

Africa Democracy Forum

***Building Democracy for Peace, Development,
and Human Rights in Africa***

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ADF Regional Conference **on** **Women Political Participation** **Monrovia, Liberia, 23rd -25th April 2007**

REPORT



Her Excellency Mme Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia at ADF Meeting

ADF Regional Workshop Participants, Liberia 23rd 25th April 2007



The Africa Democracy Forum (ADF) is an African regional network of governance, human rights and democracy organizations working to promote and consolidate democracy in Africa by providing a common platform for democrats to speak with one voice. Currently the Kenya Human Rights Commission is serving as the secretariat to coordinate ADF activities.

This meeting brought together approximately 40 people from Democratic Republic of Congo, the Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, and South Africa. The objectives of this conference was to facilitate discussions among civil society representatives and practitioners, such as parliamentarians and women leaders, from various African countries, to formulate innovative ways on how women's political participation can be promoted and consolidated to achieve greater social justice, more social and political stability, in Africa. The discussions at the meeting will focus on the following areas:

- Assisting Women in Participation in Electoral Processes
- Preparing Women to Run for Public Offices
- Supporting Women's Professional Life, Balancing with Their Traditional Role in Family

Discussions at the meeting were mainly organized in the form of participatory round-table workshops, facilitated by ADF members. Participants shared with each other their experiences and knowledge regarding the use of national, regional and international instruments to bolster democratic practice and foster partnerships among governments, civil society and the media. The workshops provided participants with opportunities to analyze issues and challenges and to develop practical strategies for NGOs.

Opening Session

The ADF Regional Meeting was opened by Her Excellency Mme Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, Mme Vabah Gayflor, the Gender Minister of Liberia, Mme Francesca Bomboko, ADF Management Committee Member, Franck Kamunga, ADF Coordinator and Eddie Jarwolo, NAYMOTE Liberia Executive Director.

In her remarks, Mme Ellen Johnson emphasized the importance of the sense of responsibility and the necessity of empowering women in politics in Africa. She called all the participants to join their networks and build a sustainable solidarity for women's Leadership in Africa. The Minister of Gender pointed out the need for developing clear visions and realistic agendas for women involved in politics in Africa. Mme Francesca Bomboko and Franck KAMUNGA introduced objectives of ADF and invited all the participants to be involved in the Conference and share their own experiences during the conference in order to come out with solid output and follow up activities for consolidating the Campaign on Women Political Participation in Africa.

In closing the opening session, all the participants, including President Johnson-Sirleaf, sang the Women's Anthem.

PLENARY SESSION:

The first day of the conference featured a plenary session with Four presentations from different resource persons, Elyse Dimandja, (member of the Parliament, D R Congo), Mabel Mentor (member of the Parliament, South Africa, Miria Matembe, (former member of the parliament, Uganda) and Sindi Medar Gould (Executive Director, BOABAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria).

Presentations from parliamentarians focused on their personal experiences in being female legislators. Hon. Dimandja said being a woman in politics is always a big challenge when it comes to respond to its home responsibilities and to face the traditional conception of a woman in our countries.

Matembe discussed the role of female parliamentarians by questioning "do we want women just to be parliamentarians, or do we want them to be parliamentarians who pursue democratic principles?" "We need more women in politics who are democrats!" said Matembe.

In her presentation, Gould explained the impact of networking for empowering women and lobbying greater women's participation in Africa, and shared BAOBAB's experiences in developing partnerships with other organizations in other countries and participating in an international network, called the International Women's Network for Democracy, to share knowledge and resources and to build solidarity among women's democracy and human rights activists.

WORKSHOPS

The second day was organized with three workshops, focusing on different themes: "Supporting Women's Professional Life and Dealing with Cultural/Traditional Barriers," "Preparing Women for Contesting in Elections," and "Assisting in participating in Electoral Processes."

