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## **Statement**

**By**

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**African Union Commission**

**At the**

**52<sup>nd</sup> Session on CSW**

**UN, New York, USA**

**Monday, March 3, 2008**

- Your Excellencies Ministers for Women Affairs and Gender
- Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives to the UN
- Distinguished Representatives of International Organizations
- Honourable Guests
- Distinguished Participants and Colleagues
- Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H. E. Professor Alpha Oumar Konare, I wish to start by congratulating you Chairperson and members of the Bureau for the way in which you have efficiently conducted the 52nd session of CSW. I am pleased Madam Chairperson to share with this session the progress that the African Union has made in general and the African Union Commission in particular, in implementing commitments of Beijing and Dakar and also efforts to domesticate CEDAW.

Allow me excellencies to comment of the theme of the 52 session which is Financing for Development. Within this context the AU Commission organized a Capacity Building Workshop on Financing for Gender Equality and the Paris Declaration which was extremely successful and was attended by 82 delegations from 26 member states including 10 Ministers of Women, Gender and Community development across the continent and also CSOs, development partners and resource persons, including UNIFEM, ECA and ILO.

The Workshop was deemed necessary for all AU member States participating at this session to build their capacities on international commitments relating to financing for development including Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration. It is an undeniable fact that Gender Equality should be at the centre of financing for development, now commonly referred to as smart economics. In the final conclusion by the participants including the Members of AU Gender Committee, the following key issues were agreed up in a joint statement:

1. Gender Equality and women's rights are central to the development process
2. Financing for Development is the process of mobilization, and **allocating resources and must therefore be rights based and** recognize all Human Rights instruments
3. Financing for Development should not be about the resources mobilized only, but also address the conditions attached to the funds in accordance with the commitments in the Paris Declaration
4. Financing modalities must be based on women's Agency and should take into account women's contribution to the economic processes across sectors and reward them
5. Financing for Development should not be limited to aid but also encompass domestic resources mobilization, the trade portfolio and debt relief

They also agreed that it is important to integrate social and environmental agendas into the economic and trade agendas, to provide a holistic approach, informed by the needs of the African

society. They also called for social responsibility from corporate private sector as a way of financing social development, social entrepreneurship and gender equality initiatives.

### Distinguished Participants

As you are aware the transformation from the OAU into The AU, was guided by the vision of "building an integrated Africa, peaceful and prosperous Africa, driven by its own citizen". It has presented us an opportunity for renewed efforts to deepen ownership of the gender equality. Indeed the transformation has brought within a short time several innovative changes regarding the way gender issues are perceived and handled on the continent. In addition of the birthing of the NEPAD programme, the African Peer Review Mechanism and AU organs such as Pan African Parliament and ECOSOCC demonstrate the transformation that the Constitutive Act envisions.

It is true to say that the AU is committed to gender equality and women empowerment. The AU has clearly demonstrated this commitment by providing for gender equality and women's empowerment in the Constitutive Act, adopting the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights to the Right's of Women in Africa and through the adoption of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

The SDGEA provides a framework through which AU Member States can report on progress made in implementing the provisions of the Solemn Declaration. As you know all the commitments contained in the SDGEA

constitute bold moves that provides enlarged opportunities for involvement of CSOs women and other stakeholders for active participation in the review process and in translating these commitments into concrete actions at the regional, sub regional and national levels.

Indeed in the Constitutive Act African Heads of States and Governments reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The principle has been observed in two subsequent elections of the AUC including in the January 2008 election.

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

In the just concluded Summit of AU Heads of States and Government, the Chairperson of the AUC presented two important documents to the Assembly:

1. The Synthesis Report on Member States of the Implementation of the SDGEA.
2. The Report of Chairperson on SDGEA.

In these reports, the chairperson shared best practices that have been identified through the synthesis done by Women, Gender and Development Directorate on Member States Progress on the Implementation of SDGEA. I would like to highlight some of these practices whose focus has relevance to the 52<sup>nd</sup> session.

- The South African Government forged partnerships with NGOs to implement UNSC 1325. In addition, the governments of Ghana, Namibia, Mali, Rwanda and South Africa have included women in peace-keeping missions and in preventive diplomacy.
- The governments of Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Rwanda have initiated programs to end child soldiering in their countries. Signing of cross-country agreements by Mali and Cote d'Ivoire, Lesotho and South Africa and a among 1-0 ECOWAS countries to stop trafficking law and establishment of an agency to monitor the implementation of the law.
- The South African government annually celebrates 16 Days of No Violence Campaign against Women and in 2006, made it a year round activity. Since 2004, 6<sup>th</sup> February is commemorated as national day against FGM.
- With regard to Financing for Development, South Africa abolished the rule of primogenitor in inheritance practices; 49 per cent of beneficiaries of the government's housing subsidy were women. In Algeria 76.2 per cent of recipients of craft-related funding was women, 22,315 women obtained their farmers card and were thus able to access funding.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude my remarks, let me state that AU looks forward to the democratic conclusion of the United Nations Reform and to a strategically placed, well resourced and technically endowed Agency

for Women, with the necessary capacity to enable it address gender issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The African Union will continue to provide leadership in the gender Equality implementation in our continent and looks forward to outcomes and proposals from this session on Financing for Gender Equality. In the meantime, the AU will monitor, evaluate and on progress by Member States at its, biannual Summits.

I thank you