



## Femmes Africa Solidarité

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### INFORMATION NOTE

#### FAS Elected to AU Economic Social and Cultural Council

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) was elected to the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union (AU) on 31 October, 2007 at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. FAS ran as a candidate during the elections for continental civil society organisations.

A total of 270 organisations from 44 African countries applied to run in the elections. FAS was elected as a member of the General Assembly, the highest decision-making body of the ECOSOCC, along with seven other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that work at the continental-level. After being short listed as an election candidate in early October, FAS presented its election platform prior to the ballot-casting. Julienne Ondziel, former President of the Executive Board of FAS, led the FAS delegation.

This election is an important victory for FAS and its network. Participating in the ECOSOCC will ensure that the voices of women, particularly those from the conflict zones in which FAS works, will be brought to the African Union level. Women can thus access the AU and contribute their input to continental-level policymaking.

The ECOSOCC is holding elections for a total of 150 NGOs and civil society organisations that work at the national, regional, continental levels and in the African Diaspora.

The ECOSOCC is a consultative body composed of representatives from different social and professional groups of AU Member States. Its primary purpose is to ensure the participation of African civil society in the AU policy process. The membership of the Council will also reflect its core principle of gender equality. The ECOSOCC was formed according to Article 22 of the Constitutive Act of the AU (adopted in 2000). Its Statute was adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2004. The first set of popularly elected members (to replace the interim Council members) will be elected before the end of 2007.

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