Workshops I: Workshop: Supporting Women's Professional Life and Dealing with Cultural/Traditional Barriers

Moderator: Francesca Bomboko (DRC)
Reporter: Ayesha Imam (Nigeria)
Volunteer Interpreters: Akouete Akakpo-Vidah (Togo/Canada)
Francesca Bombolo
Ayesha Imam

The group began by discussing the terms of the workshop title – 'professional,' 'cultural/traditional barriers' and decided first that these had to be related specifically to the political participation of women – both as candidates for political office, and as politically active citizens. After some discussion of whether the term professional life could include non-white-collar, and/or non-salaried, and/or non-remunerated activities, the group decided that they would use the term 'work' so as to include all that women do, valorizing women's labor in domestic work and social reproduction, and in productive work whether paid or unpaid, or in the informal or formal sectors. 'Barriers' was also construed in the widest sense. Hence the group discussed strategies to enable women to participate politically, whether as candidates or as citizens, in ways that support the work women do and address social, cultural, traditional and other barriers to their political activism.

Building on the presentations of the first day, the group identified several different types of barriers and suggested strategies, with some examples, of how to overcome them.

1. Ideological barriers

These are negative beliefs and stereotypes about women. They include:

- prejudices about women's capacity (e.g. unable to analyze, unable to be objective, unable to command, weak)
- stereotypes about women's proper place (e.g. restricted to the home, submissive and deferent to husband, primary or only role as wife and mother)
- objectification of women's sexuality and double standards of morality (e.g. accusations of promiscuity like 'loose woman' if active outside the home).

These prejudices, stereotypes and beliefs about women's appropriate gender roles are usually legitimated with reference to:

- conservative and fundamentalist religious interpretations in all faiths
- a static, ahistorical and essentialist view of "African tradition" or "African culture"

Strategy to address Ideological barriers:

→ To challenge, re-write and reconstruct beliefs and views about women, men and gender role. This should be done using the 'weapon of theory' (cf Amílcar Cabral) i.e. a clear analysis and vision of gender justice that arises from the work and practice of women's rights and gender justice activists.

This could be done through a number of ways, such as those following:

- Building on, developing and mobilizing the alternative interpretations in all faiths which valorize women and recognize women's rights. This is claiming the right to critique and re-interpret religious texts, religious jurisprudence (fiqh and canonical teachings) and dominant religious practices.
- Reviewing and critiquing school textbooks (e.g. a review of Kenyan primary school texts found that in animal stories, small animals like rabbits were portrayed as female, whilst large animals like lions were seen as male. Similarly lazy characters in civic texts were female, whilst hard working characters were male). Such texts should be re-written in ways that do not perpetuate conservative and negative beliefs about gender roles and women's capacities.
- De-mystifying the notion of 'culture' so as to recognize that cultures are plural, change over time and place, and reflect dominant power relations of gender, class and imperialism (amongst others). In particular, what is currently referred to as 'African culture and tradition' is an amalgamation of both pre-colonial patriarchies and European patriarchy imposed through colonialism (and the worst half of both), and often ignores values, beliefs and practices of pre-colonial Africa in which women had social status, power and roles outside the (European 19th century middle class) role of housewife/mother.

Part of this would be to research, recover and disseminate information about:

- a) pre-colonial and colonial beliefs, practices and rights of women, and;
- b) women in the past who defended and fought for their own, women's and/or community rights.

Examples of these defuse the frequent allegations that women refusing to be restricted to domestic roles and fighting for women's rights is a recent and Western imposition. An awareness manual on women "Great Ancestors" within the Muslim world have given a sense of strength and solidarity to women from Muslim communities in West Africa as fighting for rights is then recognized as part of a tradition and history.

They also defuse the allegations of being against African culture and tradition – showing instead the need and possibility of recovering and reconstructing African cultures and traditions positively.

- Advocacy with religious leaders, traditional leaders and local opinion leaders – and the women associated with them (wives, daughters etc) so as to sensitize them to the need and utility of women's public political participation. As a result, they can become the spokespersons themselves, reaching into and convincing others in their own as well as wider communities. This method of work requires direct face-to-face advocacy and communication (proximity) rather than large-scale media campaigns. This has been effective in the DRC, where as a result, such leaders spoke for (and no one spoke in opposition to) gender parity for women in political processes.
- Using the work done in recovering and developing gender-fair religious interpretations in the sensitization and training of religious leaders and religious court personnel. In Nigeria, this work has enabled religious leaders and judges to be aware of – and use - possibilities within religious discourse and laws for recognizing and protecting women's rights.
- Identifying, documenting and making information accessible (including through the mass media, as well as articles and books) about contemporary women who are politically active. Women like President Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia or Trade Union leader Ms. Rabiataou Sérah Diallo of Guinea are wonderful role models for girls and women – showing what can be and is being done by women.

