



PRESS RELEASE

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Civil society calls for women to be included in the African Union Government 23rd – 24th June 2007, Accra, Ghana

As part of the ongoing 'Gender is My Agenda Campaign,' aiming to mainstream gender in the African Union (AU), the women's civil society networks have organized the 10th AU Pre-Summit Consultative meeting which will take place in Accra, Ghana, on the 23rd and 24th June. The meeting will precede the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union and will be the 10th in a series of consultative meetings of civil society networks concerned with gender issues and the promotion of women's human rights in Africa.

The Accra Summit of the AU Heads of State will be particularly important for the future of the African Continent as the discussions will be focusing on the possible creation of an 'African Union Government'. Although some countries would prefer to strengthen the existing structures of the AU to make them more efficient, others are calling for the creation of a federal government with the full integration of all the state's political, economic, and even military institutions. A 'Study on An African Union Government: Towards the United States of Africa' was presented at the 7th Session of the Assembly at Banjul, Gambia, in July 2006. At the 8th Ordinary Session, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Heads of State agreed to dedicate the Accra Summit, in June 2007, to a 'Grand Debate on the Union Government'.



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The key objective of this meeting for civil society members of the campaign is therefore to ensure that women are fully included in the discussion and consultation process of this possible integration, not only at the higher levels of government, but also at the grassroots levels.

The Pre-Summit conference will also build upon the positive steps made at the 9th Pre-Summit Consultative meeting. The women's networks will be advocating for the full and effective implementation of the Solemn Declaration, which calls for gender parity and gender mainstreaming, into the mechanisms of the African Union, and its member states.

At the Pre-Summit conference in Addis Ababa, the organizers of the 'Gender is My Agenda Campaign' had defined thematic focal points, addressing the various aspects of the Solemn Declaration, as a means of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on its implementation. Members of civil society were asked to evaluate and report on the progress of each theme through the presentation of a shadow report. Some of the themes addressed in the context of gender equality were: governance; peace and security; human rights; health; education; and economic empowerment. The compilation of these shadow reports was vital as only 10 reports were presented by member states at the AU Summit in Addis Ababa.

The members of the Gender is my Agenda Campaign hope the meeting in Accra will facilitate a dialogue amongst civil society members, thus strengthening and expanding the networks working in solidarity for peace, gender equality and justice in Africa. It is also hoped that the Pre-Summit meeting will provide a forum in which to revise future strategies on gender mainstreaming in order to push forward the gender agenda at the regional level and to ensure that women and a gender perspective are integrated into the discussions about the 'African Union Government'.

For more details about FAS, please visit our website www.fasngo.org.
For more details on the work of the African Union visit www.africa-union.org

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FAS is an international women's organisation with the ECOSOC Consultative Status working to empower African women to assume a leadership role in peace building, and conflict resolution. FAS programmes operate mainly in war-torn countries such as the Mano River and the Great Lakes regions. FAS also works closely with African sub-regional and regional organs 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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