
**SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



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

Une force pour la liberté

1. Introduction

Ratification Now!

After the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in July 2003, women's and human rights organizations were concerned that the ratification and domestication of the Protocol might take the same time as its drafting. In April 2004, these organizations noted that one year after adoption, only one country, The Comoros, had ratified the Protocol. In response, these national, regional and international organizations formed the Coalition on Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) in order to encourage governments to ratify and domesticate the Protocol. Since the beginning of the Coalition's campaign, nine more countries have ratified the Protocol, bringing the total number of ratifications to ten. Although progress has been made, 5 more ratifications are required before the Protocol comes into force.

African Union Member States must recognize the importance of this Protocol in ensuring African women their rights. Rape in Congo, Sudan and Uganda are rampant; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) plagues girls and women in Ethiopia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Somalia amongst other countries; forced early marriages steal young girls of their childhood in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg! The violence and discrimination against African women cannot continue. At the AU Summit in Tripoli in July 2005, the Coalition looks to the African Heads of States to recognize this fact and to take action to uphold their promises made in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa in Addis Ababa in July 2004. The AU member states must ratify the Protocol, taking the number of ratifications above and beyond 15 and bringing the Protocol into force this year as they committed to. - **Faiza Mohamed, Equality Now**

Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) hands red cards, yellow cards and green cards to African leaders

Countries which have received red cards for failing to sign or ratify the Protocol include:

Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Cape Verde, Egypt, Eritrea, Malawi, Mauritania, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Seychelles, Somalia, Sao Tome & Principe, Sudan, Tunisia, Zambia

Countries which have received yellow cards for signing but failing to ratify the Protocol include:

Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, DRC, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritius, Niger, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe

Countries which have received green cards for signing and ratifying the Protocol include:

The Comoros, Djibouti, Libya, Lesotho, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa

Tell African leaders to get on with ratification!

Nearly 4 000 people have told African leaders to ratify the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.

You can join then now by signing a petition to African leaders online, by email or through sending an SMS message.

To sign online, visit <http://www.pambazuka.org/petition>

To sign by email, send a message to petition@pambazuka.org with your full name in the body of the email

To sign by mobile phone, send a text message with the word petition followed by your full name to +27-832-933-934

Ratify Now!

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2.2 The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: Supporting home-grown rights instruments

Gladys Mutukwa explains the international and regional mechanisms available for the protection of women's rights. States cannot show a commitment at one level and act differently at another, she argues. Failure to ratify a critical home-grown instrument like the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa calls into question any purported commitments to the rights of women, she concludes.

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In order to make full use of the ten years until the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, **Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim** argues that it is a matter of great urgency for African states to ratify the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and join those who have already done so (The Comoros, Djibouti, Libya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia,

Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Senegal). Ratifying the Protocol would lead to states preparing an adequate strategy for the implementation of its provisions.

2.4 Overcoming maternal mortality in Tanzania

Ananilea Nkya looks at the rise of maternal mortality in Tanzania and asks whether more attention would be given to the deaths if they were caused by road accidents or plane crashes. Without a concerted effort to reduce maternal mortality, the Millennium Development Goals will remain a dream, she says.

2.5 Removing “unfreedoms”: Women and debt cancellation

Women have suffered the most as a result of the diversion of funds from social services in order to service debt repayments. In solving the debt crisis and making sure that it never happens again, the political and economic participation of women is crucial. That’s why the Protocol on the Rights of Women must be ratified, says this **Pambazuka News** article.

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2.1 Turn Aspiration into action: Ratify the protocol now!

In Uganda in 1967 there were no women members of parliament and in 1980 only one out of the 143 members of Parliament was a woman. In the 1989 National Resistance Council elections, the NRM Government brought significant improvement to women’s political participation and reserved thirty-four seats for women. Uganda, writes Jacqueline Asiimwe, is often given as an example of effective women’s political participation, but there is a long way to go before the playing fields are truly level. Part of the solution is to turn the aspirations of the Millennium Development Goals into action by ratifying the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Jacqueline Asiimwe

Introduction:

One of the millennium development goals is the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. While limited in nature, the goal addresses gender disparity in education, the share of women in wage employment and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. The importance of this goal to human development cannot be over emphasized.

This article explores just one of the aspects of the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women by sharing Uganda’s experience in the area of women’s political leadership.

The Uganda Experience:

Uganda is oft cited as a success story with regard to the issue of women in leadership - specifically political leadership. Indeed the 1995 Constitution has various articles that

address women's [political] leadership. The National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Constitution stipulates that the State shall ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalized groups on all constitutional and other bodies. Article 32 addresses the need for affirmative action; Article 33 spells out rights specific to women. Article 78 states that every district shall have one woman representative to parliament and article 180(b) ensures that one third of members of each local council shall be women.

One of the first demands that the women's movement made of the new NRM regime (The NRM came to power in 1986 and has ruled Uganda since then. It is also known as the Movement Government.) was in the area of women's political rights. At independence in 1962 there was a 2:88 female to male ratio in parliament. But in 1967 no women served in Parliament; in 1980 only one out of the 143 members of Parliament was a woman. In the 1989 National Resistance Council elections, the NRM Government brought significant improvement to women's political participation. Thirty-four seats were reserved for women; two women won their seats in open contests against male candidates, three women were nominated by the president and two were historical members, appointed because of their participation in the guerrilla war led by the National Resistance Army. By 1996, 52 women held parliamentary seats, 39 of them reserved and constituting 19 percent of the members of Parliament. By 1995 also, women constituted 17 percent of all ministers, 21 percent of all permanent secretaries, 35 percent of all under secretaries, and 16 percent of all district administrators. Women were also represented on National Commissions such as the Constitutional Commission, the Electoral Commission and the Human Rights Commission as well as on parastatal boards.

Through affirmative action, women made considerable headway in Parliament. Women now make up 24 percent of the parliamentarians in Uganda and despite the ongoing discussion of the merits or demerits of such a policy one of the positive results is that women have been given exposure, political experience and increased confidence. When asked about the changes to women's status after the 1986 NRM takeover, women overwhelmingly responded that the biggest changes related to women's participation in politics, standing for office, becoming public and government leaders, and being able to express themselves publicly to a greater degree than in the past.

Despite these gains though, it is still not very easy for women to make it into political offices and prestigious leadership. The major players in politics and decision-making continue to be men despite women's presence and the issues on women's political agenda do not feature nor are they deemed a priority. The fact that men predominate in the public/political sphere in Uganda means that its organization and structures are heavily influenced by male values, attitudes and priorities. Very often women are expected to conform to and not transform the structures and norms of the public sphere. Whether the culture and atmosphere of politics is actively antagonistic to women, or simply organized in a way that doesn't suit them, it can be difficult for women as relative newcomers to challenge. Those who attempt to transform the structures and norms face a quick and brutal backlash.

