In July 2004, 53 Heads of State and Government of Member States of the African Union, meeting in Addis Ababa, made a Solemn Declaration to Commit to Gender Equality:

Campaign Members call to Act Now!

16 African NGOs Members of the Campaign
• «Stand Firm» says the Africa Leadership Forum
• Their profiles in pages 9 to 12
Table of content

Editorial by Bineta Diop, Campaign Coordinator page 3
Editorial by Ayodele Aderinwale, Africa Leadership Forum page 4
OSIWA, a partner page 5
Women Roll Out the Agenda pages 6-7-8-13
Profiles : NGOs members of the campaign pages 9 to 12
African Gender Forum and Award pages 14-15
Interview : Mrs Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs, South Africa pages 16-17
Profile of an African Female Leader : Asha Migiro page 18
The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa pages 19-20

Campaign Coordination by Femme Africa Solidarité (FAS)
Email : fas-ngo@sentoo.sn - Site Internet : www.fasngo.org
When the 53 Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), in Addis Ababa in July 2004 a new gender contract was born building on the adoption of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa in Maputo in 2003. While these leaders recognised that any policy and programme put in place for Africa’s development will not succeed unless women contribute their full experiences, expertise and talents in these processes, they also understood their key leadership role and position to accelerate the implementation of specific economic, social and legal measures to address the gender equality gap.

When they committed themselves to report annually on progress made on the SDGEA they realised that concerted and collective efforts from all stakeholders are needed to overcome the challenges and obstacles to gender equality, including development agencies, private sector, civil society and networks working on gender, peace and development.

Gender is my agenda campaign is one of the response provided by gender networks in the implementation of the Declaration. These networks were the force behind the gender parity principle enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union adopted in Durban, South Africa in 2002 and applied in 2003 in Maputo in the elections of the Commissioners of the AUC. The networks further built their vision and defined a common agenda, shared responsibilities and agreed to report on their own activities as well as on countries performance.

This Gender is my agenda news is part of the campaign tools designed to build bridges among the various actors and will provide information on the activities and road that led to the campaign and to the summit. This newsletter recaps the steps and successes such as the African Gender Forum and the African Gender Award that brought all actors together in a stronger manner. It also provides a roster and description of the 16 NGOs involved in the campaign. It is important to note that eighteen more organisations have joined the campaign. Only those who hold an official role are listed here but all are now involved and committed to monitoring the African heads of state and government action following the declaration. The declaration was a major step, a victory and a satisfaction, Civil Society activists say “Walk to Talk, Act Now!” And they are watching.

In the spirit of providing role models and promoting African female profiles, Mrs Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa is featured here for her action and position on Gender Equality issues.

Also in the limelight is Mrs Asha Migiro, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations.

This newsletter will be issued twice a year, prior the AU ordinary sessions to highlight and analyse the state of Governance, Peace and Security, Human Rights, Health, Education, Economic Reinforcement across the continent.

Members of the campaign welcome any contribution that will help to move the gender agenda forward and strengthen the African women’s movement.

Finally, let me express, on behalf the Gender is my Agenda Network, our deep gratitude to OSIWA for their financial contribution in the publication of this first issue of the gender is my agenda news and its website.
The effort at pushing gender into the public domain and discourse produced an all time record of a monumental proportion when the Assembly of the African Union decided to adopt gender parity as a recruitment policy within the African Union Commission. Africa, through the unrelented efforts and activism of dedicated and committed members of Civil Society Movement on the continental has given the black race a new song to sing.

The campaign that gave birth to gender parity is a worthy cause and I have no doubt in mind that the best is yet to come. With the adoption of Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGE), gender equality and equity has become a recurrent decimal in the mathematics of development in Africa. Today issues such as HIV/AIDS, recruitment of child solders, implementation of gender specific economic, social and legal measures continue to dominate and occupy a place of prominence in the development agenda of Member States of the Union.

That Africa Leaders can commit themselves to submit an annual report on the implementation of SDGE is commendable and effort should be made to sustain the tempo as more and more countries create conducive policy environment that discourage gender discrimination.

To my colleagues in the struggle I urge you to stand firm, remain resolute, courageous and committed to this campaign. Gender should remain our agenda until the content of the SDGE becomes a reality in every African country. We must also spread the message very fast, involve the grass root and link up with the next generation such sustainability and continuity will be guaranteed.