2. The patriarchal nature of states and political boundaries

Current African states (and units within states – provinces, local government areas, districts or states, and constituencies for example) are built around the pre-

colonial dominantly patriarchal chiefdoms and kingdoms and other territories – i.e. they implicitly recognize male-ruled territories as political units. Membership of these units (political and other) is traced through kinship relations in the territory – most often through patrilineage (i.e. relationships to males). Given also that marriage is most often virilocal (the wife moves to where the husband is), this often results women losing identity ties within her own area, without acquiring such claims in her husband's area of origin, with consequent difficulties for women's political claims and candidacy.

Furthermore, states are not disassociated from the societies that produce them. Thus the laws of states of patriarchal societies tend to be imbued with the views and beliefs of those who have the power to make political choices and therefore make laws – predominantly male and elite. For instance, even in states where citizenship formally may be acquired through either parent, commonly fathers are administratively privileged in requirements to a father to give permission for infants to be on the mother's passport, but not vice versa – reflecting the male-dominant view that social membership is acquired through ties to men (not women), and that children 'belong' to their fathers.

Strategies to address the patriarchal nature of states:

→ Change the notion of citizenship from that of territorial origin to one based on practice or actions (where an individual lives, works and pays taxes...).

This would give women greater ability to claim representation of a constituency. (If candidates for office had to live in their constituencies this would also have the added advantage of making it easier for their constituents to make claims on them and recall them when necessary – rather than the current all-too common situation of candidates being seen only at election time.) In Nigeria, for instance, one might refuse to fill in the "state of origin" question in administrative forms.

Another possibility is to use affirmative action by recognizing matrilocality (where the mother is from), rather than continuing to re-affirm patrilocality (where the father is from).

→ De-politicize the concept of ethnicity or ethnic identity. And, move to issue-based politics, rather than patron-based politics.

This means requiring political parties and candidates to develop a program to which they can be held accountable, instead of support being bought by the distribution of largesse from political patrons and 'godfathers'. Since women are generally not in positions to wield the resources required for the distribution of largesse, it would support women's political participation. It would also enable better political representation of the interests and participation of other marginalized groups such as the poor (of whom the majority are also women).

Review electoral laws, systems policies and practices for their effects in promoting or militating against women's political participation, and eliminate or reform those that have negative effects. For instance, in Nigeria the requirement that candidates must be from a local government area of origin within the political constituency in which they stand (regardless of where they actually live and work – sometimes for several generations) militates against many women and should be eliminated. Comparative studies would help to identify positive mechanisms to improve women's political participation. An example – given in the previous day's discussion – is that systems of proportional representation support women's political representation better than first-past-the-post electoral systems.

3. Lack of financial and material resource (the gendered nature of the allocation of resources).

4. Gender division of labor, in which the responsibility for domestic work and social reproduction is allocated to women – i.e. work such as childcare and raising children, as well as cooking, cleaning and other tasks of household maintenance.

Strategies for 3 and 4 – long term:

→ Change the perceptions of gender relations, femininity and masculinity, so that domestic tasks and household work are accepted as the responsibility of both women and men. In particular, since studies of historical changes in gender divisions of labor show that the area most resistant to change is a concept of masculine identity that is not threatened by doing domestic tasks (such as looking after small children and cooking for the household), this is the area where most work needs to be done.

Strategies for 3 and 4 – short term:

→ Build capacity for women's negotiation skills within the household.

Recognizing that women currently are obligated to undertake childcare and other domestic work, organize political activity and participation so as to take account of this. For example:

- Automatic provision for childcare (like costs of travel to meetings with small children, childcare facilities at meetings)
- Scheduling of meetings and other activities at times when women can participate (e.g. not holding trade union meetings at the end of the work day when most women workers are obliged to pick up their children and go home to cook the evening meal).

