

**SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



**MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
POUR LES DROITS
DES FEMMES AFRICAINES**

Une force pour la liberté

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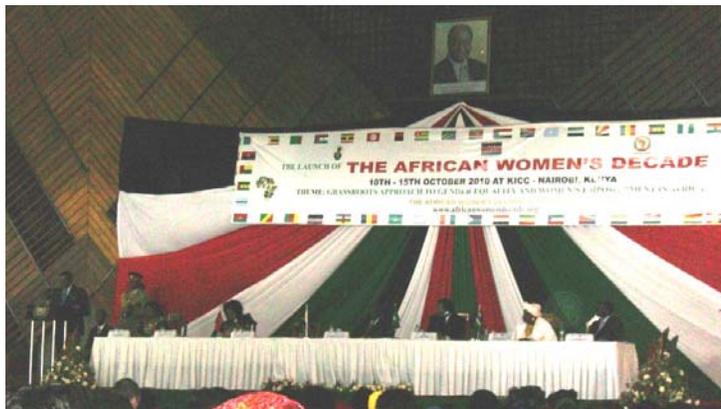
**KENYA RATIFIES THE
PROTOCOL!**

On October 13, 2010, Kenya became the 29th African Union (AU) Member State to ratify the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki announced Kenya's ratification of the Protocol at the Launch of the AU African Women's Dec-

ade 2010-2020 (AWD) in Nairobi on 15 October 2010. SOAWR members based in Kenya celebrated this announcement which demonstrated that their intensified lobbying efforts leading up to the Launch of the AWD had paid off. As they participated in the planning for the launch, SOAWR members FIDA-Kenya, Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW),

African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), and Equality Now had met with the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; the Permanent Secretary, Director of Administration, Chief of Gender, and Legal Officer of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development; as well as other key stakeholders in an effort to ensure that Kenya ratified the Protocol prior to the historic launch symbolizing the commitment of African governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) to promoting women's empowerment and gender equality.

In its ratification of the Protocol, Kenya entered in reservations on Article 10(3) and Article 14(2)(c), on reductions on military expenditure in favor of social development spending and on medical abortion, respectively. SOAWR continues to lobby the government to withdraw its reservations.



His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki officially launches the African Women's Decade 2010-2020 on 15 October 2010.

**SOAWR HOLDS
ANNUAL REVIEW
AND AGENDA-
SETTING WORKSHOP**

FEMNET, in partnership with Equality Now and the SOAWR

Steering Committee, organized the SOAWR Annual Review and Agenda-Setting Workshop with the theme "Commemorating 5 years of the AU Protocol on Women's Rights Coming into Force". The workshop was held in Nairobi from 24-25 November and brought together 33 SOAWR members based in 16 countries (Burundi, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) as well as representatives of the African Union Women, Gender and Development Directorate (AUWGDD), the AU Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), and donor organizations.

The objectives of the workshop were to: review progress made against targets agreed to in the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan; share and learn from experiences and emerging best practices at regional and national level; draw up and adopt a roadmap for joint and individual organisations' activities for the year 2011; finalize SOAWR membership and communications strategies; identify at least two new members to join the Steering Committee from the expanded membership and confirm the terms of reference for the Committee; and popularize the Protocol with African Diplomatic missions and the media.

The workshop was participatory and consisted of panel presentations, working group discussions, and



The opening session speakers. From left to right: Mary Wandia (Oxfam), Gladys Mutukwa (WiLDAF), Hannah Forster (ACDHRS), Yetunde Teriba (AUWGDD).

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

- * 18th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, with the theme "Towards Greater Unity and Integration through Shared Values", Addis Ababa, 27-28 and 30-31 January
- * 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women with the theme "Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work", New York, 22 February to 4 March
- * 2011 World Social Forum, Dakar, 6-11 February 2011
- * International Women's Day, 8 March, 100 Year Centenary 1911-2011

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SOLIDARITY FOR AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS COALITION NEWSLETTER

SOAWR HOLDS ANNUAL REVIEW AND AGENDA-SETTING WORKSHOP (CONTINUED)

strategy building sessions. It had simultaneous interpretation into English and French. The lead facilitator, Shamillah Wilson, ensured that the meeting's objectives and outputs were realized while a rapporteur, Kathambi Kinoti, documented the proceedings and has produced a draft workshop report, which is currently being reviewed.



