

**SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



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

Une force pour la liberté

Press Statement
29 June 2011

Equatorial Guinea Ratifies the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights coalition (SOAWR), a coalition of 37 organizations based in 21 African countries, congratulates the Republic of Equatorial Guinea on its deposit of its instrument of ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Protocol). The Minister of Gender, Ms. Eulalia Envo Bela, deposited the instrument to the African Union (AU) Commission, represented by Chairperson Jean Ping, on June 29th prior to the 17th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU being held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea from 30 June to 1 July 2011.

The Protocol was adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the 2nd Ordinary Session of Assembly of the AU in Maputo on July 11, 2003. Equatorial Guinea signed the Protocol in 2005 and has now become the 31st AU member state to ratify this instrument.



Sylvie Ngongmo (FEMNET) (in red), Rosemary Mugwe (Ipas), Naisola Likimani (FEMNET), with Honorable Minister Eulalia Envo Bela (far right) and AUC Chairperson Jean Ping

SOAWR members are pleased to have been given the opportunity to meet with the Minister on the morning of June 29th to advocate for the speedy deposit of the ratification instrument. They, together with Litha Musyimi-Ogana, Director of the AU Women, Gender and Development Directorate, and a representative of Ipas, accompanied the Minister as she deposited the instrument. Sylvie Ndongmo, SOAWR member and Chairperson of African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) stated, "This is a day for celebration for the women of Equatorial Guinea. The government has demonstrated its commitment to promoting and protecting their rights and we hope that

the 22 African countries yet to ratify the Protocol will follow its example." Brenda Kombo added from SOAWR Secretariat Equality Now, "This ratification is another step in the realization of the objectives of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020). We urge the government of Equatorial Guinea to allocate adequate resources to ensure women's full realization of the rights enshrined within the Protocol." SOAWR also calls upon the government of Equatorial Guinea to popularize the Protocol and to establish a process to ensure that the provisions of the Protocol are realized through laws, policies and services promoting and protecting women's rights in Equatorial Guinea.

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)