5. Lack of political networks, mentors, and role models for women's political candidacy and activity.

Strategies:

→ Supporting the development of such networks, mentoring possibilities and awareness of role models through activities such as: Internships

→ Identifying existing networks and making that information known. These could be of women's NGOs, women parliamentarian and ministerial networks, CSOs, etc)

→ Sharing information

→ Developing both individual and organizational mentoring relationships

→ Building and mobilizing donor support

6. Lack of understandable language of political and electoral systems

7. Lack of familiarity with political systems

Strategies for 6 and 7:

→ Producing material (leaflets, brochures, posters etc) that set out in clearly and concisely the A B Cs of constitutional rights, electoral systems, and other relevant information. These should be both in official and in national (indigenous) languages. Use of images and symbols, as well as writing, facilitate accessibility of information.

→ Building capacity of girls and women (awareness, training, information) in political literacy. This should be long-term and continuous, and not focused around election times (for instance, starting in primary schools)

8. Discriminatory legal provisions, and the lack of provisions that recognize and protect women's rights, and the lack of legal provisions, policies and infrastructure (including resources) to actualize women's rights and political participation even where they are recognized in constitutional and similar provisions.

Strategies:

→ Conducting gender audit (review and critique) existing legal provisions and administrative policies and practices.

→ Eradicating discriminatory provisions and policies.

→ Developing protection for women's rights – including affirmative action where required.

→ Ensuring consistency between legal (e.g. constitutional) provisions for the protection and promotion of women's rights, and other consequent laws (including customary and religious) and administrative policies and practices.

→ Ensuring the harmonization (congruence) of national laws and policies with the accepted international treaties, conventions and agreements (e.g. of CESC, ILO agreements, CEDAW, Protocol on Women's Rights to African Charter).

→ Engage in practice advocacy.

9. Threat and use of divorce to intimidate women from political activity and exercise of their rights.

10. Global economic order which continues to marginalize Africa and make it a net exporter of resources, so that African peoples (and women in particular) are unable to access and mobilize resources for political participation and the defense of their interests.

Strategies for 9 and 10:

→ Networking.

→ Gender budgeting and participation of women in budget processes.

→ Use of provisions in PSRPs and HIPC to support women's rights, interests and political participation.

→ Focus attention of the development and support of the informal sector (where most women work and derive some income).

→ Changing terms of trade (trade as a means to development for PEOPLE, not as an end in itself).

→ Developing south-south and particularly intra-African trade and exchange.

→ Develop economic literacy of women.

Workshop II: "Preparing Women for Contesting in Elections"

Moderator: Chibogu Obinwa (Nigeria)

Rapporteur: Christina Halstead (USA)

The Workshop was comprised of ten women representing diverse civil society groups, as well politicians.

Objectives of the Workshop:

- To identify issues involved in preparing women for running for elective positions
- To analyze and address possible challenges to women's participation in politics –using personal experiences as a platform for analysis
- To explore the foundations of a new kind of leadership that is participatory, horizontal, democratic, as well as empowering for women
- To proffer concrete and action-oriented recommendations for potential women political aspirants and relevant civil society partners

The group first introduced one another and then listened to a brief talk with Vabah Gayflor, Minister for Gender in Liberia. The group posed the question to Ms. Gayflor: "What is the first step when preparing to contest for a political position?" Ms. Gayflor reported the first step as identifying your position and platform. She said some people are "born leaders, some have innate attributes". Ms. Gayflor never knew she had the capabilities to be a leader until she attended a training in 1999 organized by Akina wa Mama Afrika. She said she was never the same after this training.

In addition, Ms. Gayflor shared some general tips based on her own experiences in contesting for an election:

- Be able to adapt to any situation, you don't know what that one vote can mean;
- Be able to listen; you don't know it all;
- Be reachable;
- You have to be a role model, set an example, do what you say you will do, do not make false promises, what you can't do - don't talk about it or at least give reasons why you cant do it;
- Maintain that place, position, consistency. Don't forget where you came from, you don't know when you will need them again;
- Mission – some people might be good leaders, but they don't know how to relate to people;
- Know how to build a constituency;
- Sometimes you can have all the best people around you in cabinet but if you don't have a constituency you are nothing;
- Understanding the various levels of how to relate to people; and
- You have to have a vision as a leader i.e. what is it that you want to do, what do you want to see at the end.