Gladys Mutukwa delivers keynote address.

Gladys Mutukwa (WILDAF) gave the keynote address which she entitled, "Five years with the AU Protocol on Women's Rights: Where we have come from, where we are and where we are going". As one of the founding members of the coalition, she was able to trace the journey the Protocol has taken since the initial drafting stages and the role that CSOs, such as SOAWR members, have played in promoting its ratification and implementation. As she reflected on the way forward, she suggested that while the potential of the Protocol is tremendous, for this potential to be fulfilled, women's rights advocates must be innovative and truly engage the women of Africa at the grassroots level.

Kenya's ambassador to Ethiopia and the AU, Dr. Monica Juma briefly attended the workshop, as did Litha Musyimi-Ogana, the Director of the AUWGDD. In her remarks, Ambassador Juma acknowledged the hard work of SOAWR in lobbying for the ratification of the Protocol and urged the coalition members to take advantage of the African Women's Decade to intensify their lobbying and

advocacy to make the Protocol's provisions a reality in the lives of women in Africa. Yetunde Teriba (AUWGDD) also lauded SOAWR's success so far. She noted that without policy and legal frameworks that protect and promote women's rights, the African continent cannot develop. The year 2010 is a significant one for women on the continent. It is therefore critical for women's rights advocates to capitalize on the political climate around women's rights and enhance their engagement with the AU and national governments, something that SOAWR is doing at the regional and national levels. It is also important for women's rights advocates to evaluate the impact of their work. Ms Musyimi-Ogana reiterated the commitment of the AUWGDD to the Protocol and encouraged SOAWR to work closely with the Directorate. She echoed the sentiments of Amb. Juma and Ms. Teriba in urging the coalition to take advantage of key moments including the AU Summit in January 2011.

The meeting was largely successful. SOAWR members left having shared experiences and best practices over the past year and having formulated a plan of activities for 2011 based on the Strategic Plan. Members also began discussions of a media strategy, monitoring and evaluation, and of the structure of national coalitions and the Steering Committee—discussions which will be finalized in the coming months. During the meeting, Equality Now also organized, on behalf of the coalition, a public forum and a reception (the latter in collaboration with the AU) commemorating the fifth anniversary of the Protocol's entry into force. Both events provided the opportunity for SOAWR members to popularize the Protocol and to advocate for its universal ratification and implementation.



Amb. Juma speaks. Refiloe Lueduka (Lesotho Embassy in Ethiopia) is seated on the left.



Above: Group photo, SOAWR Review and Agenda-Setting Workshop. Below: Maria Magezi (AMWA) speaks on the "SOAWR in Action: National success stories" panel. From left to right: Aline Nivyabandi (Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines du Burundi), Shamillah Wilson, Maria Magezi, Matrine Chuulu (Women and Law in Southern Africa), Regina Mwanza (COVAW) and Hadeezah Haruna (Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative).



- IN THE MEDIA -

Kenya – Equality Now assisted Fahamu in the compilation of a special issue of *Pambazuka News* commemorating the 5th anniversary of the Protocol's entry into force. The issue includes articles by SOAWR members as well as by lawyers and academics. The articles reflect on the Protocol and SOAWR campaign, providing analysis of the status of the Protocol at the national level five years since its entry into force, and reflecting on lessons learned and the way forward. The issue was published on the Pambazuka News website and is available at: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/issue/507>

Nigeria - Alliances for Africa (AfA) in collaboration with the National Coalition for Affirmative Action (NCAA) carried out a phone-in radio programme "Gender Issues" on Metro FM 96.7 in Lagos on November 5, 13 and 19 and December 17. Through the 30-minute programme AfA popularized CEDAW and the Protocol and introduced the Gender Equal Opportunities Bill, which seeks to incorporate aspects of these instruments. Topics highlighted were: promotion of equality, gender and affirmative action; marriage and family rights; gender and citizenship, specifically on how it affects women's participation in politics, domestic violence. AfA emphasized the need to support the passage of the Bill into law since it will domesticate aspects of the CEDAW and the Protocol.