I salute you all and I hope that the campaign will have more success stories in the days and months ahead.
OSIWA is dedicated to supporting the creation of open societies in West Africa marked by functioning democracy, good governance, the rule of law, basic freedoms, and widespread civic participation. OSIWA believes that it best serves by sustaining catalytic and innovative initiatives that add value to the efforts of West Africa’s civil society. OSIWA seeks to collaborate with advocacy groups, like-minded foundations, governments and donors. OSIWA further recognizes the importance of incorporating global developments in building open societies and seeks a greater commitment to the region by rich nations.

OSIWA works through a number of programs

Programs and Priorities
Each year, OSIWA disburses $10 million in grants to support country-specific and regional initiatives in the following program areas: human rights (including women’s political and economic empowerment), democracy and governance, media and technology (including information and communications technologies (ICTs), legal reform and transitional justice, and HIV/AIDS. Within the context of the program areas, OSIWA is particularly interested in supporting organizations that promote the interests of marginalized communities, such as women and children. Following extensive consultation with civil society, non-governmental organizations and governments throughout West Africa, OSIWA’s board of directors and staff periodically set funding priorities to target specific areas of need. Current priorities The following descriptions summarize OSIWA’s programs and serve as a guide to the types of projects that OSIWA seeks to support. For detailed program descriptions please follow the links below. OSIWA also considers proposals for projects that do not necessarily conform to its priorities, but nonetheless fall within the program areas and countries covered by OSIWA.

Human Rights
Democracy and Governance
Media
ICTs
Law and Justice
HIV/AIDS
Special Initiatives
Countries

OSIWA serves the 15 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as Cameroon, Chad and Mauritania.

Information for Grant Seekers
To gain a firm sense of the areas that OSIWA is interested in supporting, grant seekers should carefully review OSIWA programs and priorities prior to submitting proposals.

Proposals should be sent to the Dakar office by e-mail at osiwa-dakar@osiwa.org.

Electronic proposal submissions are preferred because they allow OSIWA program staff to acknowledge receipt immediately and notify the grant seeker if any additional information is needed.

Nana Tanko
Executive Director
Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)
Street Address: Immeuble EPI, Boulevard du Sud and Rue de Ziguinchor (ex rue des Ecrivains), Point E, Dakar
Postal Address: B.P. 008, Dakar-Fann, Senegal
Gender is My Agenda

6
FROM THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION TO THE AU SOLEMN DECLARATION
Women roll out the Gender Agenda

Victims of war, of violence and of different conflicts that have long been undermining the continent, African women adopted a survival stance following the Beijing world conference in China in 1995. Relegated, until then, to playing a second role in the political, economic and social scenes, African women finally sounded the knell of this discrimination that has for a long time punctuated the running of the continent.

Restoring the social balance

This was the start of a long march to permanently restoring the overall social balance, long ago upset by gender-specific criteria and considerations. Following many consultations held throughout African capital cities and marked by firm and resolute decisions as well as strong commitments, women will now roll out the Gender Agenda in Africa. The aim of this soft revolution, which is a result of their unprecedented mobilization and which has received the political blessing of African leaders, is to restore, step by step, the proper rights of women in the continent.

Following the tremendous efforts deployed by Wildaf within the framework of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights for the recognition of women’s rights and the adoption of what was later to become the Additional Protocol to the Charter on the rights of women, challenges faced by civil society organizations will take a more global dimension as they work towards gender mainstreaming in decision-making bodies and mechanisms in African institutions.

Hopes and challenges

This is the purpose of the recently launched “Gender is My Agenda” campaign that African civil society organizations now fully intend to shore up. This new tool for advocacy is first and foremost the fruit of extensive awareness-raising efforts made by political decision-makers and women have every intention of placing it on the agenda of continental events. This still on-going process has been marked by important and historical dates and events and crystallizes the hopes, challenges and the struggle of African women.
The African Women’s Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) and Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) organized, in Durban from 28 to 30 June 2002 (prior to the launching of the African Union), a meeting of civil society organizations involved in the promotion of women’s rights. This meeting, facilitated by the African Center for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), laid the groundwork for a successful consultation on “Mainstreaming gender and women’s effective participation in the African Union” based on Resolution N° CM/Dec. 579 LXXIII adopted in February 2001 in Tripoli by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

**The Durban meeting, a landmark**

The launching of the African Union in Durban gave a strong political signal with the “establishment of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate in the office of the Chairperson of the African Union, the entrenchment of the Statutes of the African Union Commission, of the principle of gender equality in the recruitment of the Commission’s senior staff and top management”.

