



Femmes Africa Solidarité

Regional Office
Stèle Mermoz Immeuble Rose
Appt. No 31C
P.O. Box 45077 Fann
Dakar – Senegal
Tel: +221 860 2048
Fax: +221 860 2047
Email: fas-ong@sentoo.sn

PRESS RELEASE

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REGIONAL MEDIA CONTACT:

Moussa Diop
Femmes Africa Solidarité
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: +221 860 2048
Number in Banjul: +220 780 3978
communicationdk@fasngo.org

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CONTACT :

Julia d'Aloisio
Femmes Africa Solidarité
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 328 8050
Email: communication@fasngo.org

8th PRE-SUMMIT CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE AFRICAN UNION, 26-27JUNE BANJUL, GAMBIA

In an effort to push forward women's effective participation in the African Union (AU) and its Member States, network members of the 'Gender is my Agenda' campaign, coordinated by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) in partnership with ACDHRS, will hold the 8th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU on 26-27, 2006 in Banjul, Gambia.

The meeting will be the 8th in a series of Pre-Summit consultations of civil society networks who are concerned with mainstreaming gender within AU organs, activities and processes. As such, the meeting will build upon the favourable context that emerged from the commitment to gender parity through the adoption of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) by the conference of the African Heads of State and Government in July 2004. The SDGEA calls for continued implementation of gender parity in the AU and at the national level, the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the protection of women against violence and discrimination.

Two years since the adoption of the SDGEA and after the Heads of State made a commitment to report annually on the progress made in mainstreaming gender into their activities in the areas of health, education, peace and security, economic development, human rights and governance, no such reports have been presented. Because of this shortcoming, it is essential that civil society organizations come together to assess the implementation status of the Solemn Declaration by the different responsible parties. Moreover, civil society will use this opportunity to improve their campaign strategies for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the SDGEA.

There have been a number of advances for women including the introduction of the gender parity principle in the AU Charter, the election of a women as President of the PanAfrican

Parliament, the appointment of women to many high-level positions in regional, and national governments, the entry into force of the Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa, and the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the first woman elected Head of State in Africa.

While it is important to recognize these and other successes, there is still much work to be done, including addressing the increased levels of violence against women in situations of conflict, promote an increase in the number of women appointed as Special Envoys for the AU and the number of women represented in national and local governments, and work towards the domestication of Security Council Resolution 1325.

Journalists are invited to cover the Forum, which will take place at the Kairaba Beach Hotel in Banjul, the Gambia. Opening ceremonies begin at 9h00, Monday 26 June and the conference continues until the evening of Tuesday, 27 June.

For more details about Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), please visit our website www.fasngo.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. As well, FAS 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



Femmes Africa Solidarité

International Secretariat
8 Rue du Vieux-Billard
P.O. Box 5037
1211 Geneva 11 – Switzerland
Tel: (41 22) 328 80 50
Fax : (41 22) 328 80 52
Email : info@fasngo.org
Website: <http://www.fasngo.org>

Regional Office
Stele Mermoz Immeuble Rose
Appt. No 31C
P.O. Box 45077 Fann
Dakar – Senegal
Tel: +221 860 2048
Fax: +221 860 2047
Email: fas-ong@sentoo.sn or
infodk@fasngo.org

Representative New York
United Nations Liaison Office
777 United Nations Plaza 5th Floor
New York, New York 10017
Tel: +1 212 687-1369
Fax: +1 212 661-4188
Email: infony@fasngo.org