

STATEMENT ON GENDER, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BY AFRICAN WOMEN ACTIVISTS

We are Young African women activists and feminists from various countries who gathered in Accra, Ghana on 20-23 November 2010 for the Regional Consultation and Training on Gender, Economic and Environmental Justice convened by Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and Third World Network-Africa.

Recognizing the challenges and uncertainties that the Africa region is facing in the context of systemic global crises, we affirm the central role of women in the resolution of these crises and the crucial need to address the gaps and fragmentation in the institutional and policy responses from Governments and global governance institutions. Taking into consideration the ever-increasing pace of globalization and the disastrous impact of the multiple crises of climate, finance, food, and energy, we urge governments and all stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of policies and programs for addressing all the themes of the African Women's Decade. As young women activists, we call for the full ratification and implementation of the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, especially as regards food sovereignty and climate justice, in order to make the African Women's Decade a meaningful reality.

AFRICAN WOMEN'S DECADE

We acknowledge the importance of the African Women's Decade under the theme of "Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" launched in October 2010. We applaud the recognition of "Young Women's Movement" as a distinct theme within the African Women's Decade. It is imperative to ensure inclusiveness and to engage meaningfully with members of civil society, especially women's movements, from all walks of life. We call for a fully integrated approach to identifying and addressing the priorities of women across the continent. As young African women, we urge African states to recognize the equal importance of all the themes set out by the African Women's Decade. Recalling the commitments made by African states under the various international and regional instruments for women's human rights and gender equality, we challenge African states to adhere to all their commitments. We also urge other social movements to join forces to hold authorities accountable to their commitments and their responsibilities to the peoples of Africa.

THE MAPUTO PROTOCOL

Alongside others across the continent, we celebrate five years since the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa came into force following its ratification by 15 countries. The Maputo Protocol, as it is commonly referred to, articulates women's rights and offers significant potential for ensuring that these rights are promoted, realized and

protected. It is noteworthy that the Maputo Protocol recognizes and includes rights that are not embodied in other international instruments such as women's rights to peace and the special protection of elderly women.

We applaud the 29 countries that have ratified the Protocol so far and in so doing acknowledged its importance as a framework for advancing the rights of women within their states. We call on them to promptly domesticate its provisions within their national laws and policies through parliamentary and other processes, and further ensure its successful implementation. With the same urgency we strongly call on the other African countries that have not yet ratified this important document to do so. We are further calling for the inclusion of sexual rights in the Maputo Protocol as well as in national legislations.

CLIMATE CHANGE

We demand that solutions to climate change must be based on justice and the full respect of human rights, especially women's sexual and reproductive rights. The principle of responsibility for causes and consequences of climate change must lie with developed countries. Developed countries must re-pay their climate debt by transferring environmentally-sound technologies and financial resources required to enable African countries to shift to low-carbon growth. Priority at the national level should be given to ensuring that rural communities and the urban poor have access to renewable energy sources.

Given the scale and damage of the climate crisis in Africa we demand adequate allocation of resources for mitigation and adaptation to climate change through a transparent and accountable fund under the United Nations.

We oppose market-based and false technological solutions to climate change, and reaffirm the moratorium on geo-engineering agreed to by the 10th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya. As young women activists and feminists we also resist attempts to legitimize the Copenhagen Accord and demand that developed countries commit to legally binding targets that result in significant reductions of carbon emissions.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, WOMEN LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (EPAs)

Acknowledging the need for food sovereignty and protection of women's livelihoods in Africa, we the young women activists and feminists demand that governments eliminate discriminatory policies and legislation in line with regional and international commitments on women's rights. Women's rights to land and property must be guaranteed. Laws, policies, procedures and guidelines should be enacted and implemented to ensure that land reforms do not deprive communities of common resources. Women's roles in the agricultural sector, especially the subsistence subsector for food production must be recognized, valued and supported with

adequate productive resources. Moreover, bio fuel production should not be promoted at the expense of food production. Food sovereignty, in particular the protection of traditional knowledge and indigenous biological resources as well as the right to safe and nutritious food must be guaranteed. The Precautionary Principle should be respected in all agricultural technological innovations. Furthermore, we demand a moratorium on genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

We are deeply concerned that the EPAs that are currently being negotiated pose a threat to women's livelihoods across Africa in relation to gender, economic and environmental justice. Young women activists and feminists will be monitoring African governments and continuing to oppose the entering into EPAs. We will hold African governments accountable for ensuring sustainable development policies with women's rights and gender equality at their core.

Dated: 10 December, 2010

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