

## **Banjul Hosts a Landmark Conference To Assess Progress in Achieving Gender Equality in Africa**

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Addis Ababa, 12 November 2009 (ECA) - Over 28 African ministers in charge of gender affairs and high level participants from over 43 African countries will gather in Banjul, The Gambia, to attend the 8th African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing+15) that the Gambian government is hosting from 16-20 November. They will be joined by a wide cross section of various key stakeholders including regional and international organizations and representatives of the civil society.

The Conference will take stock of progress achieved in Africa since the Beijing Summit on Women fifteen years ago, and identify pending challenges for the implementation of the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. Its threefold objective is therefore to:

- Review the evaluation report that ECA has prepared based on the inputs received from member States;
- Identify key actions that Africa needs to focus on in the next five years, in time for the second decade review of the BPFA; and
- Define Africa's input into the global review of the BPFA, due to take place at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March 2010.

This landmark regional conference on women is convening in the wake of the recent Regional Conference of the ICPD+15 held in Addis Ababa in early October 2009. This latter assessed progress achieved in the implementation of The Programme of Action of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD 1995); and reiterated the imperative need to accelerate action towards achieving gender equality and effectively empowering women and promoting their human rights in Africa.

The Banjul Conference will kick start with the statutory meeting of the ECA's Committee on Women and Development, which will be followed by the Ministerial meeting.

One of the major highlights of this African Regional Conference on Women will be the launch by ECA of its African Women's Report 2009 (AWR), which is its flagship publication on gender issues in Africa. The AWR2009 is unique in its purpose as it focuses on the use of an Africa specific tool that was recently developed by ECA, the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI). This tool aims to enhance the ability of African countries to monitor and report on their performance in the implementation of global and regional commitments and instruments on the advancement of women.

Her Excellency Isatou Njie-Saidy, the Vice President of The Gambia and Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA, will chair the launch. (ENDS)

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