

African Women's Caucus Oral Statement - 57th Session of the CSW - 14 March 2013

Madame Chairperson, on behalf of the African Women's Caucus, representing African civil society organizations from all the five sub-regions of Africa and the diaspora, committed to advancing women's human rights;

We call on Member States to declare zero tolerance of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. In this regard, we reaffirm the commitments made by UN Member states in the Beijing Platform for Action; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and its supporting resolutions; and those reflected in African regional instruments such as the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

We urge **Member States to match these commitments with national action plans where they do not exist, gender-responsive budgets, evidence-based research, time-bound targets and indicators as a matter of urgency.**

We are greatly concerned that some member states make attempts to go back on commitments already made on the rights of women and girls. We, however, commend member states that have recognized that women's human rights are non-negotiable and have moved progressively to act on this.

Discrimination and inequality must be addressed in order to end this global challenge through the **engagement of men and boys and traditional and religious leaders**, amongst other strategies.

We call on Member States to embed issues of **gender equality and violence prevention in school curriculums from early childhood level.**

Manifestations of VAW/G including **harmful traditional, customary and contemporary practices such as child, early and forced marriages; female genital mutilation; intimate partner and domestic violence; rape; trafficking; and violence in the media must end now.**

We urge Members States **to strengthen multi-sectoral services** and responses to violence against women and girls, including **provision of services to secure their sexual and reproductive health and rights**, psychosocial counseling and support, as well as long-term assistance and reparations.

We remain deeply concerned and stand in solidarity with all of our sisters in conflict zones globally, particularly those in DRC, Mali, Central African Republic, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. Therefore, we strongly urge member states to **maintain specific reference to SC Resolution 1325 and supporting resolutions, in the agreed conclusions, and to commit to their full implementation.** Factors that perpetuate VAW/G, such as increasing militarization, including the proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons must be curbed.

We call on Members States to ensure that **perpetrators of violence are brought to justice, and impunity be dealt with decisively. We further call for the recognition and protection of those who defend the rights of women and women human rights defenders.**

We strongly recommend that the elimination of violence against women and girls be reflected as a priority area in the **post-2015 development framework.**

We strongly support the Addis Ababa Declaration of the Africa Ministerial Preparatory Meeting for CSW57 and urge African Member States to use it as a basis for their negotiations to reach Agreed Conclusions. I thank you all.