The Durban meeting successfully urged the future African Union to appoint a Commissioner with an exclusive mandate on issues relating to the promotion of women’s rights within the Union for effective mainstreaming of gender issues and the incorporation of gender mainstreaming in sectoral priorities, goals and strategies of the NEPAD in line with the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The success of the Durban meeting is all the more significant since in lieu of the proposed 30% representation in decision-making bodies for women, the principle of gender parity was adopted following intense lobbying and the complicity of certain Heads of States.

**Mainstreaming since Dakar**

In April 2003, a meeting organized in Dakar adopted the Dakar Strategy in which civil society organizations recommended that a multiple track approach be used to implement gender mainstreaming within the African Union by constituting a working group comprising the Gender Directorate, the civil society and technical experts to develop a mechanism for gender mainstreaming.

Along the same lines as the Dakar Strategy, the Maputo meeting held on 23 and 24 June 2003 stressed the need to amend the Pan African Parliament Protocol to allow for at least two women representatives out of the five representatives from each member country. The Maputo meeting also recommended the establishment of a working group within the NEPAD to ensure that specific issues faced by poor women are addressed in poverty reduction strategies, and finally that the Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women is adopt-
ed and the mechanism for ratification be put into place.
The women’s advance on the continent did not stop at Maputo; the bells sounding throughout the continent found favorable echo in Addis Ababa in June 2004 where the political determination of Heads of State and Government for gender mainstreaming was translated by the adoption of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

Brought together by the African Union and FAS, representatives of African civil society organizations meeting in Addis-Ababa in Ethiopia from 28 to 29 June 2004 at the eve of the third ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government rightly “paid tribute to the Heads of State and Government for their leadership and historical decision on gender parity and for their unwavering commitment”.

While it is clear that the tribute paid to the Heads of State and Government is indeed well deserved as their Declaration provides the Gender Agenda with a political and legal backing of utmost importance, it should however not be overlooked that women in the continent could claim a certain moral satisfaction in consideration of the efforts deployed by civil society organizations to achieve this result.

The stubborn challenges

Therein lies another challenge: implementing the Declaration in accordance with its letter and spirit. Women carrying firewood stacks or water each day, dying at childbirth, affected by HIV/AIDS, who do not yet know how to write their names or sign an administrative document... in short, the “grassroots”, would hold a grudge against the civil society if the latter would not pursue its mobilization efforts for the implementation of the Declaration.

This Declaration was not considered by women as being the final stage, but instead as a source of greater motivation to pursue their efforts. Six months after
Profiles: 16 NGOs involved in the campaign

**Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA):**
The Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA) was founded and incorporated in 1996 in Dar-Es Salaam, Tanzania, as a network for advocacy on women’s issues on the African continent; Ambassador Gertrude Mongella is one of the founder members and its President. The aim of AWA is to create a strong voice for women on the issues of development, peace and equality. Many organizations had already been working in these areas, however AWA’s main focus is on advocacy with the following activities: to create a forum for women to raise African women’s concerns and influence decisions within major decision-making bodies in Africa; to facilitate contacts, provide a link and bring together people who are committed to speak for and with women in Africa; to promote actions for development, peace and equality with a gender focus; to interpret and analyze social economic and political trends in the continent and their impact on women’s advancement and empowerment.

**Africa Leadership Forum (ALF):**
The Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) is Africa’s premier civil society and not-for-profit organization. It grew out of the need to assist in improving the capacity and competency of African leaders to confront development challenges. ALF has been at the forefront, working with and building the capacities of African women for leadership and development, which culminated in the creation of the African Women Forum (AWF). The Forum seeks to identify and establish a medium through which it can challenge ideas and create networking opportunities.

**African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD):**
The African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is an international civil-society organization working throughout Africa to bring appropriate African solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. Recognized by the UN as a model for Africa, its reputation continues to grow and the knowledge and experience of the organization is often called on from as far a field as East Timor, Cyprus and Sao Paolo. ACCORD was founded in 1991.

**African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS):**
The main objectives of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) are to better compliment the work of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) are to better compliment the work of the African Commission and to serve the entire African continent more efficiently in its unwavering mission of promoting human rights and democracy through training, action-oriented research, legal service, publications, documentation and networking.

**African Network for the Campaign on “Education for All” (ANCEFA):**
The African Network for the Campaign on “Education for All” (ANCEFA) is a network aimed at promoting and reinforcing African civil society organizations in order to reinforce tools for advocacy and mobilization to facilitate access to free and valuable education for all. It uses the creation of networks and coalitions to help share experience and knowledge and to build stronger partnerships to better influence politics on very critical issues such as HIV/AIDS.
African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF): The African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), which was established in June 2000, is the first Africa-wide fundraising and grant-making fund, which aims to support the work of organizations working to promote women’s rights in Africa. The AWDF funds local, national, sub-regional and regional organizations in Africa working towards women’s empowerment. The objectives of the AWDF are fundraising within and outside Africa, grant making on an Africa-wide basis, communicating the work and achievements of African women’s organizations and providing technical assistance to grantees.

Association de Lutte contre les Violences Faites aux Femmes (ACOLVF): Based in Yaoundé, Cameroun, the Association de Lutte contre les Violences Faites aux Femmes (ACOLVF) was founded in 1991 to lead action in support of changed behaviour towards women. Fully recognising that the rate of violence against women is increasing, the association works on the health effects of women victims of violence. It also provides support to adolescents and advises them on responsible sexual behaviour.

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS): Since its inception in 1996, FAS has been working to foster, strengthen and promote the leadership role of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution on the African continent. As one of the founding members of the African women’s peace movement, the work of FAS is set in the context of a wider campaign to protect and promote women’s human rights in Africa. The International Secretariat in Geneva and New York Liaison Office influence and participate in decisions on women at the international level. The Regional Bureau for Africa in Dakar, Senegal advocates for gender equity and mainstreaming in the programmes and policies of regional and national bodies. FAS also works to build the capacity of women’s grassroots organizations through solidarity and evaluation missions and advocacy and capacity building training in partnership with the African Union (AU), UN agencies and women’s groups. FAS has Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR). It is also a member of the New York based NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, which monitors implementation of Resolution 1325.

Forum for Africa Women Educationalists (FAWE): The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) was created in 1992 as a response to the slow pace of implementation of Education for All goals in sub-Saharan Africa. FAWE was registered in Kenya as a Pan African NGO in 1993 with a Secretariat in Nairobi. Since then, it has grown into a network of thirty-three national chapters with a wide range of membership that includes women policy makers and male ministers of education who are associate members. FAWE seeks to ensure that girls have access to school, complete their studies and perform well at all levels.

Foundation for Community Development (FCD): The Foundation for Community Development (FCD) is a civic organization with no political party affiliation,
which seeks to join together the forces of all sectors of society in achieving an ideal for development, democracy and social justice. The Foundation is based on the conviction that poverty is not inevitable; it is the result of a complex mechanism of marginalizing and exploiting the poor; of feeble publicity for scientific and technical knowledge and appropriate technologies; of a system of access to resources which those social strata who do not benefit from education and involvement in formal institutions of society and the economy find hard to use. This series of factors has a negative impact on people's attitude to nature and life and also prevents them from using the resources that are already available for their own benefit in a sustainable way. These structural and psychological obstacles are the root of the poverty that the FDC seeks to combat.

**Roll Back Malaria (RBM):**
The Roll Back Malaria (RBM) was launched in 1998 by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank to provide a coordinated global approach to fighting malaria. The RBM Partnership’s goal is to halve the burden of malaria by 2010. A key role of the RBM Partnership is to lead continuing advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of malaria at the global, regional, national and community levels, thus keeping malaria high on the development agenda, mobilizing resources for malaria control and for research into new and more effective tools (including a vaccine), and ensuring that vulnerable individuals are key participants in rolling back malaria.

**Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA):**
The Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA) programme seeks to facilitate the sharing of information and experience and to encourage collective and coordinated responses for the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It focuses its studies on sensitive unexplored issues related to social aspects of HIV/AIDS in Western Africa.

**Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA):**
The Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA) is an opportunity to define new strategies to preserve the dignity of African women. It follows the global objective of taking into account numerous factors that influence the impact of HIV/AIDS activities in Africa including gender, sexuality, community involvement, NGO capacity, communications tools, stigma and discrimination, human rights, and programme sustainability. It is in charge of developing and implementing effective programmes that address these determinants. It seeks to mobilize African communities at the grassroots level and to establish national policies and strategies for AIDS control among women in Africa.

