

## **DECLARATION OF THE GENDER FOCUS GROUP**

### **Gender and NEPAD**

We in the Gender Focus Group wish to appreciate and congratulate the African Leaders for their initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), based on a common vision and provision for full participation of stakeholders. However, the people-centred element, especially, relating to the critical issues of gender have not been systematically addressed in the NEPAD document.

There is a growing consensus that in order to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development; it is critical that women are empowered to contribute to achieve the objectives of NEPAD. This is because women contribute significantly to economic development in Africa, especially in their roles in the Agriculture sector and household work, which is not counted in the national accounts. Therefore, it will be a missed opportunity in terms of sustained growth to deny women, who in many African countries not only outnumber men but also are the backbone of livelihoods.

In order to launch the NEPAD on a sound footing, we wish to make the following **recommendations** to the Heads of State:

1. All chapters of the NEPAD document be revised to integrate systematically all gender concerns of direct relevance to the continent's economic and social development, particularly, the issue of marginalisation of women in economic, social and political decision-making of the continent.
2. All countries should develop national policy frameworks and sectoral gender policies to facilitate full integration of gender issues in national, sub-regional and regional plans, programs and policies.
3. The NEPAD framework should have a gender component that focuses on the following strategic areas at regional, sub-regional and national levels:
  - (a) Regional frameworks should be instituted for developing and applying gender impacts indicators to facilitate regular assessment of the progress made on the empowerment of women in Africa to enhance their contribution to economic and social development.
  - (b) To ensure availability of adequate financial resources, as well as strong human and institutional capacities to implement gender policies at regional, sub-regional and national levels.
  - (c) In order to achieve the International Development Target to reduce poverty by half, by the year 2015 in Africa, it is imperative that the concerns of women representing over 50% of the continent's human resources are fully integrated in national plans, programs and budgets.
4. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and the African Development Bank (ADB) constitute a joint secretariat through their gender units/departments for monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action. Therefore, these units/departments should be mandated to ensure that gender perspectives of NEPAD are implemented.

### **Question to the Heads of State**

Given the need to systematically integrate gender concerns into the framework of NEPAD, what would be the practical measures that the Heads of State could ensure for the full representation of women at all stages and processes of NEPAD?