



**Statement
of
The African Union Commission
at
The 55th Session of the UN Commission on
Status of Women**

by

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**New York
USA.**

28 FEBRUARY 2011

H. E. Chairperson of the 55th Session of the CSW.

H. E. Madame Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director and Under-Secretary
General of United Nations

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies, Ambassadors

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of H.E. the Chairperson of the 55th Session of the Commission on Women's Status, I have the honour to make a statement at the 55th Session of the Commission on Women's Status, titled "Access and participation in women's rights education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work."

Let me also join earlier speakers by congratulating the Chairpersons and members of the Bureau of the Commission on Women's Status who are conducting this meeting. The AD Commission also wishes to align itself to statements made on behalf of 97 and 101 Member States.

On the outset, let me now report to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to Dr. Michelle Bachelet for her appointment as the new UN Women Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General of United Nations. H.E. the Chairperson had the opportunity to meet the Executive Director in Addis Ababa at the January 2014 Heads of State Summit and was able to convey the best wishes and that of the entire Commission to Madam Bachelet.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

The synergy demonstrated by the African Women's Decade themes and the priorities chosen by UN Women provides a natural entry point for UN Women to engage the African continent. Ms. Badier attended the January 2011 Summit, she had the opportunity to discuss the nexus between the UN Women's priorities and the Decade's themes with the AU Commission and stakeholders attending the Summit including the Civil Society community. The Commission pledged to work with UN Women and support UN Women's efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in an unprecedented manner, aimed at transforming African Women's daily reality in general and that of rural women in particular.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

Following Ms. Badier's 10 days vision and UN women's several promises, the Commission has carried out a further analysis of the UN Women priorities and is pleased to note that 5 of its selected priorities constitute four (4) of the 10 themes chosen for the African Women's Decade. These priorities are Expanding women's voice, leadership and participation, which is in line with theme 3 of the Decade, Ending violence against women, which is in line with theme 7 of the Decade, Strengthening implementation of the women, peace and security agenda which is in line with theme 6 of the Decade; Enhancing women's economic empowerment, which is in line with theme 9 of the Decade, and Making gender equality priorities central to national, local and sectoral planning, which is in line with theme 8 of the Decade. We see great synergy between the Decade's themes and believe that the accelerated advancement of women globally through the United Nations work will translate directly into African women's lives in general and rural women in particular.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

The African Union has continued to provide leadership in championing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through its ground breaking commitments which contribute to the AU Gender Architecture and well illuminated. In my previous statements at the CSW, with the normative framework in place, I am pleased to say the AU has moved one step forward. It has adopted the African women's Decade as the framework to guide implementation of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment agenda through the 10 themes encapsulated in the Nairobi Declaration followed by the successful Launch of the African Women's Decade on 19 October 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya in a colorful ceremony.

The Launch was attended by over 2,000 delegates from across the continent and the globe including African Heads of States and Government, First Ladies, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Heads of Nations Agencies, Parliamentarians, Government delegations, Gender experts, CSOs, Youth, Grassroots women and Male Champions for Change. The UN Deputy Secretary General led the UN delegation to the occasion. Furthermore, the UN sponsored the Union for African Women, as one of the Launching of the Decade as a great demonstration that the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government have already provided a UN role in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the Decade activities.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to inform you that the African Women's Decade Launch ceremony with the international "Rural Women's Day" in line with the theme of the Decade which was "Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment". The Launch was attended by important forums including NGO Forum, Experts' and Ministers of Women Affairs and Gender meetings and Caucuses based on the 10 themes of the Decade.

The aim of the African Women's Decade is to accelerate the implementation of Dakar, Beijing and AU Assembly Decisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), through dual top-down and bottom-up approaches which are inclusive of grassroots participation. The objective of the Decade is to re-invigorate commitments to accelerated implementation of graded time and regional gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

I invite delegations to visit the African women's decade website at www.africanwomendecade.org for important documents and the 10 Decade Themes are explained.

Theme No 3 of the AWD namely 'Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV/AIDS' was chosen by the ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs as the theme for 2011. This was inspired by the momentum generated by the AU Heads of State and Government's 10th Anniversary Summit theme 'In this regard the Commission has been able to organize a parallel event within the region and also a similar Roundtable on the theme of the July 2011 Summit "Accelerating Youth empowerment for sustainable development". A similar event is closely related to the theme of this Session of the 55th OSW. We thank delegates for attending this event. The objective of the Roundtable is to identify 53-106 grassroots initiatives (2 per country) that the Union was support in 2011.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen

In the High Level Roundtables held last week the Commission was able to share its experiences in the front and good practices in the OSW theme. Highlighting the Malawi Nucleo Initiative which has been instrumental in advancing intellectualism, encourage science and technology and empower young generations of Africans, the Commission cited the African Union Scientific Awards which awards scientists and inventors. The High Level Roundtable

\$ 5,000), Regional (US \$ 20,000) and Continental level (US \$ 100,000). As you can see, work is already happening on this commitment. The theme of the African Union's decade is focusing on Education, Science and Technology, more focus will be directed to this sectors to benefit for women and girls.

Once again, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, may I pledge our support to UN Women and assure Madam Executive Director of the Commission's support and best wishes.

I thank you for your kind attention.