**Tunisian Mothers’ Association (TMA):**
The Tunisian Mothers’ Association (TMA) provides medical and legal services; it receives, sensitizes and advises maiden mothers; it offers a peaceful welcoming space for mothers from abroad and inside the country. The association also conducts operational
researches and studies on mothers’ conditions, children and the family and organizes national, regional and international seminars, meetings, workshops and forums. Among its major objectives are the mobilization of information and social mobilization all over the country, using interpersonal communication means through home visits and immediate services for rural illiterate and needy mothers. The association organizes multidisciplinary caravans aimed at solidarity creation and counselling of mothers in need.

West African Women Association (WAWA):
The West African Women Association (WAWA) is responsible for mobilizing women in order to ensure the gender mainstreaming of all programmes related to setting up integration processes on the African continent. Its actions cover all country members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF):
At the time of the launching of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), the network consisted of representatives from fifteen countries. The membership then reached ninety individual members and forty organizations. WiLDAF’s membership now comprises over 600 organizations, 3,500 individuals in thirty-one countries in Africa, with country networks in twenty-six countries. To date, country networks have been set up in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote D’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. WiLDAF was set up in recognition of the importance of creating a critical mass to speak with one voice and increase pressure for change to enable women to take their rightful place in society. WiLDAF has been involved in initiating a number of programmes which bring women’s rights and advocacy groups together at national, sub-regional and Pan-African levels in various forums.
Gender is My Agenda

FROM THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION TO THE AU SOLEMN DECLARATION

Women roll out the Gender Agenda

the historical Summit in Addis Ababa, the civil society again met in Abuja in January 2005. This meeting was organized by FAS and the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) to solemnly enjoin member states, in a declaration entitled the “Abuja consensual agreement” to “implement the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, organize a meeting of African Ministers in charge of Gender Issues to develop implementation strategies of the Solemn Declaration, and especially submit, before July 2005, a first annual report on the progress made in terms of gender mainstreaming in conformity with paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Solemn Declaration”.

Mobilization was even greater in July 2005 when the organizations moved a step further during the 6th Consultative Meeting organized in Tripoli by FAS and the Libyan Secretary for Social Affairs, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to lay the groundwork for the future “Gender is my Agenda” campaign. Along the same lines as Durban (June 2002), Dakar (April 2003), Maputo (June 2003), Addis Ababa (June 2004) and Abuja (January 2005), as well as the equally important stages of Lusaka where the Heads of State had commissioned a meeting of experts to work on the Protocol and Lomé where the treaty establishing the AU was signed, a joint Agenda based on the Declaration and its implementation was hence produced.

This framework, initiated in Tripoli, was firmed up following the Dakar meeting in October 2005 held in parallel with the First Conference of Ministers in charge of Women’s Affairs and Gender issues, and the guidelines for the preparation of the reports required of Member states on the implementation of the Declaration were defined. Civil society organizations, having already defined guidelines for their own reports, fine-tuned their strategies during the 8th Consultative Meeting held in Banjul in June 2006.

A settled matter to report

The adoption of the gender parity principle in the African Union and of the Declaration is today a settled matter. Liberia holds the historic record of being the first African Republic to be led by a woman. The United Nations Secretary General has just appointed the former Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs as Under-Secretary. The Pan-African Parliament and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (Ecosoc) of the African Union are headed respectively by Mrs. Mongella and Mrs. Matai, while the Rwandan House of Representatives may blow its own horn for having adopted the gender parity rule.

Women have accomplished a great deal in such a short time. The Gender Agenda must now pursue efforts for the implementation of these tools within the institutional framework developed. This is the major challenge faced by the 9th Consultative Meeting to be held in Addis-Ababa prior to the African Union Summit during which the States will be presenting their first reports on the implementation of the Declaration and the civil society will also produce its own report.
African Gender Forum and Award

In the vision of contributing to build a space for exchanges and dialogue, to harmonise and emphasise the action of the African continent women’s networks, Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and its Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace and Development, in conjunction with its partners, have instituted the African Gender Forum. Dealing with gender, political and economic questions, this biennial forum offers a unique opportunity for the exchange of ideas and experiences between women in Africa and in other regions of the world.

