

THE AFRICA WE WANT



POSITION PAPER



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Since the adoption of the MDGs in 2000, Africa as a whole has registered impressive economic growth. However, taken individually, many countries have not translated these economic gains into inclusive growth that puts human security at the center. According to the MDG Report 2013¹, Africa remains off track on the goals to: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1), Reduce child mortality (Goal 4); Improve maternal health (Goal 5); Ensure environmental sustainability (Goal 7); and develop a global partnership for development (Goal 8). Failure to accelerate progress on these lagging goals have dire implications on human security, particularly for women and girls including their health, economic, food, political, environmental, community and personal security.

With less than 300 days to the end date of the MDGs, we call for accelerated implementation of measures to achieve the MDGs and fully support initiatives that are people-centered, and that place women's human rights and development at the center. One of the key achievements of the MDGs has been gender parity in education. This has so far been measured in terms of enrolment in primary school and could further be scaled up to ensure quality in education, enrolment, retention and completion up to tertiary level and an increase in the number of trained female teachers². Additionally, school curricula should

berights based and gender responsive. In the current context of Africa's economic growth, especially with the discovery of oil and other precious resources, it is increasingly evident that the current model of economic growth exacerbates inequalities. It is therefore crucial that women's empowerment remains a key focus so as to eliminate all barriers that prevent women's access to information, technology, infrastructure, credit, employment, and markets.

African leaders must demonstrate political will in implementing the progressive regional and global agreements that they have agreed to. This can be done through a multi-sectoral approach linking different development sectors with corresponding gender-sensitive budgets. Examples of these key agreements include: The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa³; The Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights⁴; The International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) and The Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and other related Infectious diseases⁵. This will create an enabling environment for the realization of women's rights and the achievement of gender equality.

1. MDG Report 2013: Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals

2. Mind the Gender Gap:

3. Maputo Protocol: <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/women-protocol/>

4. Maputo Plan of Action: http://pages.au.int/sites/default/files/MPoA_0.pdf

5. Abuja Declaration: http://www.un.org/ga/aids/pdf/abuja_declaration.pdf

There are existing examples in Africa on how development challenges can be addressed, which have contributed to achieving significant progress on some of the MDGs. Governments should demonstrate political will to adapt these solutions to local realities and to scale-up these initiatives, where appropriate. A transformative agenda can only be achieved through responsive, democratic and inclusive governance with the increased voice and participation of African citizens.

As 2015 fast approaches, the need to set new goals provides an opportunity to build on the strengths of the MDGs while also addressing the challenges that come with linking, social, economic and environmental development. To this end, we call for prioritization of the following:-

A transformative stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment that is grounded in human rights and tackles unequal power relations. In addition, we call for the integration of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment consistently across the entire framework through data collection disaggregated by sex and gender – sensitive targets and indicators.

The MDGs did not address the root causes of poverty, most especially women's inequality, which made it impossible for the goals to be truly transformative. It is increasingly recognized that unless the structural causes of poverty, such as power relations, are addressed, poverty eradication will be impossible to achieve⁶

Zero tolerance of all forms of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

The 2010 MDG review showed that progress in achieving MDG 4 on child mortality and MDG 5 on maternal mortality was very slow as both were held back by violence against women.⁷ VAW fundamentally impacts every aspect of women's lives and their ability to participate on an equal basis in society. Women face a greater risk when they vie for political positions or seek sexual and reproductive health services. Intimate partner violence in the home has also been on the rise. Based on country data available, up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime – the majority by husbands, intimate partners or someone they know.⁸

We therefore call on Member States to:

- ◆ Eliminate harmful practices including early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, widow inheritance, etc.
- ◆ Adopt & implement laws and policies and make resources available to ensure women's access to justice, protection of survivors and their access to quality health care and other services.
- ◆ Provide long-term support to ensure the reintegration of survivors into society, including housing, income support, training, employment, etc.
- ◆ Enact appropriate national legislative measures to guarantee that the minimum age of marriage for women shall be 18 years as specified in Article 6 of the Maputo Protocol
- ◆ Enact a minimum age for work and prohibit the employment of children below that age, and prohibit, combat and punish all forms of exploitation of children, especially the girl-child;
- ◆ Take effective legislative and administrative measures to prevent the exploitation and abuse of women in advertising and pornography.
- ◆ End all forms of human trafficking
- ◆ Combat new forms of violence taking place due to technological advances such as internet and mobile phone technology

6 Righting the MDGs: Contexts and Opportunities for a Post-2015 Development Framework

7 WHO 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Report
8 <http://saynotoviolence.org/issue/facts-and-figures>

Guarantee women's equal access to, control over and ownership of resources including land water, energy, information and technology and agricultural inputs.

