

Oral Statement of African Women's Organisations at the 54th Commission on the Status of Women

We, the representatives of various African women's civil society organisations assembled at the Global NGO Forum for Women on Beijing +15 in New York in February 2010, and representing the voices of millions of African women, both and girls.

Having widely consulted with different stakeholders, including Global NGO Forum on the progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Africa since the last review (Beijing +10);

Having reflected on the situation of the African woman and girl in the region and reviewed highlights of the African Women's Report Shadow Report on Beijing +15 which incorporates national and sub-regional reviews from women's civil society organisations and networks;

Recognizing that the Beijing +15 Report is a challenge for African women in the realization of their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights;

Considering that the Beijing Platform for Action over the last 15 years has utilized significant resources, progress has remained minimal, slow and fragmented, and has not resulted in fundamental changes in the lives of the majority of women in Africa;

We therefore call upon African leaders, development partners, the private sector and all key stakeholders in the development process to access, coordinate and reformulate the following actions:

1. Ensure ratification with no reservations, domestication and full implementation of all human rights instruments that secure the rights of women and girls including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Women, the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on Democracy and Governance, the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1625, 1889 and 1889;
2. Ensure that provisions and policies promoting the achievement of gender parity in leadership and decision making are implemented and that women are sufficiently enabled to influence culture, systems and structures of decision making;
3. Ensure that structures established to lead the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda have increased and significant advancement;
4. Increase support for African women's economic empowerment as part of the strategy to eradicate poverty;
5. Take action to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls including harmful cultural and religious practices, violence and conflict, and trafficking.

We call upon African women's civil society organisations to take leadership to significantly reduce the gender inequality in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, specifically in the first five years of the Decade.