The 1st African Gender Forum, in partnership with The Arab International Women’s Forum, took place on May 1-2 2005, in Dakar (Senegal), and featured a Dialogue with Arab Women. Held in the spirit that economic empowerment and balanced leadership that includes women are necessary for a lasting peace, the forum defined and achieved the four following objectives:
• To inspire a durable commitment to mainstreaming and accountability on gender issues;
• To share lessons learned from the Arab and overall African experience on the African continent;
• To strengthen a concerted action between actors in public and economic spheres;
• To instill a culture of solidarity at the continental level.

This inaugural conference brought together many eminent women from across Africa and the Arab world to share experiences and build bridges. The opening ceremony was honoured by the presence of the First Lady of the Republic of Senegal, Her Excellency Ms. Viviane Wade. The conference was characterized by dynamic presentations by African, Arab, and International women and men on women’s empowerment, publicprivate partnerships, networking, political action, and women’s leadership for change.
The interventions were made by notable personalities such as H.E. Ms. Isatu Njie Saidy, Vice-President of Republic of Gambia, Hon. Ms. Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament, H.E. Ms. Viviane Wade, First Lady of Republic of Senegal, H.E. Ms. Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Ms. Aminata Tall, Minister of State, Minister of Local Communities of Republic of Senegal, H.E. Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Ms. Saida Agrebi, Deputy, Member of Tunisian Parliament and Chairperson of the Tunisian Mothers’ Association, Ms. Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani, Founder and Chairperson of the Arab International Women’s Forum (AIWF), and Ms. Julienne Ondziel, Chairperson of the Board of Femmes Africa Solidarité.

This Forum also hosted the premiere of the African Gender Award. African women, under the leadership of Femmes Africa Solidarité and its Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace and Development, also celebrated the initiative and dedication of President Abdoulaye WADE and President Thabo MBeki – two leaders who have distinctively committed themselves to African women’s effective participation, and to putting in place a policy framework for gender equality in the AU.

This first edition of the African Gender Forum and Award was supported by the Government of Senegal, The Government of South Africa, the Arab International Women’s Forum, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, the Senegalese private sector, as Confederation Nationale des Employeurs du Sénégal, Société Nationale d’Electricité du Sénégal.

The African Gender Award will be celebrated every two years and nominees may be African Leaders, or groups from the government, who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in furthering gender mainstreaming in the economic and political spheres, as well as addressing social and cultural barriers that impede the involvement of women in Africa. The African Gender Award will be accompanied by two other recognitions. One is for the private sector/organization and the other for the civil society/women’s group that actively promote women’s agenda.

Extraordinary achievements in themes guided by African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and Gender is My Agenda campaign guidelines in Africa will be especially considered. Such domains include: gender mainstreaming in peace processes; the systematic prohibition of the recruitment of child soldiers; the guarantee of women’s land, property and inheritance rights; and the implementation of gender-specific economic, social, and legal measures on HIV/AIDS, among others.

The process of selecting and nominating the Award recipients is conducted by the Selection Committee, an international team composed of outstanding independent experts, representatives of African women’s networks, the civil society, the private sector, FAS members and partners. The Selection Committee is dedicated to review the nominations for candidature proposed by our partners and networks and to elect the final recipient. Further, the Committee will also contribute towards setting the action plan of the follow-up of activities including field activities, fundraising, etc.

The second edition of the Forum and the Award will take place in May 2007 in Dakar (Senegal) and will feature on a dialogue with African Diaspora and themes related to migration. Four African Presidents have been pre-selected for the African Gender Award and are currently evaluated by the Selection Committee.
Question
This is now the 9th consultative meeting that will be taking place for the “Gender Is My Agenda” Campaign. What are your reflections on the progress made as a result of this Campaign?

Response:
Firstly, the campaign achieved notable success in developing a co-ordinated response and strategy from women’s organizations in civil society to drive the gender agenda so that issues are foregrounded in regional gender instruments. The numerous Regional Consultative meetings bear testimony of the collective efforts of African Women’s Networks to make sure that gender remains on the agenda of all AU processes.

Secondly, the Campaign succeeded in making real and lasting gains for the Gender Agenda through focussing on ways that current commitments around Gender be upheld and implemented. In a very real way, the Campaign has enabled civil society organisations to develop a real and meaningful relationship with members of the African Union that bodes well for future joint initiatives and collaborations.

Question
In your opinion, what are some possible future directions that the Campaign might take to better highlight and promote the implementation of the gender agenda? How should resistance to the Campaign be managed?

