



**12th African Union Pre Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender
Mainstreaming in the African Union
June 21-23 2008
Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt**

PRESS RELEASE

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**Integration of Gender in the African Union
Forty african civil society organisations meet in Sharm El Sheikh**

The network of the Campaign "*Gender is My Agenda*", organized by forty African civil society organisations, in collaboration with the Directorate of Women, Gender and Development of the African Union, Action Aid, the Association of Women Business Egyptian women and their partners are organizing the 12th Consultative Meeting of civil society on gender mainstreaming in the African Union from 20 to 22 June 2008, in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt on the sidelines of the African Union Summit, scheduled from June 24 to July 1st 2008.

The meeting will be chaired by Her Excellency the First Lady of Egypt, Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, president of Suzanne Mubarak Movement International Peace Women, and Mrs. Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament.

The first results of a study on "Best practices of African women in mainstreaming gender in Africa", sponsored by the network of the Campaign will be exposed. The study was conducted by two high-level consultants, Dr Monica Juma of Africa Policy Institute and Dr. Olumide Ajayi, Africa Leadership Forum. The aim is to develop a training manual and advocacy manual for African women on Gender.

Member organizations of the Campaign will also take stock of the implementation of the Solemn Declaration of the African Union on equality between men and women in Africa, adopted by Heads of

State and Government in July 2004, in Addis Ababa. Reports will also be given on issues such as health, strengthening women's economic and human rights, education, good governance, peace and security.

New issues related to women's rights to health, availability of water, land rights and human trafficking, among other issues will be discussed by the participants.

Members of the Campaign will also take this opportunity to launch a strategic reflection on the mobilization of resources for this campaign and the joint programme of work. It must be remembered that the campaign "Gender is My Agenda" which is coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarity (FAS) is a network of four civil society organizations in Africa. Launched in June 2006 in Banjul, it seeks the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on equality between men and women in Africa and all instruments for promoting women's rights.

Participants will also discuss the establishment of a Fund for African women's economic empowerment; gender mainstreaming in the African Union; the debate on the Government of the Union which idea was launched in Accra in June 2007; and the suggested reforms of the African Union, in the light of conclusions and recommendations reached by the high-level experts of the African Union Commission.

A session devoted to the situation in Darfur has also been included in the programme and it will feature the Sudanese women's Interim Steering Committee. This committee was put in place after the recommendations of the African Women's Consultation on Darfur held in Addis Ababa, in January 2008. This was an initiative of FAS.

Also, under the chairmanship of a representative of Madame Vebah Gayfloor, Minister of Women of Liberia, the meeting will hold a session on the continued preparations of the International Symposium on Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Liberia, scheduled for 2009.

The Selection Committee for the African Gender Award will also meet at the Pre-Summit to evaluate the 2007 programme as well as set the agenda for the 2009 award. In December 2007, the award was given to President Paul Kagame of Rwanda for his political commitment to women of his country. Earlier in May 2005, the award was given to Presidents Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, for their contribution to the adoption of the principle of parity in the African Union and its organs and their involvement in favour of the adoption of the Solemn Declaration on equality between men and women in Africa.

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FAS is an international organization of women enjoying consultative status with ECOSOC, which works to strengthen the capacity of African women so they can assume a leadership role in peace building and conflict resolution. FAS programs particularly apply in countries ravaged by wars and in the regions of the Mano River and Great Lakes. Similarly, FAS works closely with subregional and regional bodies such as ECOWAS and the African Union to ensure greater involvement of women in decision-making processes for peace and development

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