Further, despite the high numbers of women in politics and in the public space, women are still regarded as intruders in this [male] space and are largely unwelcome in the political domain and for the most part they are endured as a necessary evil rather than an equal partner on the pathway to development. As one person put it:



‘The biggest threat facing the stability of families today is the desire for women to join high-level politics. There are shortcomings to this, most important being the lack of “quality time” and parental love to children...Women should be limited to 10% political representation and should be stopped from voting for presidents and MPs at least for some 200 years. [See Dr. Joy C Kwesiga, Leaders Within Limits: Gender Ideologies and Identities in Uganda Today (research paper under a research program titled “ Consolidating Peace and Development in the Lake Victoria Region and its Environs: The National and Local Responses to Transformation from Turmoil to a More Sustainable Development Process”]

Another person put it this way: “Sometimes when you give financial, economic and social power to women, in most cases it brings problems. Check which type of woman is given power.” (Muhairwe, Ekimeza 23/02/02)

The major scenario with regard to women and leadership has been bureaucratically putting women in places of leadership and authority without any attempts at simultaneously removing the practical and structural obstacles that stand in their way to effective involvement in this arena. In short it is not enough to increase women’s participation in politics/leadership without democratizing the public space where such politics are done. [Sylvia Tamale, Gender and Affirmative Action in Post-195 Uganda: A New Dispensation, or Business as Usual? IN CONSTITUTIONALISM IN AFRICA: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES, FACING CHALLENGES, J.OLOKA OYANGO (Ed) 2001 at221.] This issue is closely related to tokenism, which is the practice of appointing a few women to positions of power and responsibility, without giving them the requisite support, or eliminating the impediments they face. The following quote illustrates this point:

‘Women are not brought in as an equal partner but as a means of balancing the composition. This is reflected during parliamentary debates where in most circumstances the Speaker or the chairperson is giving women a chance to speak. He will often say ‘let me first gender balance’. When looked at analytically it seems like the speaker has been giving an opportunity to substantive speakers, and then giving women a chance for the sake of balance. [SUPRA Note 7.]

Bringing women into the policy and decision making space does not necessarily mean or lead to power sharing or redress in imbalances at that level. Many women have in fact shared of the struggles in that space, struggles to assert the worth of a woman, struggles to be respected as competent legislators or decision-makers, etc. Take for example Maria Mutagamba’s experience, who in 1996 was a member of the Democratic Party (DP). When she was still with the DP she was chairperson of the presidential elections campaign in 1996 and when she asked Dr. Kawanga Ssemwogerere what he expected of her he said “All you have to do is present yourself at the conference center, welcome me when I come in and introduce me to the gathering.” [WINNIE BYANYIMA AND RICHARD MUGISHA (Eds), THE RISING TIDE: UGANDAN WOMEN’S STRUGGLE FOR A PUBLIC VOICE 1940 - 2002 (2003) at 186] She also recounts the following about her high post in the DP

‘Slowly I was coming face to face with the realities of politics. I had to get my campaign team to accept me first. They had not agreed on me becoming their chairperson. I think that Dr. Ssemwogerere had sat somewhere and thought of a woman for several reasons. One he thought I had money, which would help his campaign. Secondly I think he wanted to appear gender sensitive and appointing a woman head of his team would portray a gender-balanced campaign and thirdly, as I came to realize later, he thought I was a quiet innocent person who could be pushed

around easily...At first men close to him did not accept me easily because they had lined up some other people to head the campaign and they did not want a woman to head...'

While the public sphere is opening up to women the private sphere remains intact. By private sphere we mean the family. Difficulties arise because the entry of women into leadership positions is discussed in isolation of these structures. Consequently, while the power centers are shifting, the other institutions in society are not changing. This is particularly so in the case of family structures and household dynamics. People are often quick to remind women where they belong as the following quotation illustrates:

'However high you have gone politically, socially or economically, your husband is your husband. Even if you become the President of Uganda and your husband is a primary school teacher, he is still entitled to his respect in that capacity. Drop the pride! It smacks of arrogance, conceit and egoism. Its capacity to destroy marriages is unquestionable. [SUPRA Note 18.]

Despite the challenges that women in politics face, it goes without saying that their presence has gone a long way in improving the lives of ordinary Ugandans. Their contribution is summed up as follows:

'The presence of such an unprecedented number of females in an institution that was traditionally dominated by men has... introduced a gendered perspective to the law-making process...Moreover, the increased visibility of women in positions of leadership is slowly changing the attitudes of Ugandans (both men and women) towards women's presence in the political arena. This new consciousness forms the crucial basis for a new kind of political self-organisation for women and for a more radical transformation of gender relations in Ugandan society (Tamale: 2001: 220).

Affirmative Action in politics in Uganda has delivered numbers. Presence and action of women has expanded and relatively deepened public concerns. Both at the national and local levels, the relative presence of women has brought new questions on the political agenda. The experience of the constitution making process in 1994 and the resultant 1995 constitution indicate that numerical presence of women in the Constituent Assembly had a lot to contribute to the gendered contestations and outcomes. The outlook of decision-making bodies has changed, ideologically accommodating the construction of a leader as male and female.

Enter the Protocol on Women's Rights:

With regard to the issue of women's rights to participate in politics and decision making the Protocol provides that:

- 1) States Parties shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that:
 - a) women participate without any discrimination in all elections;
 - b) women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes;
 - c) women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of State policies and development programs.

- 2) States Parties shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

The Millennium Development Goals and the Protocol tie in beautifully because both demand for the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries, part of which includes levels and numbers of representation. No one country can stand tall and proud or even seek to make headway in politics if it continues to exclude or marginalize women. If women are the backbone of our economies, if they are the central to agriculture and food security in our countries, if they are the pivot around which our populations grow and expand, then they must be included in the same measure in politics and decision making.

The Millennium Development Goals and the Protocol on Women's Rights must not be seen as separate instruments, with governments being able to pick and choose which they will deliver on. They are two sides of the same coin. One cannot be properly implemented without the other and that's why the clarion call goes out to all African Leaders - we need to ratify the Protocol NOW!

Turn the aspirations of the Millennium Development Goals into action by ratifying the Protocol on the Rights of Women.