States shall implement laws and create accountability mechanisms to guarantee women's ownership and control over resources. This involves implementation of the African Union 'Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa' Assembly/AU/Decl. 1(XIII) Rev.1 which resolves to strengthen security of land tenure for women.

We therefore call on Member States to:

- ◆ Dedicated resources to enable access to technology and transfer of information to women in rural areas.
- ◆ Subsidies for inputs and public goods to support women's agricultural production
- ◆ Support for women to move from small-scale to market-level production
- ◆ Redistribution of land to smallholder farmers, most of whom are women.

Guarantee universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

"Promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and young people, especially adolescent girls, are central to ending extreme poverty, ensuring social cohesion and the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental)"⁹ Africa still has the largest burden of maternal deaths in the world, with 56% of global burden of deaths in 2010. An estimated 480 women and girls die per 100,000 live births.¹⁰ In addition, more than half of African countries have an adolescent birth rate above 100 per 1,000 women aged 15-19.¹¹ Complications arising from unsafe abortion constitute one of the main causes of maternal mortality and morbidity. Part of protecting women's rights in this area is ensuring access to safe abortion, where legal, and to post abortion care.¹² Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol calls for Member States to "Protect the reproductive rights of women by authorizing medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest,

⁹ UNFPA: Empowering People to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All

¹⁰ MDG Report 2013

¹¹ MDG Report 2013

¹² Maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights Prepared by: Women's Rights and Gender Section, OHCHR Research and Right to Development Division



"Non-discriminatory, rights-based, comprehensive sexuality education taught at primary and secondary levels for both in and out of school youth"

and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the foetus."¹³

'Evidence confirms that investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights is not only right from a human rights perspective, but also is smart for the economy as it is associated with significant saving for the health sector by reducing unwanted pregnancies, maternal morbidity and death and unsafe abortions.'¹⁴

We therefore call on Member States to:

- ◆ Provide access to quality and integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health services including information, contraception, maternity care, safe abortion services, post abortion care, prevention and treatment of STIs and HIV. These services must be accessible, affordable, acceptable and of high quality.
- ◆ Eliminate legal, policy, financial and social barriers that promote discrimination against women and girls and violate their sexual and reproductive rights. The continuum of care and protection of rights should be across the life cycle. From girls – adolescents - women of reproductive age - elderly women
- ◆ Non-discriminatory, rights-based, comprehensive sexuality education taught at primary and secondary levels for both in and out of school youth

¹³ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

¹⁴ UNFPA: Empowering People to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All

Strengthen the voices and participation of women at all levels of decision-making in the public and private sphere.

Any new development framework must prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment primarily because of the pervasive injustice faced by women around the world.¹⁵ However, this must not undermine women's voice and agency. Recognizing also that the 'Personal is Political' and that there are power dynamics even at the household level, the Post 2015 framework should include indicators that focus on the distribution of income and control over resources between men and women within households.

We therefore call on Member States to:

- ◆ Implement the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa in all sectors;
- ◆ Implement affirmative action and quotas to ensure a critical mass of women and youth participation at all levels of government from constituency to national level – including in nominations, party lists, parliamentary and senate seats;
- ◆ Provide financial support to female political candidates;
- ◆ Build capacity of women to exercise quality leadership in political spaces;
- ◆ Develop and implement policies that enable women to participate on an equal basis and take leadership in the public and private sectors including by ensuring their access to:
 - SRH and other health services
 - Training and skills-building opportunities
 - Tertiary education
 - Environmentally sustainable technologies
 - Paid parental, sick and care leave
 - Decent work and living wages
 - Universal social protection

Put women's leadership at the centre of peace building efforts.

