



## **OPEN LETTER TO THE AFRICAN UNION**

We, the civil society organizations, members of the “Gender is My Agenda” Campaign and Network that met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the eve of the 8<sup>th</sup> Summit of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, from January 24-25 2007, are addressing this open letter to the AU Heads of States and Government as well as to the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

We would like to thank His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the AU Commission for his persistent commitment to the accelerated implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), adopted at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2004.

From Maputo 2003 to Addis 2007, outstanding achievements have been recorded in favour of gender parity policy and mainstreaming to foster the emergence of an African society more just and equitable, and fully dedicated to sustainable human development, namely:

- The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equity in Africa;
- The decision taken at the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in 2005 to accelerate the implementation of the Solemn Declaration;
- The adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa;
- The creation of the Social, Economic and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

We, the civil society organizations,

- Are disappointed by the fact that AU women Commissioners hardly attend the initiatives undertaken by women civil society organizations on monitoring the implementation of the Solemn Declaration;
- Wonder about the level of implication and solidarity of AU women Commissioners in the promotion and implementation of the gender agenda;
- Question how to attain a good dissemination of their programmes/projects among the African women gender movements who fought so hard to attain the commitment of the AU Heads of States and Government to the

adoption of the SDGEA and accelerate its implementation, the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.....

- Vigorously deplore that only nine out of fifty three signatory States of the SDGEA have submitted their reports on its implementation.

Aware of the necessary consultation in the implementation of our specific programmes/projects, we, the civil society organizations, members of the "Gender is My Agenda" Campaign and Network that met in Addis Ababa on the eve of the 8<sup>th</sup> Summit of the AU would like to get more information on:

- What are the criteria set for the election of AU commissioners?
- Who are the members of the election committee of the commissioners?
- What are the roles, responsibilities and contributions of AU women Commissioners and all other Commissioners in the implementation of the gender parity principles and gender mainstreaming of the AU, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other organs programs /projects?

Heartedly hoping that:

- The AU Commissioners, in particular the women Commissioners who will be elected in July 2007, will be more responsive and dedicated to the promotion of the AU policy and programmes on gender equality and gender mainstreaming;
- All the AU member States respect their commitment to report as stipulated in the SDGEA;
- The AU Women, Gender and Development Directorate will be fully resourced and the recruitment of the Director taken as a serious and urgent matter. In this regard, we thank our sister Yetunde Teriba who has been persistent in raising the profile of the gender agenda all these years.

Please accept, Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and Chairperson of the AU Commission our highest consideration.

**Members of the "Gender is My Agenda" Campaign Network**



## Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

### THEMATIC FOCAL POINTS

- Governance :** Africa Leadership Forum (ALF)  
**Peace and Security:** Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS),  
African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), SaferAfrica  
**Human Rights:** Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF),  
African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)  
**Health:** Alliance pour la Recherche sur les Aspects Sociaux du Vih/Sida (SAHARA),  
Society for Women and Aids in Africa (SWAA), Roll Back Malaria (RBM)  
**Education:** Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE),  
Campagne Internationale sur les Objectifs du Millénaire pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ANCEFA)  
**Economic Empowerment:** African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)

### REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS

- Western Africa :** Association des Femmes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (AFAO)  
**Northern Africa:** Association des Mères Tunisiennes (AMT)  
**Southern Africa:** Foundation for Community Development (FDC)  
**Central Africa:** Association Congolaise de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes (ACOLVF)  
**Eastern Africa:** Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA)

### OTHER ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING

FEMNET, MARWOPNET, ABANTU for Development, Akina Mama Wa Africa, Centre for Human Rights, Equality Now, CONAFED, CGE, Pan African Movement, CAFOB, REPERES, EBWA, AAWORD, NPI, SSWC, ANSEDI, Women's Society of Alfateh, IAC

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH**  
AU, ECA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF

**WITH THE SUPPORT OF**  
OSIWA

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