

Press Release

Governments Must Re-Dedicate to Women's & Girls' Rights Commitments

November 17, 2014

For Immediate Release

Women's rights organizations meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 14-16 November have called on African governments to re-dedicate themselves to upholding national, regional and international laws and policies that advance women's rights and gender equality on universal human rights standards already agreed upon and protect them from social moral and cultural arguments and positions.

Civil Society Organizations were discussing the progress made in the field of women's and girls' rights 20 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA) was adopted.

Participants said that most of the gains made in Women's and Girls' rights since the holding of the International Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 have come under various threats and are facing persistent challenges, notably from widening inequalities between the rich and poor and between men and women due to prioritization of macroeconomic policies that are driven by growth without equitable development and respect for human rights.

"HIV, maternal mortality and morbidity continue to be amongst leading causes of death for women; the rising radical and extremist groups pose threats to the safety, security and advancement of women and girls as indicated by on-going abductions of girls shrinking space and; resources for civil society; and macroeconomic policies that perpetuate inequalities," as noted in the NGO Forum Declaration (available online on www.femnet.co).

The **rights, priorities and needs of African women and girls** must intentionally be highlighted in the ongoing regional and global discussions such as the 59th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 59) scheduled for in March 2015, where governments will be reviewing and appraising implementation of the BDPfA. In addition, CSOs are keen to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Post-2015 development agenda through the integration of a rights-based and gender perspective.

BPfA is a landmark visionary roadmap for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment as set out by governments during the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing 1995. **To date, no country in the world has achieved gender equality.** According to UN Women, *"though much has been achieved, progress has been unacceptably slow, particularly for the most marginalized women and girls"*.

The weekend conference was attended by over 150 African women and girls from 34 countries across the continent.

Rachel Kagoiya
Information Manager, FEMNET
library@femnet.or.ke

Nabila Abdulmelik
Head of Communication, FEMNET
communication@femnet.or.ke

Follow conversations online [#Beijing20](#) and [#TheAfricaWeWant](#)