* Please send comments to editor@pambazuka.org

2.2 The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: Supporting home-grown rights instruments

Gladys Mutukwa explains the international and regional mechanisms available for the protection of women's rights. States cannot show a commitment at one level and act differently at another, she argues. Failure to ratify a critical home-grown instrument like the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa calls into question any purported commitments to the rights of women, she concludes.

Gladys Mutukwa

Introduction

The need for the effective promotion and protection of the rights of women is no longer an issue as it is now widely recognised that without the equal and effective participation of half of the world's population, the problems of growing poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS and other development issues confounding our world today will continue to confound us. The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals recognise that gender inequalities based on the subordination of women are intricately connected to the development challenges facing the world today.

It is always important to realise that the promotion and protection of the human rights of women is a development goal in its own right, as well as being one of the prerequisites for poverty reduction and sustainable development. The Beijing Platform for Action and the various international, regional and sub regional instruments on the human rights of women provide the framework and the tools for this.

As a result of this realisation, several instruments have been signed over the years at the international, regional and sub regional levels regarding the need to promote and protect the human rights of women. We see this right from the time of the United Nations Charter



in 1946 that reaffirmed the equal rights of women and men. We see this principle of equality further elaborated and expanded on in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights adopted in 1948. A number of conventions and covenants followed in subsequent years, like the Covenant on the Rights of Married women, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which require states parties to them to ensure the equal enjoyment by both women and men of the rights set therein.

In furtherance of this quest for protecting the human rights of women, the world community went on to adopt a Declaration which was later developed into the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which we all know as CEDAW, and later the Declaration on Violence Against Women. The efforts at this level are on -going.

At the regional level too, the African continent has not been idle. A number of instruments have been adopted with reference to or provisions on the rights of women. Notable among these is the 1981 African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), which essentially gave an African character to the principles on human rights, including equality and non-discrimination, agreed to and adopted at the international level. Issues of refugees, children's rights, mercenaries, peace and security, corruption etc have been addressed in various instruments. Recently, the Protocol to the ACHPR on Women's Rights was added to the list.

SADC as a sub regional institution has also developed and adopted a number of instruments including the famous Declaration on Gender and Development adopted in 1997 by the SADC Heads of State and Government. In 1998 an Addendum on the Eradication of Violence Against Women and children was also adopted.

All these efforts and instruments would just hang in the air and be of little help to any women unless they are complimented and completed by adoption of national constitutions and laws that adequately provide for the rights and equal status of women.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women

The above captioned Protocol (hereinafter referred to as the African Women's Protocol) was adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003. This Protocol is a legal framework for African women to use in the exercise of their rights as well as for states to use in promoting and protecting the rights of women. It was signed by thirty member states, five of them from Southern Africa. It was agreed by the Summit that the Protocol would be ratified and come into force in time for the next summit in 2004. That Summit has come and gone and unless we double our efforts, and move from the current ten ratifications so far, the goal post may be shifted again and again.

This will be a great letdown for the efforts to better promote and protect the human rights of the women of Africa who make up more than half its population and carry an unconscionable burden of poverty, disease and disempowerment.

This Protocol can rightly be called the Bill of Rights for African Women. It may not be perfect but it has the special distinction of addressing specific problems and issues that have been major constraints and hindrances for African women in the past. The Protocol covers fundamental issues like the right to inheritance, widowhood, affirmative action to promote equal access and participation in politics and decision making; rights of



particularly vulnerable groups of women i.e. the elderly women, women with disabilities, women under conflict situations, pregnant women and nursing mothers, protection against harmful traditional practices. It also boldly addresses current and emerging issues like HIV and AIDS, refugee women, right to food security and adequate housing etc.

The Protocol, drawn up by Africans, addresses issues specific to Africa that were not covered by other instruments in addition to covering the other general human rights issues.

Sub regional context

Out of the twelve countries in the Southern African sub-region, only three countries have ratified the Protocol. Some of the countries did not even sign the Protocol and others are not treating the follow up steps seriously enough. Yet, this is a critical year for the sub region as at its next summit in August there is to be a report back on how far the States have gone in implementing the provisions of the SADC Gender and Development Declaration, especially the provision relating to having at least thirty percent of decision-making positions occupied by women. We are also engaged in assessing whether the Declaration has made a sustainable change to the lives of the millions of women in our sub region.

In order for the campaign to have the Protocol ratified by all the countries succeed, it is important for all of us to fully appreciate the importance of this Protocol, how it relates to other instruments that we are already engaged with like CEDAW, the SADC Gender Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action. We also need to know why early ratification and domestication are critical to the issue of the rights, role and status of women in our countries.

The Protocol gives a truly African aspect to the issue of human rights for women. It more or less domesticates on the African continent what all our governments and states have committed to by ratifying CEDAW and other such instruments. The Protocol brings a very progressive aspect by addressing issues, in addition to usual ones that are critical to Africa, which are assumed under the other instruments.

History of the instruments on women's rights

1. International level:

UN charter (1946); Universal declaration on Human Rights (1948); various Covenants on political, economic, social, cultural and others rights, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and optional Protocol, Convention on the rights of the Child

2. Regional Level

Instrument establishing the OAU (1963) African Charter on Human and people's Rights (ACHPR-1981) Convention on the Rights of the African Child (1990) ; Protocol to the ACHPR establishing the African Court on human and People's Rights (1998); Constitutive Act of the African union (2000); Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women (2003)

3. Sub regional level

Instrument establishing the Southern African Development Community; SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) Addendum to the Declaration on the Eradication of Violence Against Women (1998).

Other sub regions are also in the process of developing instruments that bring the internationally agreed principles to talk to real sub regional issues and priorities.

4. National level

Constitutions, laws, traditions and customs.

Domestication

All the instruments require our states to include in their national constitutions and other legislative instruments the fundamental principles of equality of the sexes and non-discrimination and to ensure effective implementation.

The international, regional and sub regional instruments are complimentary and they reinforce each other. They are not contradictory. Neither are they in competition with each other. On the contrary, together they offer women a more comprehensive empowerment framework. But they all call for action at national level. This calls for ratification, domestication, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Parliamentarians can contribute in a very tangible way to the sustainable protection of the rights of the millions of women in all the SADC countries by, inter alia;

- Demanding the urgent ratification of the Protocol where this has not been done;
- Moving a motion for the domestication of its provisions, according to the relevant legal system;
- Ensuring that adequate and sustainable budgetary allocations are made for its implementation;
- Asking for the steps necessary for the effective implementation of the Provisions under the national legal system (domestication);
- Putting this item on the agenda for an update on the progress made;
- Ensuring that, as many people in your constituencies know the Protocol and its implications for the daily lives of women at all levels in the country so that they can demand its implementation..

