



Femmes Africa Solidarité

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INFORMATION NOTE

New AU Commissioners and Chairperson Elected in Addis Ababa

During its 10th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government elected its second Chairperson of the AU Commission. Mr. Jean Ping, Foreign Affairs Minister of Gabon, was elected on 1 February with a two-thirds majority by the Assembly. Mr. Ping will serve a four-year mandate as Chairperson.

Mr. Ping served more than 30 years in the government in Gabon and occupied numerous ministerial posts, among which Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Planning, Environment and Tourism. He also served as President of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly in 2007 and represented Gabon at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and La Francophonie. Mr. Ping has also helped mediate conflicts in central Africa. He holds a PhD in Economic Sciences from Université de Paris I - La Sorbonne in Paris.

Mr. Ping replaces the outgoing Chairperson, Professor Alpha Oumar Konare. Prof. Konare enjoyed widespread support in the AU and among civil society, particularly women's civil society groups, for highlighting the importance of gender equality in the AU and in Africa in general. In fact, it was during Prof. Konare's Chairmanship that the AU Commission adopted the gender parity principle. According to the new parity principle, five out of the ten Commissioners (including the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson) must be women.

Following the election of the AU Commission Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government elected seven new AU Commissioners on 2 February. The five new female Commissioners are:

Mrs. Julia Dolly Joiner (Gambia) - *Political Affairs*

Mrs. Elham Mahmood Ahmed Ibrahim (Egypt) - *Infrastructure and Energy*

Mrs. Bience Philomina Gawanas (Namibia) - *Social Affairs*

Mrs. Elizabeth Tankeu (Cameroon) - *Trade and Industry*



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The election for the post of *Rural Economy and Agriculture* will be held in April 2008. This post has been reserved for a female candidate in order to maintain the gender balance in the Commission.

Along with AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, the other four male Commissioners are:

Mr. Erastus Mwencha (Kenya) - *Deputy Chairperson*

Mr. Ramtane Lamamra (Algeria) - *Peace and Security*

Mr. Jean Pierre Onvehoun Ezin (Benin) - *Human Resources, Science and Technology*

Mr. Maxwell Mkwezalamba (Malawi) - *Economic Affairs*

The 10th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government opened on 31 January 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. FAS and several members of its network attended the Session to advocate for the full implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and for swift action on the conflict in Darfur, Sudan. As well, FAS helped bring the Sudanese Women's Declaration on Darfur and the Plan of Action for peace in Darfur to the AU.

For more information, contact: communication@fasngo.org or visit www.fasngo.org



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