*
- *to influence and pressure those involved in politics in Burundi to ensure that the peace process is brought to a conclusion as rapidly as possible in view of the distressing conditions in which the people of Burundi are living;*
- *to strengthen the national Peace Committees so as to break away forever from the country's sombre past;*
- *to build up co-operation with the International Network of African Women.*

The women's delegation fervently hopes that the general agreement on the right use of power that will emerge from these negotiations will:

- *foster peace and the social well-being of the Burundian people;*
- *lead to reconstruction and rehabilitation;*
- *enable the repatriation and resettlement of refugees, displaced persons and those forcibly transferred;*
- *help each individual victim of the crisis in Burundi.*

The delegation appeals to all those who long for peace to support the efforts being made to restore peace to Burundi.

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