It is important to realise that states cannot show a commitment at one level and act differently at another. Failure to ratify such a critical home- grown instrument calls into question any purported commitments to the rights of women. Furthermore it goes against the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality adopted by all our Heads of State and Government that also calls for the quick ratification of the African Women's protocol.

* Gladys Mutukwa is regional coordinator of the Women in Law and Development in Africa and a member of the steering committee of the Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition. The paper was based on a presentation to the SADC regional women's parliamentary caucus in May.

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2.3 The Protocol on the Rights of Women and the Millennium Development Goals

In order to make full use of the ten years until the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, **Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim** argues that it is a matter of great urgency for African states to ratify the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and join those who have already done so (The Comoros, Djibouti, Libya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Senegal). Ratifying the Protocol would lead to states preparing an adequate strategy for the implementation of its provisions.

Les Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement et le Protocole additionnel à la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples, relatif aux droits des femmes

Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim, Conseillère régionale pour la promotion des droits des femmes

Commission économique pour l'Afrique

Contexte

La nécessité de lutter contre la pauvreté dans le monde, la faim, le chômage, la maladie, les inégalités entre les sexes et la dégradation de l'environnement, est devenue le motif de ralliement de tous les acteurs de développement nationaux, régionaux et internationaux. Cette convergence des points de vue a été traduite pour la première fois dans l'histoire par l'adoption à l'aube de ce millénaire, d'une déclaration dans laquelle des priorités ont été identifiées en vue de résoudre les maux dont souffrent des millions d'individus. A partir de cette déclaration commune des 191 chefs d'Etat et de gouvernements, huit objectifs ont été dégagés. Il s'agit notamment de réduire l'extrême pauvreté et la faim, assurer l'enseignement primaire pour tous, promouvoir l'égalité des sexes et l'autonomisation des femmes, réduire la mortalité infantile, combattre le VIH/Sida, le paludisme et d'autres maladies, assurer un environnement durable et mettre en place un partenariat mondial pour le développement.

La date butoir pour la réalisation des ces objectifs de développement a été fixée à 2015 et l'année 1990 a été retenue comme période de référence. Les résultats de la revue des progrès réalisés varient d'une région à l'autre, d'un pays à l'autre et à l'intérieur des pays eux même. Selon le rapport présenté par la CEA à la 38ème session des ministres africains des finances qui s'est tenue à Abuja du 14 au 15 mai 2005, intitulé "Réaliser les objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement en Afrique », malgré certaines avancées, l'Afrique a obtenu les plus mauvais résultats. Les progrès les plus lents ont été enregistrés de même que d'importantes inversions de la tendance dans certains domaines clefs.

« En Afrique subsaharienne, le nombre de personnes vivant dans une situation d'extrême pauvreté (avec un dollar par jour au moins) a augmenté, passant de 217 millions en 1990 à 290 millions en 2000, dont une majorité de femmes et de jeunes filles. On estime que l'espérance de vie des adultes a reculé, passant de plus de 50 ans à 46 ans... » Par ailleurs Le rapport ajoute que « l'inégalité entre les sexes demeure préoccupante, alors que pour atteindre tous les objectifs, l'éducation des femmes, par exemple joue un rôle important. Il est à noter qu'un grand nombre de pays n'ont pas adopté une approche du

développement, fondée sur les droits de l'homme, qui accorde une attention toute particulière à l'égalité et à la non-discrimination. »

Le rapport de la CEA a identifié l'inégalité entre les sexes comme l'une des causes qui entravent le développement. Certes, des progrès ont été enregistrés depuis la 4ème conférence mondiale sur les femmes en matière d'éducation, de santé, et pour certains pays dans le domaine institutionnel et législatif, mais nous sommes encore très loin d'atteindre les objectifs assignés comme l'a démontré le texte final issu de la 7eme conférence africaine sur les femmes « Résultats et perspectives».

La situation des femmes africaines dix ans après Beijing

Evaluant la décennie de la mise en œuvre de la Plate-forme d'action de Beijing, ce document a relevé que « Les femmes africaines, en particulier les femmes rurales et les femmes handicapées, rencontrent encore de graves problèmes. Leur faible accès aux ressources productives, comme la terre, l'eau, l'énergie, le crédit, les moyens de communication, l'éducation et à la formation, la santé, et l'emploi rémunéré et décent, a contribué à ce que davantage de femmes africaines qu'il y a 10 ans vivent aujourd'hui dans la pauvreté, voire dans l'extrême pauvreté. Les effets cumulés du VIH/sida, de la tuberculose et du paludisme, de l'insécurité alimentaire, de la faiblesse de la productivité économique et de faibles niveaux d'éducation, ainsi que la recrudescence de la violence sexuelle sont autant de problèmes considérables qui rendent les femmes et les filles africaines plus vulnérables. Les femmes sont les plus exposées à l'infection au VIH/sida, du fait de leur extrême pauvreté, ainsi que de leur responsabilité de prise en charge des personnes infectées et affectées..... Les femmes et les filles sont encore victimes de graves violations de leurs droits humains ... »

Ainsi la situation des femmes au niveau mondial et notamment régional n'est toujours pas brillante. Toutefois, nous devons reconnaître qu'une avancée notoire a été relevée dans un domaine précis qui est celui de la reconnaissance de la nature transversale des questions de genre et leur impact sur le développement et la réduction de la pauvreté. Tout le monde s'accorde aujourd'hui à dire que la femme est au centre du développement et que l'inégalité des genres retarde la croissance économique et la réduction de la pauvreté. On admet de plus en plus que les politiques de développement qui ne tiennent pas compte des questions de genre et de l'égalité entre les sexes ne sont pas efficaces. Cette prise de conscience s'est concrétisée lors du Sommet du Millénaire par l'adoption de la déclaration auparavant citée dans la quelle tous les Etats membres des Nations Unies se sont engagés à promouvoir l'égalité entre les sexes et l'autonomisation des femmes comme étant le meilleur moyen de combattre la pauvreté, la faim et les maladies et stimuler le développement.