A. Stages of Preparation to Contest in a Political Election

The group engaged in a productive discussion about outlining the stages needed for to prepare women for leadership and to contest in a political election. The group first asked what kind of leadership and what kind of person are we talking about preparing. Participants decided it was leadership for a national-level position and there were two groups of people we were preparing – one was the person who was a self identified leader and the other was a leader who was singled out by the crowd.

The group agreed that the three main stages of preparation for contesting in an election are “Identification”, “Having a Vision” and “Building a Constituency”. The following are some of the main points which were captured in discussing each stage of preparation.

1) IDENTIFICATION

- Self identified or community identified leader;
- What do you want to do with your leadership skills;
- Must do a self assessment at this stage – assess capacity of self, skills, and needed education/training, self evaluation;
- Figure out what are your resources.

2) HAVING A VISION

- If a candidate does not have a vision, it will be difficult to have a well-defined manifesto;
- Candidates must clearly define for themselves what do they want to give back?;
- Ask yourself, WHY do you want to stand?;
- Party affiliation: How do we find a party to align with? There is also the issue of independent candidacy.

3) BUILDING A CONSTITUENCY

- Identify a constituency;
- Where you will run may depend on the legislation in place, so make sure you know what the law states (e.g. can you contest in your place of origin or place of abode?)
- Identify networks, where you think you have leverage, identify the area, how known are you there, what is it that links you to that area;
- Do a mini fact finding/research –e.g. Is there a strong candidate of the same position? Has the past candidate failed to perform, why? What can I improve upon that the last candidate was unable to improve upon?;
- Hold consultative meetings with leadership in the community, identify local authorities, youth, seeking their partnership, women's groups, religious leaders, business community;
- Tapping into existing networks;
- Study community.

Group members said that once elections are over, some elected members disappear. The group agreed that the constituents must hold elected members accountable. This became a major theme. The group members advised that people “should not be afraid to hold those in power accountable for their words, actions.”

Additionally, as an elected official, you must return to your community and interact with the people from time to time and report on whether you have been able to deliver on your promises as a politician. Elected officials should stay in touch, be transparent and maintain constant communication with the constituents. The point was also reinforced here that politicians should not promise what they cannot manage. Politicians must ask themselves, “Is my vision too broad?”, and “Has there been accurate and honest budgetary allocations?”

The group members all agreed that we are proposing a different kind of leadership, one that is participatory and horizontal, focusing on consensus building and gender sensitive leadership.

B. Organizing Ethical Campaigns

The group deliberated extensively on the issue of organizing campaigns as a key component of any prospective candidate for an elective position. In particular, the group looked at ‘Ethical Campaigns’ and what it entailed.

The facilitator posed the question to the group, “What are some of the initial things that come to mind when thinking about organizing an ethical campaign?” In response, the group decided that the word “ethical” is a given, it goes without saying, so the group decided to take the word out because we are all going to be conducting “ethical” campaigns.

First, the group agreed that you should organize a team of people that you want – begin from within the home – look in your district, find supporters, people who believe in you, who are respected in the community, a campaign manager, financier, seek people that share your vision – formation of the youth, elders, women, men, make it diverse. Next, there should be a structure set for the campaign team, inclusive of defined roles and responsibilities based on individual expertise, assignment of office bearers, including village campaign team. Following this, there were a number of different tasks with which a prospective politician would want to consider, such as, preparing a message which is derived from/reflection of the vision, and one that can be easily identified with the team. Along with this, there should be a catchy slogan with the campaign message. The campaign team should identify a campaign base or headquarter where members of the team can assemble. The campaign team should draw up a budget, outline the campaign strategy including activities to hold, workshops, trainings, community visits and how best to implement the various strategies. The campaign

team should also be on the same page in regards to remaining accountable to the constituency and ensuring transparency in the campaign.

The group members agreed on the importance of the media and how it can either make you or break you. And in the attempts to break you, women running for office should be prepared for the worst by the media and maintain strength and sense of self during any attempts at slander.