Response:
A focus on improving information management to civil society organizations is key. The existing information management system need to be improved so that the current database of organizations involved in the Campaign be expanded, and information disseminated to them timeously and efficiently.
In addition to this, the Campaign should strengthen its existing efforts to ensure that gender policies are translated into practice, and intensify their efforts to ensure that we translate the gender rights that we have into real rights for women.

The management of resistance depends on the type of resistance that is encountered: for example, if it is resistance to gender justice, this should be countered by deepening and building an understanding of the nature of oppressive gender relations within that particular context.

**Question**

What do you see as the future for women in politics in Africa? For example, Senegal has recently begun increasing the number of women on their electoral lists. What do we need to do to ensure that this trend continues in the rest of Africa?

**Response:**

a) We need to balance our efforts to get more women into public office, with the related challenge that increase leadership of women into the Public Sector.

b) We need to create opportunities for women to advance from within their political constituency—be it their respective political parties, or their involvement in community-based networks and organizations. This will enable the Campaign to build a critical mass of women that effect real gender representivity—in numbers and in substance—into political parties and related organizations.

c) Finally, civil society organizations have to be encouraged to build strong, substantive relationships with national governments, guided by the principles of mutual respect, transparency and accountability. The Campaign represents a real opportunity to build good relationships with national governments, and so should be used to ensure that we harmonize the efforts of civil society around gender justice with government commitments.

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**Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**

**Studies and medical career**

Born in Natal, Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini-Zuma completed her undergraduate studies in Zoology and Botany at the University of Zululand, obtaining a Bachelor’s Degree in Science (BSc) in 1971. She subsequently began her medical studies at the University of Natal, although she completed them at the University of Bristol in the late 1970s. She worked as a doctor at the Mbabane government hospital in Swaziland, but returned to the United Kingdom in 1985 in order to complete a diploma in tropical child health from Liverpool University’s School of Tropical Medicine. After receiving her diploma, she worked for the ANC Regional Health Committee before accepting the position of director of the Health and Refugee Trust, a British non-governmental organization. Dr Zuma was awarded honorary Doctor of Law degrees by both the University of Natal (1995) and the University of Bristol (1996).

**Political role**

During her studies in the early 1970s, Dr Zuma became an active underground member of the (then banned) African National Congress (ANC), and was also a member of the South African Students Organisation, of which she was elected deputy president in 1976. During the ‘Convention for a Democratic South Africa’ (CODESA) negotiations in 1992, Dr Zuma was part of the Gender Advisory Committee. After the first all-inclusive South African elections of 1994, she was appointed as Minister of Health in the cabinet of President Nelson Mandela and in June 1999, was appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the cabinet of Thabo Mbeki. She was also the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Executive Council of Ministers, during South Africa’s tenures as AU Chairperson.
Dr Asha-Rose Migiro born in 1956 in Songea, Tanzania. She obtained her LL.B and LL.M from the University of Dar-es-Salaam, and her Ph.D in 1992 from the University of Konstanz, Germany. She was a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar-es-Salaam a few years before being appointed as the Minister of Community, Development, Gender and Children’s Affairs. In January 2006 she became the first woman Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, of the United Republic of Tanzania, whilst a year later it was announced that Dr Migiro had been chosen as the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Only two people have formally held the post of Deputy Secretary General. It was only in 1997 that Kofi Annan announced the creation of the position, amongst a series of reforms at the United Nations. This post was intended as a supporting role, assisting the Secretary General in their general duties, and representing them in the case of their absence; it was established as a formal position by the General Assembly towards the end of the same year.

On 5th January 2007, the new Secretary-General for the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, announced the appointment of Dr Migiro, as only the third person to fulfil this position in the UN. Dr Migiro is now the highest ranking women within the UN structure and the 2nd highest amongst all officials; her selection fulfilling the Secretary-General’s personal commitment to promote women from the developing world. According to Ban Ki-Moon, Dr Migiro is ‘a highly respected leader who has championed the cause of developing countries over the years’ and ‘through her distinguished service in diverse areas, she has displayed outstanding management skills with wide experience and expertise in socio-economic affairs and development issues.’
We, the Heads of State and Government of Member States of the African Union, meeting in the Third Ordinary Session of our Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 6-8 July 2004:


Standing by our Decision on gender parity taken at the Inaugural Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa implemented during the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, 2003 through the election of five female and five male Commissioners;