RAISING HER VOICE

WOLPNET PARTNERS WITH COCISWOL TO LAUNCH AU PROTOCOL 50-50 WOMEN CAMPAIGN

On October 13th, Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET) collaborated with the Coalition of Civil Society Women of Liberia (COCISWOL), a coalition of 45 organizations, to launch the AU Protocol 50-50 women campaign in District 3, Montserrado County. The event aimed at popularizing the Protocol as the only domesticated and legal regional instrument in Liberia that can be used as a framework for holding the government accountable to deliver on the provisions and commitments on women's rights. The event brought together over 500 women, including activists and women leaders who marched down Tubman Boulevard and major streets of District 3 carrying placards with messages geared towards public education and the promotion of Article 9 of the Protocol on the right

to participation in the political and decision-making process.

An outdoor programme was held on the same day with various stakeholders in attendance including the Senior Senator of Mary Land County, Hon. John Balloute who officially launched the AU Protocol 50-50 Campaign for Women Representation.

Six 50-50 Women Clubs were established in the communities of District 3 Montserrado, with membership of fifty women as a symbol of equality and reminder of the quest for equal representation. At the formalization meetings of each club, Una Thompson (WOLPNET) provided an overview of the Protocol and SOAWR campaign. She also highlighted the significance of the Protocol during preparations for the 2011 elections and in light of the rejection of the Gender Equality Bill.

At a retreat with the Minister of Gender and her staff, the COCISWOL, and the Mano River Women Peace Network

Raising Her Voice (RHV) promotes the rights and capacity of poor women to engage effectively in governance at all levels through increased voice and influence and more effective institutional accountability. The programme uses strategies such as media and communications work, networking, lobbying and advocacy, working with public institutions and decision-making forums and empowering and building capacity of civil society organisations.

(MARWOPNET) and other stakeholders held on November 26th, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf voiced her support for 50-50 women participation and representation at all levels of governance in Liberia. As a result, the Minister of Gender acknowledged the Protocol as the driving force and tool for demanding equal representation through affirmative action and other national legislation. Upon the submission of the retreat report, the Protocol is slated to propel the 50-50 campaign to the Legislators for the reintroduction of the Equity Bill. The President's statement of support and the mobilization strategies undertaken by WOLPNET have increased the chances of a fruitful dialogue with the Ministry of Gender on taking a multi-sectoral approach to implementation of the Protocol.

GLOBAL RAISING HER VOICE MEETING

On the 6th to the 10th of December, SOAWR members Oxfam, Equality Now, AMwA, Forum Mulher, and WRAPA participated in a global RHV learning meeting in Oxford alongside RHV partners and Oxfam Staff from Nepal, Honduras and Indonesia. The objectives of the meeting were: to share RHV/partner experience on building coalitions and alliances at every level; to build understanding of the contribution of alliances to programme success; to understand what is working well and why; to articulate programme knowledge to enable a "how to" guide on coalition building in gender and governance work to be written; and to identify applicable lessons from various programmes. The lessons arising from the meeting will be consolidated into a small RHV handbook entitled "How to work with alliances and coalitions on governance and women's rights".

EQUALITY NOW HOSTS PUBLIC FORUM ON THE PROTOCOL

On 24 November 2010, Equality Now hosted a public forum "Breathing Life into the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa at the Eve of the 5th Anniversary of its Entry into Force" on behalf of the SOAWR coalition and under its RHV Project. This forum was held during the SOAWR annual workshop so as to provide an opportunity for SOAWR members to popularize the Protocol, provide information about the coalition's work, and highlight the importance of addressing often contentious issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and women's reproductive health rights.

The forum was attended by about 90 people. An excerpt from *Africa Rising: The Grassroots Movement to End Female Genital Mutilation*, a documentary by Paula Heredia, produced by Equality Now, was screened along with the documentary produced by AMwA with support from FEMNET and other organizations on the East African Maternal Health Caravan, and the SOAWR film. This was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Irungu Houghton (Oxfam) with panelists Hannah Forster (ACDHRS), Alexandriah Muhangi (FIDA-Kenya), Maria Magezi (AMwA), and Sylvia Namale (Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women [EASSI]). Panelists highlighted SOAWR's work and the progress and challenges in promoting the



Top: From left to right: Hannah Forster, Irungu Houghton, Alexandriah Muhangi, Maria Magezi, and Sylvia Namale.
Bottom left: Screening of *Africa Rising*.
Bottom right: Screening of documentary on the Caravan.



Protocol. In the plenary discussion that followed, audience members highlighted, among other things, the need to fight patriarchy; consideration of the need to protect women's rights defenders; the importance of examining what we have learned from countries that ratified the Protocol; the need for individuals to take leadership on these issues, the problem of a lack of political will; and the need for men to be further involved. In concluding comments, panelists and the moderator highlighted the need for concrete action from governments, CSOs, and individuals in promoting women's rights, particularly in the context of the African Women's Decade.

FEMNET ORGANIZES NGO FORUM PRECEDING LAUNCH OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DECADE

FEMNET, on behalf of SOAWR, organized the NGO Forum preceding the Continental Launch of the African Women's Decade. By organizing the forum, which was held in Nairobi on 10 October, FEMNET aimed to ensure wide participation and contribution by African women, particularly from the grassroots, in the launch.

FEMNET successfully lobbied for the registration fee for the launch to be waived, which removed a key barrier to participation for many grassroots women from across the continent. Thus, FEMNET facilitated the participation of 252 women in the forum in order to increase awareness on the African Women's Decade as an opportunity for acceleration

of implementation of AU and global commitments on women's rights and to prepare the NGO statement which called for universal ratification of the Protocol by 2013 among other recommendations. Several recommendations from CSOs were taken up in the Experts' report and the Nairobi Declaration, in particular, the emphasis on the important role that grassroots women play in national development and commitment to support the scaling up of these initiatives.



NGO Forum participants

FEMNET LAUNCHES PHOTO EXHIBITION ON MATERNAL HEALTH



FEMNET launched a photo exhibition on the East African Caravan on Maternal Health on 17th November in collaboration with the Kenya Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, ABANTU for Development and the UN Millennium Campaign. The exhibition ran until 28 November. The exhibition was pre-launched in Kenya at the national launch of the Campaign for the Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) on 9 November at the request of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation. In partnership with Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA), FEMNET aired the short documentary on the Caravan during the SOAWR public forum on 24 November.

The exhibition was aimed at raising awareness and debate on issues surrounding maternal mortality in East Africa, particularly the right to sexual and reproductive health, in order for various stakeholders to advocate for and claim

rights provided in the Protocol. About 600 people, including medical students, CSO representatives, the media and government officials, viewed the exhibition during the CARMMA launch and public exhibition. *(More information on the Caravan is available at: <http://eacaravan2010.wordpress.com/>)*

WLSA CONVENES SENSITIZATION MEETINGS

On 27th October and 10th November, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) organized sensitization meetings in the rural communities of Kapiri Mposhi and Choma in Zambia on the Protocol, with a focus on Article 14 on sexual and reproductive health rights. WLSA also produced a fact sheet and a policy brief on unsafe abortions in Zambia. Through these activities, WLSA was able to increase knowledge of sexual and reproductive health rights. Women and girls got the sense that they do not need permission to get contraceptives and that the law allows safe abortions.

RURAL WOMEN PARTICIPATE IN AWD LAUNCH

Given that the theme of the Continental Launch of the African Women's Decade (AWD) 2010-2020 was "Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women Empowerment", Equality Now recognized the necessity of promoting the engagement of women from the grassroots in this event in order to ensure that their perspectives and recommendations were incorporated. Thus, Equality Now facilitated, on behalf of the SOAWR coalition,



Rural women at the NGO Forum. Left to right: Rebecca Sabri, Thérèse Mukandoli, Agnès Lusamba, Dinaless Msomba and Sophia Nthenda.

the participation of five rural women who traveled from their respective countries to attend the

launch activities. In collaboration with SOAWR member NGO-Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN), as well as other organizations Hagaruka, the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development, and the Comité National Femme et Développement, Equality Now was able to secure the participation of Thérèse Mukandoli (Rwanda), Agnès Lusamba (DRC), Sophia Nthenda (Malawi), Dinaless Msomba (Malawi) and Rebecca Sabri (Ghana).

Between October 10th and 15th, the women attended the NGO Forum and various



Rural women with Brenda Kombo (Equality Now) at the AWD Launch.

NGO Parallel Events such as the Roundtable on 1325 and a session entitled "Face to Face with Rural Women", in addition to the openings of the Experts and Ministerial Meetings and the official launch.

The rural women expressed the hope that during the decade governments will follow through on commitments to gender equality and will actively work towards ending violence against women and empowering women in rural areas.