Les OMDs et l'impératif de l'égalité entre les sexes

Parmi les huit objectifs sélectionnés, la question de l'égalité entre les sexes n'apparaît d'une façon évidente qu'au sein de l'objectif 3, mais il n'en demeure pas moins qu'elle est d'une grande acuité pour la réalisation de tous les OMDs. Elle est considérée comme une condition sine qua non pour le développement durable et la croissance économique. Etant elle-même un objectif à atteindre, elle est également nécessaire pour achever les autres cibles, tout en se nourrissant des gains acquis dans le contexte de ces cibles. En effet du fait que les OMDs sont inter-dépendants, les progrès enregistrés dans l'un des domaines affectent les progrès des autres. Les succès au niveau de la scolarisation par



exemple se répercuteront d'une manière positive sur l'égalité des sexes. D'autre part, les bénéfices obtenus en matière d'égalité permettront de faciliter la réalisation des autres objectifs. En d'autres termes promouvoir les droits des femmes et renforcer leur pouvoir d'action sont des moyens importants pour la réalisation des objectifs du millénaire pour le développement.

En fait les OMDs ne peuvent être atteints si les pays n'œuvrent pas pour cette égalité. En conséquence la prise en compte du principe de l'égalité entre les sexes dans toutes les politiques et programmes qui visent la réalisation des objectifs du millénaire est cruciale et une démarche fondée sur les droits humains devrait guider la formulation, la mise en œuvre, le suivi et l'évaluation des OMDs. Adopter une approche fondée sur les droits humains, permettrait par exemple de considérer la mortalité maternelle telle qu'elle est énoncée dans l'objectif 5, comme étant une violation d'un droit humain et non uniquement comme un problème de santé. Selon cette même approche, il devient impérieux d'éliminer les pratiques néfastes et discriminatoires qui perpétuent les inégalités à l'égard des femmes, et chercher à promouvoir des normes et des valeurs sociales et culturelles, qui favorisent l'égalité et l'équité, ainsi que la justice

Les OMDs dans le contexte africain

Les Chefs d'Etat africains, à l'instar de tous leurs pairs au niveau mondial ont reconnu le lien qui existe entre l'égalité des sexes et le développement. Parties intégrantes de la Déclaration du Millénaire, ils ont aussi confirmé leur position, en adoptant lors de leur sommet annuel en juillet 2004, « La Déclaration solennelle pour l'égalité entre les sexes ». Ainsi ils se sont engagés à prendre une série de mesures en vue d'éliminer toutes les discriminations à l'égard des femmes. Ils ont décidé notamment « d'assurer la promotion et la protection de tous les droits de l'homme, des femmes et des filles, y compris le droit au développement par la sensibilisation ou par l'application des lois nécessaires, le cas échéant ». Ils se sont aussi obligés à ratifier avant la fin de l'année 2004, le Protocole additionnel à la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples, relatif aux droits des femmes. Cet instrument régional est d'une grande importance pour tous les Africains en ce qu'il constitue un cadre théorique qui identifie les obstacles à l'accomplissement des droits des femmes, évalue les besoins, et assigne les buts et les objectifs. Le concept d'égalité qui est reflété dans le Protocole va au-delà de l'égalité formelle, et insiste sur la création des opportunités et l'égalité d'accès. En d'autres termes, il insiste sur la réalisation de l'égalité de fait. En outre, les dispositions du Protocole orientent les Etats vers les mesures et les actions à prendre pour une protection effective des droits des femmes.

Aussi, si nous voulons exploiter efficacement les 10 années à venir pour atteindre les Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement et être au rendez-vous de 2015, il est urgent que les Etats africains rejoignent les 10 pays (Comores, Djibouti, Libye, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibie, Nigeria, Rwanda, Afrique du Sud et Sénégal) qui ont déjà ratifié le Protocole à la Charte africaine sur les droits de l'homme et des peuples, relatif aux droits de la femme, et préparent une stratégie adéquate pour la mise en œuvre de ses dispositions.

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Context

The necessity of fighting global poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease, gender inequalities and the destruction of the environment has become the rallying motif of all development actors, nationally, regionally and internationally. At the dawn of the 21st century, for the first time in history, this consensus of opinion was translated into the adoption of a declaration, identifying priorities intending to resolve the evils that inflict millions of people. Based on this common declaration made by 191 heads of State and governments, eight objectives were highlighted; notably to reduce extreme poverty and hunger, guarantee universal primary education, promote gender equality and the self-determination of women, reduce infant mortality, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, safeguard a sustainable environment and to implement a global partnership for development.

The target date for the realisation of these development objectives was fixed as 2015, with the period from the year 1990 set as a framework of reference. The results emanating from the review of progress achieved so far vary from one region to another, from one country to another, and even within countries themselves. The report presented by the ECA at the 38th sitting of African Ministers of Finance held in Abuja from 14 to 15 May 2005, entitled 'Realising the Millennium Development Goals in Africa', illustrates that despite certain advancements, Africa has obtained the worst results. The continent has demonstrated the slowest progress and at the same time shown trends of decline in certain key areas.

"In Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people living in a situation of extreme poverty (on less than one dollar a day) has increased from 217 million in 1990 to 290 million in 2000. The majority of these people are women and girls. It is estimated that adult life expectancy has fallen, from over 50 years to 46 years..." Elsewhere, the report adds that: "gender inequality remains a concern, whilst the education of women, for example, plays an important role in meeting all the objectives. It should be noted that a large number of countries have not adopted a rights based approach to development, that would accord particular attention to equality and non-discrimination."

The ECA report has identified gender inequality as one of the causes that is hindering development. It is true that since the 4th world conference on women, there has been some progress in women's education and health, and, in certain countries, in institutional and legislative domains. However Africa is still a very long way from reaching the designated objectives, as set out in the final document issuing from the 7th African conference on women, 'Results and Perspectives'.

The situation of African women ten years after Beijing

Evaluating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action over a decade, this document reveals that "African women, particularly rural and handicapped women, continue to encounter problems of a serious nature. Their weak access to productive resources, such as land, water, energy, credit, means of communication, education and training, health and decent paid work have contributed to a situation whereby African women are still today, as ten years ago, living in poverty, indeed in extreme poverty. The cumulative effects of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, food insecurity, weak economic productivity and low levels of education, as well as a new wave of sexual violence are some of the considerable problems that are rendering African women and girls more vulnerable. As a fact of their extreme poverty, women are the most exposed to HIV/AIDS infection,

besides which they bear the responsibility for taking care of infected and affected persons... Women and girls are once again victims of grave violations of their human rights...”

Thus the situation of women is still not particularly bright at a global, and notably at a regional level. However, we must recognise that there has been manifest advancement in one particular area: the cross-cutting nature of gender issues, and their impact on development and the reduction of poverty have been recognised. Nowadays, there is consensus that women must be at the centre of development and that gender inequality decelerates economic growth and poverty reduction. It is conceded more and more that unless development politics take gender equality into consideration, then they will not be efficient. This realisation was consolidated at the time of the Millennium Summit through the adoption of the declaration previously cited, in which all member States of the United Nations committed to promoting gender equality and the self-determination of women as the best means to combat poverty, hunger and disease, and to stimulate development.