In order to deliberate effectively on how to deal with the media in relation to organizing ethical campaigns, the group did a practical exercise on a case study from the Women's Learning Partnership DRAFT Political Participation manual – on Ethics and Political campaigning: The case study was about a prospective candidate for the parliament, who felt like backing out of a planned rally, because she feared that the Media might raise some personal 'embarrassing' questions. The candidate's brother had been arrested for drunk driving, and the news was all over the media. Also, the candidate's source of funding was a sensitive matter and another cause for concern. The case study revealed how the journalists raised different questions –some intrusive and demanding, and virtually trying to put the candidate on the defensive.

After deliberating on the events as reflected in the case study, participants came up with some strategies for the dealing effectively with the media during campaigns. These include: Being able to ensure that you articulate your message well before responding to the Media, as well as knowing how to create a balance between diplomacy and consistency in your responses. Participants also agreed that the campaign has to be ethical –e.g. there must be honesty, transparency, dignity and respect for human rights. On the other hand, it was agreed that candidates should not undermine the importance of the role of the Media –as they can make or break a campaign. The need for media training was expressed, and also building allies within the Media.

C. Challenges in contesting for elections:

- Funding/resources are not enough;
- Difficulty in maintaining a balance between family and work, also not having a supportive family;
- Not communicating effectively or articulating your message most effectively;
- Marketing yourself;
- Dealing with media;
- Gender issues; e.g. gender division of labor that expects women to play certain domestic role and men to be in the public arena;
- Marital status – e.g. expecting that every female candidate has to be married (not divorced or single).

D. Recommendations

After a fruitful day's discussion, the group finally came up with a set of general recommendations, for activists, prospective candidates and ADF towards ensuring that more women effectively contest and win elections.

- Prospective candidates should be educated on party politics, e.g. which party is taking care of your interests and vision;
- Advocate for constitutional amendments/provisions to allow for independent candidates;
- Sustain continuous mobilizing;
- Complementing where the government goes wrong;
- Begin to identify potential female political aspirants for the next election, begin to support more women;
- Create a data bank of potential female candidates;
- Fundraising activities – identify local empathetic philanthropists who are willing to support women's issues;
- Capacity building, training, development – on leadership for potential candidates;
- Create and strengthen linkages, networks, coalition building – such as International Women's Democracy Network (IWDN);
- Build a strong women's movement (civil society);
- Individual female candidates should be deeply rooted in the women's movement;
- Women's movement should have ownership of female candidates (The group had a very healthy and dynamic discussion about the women's movement – how strong it should be. It was observed that there was need to not just build a women's movement, but to sustain it;
- Utilize existing networks to get support for women seeking to elective positions;
- It was noted specifically that a post conflict country (e.g. Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc.) has different challenges and these have to be taken into consideration by activists. Also these challenges attract the sympathy of the international community, and as such activists should exploit the situation for positive gains for women;
- Support the production of a political participation manual which would include topics such as those discussed in today's workshop;
- ADF should support the women's movement starting with ECOWAS sub region;
- Start building movement and networks NOW!!!

Workshop III: "Assisting in participating in Electoral Processes"

Moderator: Mary Brownell (Liberia)

Rapporteur: Solome Kimbgwe (Uganda)

Just over dozens of participants participated in this workshop to discuss how to assist women in participating in electoral processes effectively by sharing various experiences, particularly the recent experience in Liberia.

Strategies that the participants shared include:

1. Helping women to be clear on what they want to achieve in electoral processes.
2. Informing and getting advise the family members on their intention to stand for political office.
3. Encouraging women and girls to join and create political parties and play an active role for one presence to be felt.
4. Consulting with community leaders and citizens of the intention to contest, this enables women to root themselves within their constituencies, and to identify allies and strategies for opponents.
5. Planning political processes:
 - Workplan/action and activities
 - Composition of a campaign team to set up the following :
 - Mobilization
 - Campaign leaders
 - Fundraisers
 - Volunteers etc.
6. Drawing a budget that cost all expected income and expenditure
7. Collaborating and networking with other women organizations (civil society, NGOs, professional organizations etc.)
8. Massive awareness and training for women candidates, voters and monitors on good governance, transparency, accountability, women rights, electoral laws, responsibilities and duties through negotiations and discussions.
9. Community outreach and mobilization in the importance of women political participation in governance.
10. Advocacy and lobby of enabling existing laws on equal participation of women and men in electoral processes.