SOLIDARITY FOR AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS COALITION NEWSLETTER

SOAWR CO-HOSTS RECEPTION WITH THE AU



On November 25th, Equality Now co-hosted, on behalf of the SOAWR coalition and in partnership with the AU, a reception celebrating the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Protocol and Kenya's recent ratification. The reception was attended by over 70 individuals including representatives of the AU, Government of Kenya, African diplomatic missions, civil society, donor organizations and the media. The chief guest was the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Development, Hon. Dr. Naomi Shaban, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary (PS), Dr. James Nyikal, due to a commitment in Parliament. The evening was presided over by Hannah Forster, the Executive Director of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) and SOAWR member. In opening remarks, Faiza Mohamed (Equality Now) and Mary Wandia (Oxfam), spoke about the significance of the Protocol in advancing women's rights

on the continent. Mahmane Dra, the Conseiller d'ambassade of Mali in Addis Ababa and member of the Peace and Security Council congratulated the countries that have ratified the Protocol and urged those that have not done so to deposit their instruments of ratification. He recognized the work of SOAWR in pushing for the ratification and implementation of the Protocol and urged the Coalition to continue in its

Right: Litha Musyimi-Ogana (AUWGDD) speaks on behalf of the AU Chairperson



work and to be assured that, in collaboration, the necessary work can be done. Litha Musyimi-Ogana, Director of the AUWGDD, made remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Jean Ping, who was unable to attend due to an engagement in Egypt. She praised the coalition for its work and highlighted the continuing partnership between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the coalition on the realization of women's rights. The PS, Dr. James Nyikal, made the keynote address. Alluding to Kenya's recent ratification, he indicated that the Government was "waiting for the opportune mo-

ment" to ratify the Protocol. He congratulated the SOAWR coalition on its work and urged the coalition to continue to advocate for ratification. Dr. Nyikal also spoke about the advances that Kenya has made in the area of women's rights, including the promulgation of the most progressive Constitution in the world, the establishment of various institutions (such as the Gender Commission), and the mainstreaming of gender in all government ministries. He also cited progress in girl child school enrollment and advances towards addressing the feminization of gender. At the same time, he urged men and women to both be engaged in advancing gender equality. SOAWR members in attendance used the opportunity to lobby representatives of the diplomatic corps for ratification of the Protocol. The Ambassador to Kenya of Sudan and First Secretary of Algeria, expressed to SOAWR members their commitment to ensure that their countries ratify the Protocol. The representatives of the Government of Kenya also pledged to continue to promote women's rights and gender equality.



Left: Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development Dr. James Nyikal makes keynote address.

FEMNET REPRESENTS SOAWR IN UNITE CAMPAIGN

FEMNET represents SOAWR on the steering committee of the *Africa UNITE to End Violence Against Women* Campaign. The campaign was launched in January 2010, at the margins of the 14th AU Summit. Since then materials have been developed and widely disseminated in five African languages. A secretariat has been established in Addis Ababa to coordinate the campaign activities. The Secretariat has contacted all the Regional Economic Communities in the last nine months to obtain their commitment to integrate the campaign in their plans and also second a senior person to be a representative on the Regional Steering Committee. FEMNET has publicized the UNiTE Campaign through several sub-regional

meetings on the African Women's Decade. In the Central Africa meeting held in May and the Eastern and Horn of Africa meeting held in Dar-es-Salaam participants were introduced to the campaign. In Central Africa FEMNET urged UNIFEM to work with women's organisations and the gender machineries to launch the campaign together with the national launch of the Africa Women's Decade.

The Regional Committee met on the 6th - 8th December in Addis Ababa and reviewed a proposed Communication Strategy and key messages for the Campaign. Members also looked at possible ways of mobilizing the required resources to implement the Communication Strategy.

The **Say NO - UNiTE** web platform, Say NO, counts and showcases actions on ending violence against women and girls through an interactive website, www.saynotoviolence.org

AMWA UPDATE ON MATERNAL HEALTH IN UGANDA AFTER THE CARAVAN

During the East African Caravan on Maternal Health, hundreds of signatures had been collected on two large petitions, urging Heads of States attending the 15th AU Summit in Kampala to *Act Now* to prioritize women's health and save women's lives.

