

THE DAKAR STRATEGY

Dakar Strategy on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union & NEPAD

We representatives of African civil society organizations and government working on gender and development issues participating in the a consultation on *Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union and NEPAD* organized by the Femmes Africa Solidarité from April 24-26, 2003 in Dakar, Senegal:

Welcoming and recognizing our Heads of States and Government on their decisions taken in Durban in July 2002 on gender mainstreaming in the African Union. We note with appreciation that Article 6 of the Statutes. Rule 39 of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the Assembly provides that at least one Commissioner from each region shall be a woman that will lead to 50 percent representation of women at the AU Commission.

Further recognizing the establishment of a Gender Directorate in the Chairperson's Office to mainstream gender in all the portfolios of the Commission according to Article 12 of the Statutes as well the provision under Article 18 of the Statutes calling for gender equality in the recruitment of senior, professional and technical staff in the Commission;

Recalling the decision of the Heads of State and Government to ensure gender parity within the African Union, taking note of the up-grading of the Gender Division into a Directorate within the Office of the Interim Commissioner;

Noting with concern that the Gender Directorate is severely under-resourced both financially and in terms of human resources, thus constraining the process of gender mainstreaming in the African Union;

Also noting the decision AHG/Dec. 175 (XXXVIII) of the Assembly which approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (CSSDCA) as a policy development forum, a framework for the advancement of common values and as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the African Union.

Further noting that under indicators 22 and 27 of the MOU calls for increased participation of women in politics and decision-making as well as adoption and implementation of those instruments that guarantee the rights of women as entrenched in the *Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*;

Recognizing the importance attached to issues of peace and security in Africa, the Assembly of the African Union under Article 5 (2) of the *Constitutive Act* established a Peace and Security Council as a collective security and early warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa to be supported by the Commission, a Panel of the Wise, a continental early warning system, an African Standby Force and a Special Fund;

Noting with concern the absence of provisions for gender mainstreaming in the Peace and Security Council and urging the inclusion of women in the Panel of the wise as a matter of priority;

Noting further the adoption of a Declaration on the Implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) decision ASS/AU/Dec.1 (I) by the Assembly of the African Union in Durban endorsing progress made in the implementation of NEPAD. Also note with concern that NEPAD in terms of process and content had not effectively mainstreamed gender concerns in Africa and thus a need for immediate action to ensure that this is done;

Acknowledging the African Union's recognition of the contribution of African Civil Society Organizations involving women and youth to Africa's development, calling on them to participate in all activities of the African Union through the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC) as provided in the *Constitutive Act* of the African Union. Convinced of the need to ensure participation of African women's civil society organizations, call for 50 percent representation of women in ECOSOC to ensure gender parity;

Recognizing the importance attached to the effective participation of women in development by African leaders, request in particular President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, to use his good offices to mobilize his colleagues to actively promote the implementation of the objective of gender equality:

Reaffirming the commitment of African women to building strategic partnerships at all levels and in the activities of the African Union hereby recommends the following to the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and the 1st Ordinary Session of the Heads of States and Government of the African Union:

A African Union

1. That a multiple track approach be used to implement gender mainstreaming within the African Union by constituting a task team comprising of the Gender Directorate, civil society and technical experts to develop a mechanism for gender mainstreaming.
2. That a delegation including the representatives of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) be sent to the Heads of States of Tanzania and Lesotho who are scheduled to speak on gender in the African Union before the Maputo Summit to lobby them on our concerns about mainstreaming.
3. Appreciating the role and contributions of AWCPD that the African Union and UNECA make a decision soon as to the location of the AWCPD in the African Union with the full knowledge of the value that the African women places in the AWCPD.

B New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

1. That dialogue be initiated between African women and the NEPAD Secretariat.
2. That the NEPAD Secretariat provides access to simplified information in order to encourage this dialogue.
3. In view of the insufficient level of gender mainstreaming in NEPAD that civil society organizations working on gender and NEPAD utilize the opportunity presented by the NEPAD Secretariat to second representatives to mainstream gender in all the activities of NEPAD.

C Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

1. That the Draft Protocol be adopted and the mechanism for ratification be put into place.
2. That member states consider withdrawing reservations made on some key Articles of the Draft Protocol with a view to strengthening the final Protocol.

D Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA)

1. That all activities of the CSSDCA be strengthened, expanded, and be gender mainstreamed to ensure effective participation of women.

E Participation of African Women in the Organs of the African Union

1. That the Pan African Parliament (PAP) Protocol should be amended to allow for at least two women representatives out of the five representatives from each member state.
2. Recognizing the importance attached to peace and security in Africa, that the Peace and Security Council ensure that women are represented and participate effectively in its Panel of the Wise.
3. That the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC) ensure gender parity in its membership.
4. That a Specialized Technical Committee on Gender be established under Article 14 of the *Constitutive Act* for effective mainstreaming of gender.

In light of the foregoing, we the representatives here present, hereby pledge our commitment to fully support these commendable initiatives of the African Union and will work in strategic partnership to promote the ideals and principles of the African Union.

Done in Dakar, Senegal April 26, 2003

Abantu for Development

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)

African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)

Africa Leadership Forum (ALF)

African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD)

African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)

Equality Now-Africa Office

Femmes Africa Solidarité

Foundation for Community Development (FCD)

International Alert

SAFER Africa

Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)