The MDGs and the imperative for gender equality

Amongst the eight identified objectives, the question of gender equality is made explicit only in the third objective, but this does not make it any less relevant for the realisation of all the MDGs. Gender equality is considered a condition for sustainable development and economic growth sine qua non. Besides being an objective in its own right, it is equally necessary to achieve the other goals, notwithstanding its positive impact on the gains made in the context of all the goals. In effect, given the fact that the MDGs are interdependent, progress made in one area impacts on progress made in all areas. The successes, for example, of increasing school enrolment have positive repercussions for gender equality; and the benefits obtaining to equality will enable easier realisation of the other objectives. In other words, promoting the rights of women and reinforcing their empowerment are important means of achieving the sum of the Millennium Development Goals.

In fact, the MDGs cannot be met unless countries strive to achieve this equality. Consequentially, understanding the principle of gender equality in all policies and programmes that aim to achieve the millennium objectives is crucial. A human-rights approach should guide the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs. Adopting a human rights approach for example permits the consideration of maternal mortality, as enunciated in objective 5, as a violation of a human right, and not only a health problem. Consistent with this approach, it becomes imperative to eliminate harmful and discriminatory practices that perpetuate the inequality of women, and to seek to promote social and cultural values and norms that favour equality and equity, as well as justice.

The MDGs in the African context

Following the example of all their peers at a global level, African heads of State have acknowledged the relationship between gender inequality and development. As signed up members of the Millennium Declaration, they also confirmed their position by adopting ‘The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality’ at their annual summit in July 2004. Thus they are committed to adopting a series of measures aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. They have notably decided to ‘guarantee the promotion and the protection of all human and women’s rights, including the right to development, through awareness-raising or applying necessary legislation if need be’. They are further obliged to ratify the additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa before the end of 2004 . This regional instrument carries great importance for all Africans; as it constitutes a theoretical framework to identify the obstacles to



women's rights, evaluate needs and set goals and objectives. The concept of equality reflected in the protocol extends beyond formal equality, insisting on the creation of equality of access and opportunities: i.e. the realisation of equality de facto. Moreover, the requirements of the Protocol direct States towards measures and actions that must be taken to protect the rights of women effectively.

Consequently therefore, if Africa wants to make best use of the next ten years to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and to be at the meeting of 2015, it is urgent that African States join the ten countries - Comoros, Djibouti, Libya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Senegal - which have already ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and prepare an adequate strategy to implement the measures it provides for.

2.4 Overcoming maternal mortality in Tanzania

Ananilea Nkya looks at the rise of maternal mortality in Tanzania and asks whether more attention would be given to the deaths if they were caused by road accidents or plane crashes. Without a concerted effort to reduce maternal mortality, the MDGs will remain a dream.

Ananilea Nkya

Although the reduction of maternal mortality is an area of focus for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of which Tanzania is a signatory, pregnancy related deaths continue to be a major threat to women of reproductive age in the East African country which attained its independence 44 years ago.

Statistics indicate that deaths during child birth jumped from about 10 deaths a day (208 per 100,000 live births) in 1995 to 26 deaths (800 per 100,000 live births) in 2004. "What if this was a road accident or a plane crash killing 26 people daily. Would action not be taken to prevent it?" Professor Malise Kaisi, a long serving Gynecologist with the national hospital Muhimbili and based in the city of Dar Es Salaam, has asked.

Kaisi believes there is a need to break the silence on maternal death by sensitizing the public, decision makers, law makers, development partners and financial institutions on the need to make maternal mortality a priority.

He said for the MDGs to be a success the national government should accord maternal mortality due priority by setting aside sufficient financial resources for establishing and adequately funding reproductive health services, training of more medical personnel and running massive public education programmes against behaviour and cultural practices that endanger the health of the pregnant mother.

A gender and media consultant, Charles Kayoka, said the government should treat child bearing as a public service. "This important labour must be recognized and budgeted for," he noted. He was speaking at a session organized by the Tanzania Media Women's Association in collaboration with State University of New York (SUNY) in the central capital Dodoma recently. The session was intended to sensitise women parliamentarians on the need to make maternal mortality their permanent agenda.

Kayoka said the road pregnant mothers travel to their preventable deaths is a narrative of their own low status in society and indifference by the government towards reproductive health.

He indicated that medical reasons attributed to maternal mortality can be explained in general terms. “The medical causes given by doctors could be indicators for a more serious problem of where a pregnant woman comes from,” he noted, adding that “we should study the woman’s journey to the hospital to see how certain cultural elements contribute to her death when giving birth.” He said: “What made her anemic? What made her marry early? What made her undergo FGM and thus have a problematic delivery?”

Kayoka said many of these deaths are attributed to the poor status women are accorded in society. As a result they are denied rights to control resources and power to control their bodies - a crucial factor is planning when and how to have a child.

The women parliamentarians who attended the session admitted that maternal deaths are a preventable problem and that some work needed to be done to empower various leaders, women, men and communities at large to take action. “Before this session I hardly looked at maternal mortality in gender terms nor as a road accident that claims so many lives on daily basis,” noted Monica Mbega, Iringa Urban Member of Parliament. She urged members of parliament to take up the issue as a priority and build a case for government as well as people in different constituencies to act. “If the government, MPs, councilors and communities work seriously on this problem, it will take a short time to reduce the number of these shameful deaths in the country,” she said, noting that without such efforts the realization of the MDGs would be a mere dream.

Anne Makinda, MP for Njombe South in Iringa region, who is also the chairperson of women parliamentarians, suggested the organisation of bigger training events for all MPs after the 30th October general elections to sensitise law makers on their role in the prevention of maternal deaths. “Sensitisation of the entire house is crucial, should we wish to engage all parliamentarians so that they are able to see the problem from a gender perspective and act accordingly,” Makinda insisted.

* Please send comments to editor@pambazuka.org

2.5. Removing “unfreedoms”: Women and debt cancellation

Women have suffered the most as a result of the diversion of funds from social services in order to service debt repayments. In solving the debt crisis and making sure that it never happens again, the political and economic participation of women is crucial. That’s why the Protocol on the Rights of Women must be ratified, says this **Pambazuka News** article.