Noting with satisfaction that our Decision on gender parity is a historic achievement that does not yet exist in any other continent or regional organizations;

Re-affirming our commitment to continue, expand and accelerate efforts to promote gender equality at all levels;

Determined to build on the progress that we have achieved in addressing issues of major concern to the women of Africa;

Taking cognizance of the landmark decision to adopt the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa during the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, 2003;

Noting the decision of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to transform the African Women’s Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) into the African Union Women’s Committee (AUWC), which will be located in the Gender Directorate and serve as an Advisory Body to the Chairperson on Gender and Development;

Recognizing that major challenges and obstacles to gender equality still remain and require concerted and collective leadership and efforts from all of us including networks working on gender and development;

Deeply concerned about the status of women and the negative impacts on women of issues such the high incidence of HIV/AIDS among girls and women, conflict, poverty, harmful traditional practices, high population of refugee women and internally displaced women, violence against women, women’s exclusion from politics and decision-making, and illiteracy, limited access of girls to education;

Aware of the policies and programmes we have put in place to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as the current challenges in this campaign;

Concerned that, while women and children bear the brunt of conflicts and internal displacement, including rapes and killings, they are largely excluded from conflict prevention, peace-negotiation, and peace-building processes in spite of African women’s experience in peace-building;

Aware of the fact that low levels of women’s representation in social, economic and political decision-making structures and feminisation of poverty impact negatively on women’s ability to derive full benefit from the economies of their countries and the democratization process;

Aware of the digital divide between the North and the South, men and women and the role of information telecommunication technologies (ICTS) in the advancement of the gender issue as stated in the e-gender Forum Declaration of Tunis, May 2004 in preparation for the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) 2005;
HEREBY AGREE TO:

1. Accelerate the implementation of gender specific economic, social, and legal measures aimed at combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic and effectively implement both Abuja and Maputo Declarations on Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Disease. More specifically we will ensure that treatment and social services are available to women at the local level making it more responsive to the needs of families that are providing care; enact legislation to end discrimination against women living with HIV/AIDS and for the protection and care for people living with HIV/AIDS, particularly women; increase budgetary allocations in these sectors so as to alleviate womenís burden of care;

2. Ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace process including the prevention, resolution, management of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa as stipulated in UN Resolution 1325 (2000) and to also appoint women as Special Envoy and Special Representatives of the African Union;

3. Launch, within the next one year, a campaign for systematic prohibition of the recruitment of child soldiers and abuse of girl children as wives and sex slaves in violation of their Rights as enshrined in the African Charter on Rights of the Child;

4. Initiate, launch and engage within two years sustained public campaigns against gender based violence as well as the problem of trafficking in women and girls; Reinforce legal mechanisms that will protect women at the national level and end impunity of crimes committed against women in a manner that will change and positively alter the attitude and behaviour of the African society;

5. Expand and Promote the gender parity principle that we have adopted regarding the Commission of the African Union to all the other organs of the African Union, including its NEPAD programme, to the Regional Economic Communities, and to the national and local levels in collaboration with political parties and the National parliaments in our countries;

6. Ensure the active promotion and protection of all human rights for women and girls including the right to development by raising awareness or by legislation where necessary;

7. Actively promote the implementation of legislation to guarantee womenís land, property and inheritance rights including their rights to housing;

8. Take specific measures to ensure the education of girls and literacy of women, especially in the rural areas, to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA);

9. Undertake to Sign and ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa by the end of 2004 and to support the launching of public campaigns aimed at ensuring its entry into force by 2005 and usher in an era of domesticating and implementing the Protocol as well as other national, regional and international instruments on gender equality by all States Parties;

10. Establish AIDS Watch Africa as a unit within the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission who should render annual report on HIV/AIDS situation in the continent during annual Summits; and promote the local production of anti-retroviral drugs in our countries;

11. Accept to establish an African Trust Fund for Women for the purpose of building the capacity of African women and further request the African Union Commission to work out the modalities for the operationalisation of the Fund with special focus on women in both urban and rural areas;

12. Commit ourselves to report annually on progress made in terms of gender mainstreaming and to support and champion all issues raised in this Declaration, both at the national and regional levels, and regularly provide each other with updates on progress made during our Ordinary Sessions;

13. We request the chairperson of the African Union Commission to submit, for our consideration, an annual report, during our ordinary sessions, on measures taken to implement the principle of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and all issues raised in this Declaration both at the national and regional levels.