

THE ABUJA CONSENSUAL AGREEMENT

We, the Civil Society Organizations across Africa meeting at the 5th Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming of the African Union in Abuja, Nigeria, from 25-26th January 2005 prior to the 4th ordinary session of the Conference Heads of State and Government to organize follow up of progress made in the implementation of the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality*, as well as to facilitate dialogue and revision of strategies on gender mainstreaming within the African Union, under the auspices of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate of the African Union, Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) :

Recalling the commitment of the African Heads of State and Government 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 decision to establish a Gender Directorate within the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission, the resolve to integrate the formal African Women Committee on Peace and Development into the organs or the Commission of the African Union as well as the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa adopted by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2004;

Recognizing their previous commitments to the implementation of Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women; and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African Charter on the Rights of the Child and all other relevant international, regional and sub-regional instruments aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and promoting equality between women and men;

Considering their commitment to implement the UN Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security; to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other related infectious diseases as contained in the Maputo Declarations on Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other Related Infectious Diseases; as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG); and the NEPAD programme;

Commending African Heads of States and Government who have signed and ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; and reminding those who have not done so to take that action;

Bearing in mind the efforts of the AU in ensuring visibility of the gender machinery by the recent creation of a Gender Directorate within the Office of the Chairperson of the African Union;

Bearing also in mind and building upon important work already accomplished by the Women Networks gathered around the African Union process under the facilitation of Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS);

Aware of the continued deprivation of women and the disadvantages that women face in access and control of resources and denial of economic opportunities;

Determined however to build on the momentum of these developments to ensure effective implementation of the Solemn Declaration instrument and promote gender parity;

We applaud the African Heads of State and Government for this memorable decision, which will bring a great change in the lives of the African women as well as the African population in general;

We salute the Commitment and the determination of the Chairperson of the African Union, H.E. Alpha Oumar Konare, to make of the Gender parity a reality within the African Union.

We commit ourselves to:

Increase our networking and advocacy for the implementation of the Declaration at various levels of operation within our comparative advantage;

Partnership with the AU and its organs, the RECs as well as all international partners on the implementation of the Solemn Declaration;

Commit ourselves to develop a framework that we will use in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Solemn Declaration;

Document processes that lead to the adoption Solemn Declaration including action by civil society;

Explore how to integrate the Declaration into the Peer Review Monitoring mechanism of NEPAD;

Convening another regional forum as soon as possible to investigate progress in the implementation of the Solemn Declaration.

We urge Member States:

To effect the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa;

To organize a meeting of the African Ministers of Gender to develop implementation strategies of the Solemn Declaration;

To ensure submission by July 2005 of a first annual report on progress made in terms of Gender mainstreaming as per paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Solemn Declaration;

To allocate adequate resources for the implementation of the Solemn Declaration.

We urge the Commission of the African Union:

To allocate adequate human and financial resources to the implementation of the Gender parity principle as well as the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

We urge the International Community:

To support the efforts of Africa in the implementation of NEPAD, the Millennium Development Goals and particularly the Gender programmes such as CEDAW, Beijing Plate form of Action, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and all other development programmes agreed upon.