Pambazuka News

In 2005 the issue of debt cancellation has received an enormous amount of attention, with world leaders under pressure to deliver on what has been described as one of the biggest stumbling blocks to Africa’s development.

The argument for debt cancellation is that undemocratic governments contracted the debt and these debts are therefore illegitimate. Repayments prevent governments from

channeling money into much needed social services such as health and education. This violates the rights of people to adequate health care, for example.

Continued debt repayments also make a mockery of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which require substantial financial commitments. As long as governments have to continue paying large amounts to service their debt, the MDGs will remain a pipe dream. Many countries are so mired in debt that they can never realistically hope to fully repay their debts and live a debt free existence. Rich countries have also only been willing to write off debt subject to the adoption of certain conditions by debtor countries, such as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which have in turn had a devastating impact on the social fabric of the countries where they have been implemented.

This is why countless statements have been issued over the years calling for unconditional cancellation of third world debt. For example, the Dakar Declaration for the total unconditional cancellation of African and Third World debt adopted in Dakar, Senegal on December 14, 2000 stated that debt and structural adjustment plans (SAPs) constitute the principal causes for the degradation of health, education, nutrition, food security, the environment and socio-cultural values of African populations. Debt and SAPs, said the statement, are the cause of the aggravation of unemployment, the destruction of families, the worsening of women's socio-economic conditions, the ecological degradation of the continent and wars.

It has been clear for many years that the onerous burden of debt has an enormous impact on nearly every aspect of life and none more so than on the lives of women. As Barbara Kalima from the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) in Harare, Zimbabwe has previously pointed out, in Sub-Saharan Africa, women's roles have been increasing in scope because of the impact of economic reforms, wars and crises. Women are not only crucial to the economy, but also play a key role in delivering social services. But Kalima goes on to note that women often live in difficult social and economic conditions. This is amplified by a reliance on the formulations of the Bretton Woods Institutions: "The essence of adjustment conditionality denies women the right to participate in economic policy formulation and to identify the economic models that suit them. The international financial institutions are actively contributing in mortgaging women's well-being." Kalima states that women's economic rights must be fostered through engendered human development which means that gender biases are corrected through the process of developing people's capacity to enjoy a decent life and be educated.

The often poor economic condition of women is of direct benefit to the market. Yassine Fall notes that women's inequality has benefited the capitalist system. "Women not only represent a cheap labour force, but they also contribute to the survival of the economic system though their unpaid labour," she writes. Fall argues that the link between gender and debt can be explained in the impact of the macroeconomic policies such as SAPs on women. "The very things that can help raise their status - education, health care and employment - are being decimated as governments struggle to meet crippling debt repayments to the creditors."

While the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit provided the international community with a clear set of development goals, Fall says meaningful development requires the removal of major sources of "unfreedom" - including institutional arrangements that deny people, especially women. "Alleviating poverty, ensuring food security, reducing population growth, improving the quality of a country's future labour force, and properly using the



natural resource base all depend substantially on women, and thus major gender policy analysis should not ignore this fact. Without gender analysis, there is little chance that any efforts to reduce and manage external debt will bring about substantial poverty alleviation for both women and men.”

Fall makes some recommendations to redress the gender and debt disparity. Governments should generate economic policies that have a positive impact on employment and income of women workers; governments should seek to mobilize new and additional financial resources in the form of grants and not loans; and explore more effective ways of integrating gender into debt management negotiations and monitoring processes.

How to avoid future manifestations of the debt trap? Gerald Mwale, in an article for One World Africa, argues governments must develop clear guidelines as to how loans will benefit men, women, and children. The location of control also needs to shift from the centre to citizens, who need to become the mechanism of control. “Governments should only obtain loans that are sanctioned by the people through their representatives (parliamentarians) and allow civil society to monitor them,” he writes. Moreover, Mwale continues, debt negotiations ought to consider the link between debt and budgeting for social services. “Last but not least, complicity of borrowers and debtors plus the historical cause of debt must be included in debt analysis,” he concludes.

If women have experienced the worst of the debt crisis in Africa, then their perspective is crucial not only in resolving the situation but also in participating in the process that results in redress and makes sure that history does not repeat itself. The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, which clearly deals with women’s political and economic participation, is an important mechanism in making sure that this happens.

* Please send comments to editor@pambazuka.org

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3. Gerald Mwale : African women carry the debt burden, One World Africa. May 2005. (<http://www.odiousdebts.org/odiousdebts/index.cfm?DSP=content&ContentID=12958>)
4. World Development Report 2001: The vicious cycle: Aids and third world debt.



2.6 An A-Z of African countries involved in ratifying the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

Update On the Campaign on Popularization, Ratification and Domestication of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

By Equality Now, June 2005

Benin

The country's Parliament has approved the ratification of the Protocol but the process of depositing its instrument of ratification appears to be somewhat delayed. (WiLDAF West Africa)

Burkina Faso

On 20th May 2005, the National Assembly met and authorized the ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. It is anticipated that the instrument of ratification would soon be deposited to the African Union. (WiLDAF West Africa)

Cape Verde

The bill of authorization to ratify the Protocol got a favorable vote in the Parliamentary session of April 28th, 2005. Of the 48 representatives present 47 voted in favor of ratification while one abstained. (WiLDAF West Africa)

Djibouti

Following the country's ratification in February 2005, activists shifted their campaigning to inform the public about the value added of this important instrument while at the same time also preparing for the domestication phase. The UNFD has planned to undertake the following activities to realize these two objectives:

- Information and Sensitization Workshops on the Maputo Protocol including through the organisation theatre tour in schools and in the working areas.
- Public media engagement (skits, spots on radio and television, etc.) in support of the Protocol.
- Judicial study analysing the Djibouti legislation on the protection and the defense of the rights of women in Djibouti with regard to the provisions of the Maputo Protocol. The outcome of the study will be discussed during consultation meetings with lawyers and judges. The anticipated outcome includes : Reflections on setting up effective sectoral structures for follow up of actions in priority sectors for the protection of the human rights of women;. Recommendations for legislative reform or complementing the djiboutian law on the protection and defense of the rights of women.

The Gambia

In response to a letter Equality Now sent to the President Alhaji Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, the office of the President wrote to confirm that the process of ratification of the Protocol has reached an advance stage and that the Gambia was soon due to complete this process.



Guinea, Republic of

The country's Parliament has approved the ratification of the Protocol in October 2004 but the process of depositing its instrument of ratification has been delayed but coalition member CPTAFE is encouraging government to act without any further delay and anticipates that Guinea will soon be among the countries that the coalition has honored with Green cards for their commitment to women's rights.