Principal General Recommendations :

LEGISLATIVE REFORM:

- Enactment of enabling laws that enable gender equality
- Amendment of the existing laws on gender equality in political processes

- Monitoring and Implementation of the existing laws in different African countries

ADVOCACY TOOL REDACTION AND DISSEMINATION

- All the participants have recommended ADF to start working on the Woman Political Participation Advocacy Tool to be translated in English, French and all the national local languages in different countries for dissemination.
- Collection of the former Female Political Leaders histories and examples around the continent to inspire the coming African women generations in politics.

CLOSING SESSION

The closing Session was given by the Liberia Gender Minister Mme Gayflor and the ADF Coordinator Mr. Franck KAMUNGA calling on our common responsibility and sustainable solidarity for effective women Political participation.

Mr Kamunga said that it was crucial for both of the participants to work on the effectiveness of the follow up activities and transform make all the Conference Recommendations into realities in our respective countries.

Both Mme Gayflor and Ms Franck Kamunga presented their gratitude to all the participants for having accepted the invitations and come to Liberia for the ADF Regional Workshop. They recognized the real commitment and efforts of each of the participants to make the workshop a crucial and unforgettable moments for experiences and skills sharing before wishing a good trip back to all the Conference participants.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

(Attach the list of participants)

AGENDA

Day 1

9:30 – 11:00 Opening

- Welcome
- Opening Remarks
 - ADF Chair (Represented by the ADF Coordinator)
 - Minister of Gender and Development, Liberia
- Keynote Address :

Her Excellency Madam Helen Johnson Sirleaf , President of Liberia

- 11:00 – 12:30 Panel Discussion: Achievement in Increasing Women's Political Participation in Africa
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 17:00 Panel Discussion: Challenges in Women's Political Participation in Africa
- Cultural/Traditional Obstacle: Patriarchal System in Political, Social and Economic, and Private Institutions

Day 2

9:30 – 12:30 Workshop Session: Dealing with Cultural/Traditional Barriers (Developing Practical Strategies to Overcome the Challenges by encouraging every country in Africa to ratify the Protocol on Women's Rights to the African Charter on People's and Human Rights, advocating affirmative actions for women in political parties and parliaments, conducting leadership training, etc. Through small group discussions/workshops, participants will develop recommendation and action plans for civil society groups, Governments in Africa, regional institutions, international community, including the Community of Democracies)

- Assisting Women in Participation in Electoral Processes
- Preparing for Women to Run for Public Offices
- Supporting Women's Professional Life, Balancing with Their Traditional Role in Family

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 17:00 Workshop Session: Dealing with Cultural/Traditional Barriers – *Continued*

- Assisting Women in Participation in Electoral Processes
- Preparing for Women to Contest in Elections
- Supporting Women's Professional Life, Balancing with Their Traditional Role in Family

Day 3

9:30 – 12:30 Recommendations / Action Plans

- reports from each workshop
- discussions

- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 17:00 Closing Session
- Closing Remarks
 - ADF Coordinator
 - Liberian Partner Organization(s)
 - Representative of the Community of Democracies Non-Governmental Executive Secretariat

***SPECIAL THANKS to:**

- **Her Excellency Madame Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf**, President of Liberia
- **Madam Vabah Gaylor**, Liberia Minister of Gender and Development
- **Staff members of the Ministry of Gender and Development**
- **Eddy Jarwolo , Aaron Weah-weah, Saeid Taeage, Alaket and all the staff members of NAYMOTE Liberia**
- **Cecilia Reeves of Liberia Women Initiative**
- **Rights and Democracy**
- **World Movement for Democracy / National Endowment for Democracy**

List of Participants

Steve Ouma Akoth	Kenya	Kenya Human Rights Commission
Lavina Banduah	Sierra Leone	National Accountability Group
Zainab Bangura	Sierra Leone	United Nations Mission in Liberia
Mariam Bah	Guinea	
Yah Belleh	Liberia	Nimba Women Association of Liberia
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