



Femmes Africa Solidarité

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The full integration of a gender perspective in all of the council's special procedures and mechanisms is a key component to its success and legitimacy.

For over ten years, Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) has been dedicated to the integration of a gender perspective in many African states and the African Union. Today, FAS would like to share some of the achievements and progress made as well as the challenges we still face. We really do need to think globally and act locally.

First and foremost, a critical step to integrate gender is to ensure gender balance within the structure of the Council. In the case of the African Union Commission, the adoption of the gender parity principle has led to the election of five women commissioners out of ten. This resulted in a multiplier effect in other organs of the AU.

Second, gender balance needs to be accompanied by gender mainstreaming in policy and programs. For that, we need to expedite the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, the MDGs and other universal instruments that promote the status of women. In this regard, the African States have adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa to look into gender integration in peace, security, health and education.

Third, in addition, we need to accelerate the process of assuring the human rights of women on the basis of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). To domesticate this instrument, Africa has adopted and ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa.

These principles, programs, and legal instruments have been adopted by Heads of States thanks to the sustained efforts of various African women's groups and networks in response to the plight of women who face violence, conflict, rape, discrimination, lack of education, poor health conditions, and other human rights violations.

However, a major obstacle we are facing is the lack of enforcement of this principle and legal instruments at the grassroots and national level. A strong gender integration in the Council will help monitor and evaluate the realization of these decisions, assist the African Peer Review Mechanism, and therefore confirm the implementation of all the national and international instruments to promote and protect the human rights of women – not only in Africa, but throughout the world. How can consultation with relevant NGOs at the regional level be assured in preparation of UPR reports, and how can our work be mutually reinforcing?

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