Kenya

The country's Minister responsible for Gender, hon. Ochilo Ayako, in April informed members of the Solidarity with African Women Rights coalition that his country planned to deposit its instrument of ratification in two and half months. He added that he has already made the first reading in Parliament.

Mali

Mali deposited its instrument of ratification in February. (AJM), a coalition member, is at present engaged in facilitating discussion among women's organizations and groups to comprehend the potential impact of this important instrument and how they could use it to benefit women. AJM also plans workshops for magistrates and notaries, as it is these groups that must invoke the articles of the Protocol before the courts to protect the rights of women.

Mauritania

The Mauritanian National Assembly (Lower House) met on 19th May and after discussion and adopted a law relating to the ratification of the Protocol. (WiLDAF West Africa)

Nigeria

Hon. Saudatu Sani, the Chairperson, House Committee on Women Affairs and Children convened a stakeholders' meeting on May 4, 2005. This meeting was primarily for Legislators and other stakeholders to brainstorm on the envisaged obstacles in the enactment of the **Violence Against Women (Prohibition) BILL, 2003** and issues relating to the domestication of **CEDAW** and the **Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women**. The meeting was attended by (15) over 50% of the members of the Committee on Women Affairs, 18 civil society organizations and the media.

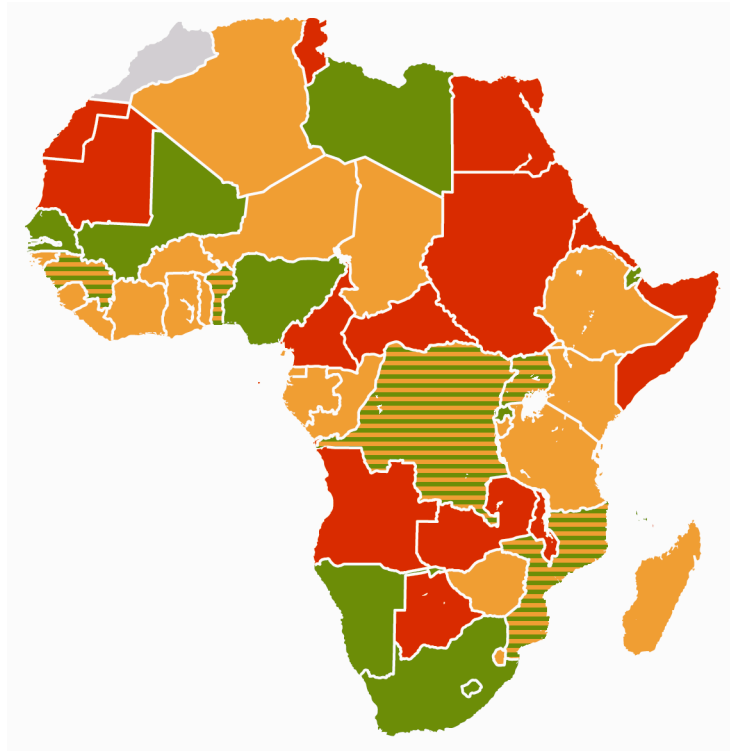
At this meeting the Protocol was formally introduced to the Legislature and copies of the simplified version by the Women's Rights Awareness and Protection Alternatives (WRAPA) were distributed to members. Its status as a regional instrument and the requirements for its ratification was explained. The principles of the provisions and the wide endorsement of the Protocol were also explained. Members were requested to ensure that, the Protocol comes into force; Nigeria would through the relevant institutions commence the domestication processes. The role of the legislature was reiterated and the relationship of this instrument to other international obligations on Nigeria was also highlighted. At the end of the meeting a commitment to support the legislative process for domestication was made by the Committee and its members.

Uganda

Akina mama Wa Afrika and the Ugandan Women Network (UWONET) have joined forces to advocate for the speedy ratification of the Protocol. They plan to hold a press conference

in Kampala on 20th June calling on the Government to immediately ratify the Women's Protocol.

2.7 Map of Africa showing ratification status



RED

These countries have not signed the Protocol

YELLOW

These countries have signed the Protocol but have not yet ratified

YELLOW STRIPED
but should soon be upgraded

These countries have signed the Protocol and are in the process of ratification

GREEN

These countries have signed and ratified the Protocol

2.8 Further reading links and website links

Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

<http://www.pambazuka.org/petition/1/protocol.pdf>

Not Yet a Force for Freedom: Publication of articles on the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa

<http://www.fahamu.org/pamphlet.pdf>

Pambazuka News Special Issue on Debt and Africa

<http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?issue=197>

Pambazuka News 190: Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa: A pre-condition for health and food security

<http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?issue=190>

Pambazuka News 176: From Beijing to Addis Ababa: what progress for African women?

<http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?issue=176>

Pambazuka News 173: Putting an End to Female Genital Mutilation: The African Protocol on the Rights of Women

<http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?issue=173>

Pambazuka News 162: Unfinished business - African leaders must act now to ratify the Protocol on the Rights of Women

<http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?issue=162>

Equality Now

<http://www.equalitynow.org/>

Fahamu - Networks for Social Justice

<http://www.fahamu.org/>

Femnet

<http://www.femnet.or.ke/>

Wildaf West Africa

<http://www.wildaf-ao.org>

Akina Mama wa Afrika

<http://www.akinamama.org/>

Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative

<http://www.wrapa.org>

The Coalition on Violence Against Women

<http://www.covaw.or.ke/>

Abantu for Development

<http://www.abantu.org/>

African Gender Institute

<http://www.uct.ac.za/org/agi>



Association for Women's Rights in Development
<http://www.awid.org>

Africa Women's Media Centre
<http://www.awmc.com/>

Agenda
<http://www.agenda.org.za/>

Association of African Women Scholars
<http://www.iupui.edu/~aaws/>

Commission for Gender Equality
<http://www.cge.org.za/>

Flame
<http://flamme.org/>

Global Fund for Women
<http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/>

International Lesbian and Gay Association
<http://www.ilga.org/>

International Women's Tribune Centre
<http://www.iwtc.org/>

ISIS - Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange
<http://www.isis.or.ug>

Organisation of Women Writers of Africa
<http://www.owwa.org/>

Peacewomen
<http://www.peacewomen.org>

Unifem
<http://www.unifem.undp.org/>

Saving Women's Lives
<http://www.savingwomenslives.org>

Women's E-News
<http://www.womensenews.org>

Women's Human Rights Net
<http://whrnet.org>

Women of Uganda Network (Wougnet)
<http://www.wougnet.org/>

Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network
<http://www.zwrcn.org.zw/>