Immediately after the East African Caravan and the July AU Summit in 2010, the Social Services Committee within the Parliament of Uganda went on a national tour to assess the Government's progress in health service provision and specifically reproductive health. This was in response to the public outcry of the state of health facilities in the country.

EXCERPTS FROM FEMNET PRESS STATEMENT (6/12/2010)- REPRESENTATIVES OF AFRICAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS MEET WITH MS BACHELET

The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) together with a wide range of African women's organizations, activists and members of the Africa Feminist Forum (AFF), organized to meet with United Nations Secretary General for the UN Women, Ms. Bachelet, on 26th November to start conversations regarding the vision for the UN Women. [SOAWR members] FEMNET and African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), with support of Urgent Action Fund – Africa, facilitated a high level delegation of African women leaders to travel to New York to meet with the newly appointed head of the UN Women. FEMNET is a focal point organization for Africa in the Network of the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign. The delegation of African women leaders included Dr. Thelma Awori, Chairperson, Isis –WICCE; Dr. Hilda Tadia Chairperson, AWDF; Ms. Ticky Monekosso Treasurer, Femmes Africa Solidarité; Ms. Imane Belghiti, Association Nationale AL HIDN (Consultative Status with ECOSOC, UN) GEAR Campaign, Focal Point North Africa/ Board Member, FEMNET; and Ms. Norah Matovu Winyi, Executive Director, FEMNET. Ms. Bachelet mentioned that the policy team within the UN Women will make deliberate efforts to develop new and compelling arguments for supporting women's empowerment and gender equality programmes (WEGE). Ms. Bachelet stated that she considered the meeting with African women leaders as a very good start of a partnership that will be beneficial to her work and that of the UN Women. She welcomed the input of African women and different organizations and confirmed the interest for continued engagement as the UN Women develops.

During the meeting the African women leaders emphasized the need for the UN Women to have clear mechanisms for continued engagement with African women's organizations that are based and operating within the continent as they have firsthand experience of organizing around women's

rights and other development issues at various levels. The delegation promised to follow up with the representatives of the 10 African countries that are members of the Executive Board of the UN Women to encourage them to also link up with African women organizations for consultations on how best to build a strong UN Women that can provide support to their work in this area.



Representatives of African women's organizations meeting with Ms. Bachelet.

SOAWR MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN UNIFEM FORUM

SOAWR members, African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), Alliances for Africa, African Women Development Fund (AWDF), Equality Now, African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), and Oxfam participated in the Consultative and Planning Forum on Women's Rights and the African Union convened by the UNIFEM Liaison Office to the AU and ECA on 2-3 December in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The forum provided the opportunity for women's rights organizations and networks working at the sub-regional and regional level to review achievements, strategies and challenges in women's rights advocacy in the past year; increase knowledge of the AU institutional framework and opportunities for engagement; conduct strategic region-wide planning; and define roles and establish mutual accountability among themselves in order to facilitate continued advocacy. SOAWR members shared activities engaging the AU over the past year, highlighting challenges and lessons learned. Participants set targets for 2011 focusing on the theme of the African Women's Decade, namely "Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV/AIDS".

OXFAM AND FAHAMU PARTICIPATE IN HIGH- LEVEL ACCORD-AU SEMINAR ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

Oxfam provided technical support for the hosting of the "High-Level Seminar on Women, Peace and Security" organized by the African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the AU in Durban, South Africa, from 8-9 October. The seminar brought together practitioners, academics and policy makers from Africa and beyond on the theme "1325 IN 2020—LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK". The objective of the seminar was to review progress since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, with a focus to increase women's participation in conflict prevention and peace-building. Seminar participants developed a roadmap for the realization of the provisions of 1325 in Africa by 2020. Oxfam and Fahamu facilitated the participation of a delegation of women from DRC, Burundi and Sudan working on issues around women and conflict. Members of the delegation made presentations on women's involvement in peace negotiations in their respective countries.



IAC HOLDS SUB- REGIONAL YOUTH MOBILIZATION WORKSHOP

From 23 to 26 November, the Headquarters of the Inter-African Committee Against Harmful Practices (IAC) held a sub-regional youth mobilization workshop in Kampala, Uganda. Thirty young people from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda participated. The theme of the workshop was "Enabling young people to accelerate ending FGM". The objective, which was met, was to build further youth capacity on a human rights-based approach to the elimination of FGM using mainly the Protocol, the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and national legislation where applicable.

