

African Women's Position on the New Development Agenda

United Nations - Sunday, 2 August 2015, 193 governments agreed to a historic agenda for global sustainable development to be carried out over the next 15 years, which will be formally adopted by world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September. **African women joined other women's rights activists in applauding the new "2030 Agenda" for having the promise of being truly transformative for women and girls around the world.**

The new agenda includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a framework of 17 goals and 169 targets that build upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expire this year. Gender equality is addressed much more robustly than the MDGs did and recognize the issue as crosscutting.

The "2030 Agenda" includes significant victories for women and girls. Governments have committed to:

- End discrimination and gender-based violence
- End child marriage and female genital mutilation
- Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health care services and education for all
- Protect women's and girls' reproductive rights
- Recognize and value the burdens of unpaid care work on women and girls
- Expand women's economic opportunities and ensure their rights to resources
- Eliminate gender disparities in schools and ensure equal access to education

Gender equality, human rights and the empowerment of women and girls remains a critical driver to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. The prioritization of women's rights will ensure that spatial, political, social and economic inequalities are addressed. Furthermore, the redistribution of wealth, power, opportunities and resources is critical for addressing prevalent inequalities between men and women, within and between countries. Although we have registered substantial gains in securing gender equality in the Post-2015 development framework, the lack of political will from some of the African Member states to safeguard gender equality and the human rights of women and girls throughout the Post-2015 development process remains of great concern to African women.

We are deeply concerned that Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon consistently called for removal of language on gender equality, reproductive rights, recognition of human rights and non-discrimination for all. In January 2014, the African Heads of States adopted the Common African Position (CAP) on Post-2015 articulating the continent's priorities in the Post-2015 development agenda. The Common African Position has strong commitments to ensure that **"No person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities."** African Heads of State specifically highlighted the inextricable link between gender equality, women's rights, women's empowerment and Africa's structural transformation.

As we come to a close of what has been a protracted process and enter a new phase of implementation of the "2030 Agenda", its follow up and review; **we call on African leaders to demonstrate political will in implementing the "2030 Agenda" through domesticating at national level and allocation of adequate resources.** In line with the commitment to gender equality within the African Union, we call upon them to implement progressive regional and global agreements such as; The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; The Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights; The International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) and The Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other related Infectious diseases. This will play a critical complementary enabling role for the new Development Agenda in the realization of women's and girls' rights and the achievement of gender equality.

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