

**ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION**  
**OF**  
**AFRICA MINISTERIAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 57<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF**  
**WOMEN**  
**ON**  
***PRIORITY THEME: ELIMINATION AND PREVENTION OF ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS***

**Preamble**

We, Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and senior government officials from Africa, met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 14-16 January, 2013 to prepare for the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on the priority theme "*Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls*".

The meeting was attended by **37** Member States and a total number of **225** delegates comprising also members of the diplomatic corps in Ethiopia, experts, representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), Inter-Governmental Organisations, representatives of the Africa Union and the United Nations system.

The meeting was organized by UN Women in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC).

The meeting objectives were:

- (i) to reflect on and propose strategies to end Violence Against Women (VAW) in preparation for the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the CSW to be held in New York from 4 – 15 March 2013,
- (ii) to forge a common understanding of the mandate, role and significance of the CSW, and how Africa can better utilize the CSW outcomes to hold governments accountable on their commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment – and in particular on eliminating and preventing violence against women,
- (iii) to exchange knowledge, and best practices emanating from regional and national experiences,
- (iv) to propose recommendations, priorities and key messages on how best to accelerate global, regional and national action to end VAW,
- (v) to develop a strategy for engaging actors to participate in and substantively contribute to the CSW57 Outcome Document and its follow up, to propose modalities for implementation of CSW57 Outcome Document at country level.

*Recognizing* that Violence Against Women (VAW) is a global human rights and development phenomenon, that is

pervasive, persistent and insidious in nature, manifesting in multiple intersecting forms- including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), rape, trafficking, forced marriage, early marriages, domestic violence;

*Acknowledging* that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) occurs in conflict and in times of peace;

*Deeply* concerned about the use of rape as a weapon of war in conflict affected countries such as Mali and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);

*Recognizing* that VAWG has regional and country specifics and is deeply rooted in systemic gender inequality linked to some harmful cultural practices that perpetuate bias, discrimination and victimization;

*Acknowledging* existence of some positive cultural, religious and traditional values on the African continent;

*Reaffirming* the significant commitments by African Member States, governments and people through the ratification of international standards, and regional frameworks to end VAW including-The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1880, 1890; UN General Assembly Resolution on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women; General Assembly Resolution (2012) on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);

*Further acknowledging*; The Protocol to the Africa Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Human Rights of Women in Africa; The AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children; ICGLR Heads of State's Kampala Declaration on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV); and The Africa UNiTE Campaign on ending VAW;

*Noting* in particular Article 14 on Health and Reproductive Rights, of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa which calls on "*State Parties to ensure that the right to health of women, including sexual and reproductive health is respected and promoted*" and "*to protect the reproductive rights of women*" (Maputo Protocol, 2003);

*Cognisant* of the Africa Union Commission's exemplary leadership on gender equality commitments;

*Appreciating* the platform provided to voice Africa's determination, commitment and greater action to end VAWG and in that regard UN Women's vision and leadership and UNECA's strategic partnership in organizing the Africa Ministerial preparatory meeting for the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of CSW; ;

*Noting* the gap between commitments and action; and reaffirming zero tolerance to VAWG;

WE DECLARE that in Africa Ending Violence Against Women IS NOT AN OPTION but a priority for development, peace and security, human rights, economic and social cohesion;

WE DECLARE ZERO TOLERANCE to all forms of VAWG in Africa;

We **RECOMMIT** to strengthen laws, policies and implement strategic actions to end VAWG; to take measures to **PREVENT** VAWG, so that it does not happen in the first place, and to **RESPOND** appropriately whenever it happens as follows:

## **I. ON PREVENTION**

### **We Commit to:**

- 1.1 Establish, monitor and assess effectiveness of measures to enforce zero tolerance to end VAWG;
- 1.2 Strengthen existing positive cultural practices of respect and non-violent relationships in families, schools, communities and public institutions;
- 1.3 Review education curricula at all levels to incorporate sexual and reproductive health in accordance with Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol;
- 1.4 Promote awareness raising, sensitization and training of the Police, Prosecutors, Judiciary, Military; religious, cultural, community leaders, and the community at large on women's rights and ending VAWG;
- 1.5 Involve and engage traditional leaders, men and boys in VAWG prevention initiatives;
- 1.6 Document harmful practices that perpetuate VAWG and formulate clear strategies for their elimination;
- 1.7 Enforce the ICGLR Protocol on prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children as a way to end impunity in conflict and post conflict situations;
- 1.8 Scale up best practices at regional, national and local levels on strengthening families and community initiatives and other preventive strategies;
- 1.9 Continue empowering women at the grassroots levels so that they can claim their rights;
- 1.10 Enforce a policy of not granting amnesty to perpetrators of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict;

## **II. ON RESPONSE**

### **We are determined to:**

- 2.1 Ensure that the elimination of VAWG is a priority area of the post-2015 agenda with clear targets and indicators;
- 2.2 Enact and enforce laws and policies on VAWG;

- 2.2 Ensure that the right to health of women, including sexual and reproductive health, is promoted through education and service provision in line with Article 14 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa;
- 2.3 Domesticate and implement General Assembly Resolution on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (2012) in countries where the practice exists;
- 2.4 Implement a multi-sectoral approach including the One Stop Centers to effectively engage all stakeholders in providing services and support to survivors of VAWG;
- 2.5 Enhance the buy-in of all Ministries to end VAWG, including Ministries responsible for Finance, Economic Planning, Health, Justice, Education, Home Affairs and others;
- 2.6 Advocate for adequate allocation of resources to end VAWG from public and private sectors and donors;
- 2.7 Set up special funding mechanisms for ending VAWG in all conflict, humanitarian and development settings;
- 2.9 Intensify economic empowerment initiatives for women as a means of uplifting the status of women and preventing VAWG;
- 2.10 Ensure effective representation and participation of women in all peace processes and community peace building and reconstruction initiatives as per UN Resolution 1325;
- 2.11 Utilize the Africa UNiTE Campaign and the Africa Women's Decade as advocacy platforms for Zero Tolerance throughout Africa;
- 2.12 Make provisions, at national and community levels to fast track investigations and prosecution of perpetrators of VAWG including but not limited to special courts;
- 2.13 Establish regular mechanisms to collect, analyse and disseminate data on VAWG, monitor and assess effectiveness of ZERO TOLERANCE to end VAWG;
- 2.14 Increase men and boys participation/engagement in programmes to end VAWG;
- 2.15 Include civil society in regional and national norm setting, programming as well as in government delegations for a more holistic representation of regional and national concerns;
- 2.16 Put in place a monitoring framework for the implementation of the 57<sup>th</sup> CSW session outcomes at national, regional and global level.

*ADOPTED ON this sixteenth day of January 2013, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*