"Peace and access to justice are not only fundamental human aspirations but cornerstones of sustainable development."¹⁶ This is increasingly apparent due to the fragility of states caused by terrorism and conflict. Implementation of the Security Council 1325 and 1880,

¹⁵ GADN, *Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Post -2015 Framework*

¹⁶ *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development. Report of the High- Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post -2015 Development Agenda*

legally binding documents that call for the tracking of indicators on: Prevention of conflict and violations of women's and girls' human rights; Ensuring the inclusion and participation of women in decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; Protecting and promoting the human rights of women and girls and ensuring their physical safety, health and economic security; Recognizing the specific needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict areas and establishing a fund to provide support to survivors of violence.¹⁷

Guarantee women's economic rights

States shall adopt and enforce legislative measures that involve a transformation of macroeconomic structures to ensure the implementation of Article 13 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa which calls for among others:

- ◆ equality of access to employment that includes decent work;
- ◆ value, recognize, redistribute women's unpaid care work
- ◆ the right to equal remuneration for jobs of equal value for women and men;
- ◆ conditions to promote and support the occupations and economic activities of women, in particular, within the informal sector;
- ◆ a system of protection and social insurance for women working in the informal sector;
- ◆ necessary measures that recognize the economic value of the work of women in the home;
- ◆ ensure the equal application of taxation laws to women and men;
- ◆ recognize that both parents bear the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of children and that this is a social function for which the State and the private sector have secondary responsibility; and
- ◆ recognition of migrant workers rights, especially domestic workers

¹⁷ Security Resolution 1325

Ensure the protection of women in discussions on climate change, environmental sustainability and natural resource management including extractives industries

While Africa is not responsible for the pollution and the factors that are causing climate change, it stands to suffer most from its effects. Recognizing this, we must strive to ensure that women are equally involved in the formulation and implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes, natural resource management programmes as well as have equal access to and control over climate change finance.

We therefore call on Member States to:

- ◆ Commit to reduce deforestation, desertification and pollution, promoting reforestation and reducing soil erosion;
- ◆ Improve land management promoting renewable energies; promoting efficiency of energy production, consumption and recycling; and effectively implementing the Kyoto Protocol;
- ◆ Recognize that market mechanisms such as carbon trading, REDD and REDD+ have caused land-grabbing, food insecurity for communities that depend on forests and most importantly removed focus on real solutions such as reduced global emissions primarily by developed countries to combat climate change;
- ◆ Ensure that the utilization of natural resources and biodiversity economically benefit the women and smallholder farmers who are custodians of these resources and thereby should have their rights to possess and control these resources recognized and respected;

Acknowledge and promote the use of indigenous knowledge to halt biodiversity loss

We therefore call on Member States to:

- ◆ Respect the rights, knowledge and sustainable livelihood models of Indigenous Peoples
- ◆ Research into traditional indigenous systems and the preservation of these systems in a manner that does not commercialize indigenous knowledge, but strengthens the position of women smallholder farmers who are custodians of this knowledge and hold it trust for communities for future generations.

Financing and Partnerships

We therefore call on Member States to:

- ◆ Restructure the global financial and tax architecture to ensure economic and social justice
- ◆ Reform fiscal policies to ensure they promote rather than undermine human rights,
- ◆ Ensure transparent and gender responsive budgeting that not only focuses on stopping the feminization of poverty, but seeks to transform macroeconomic structures
- ◆ Progressive taxation that redistributes the unequal and unfair burdens on women and girls

Meaningful engagement between governments and civil society, including women's groups in the development, implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda

Include marginalized women including those living in urban slums, refugee and internally displaced persons camps, remote or rural areas, those with disabilities and impoverished communities in the discussions on the post-2015 agenda.

For more information, kindly contact Yvette Kathurima advocacy@femnet.or.ke



**The African Women's
Development and
Communication Network**

Website: www.femnet.co

Twitter: [@femnetprog](https://twitter.com/femnetprog)

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