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A force for freedom

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**MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
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DES FEMMES AFRICAINES**

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| Status of the Protocol | In October 2009 | In October 2010 |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Signatures | 45 | 46 |
| Total Ratifications | 27 | 29 |

State Parties to the Protocol

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Comoros, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, **Kenya**, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

SOAWR MEMBERS ENGAGE PAP

Oxfam and Equality Now provided technical support to facilitate the participation of SOAWR members in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) Women's Conference held in Midrand, South Africa, on 8-9 October. In August, Oxfam had secured an appointment to present a briefing paper on the Protocol to the PAP Women's Caucus Meeting. SOAWR members FEMNET and People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) made this presentation and, with Oxfam taking the lead, requested space for a presentation at the conference in October. A slot was provided to the coalition and members Sister Namibia, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), and POWA attended the conference and made a presentation highlighting the role and strategies that PAP members can use in ensuring the implementation of the Protocol. The SOAWR members also lobbied individual PAP MPs from Uganda, Malawi, the DRC, Zambia, Rwanda and Mozambique on these issues. PAP MPs are aware of the Protocol and appreciate that it needs to be implemented in order to improve the status of women. They committed to work on implementation or ratification at the regional and national levels.

Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) is a coalition of 37 civil society organizations across the continent working to ensure that the *Protocol* to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa remains on the agenda of policy makers and to urge all African leaders to safeguard the rights of women through ratification and implementation of the *Protocol*.

Coalition Members

African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), Alliance for Africa, Association des Juristes Maliennes (AJM), BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Le Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines de Burundi (CAFOB), Cellule de Coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelles Affectant la Santé des Femmes et des Enfants (CPTAFE), Centre for Justice Studies and Innovation (CJSI), Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Eastern Africa Sub-regional Support Initiative (EASSI), Equality Now, Fahamu Networks for Social Justice, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya, Forum Mulher, Girl Child Network, Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS), Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), NGO Gender Coordination Network, Oxfam GB, People Opposing Women's Abuse (POWA), Sister Namibia, Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), The Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC), The Inter-African Network for Women, Media, Gender Equity and Development (FAMEDEV), Tomorrow's Child Initiative, Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), Union Nationale des Femmes de Djibouti (UNFD), University of Pretoria Centre for Human Rights, Voix de Femmes, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Women Direct, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET), Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)

SOAWR MEMBERS CO-ORGANIZE ROUNDTABLE ON UN RESOLUTION 1325

During the Launch of the African Women's Decade, Oxfam, Femmes Africa Solidarité, UNIFEM Liaison Office with the AU, ACCORD, Urgent Action Fund-Africa, ISIS WICCE, YWCA, Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa, Fahamu, FEMNET, and Equality Now (on behalf of SOAWR) collaborated with the AU Peace and Security Directorate and WGDD to host a roundtable on UNSCR 1325. The roundtable provided an opportunity for women from Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Rwanda, Liberia and DRC working on and affected by conflict to share their experiences on UN Resolution 1325 and to come up with strategies that can be used to fast-track implementation of the resolution during the African Women's Decade. Oxfam took the lead in organizing the roundtable as part of its and SOAWR's efforts to scale up women's engagement with peace and security issues as elaborated not only in UNSCR 1325, but also in the Protocol whose provisions include the right to peace and protection of women in conflict.

ASSOCIATION DE JURISTES MALIENNES ORGANIZES A FORUM ON THE PROTOCOL

On 3 December 2010, the Association de Juristes Maliennes (AJM) organized a forum with women from the Bamako military camp on the subject of the Protocol. The objectives of the forum were to sensitize the women on human rights and particularly women's rights as elaborated in the Protocol. Sixty-nine women took part in the forum.

FEMNET ORGANIZES DISCUSSION OF PROTOCOL USING CROSSROADS RADIO DRAMA

FEMNET, a co-organizer of the Kenya Gender Festival, held a discussion on 26th November on the Protocol using the Crossroads radio drama. The objective of this discussion was to raise awareness of the Protocol among Kenyan grassroots leaders including human rights defenders. Thirty grassroots leader received copies of the Protocol in English and Swahili and committed to popularizing the Protocol within their various constituencies upon their return.