



Press Statement

African Women's Day: « We demand action! »

31 July 2009 – On the occasion of African Women's Day, the Campaign Coalition, composed of over one hundred organisations across the continent, supported by Nobel Peace Prize Winners, Desmond Tutu and Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Literature Prize Winners, Wole Soyinka and Nadine Gordimer, and numerous artists (including Youssou N'Dour, Angélique Kidjo and Tiken Jah Fakoly...), renew their appeal to national authorities to ratify international and regional women's rights protection instruments and respect them in law and practice. The organisations of the campaign will organise conferences, demonstrations, radio programmes etc. to raise public awareness and convey the message of the Campaign.

This day is also an occasion to evaluate progress made since the launch of the campaign « Africa for women's rights » at the outset of 2009.

RATIFY! The coalition of the campaign welcomes the ratification by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in February and by Cameroon in May 2009 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

« While these commitments represent important steps for women's rights, they are not enough. We call for ratification to be followed rapidly by reform of laws and policies in these two countries where women's human rights continue to be massively violated, » underlined the Campaign Steering Committee.

RESPECT! Concrete and lasting respect for women's rights requires the amendment of the legal framework and the Campaign Coalition therefore strongly welcomes the adoption of new laws aimed at the promotion and protection of women's rights, such as the law on quotas adopted in Burkina Faso in April which requires a minimum representation of 30% of each sex on the local and parliamentary electoral lists.

« We recognise the long and hard battles fought by civil society in Burkina Faso to achieve this important result. We will remain at their sides, in solidarity, until parity is achieved! » declared the Campaign Steering Committee.

« Each sign of progress provides encouragement and strength to our movement, but we are more than aware of the work still to be done », concluded the Campaign Steering Committee. « On African Women's Day, in the name of all the organisations supporting the Campaign across the continent, we call upon all national authorities to take this symbolic occasion to adopt concrete reforms in favour of equality and full respect for women's human rights. »

To follow developments in the campaign, visit the blog :
www.africa4womensrights.org

Women in Law in South Africa (WLSA), African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) and Women's aid Collective (WACOL)

The campaign has the support of : Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, 1984; Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, 2003 ; Wolé Soyinka, Nobel Literature Prize Winner, 1986; Nadine Gordimer, Nobel Literature Prize Winner, 1991; Youssou N'Dour, Artist; Tiken Jah Fakoly, Artist; Angélique Kidjo, Artist; Maryse Condé, Writer ; Rachid Taha, Artist; Jane Birkin, Artist; Bafing Kul, Artist. The campaign is also supported by: Soyata Maiga, Special Rapporteur on women's rights, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; Yakin Ertürk, Former UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Pramila Patten, UN expert, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and et Angela de Melo, Vice President, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

