

**SOLIDARITY FOR  
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



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

Une force pour la liberté

## **Announcement of Essay Competition: Why the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa is important to youth**

SOAWR Coalition

May 3, 2011

In October 2010, the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) was officially launched in Nairobi, Kenya. The decade is a critical moment for the advancement of women's rights and gender equality on the continent. The Solidarity for African Women's Rights coalition (SOAWR), a coalition of 37 organizations based throughout the continent, is committed to ensuring that African Union (AU) member states ratify and implement the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa as an instrument that will play an important role in the realization of the Decade's objectives. Yet, unfortunately, not all Africans are aware of the Protocol and its significance.

In Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, this June, African heads of state and government will gather at a summit with the theme, "Youth empowerment for sustainable development". Youth action is critical to the continent's development, and more specifically, in ensuring that girls and women can make equally valued contributions to this development. As such, the SOAWR coalition would like to invite youth to reflect on the importance of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. Contestants are asked to respond to the question, "**Why is the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa important to you?**" in an essay of a maximum of 2000 words.

The four best essays will receive a copy of *African Women Writing Resistance: An Anthology of Contemporary Voices* edited by Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, Pauline Dongala, Omotayo Jolaosho, and Anne Serafin. The winning essays will also be published on the *Pambazuka News* website ([www.pambazuka.org](http://www.pambazuka.org)). In addition, the writer of the essay awarded first place will be given the opportunity to attend the AU Summit in Malabo with her or his basic expenses (ticket, accommodation, etc.) covered.

The competition is open to citizens of all African countries aged between 18 and 25.

Entries can be submitted in English or French. The deadline for submission is **May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at 12 noon, GMT**. Essays should be typed (1.5 line spacing and 12 point font) and sent in Word or PDF format to the SOAWR Secretariat through [bkombo@equalitynow.org](mailto:bkombo@equalitynow.org) with the subject "SOAWR Essay Competition". Along with the essays, contestants should indicate the email address where they can be reached and provide their age, nationality and country of residence.

### Coalition Members

African Centre 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), Alliances for Africa, Association des Juristes Maliennes (AJM), BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Cellule de Coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelle Affectant la Sante des Femmes et des Enfants (CPTAFE), Centre for Justice Studies and Innovations (CJSI), Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Collectif des Associations et ONGS Féminines de Burundi (CAFOB), Eastern Africa Sub-regional Support Initiative (EASSI), Equality Now, FAHAMU, FAMEDEV, Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya (FIDA-Kenya), Forum Mulher, Girl Child Network (GCN), Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS), Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC), Inter-African Network For Women, Media, Gender and Development (FAMEDEV), Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN), Oxfam GB, People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), Sister Namibia, Strategic Initiative for the Horn of Africa (SIHA), Tomorrow's Child Initiative (TCI), Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), Union Nationale des Femmes de Djibouti (UNFD), University of Pretoria Center for Human Rights, Women Direct, Voix de Femmes, Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET), Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternatives (WRAPA), Women NGO's Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL)