

## **BANJUL DECLARATION**

*Of the “Gender is My Agenda” Campaign  
on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa  
at the 8<sup>th</sup> Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting  
on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union*

**Adopted 27 June 2006**

**Banjul, the Gambia**

We, the Civil Society Organizations working across Africa meeting at the 8<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union (AU) in Banjul, the Gambia 26-27 June 2005 prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to follow-up on the “Gender is My Agenda” Campaign on the implementation of the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* (SDGEA), co-organized by the African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) and Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS):

**Building** upon the important work and achievements accomplished by African women’s networks under the initiative of the African Women Committee for Peace and Development (AWCPD) and Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) during previous consultative meetings in: Durban in June 2002 organized by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD); in Dakar in April 2003; in Maputo in June 2003 organized by the Foundation for Community Development (FCD); in Addis Ababa in June 2004 organized by the AU Gender Directorate; in Abuja in January 2005 organized by the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), in Tripoli in July 2005 with the Ministry of Social Affairs of Libya; and in Dakar, in October 2005 organized by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS);

**Recognizing**, the support of Her Excellency Madame Isatou Njie Saidy, Vice President of the Republic of the Gambia in chairing the 8<sup>th</sup> Women’s Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting;

**Recalling** the commitment of the African Heads of State to gender equality as a major goal of the AU as enshrined in Article 4 (1) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, in particular the decision to implement and uphold the principle of gender parity taken at the Inaugural session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2002 in Durban South Africa and its operationalization during the Second Ordinary Session in Maputo, Mozambique 2003, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa adopted at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2004, as well as the entry into force of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa;

**Bearing** in mind our commitment to monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of the SDGEA;

We, the civil society organizations present in Banjul, having taken cognizance of the activities of our various thematic focal points to follow-up and implement the SDGEA in their respective fields,

**Note with appreciation** the following achievements:

1. The holding of the first conference of ministers responsible for gender and women’s affairs in Africa;

2. The establishment of the African Union Women's Committee;
3. The entry into force of the Protocol of the Rights of Women in Africa in November 2005;
4. The application of the parity principle in the commission in the AU including the commission on human and people's rights and the ECOSOCC;
5. The steps taken by the AU to investigate the allegations of sexual abuse by AU peacekeeping force in Darfur.

**Deplore** the following unfulfilled commitments, two years after the adoption of the Solemn Declaration,

1. No report has been presented on its implementation;
2. The Establishment of the African Trust Fund for women has not yet been created;
3. The Parity principle has not been applied in the nomination and election of judges to the Africa Court on Human and People's Rights;
4. Violence and sexual abuse of women are intensifying with impunity;
5. No steps have been taken to prevent recruitment of child soldiers;
6. Only 19 state parties out of 53 have ratified the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.

**Make** the following recommendations:

1. The Pan African Parliament (PAP) Protocol should be amended to allow for at least 2 women representatives out of the five;
2. The African Union should work to simplify and harmonize systems of reporting by Member States;
3. Integrate "life skills" education into school curricula;
4. Each country put into place a system that ensures women access to health care;
5. Ensure women's access to land and to resources or profits obtained from extractive industries;
6. Establish a group of women mediators and peacebuilders at all levels, including the grassroots.

**Take** the following commitments:

1. To contribute to the reporting process at the national level as well as at the level of the AU Commission;
2. To establish a system of mentoring to promote the inclusion of youth in our programs;
3. To work towards building a women's movement in Africa;
4. To encourage the participation of women in politics and advocate for the reform of electoral systems to facilitate their participation;
5. To document lessons learned and best practices to share experiences in the different areas of intervention.