STATEMENT BY THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA ON THE OCCASION OF THE “INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY, 08 MARCH 2011”


The theme for this year’s International Women’s Day is: “Equal Access to Education, Training, Science and Technology: Pathway to Decent Work for Women” and it is within this framework that I wish to place the celebration under the spirit of the effectiveness of all Women’s rights.

The theme currently under analysis is closely related to that discussed during the 55th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. It is my hope that relevant recommendations ensuing from the said Session will be taken into account by the States Parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights for the review and strengthening of the laws, policies and action plans adopted by them, in the education and training of girls and women.

The States Parties will also need to allocate more budgetary resources to the national and regional programmes which are implemented to enhance accessibility to science and technology by women and girls to enable them achieve their potential.

The States Parties should also show greater commitment to the fight against discrimination and against all forms of abuse suffered by women and girls, in particular in the workplace, and which are likely to constitute a obstacles to their equal access to economic opportunities and to promotion.

In the past weeks, several North African countries have been the theatres of popular uprising and social upheavals which have given rise to large scale
displacements of populations, with serious humanitarian consequences on the working and living conditions of women and children. The Authorities responsible for conducting the current transition processes are under the obligation to provide urgent solutions adapted to their specific needs.

I invite the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to see to it that women leaders are included in the mediation panels to enable them ensure that the needs of women in the countries in crisis are taken into account and that the technical expertise of women leaders is fully utilised in the peaceful transformation of our societies.

Finally, it is important to highlight that this year numerous African countries are preparing for general elections. I would like to seize this opportunity to urge the States Parties to provide a conducive environment for the organization of free, transparent and fair elections, capable of guaranteeing the participation of women in the electoral process, and their greater representation in elected positions and positions of responsibility, pursuant to the commitments made under the Maputo Protocol and the Solemn Declaration of the Heads of State on Gender Equality in Africa.

Long Live the International Women’s Day

Long Live the African Woman in her tireless efforts for the development of the Continent.

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Done in Banjul, 08 March 2011