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**Statement
of
The African Union Commission
at
The 54th Session of the UN Commission on
Status of Women**

by

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Of the CSW**

**New York
USA.**

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Chairperson of the 54th Session of the CSW

Excellency the Vice President of The Gambia

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies Ambassadors

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of H.E. the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Dr. Jean Ping I bring you best wishes for the International Women's Day, which is being celebrated today all over the world, and for the 2010 Session of Commission on Status of Women, which is of special significance as it is also the 15 Global Review of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action. I also wish to echo earlier speakers by congratulating the Chairperson and members of the Bureau for the efficient way in which they are conducting this meeting.

The AU Commissions also aligns itself to statements made by Yemen on behalf of G77. Furthermore, the AU Commission joins other AU Member States that have already sent messages of condolence to Haiti and Chile for the terrible earthquake disaster that those two countries have recently faced. We assure them our solidarity at this difficult time.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

Since the 52nd Session of the CSW, the African Union has continued to provide leadership in championing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through its ground breaking commitments, evidenced by the adoption of the first ever African Union Gender Policy and its Action Plan, Assembly declaration of 2010-2020 as an African Women's Decade and the launching of the Fund for African Women. Furthermore, it continued to implement its previous commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, as contained in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).

Through sustained political will and commitment at the national level, a total of 27 AU Member States have so far ratified the Protocol on the African Charter of Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) while 40 countries have already reported on the implementation of the SDGEA to the Assembly. With regard to the Gender Parity Principle, success has been recorded at the levels of AU Organs and Member States, with the AU

ECOSOCC surpassing the 50 % target, by electing 60% females in its governing body. At the level of Member States, the Republic of Rwanda continues to provide global leadership in Parliamentary elections with 56% women in its current Parliament; while Cape Verde holds the highest female Cabinet in the world. While these cases could be viewed to be isolated, they truly demonstrate the existence of enabling environment for women's leadership in general and commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in particular.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

By adopting the first ever AU Gender Policy in 2009 and going further to declare an African Women's Decade (2010-2020), the African Union's commitment and leadership in gender equality and women's empowerment continues to be unchallenged. Indeed, we are well aware that there is no shortage of policies on the Continent and while the Union is proud to adopt the continental Gender Policy, it is fully sensitised on the huge implementation challenges that exist.

According to the analysis carried out by the Commission, 70% of AU Member States had Gender Policies, most of which remain unimplemented. The AU is, therefore, committed to using its Gender Policy to breathe in fresh air into the existing policies and to use it as a resource mobilization tool for the implementation of this and other gender policies so far adopted. Indeed, the African Women Decade provides the platform for accelerating the implementation of these gender policies and also prevent cutbacks on resources for gender equality due to the current economic crises.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

The 15 year Review of Beijing and Dakar is a key moment in the history of UN Reviews, as it coincides with other important processes, including the ten year Review of MDGs and UN Resolution 1325. With regard to former, the AU has taken concrete steps to address MDG5 on Maternal Mortality by initiating the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA), which has so far been launched in 9 countries. Already, this campaign is starting to change the Maternal Mortality terrain and with your support, could soon reverse the high incidence of Maternal Mortality in our continent.

In view of the nexus between these three important Reviews, the African Union is pleased to affirm its support for the ***African Common Position on the Fifteen Years Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*** as adopted at the 8th African Regional Conference in Banjul, The Gambia in November 2009. The African Union was pleased to endorse the Common Position in January 2010 Assembly as demonstrated by its decision reference Assembly/ AU/Dec.10(XVI).

Furthermore, the continent has just launched the Regional Campaign to end Violence Against Women (VAW), (*Africa-UNiTE*) at the margins of the

January 2010 Assembly, in Addis Ababa, in support of the UN Secretary General initiative to end Violence Against Women.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

Before I conclude this statement, let me say that AU welcomes United Nations General Assembly Decision 63/311 on the new consolidated Agency for Women. This decision is in line with call for a strong, well resourced and strategically positioned Agency for women which would enjoy the support and special attention of the Secretary General, particularly in its formative stage. The AU, therefore, commends the Secretary General for the enormous work done in putting the framework for agency together and encourages him to move expeditiously in operationalizing this Decision as well as appointing the Under Secretary General as soon as possible.

The Commission wishes the Secretary General success in this endeavour and thanks your excellencies for your kind attention.