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20 - 22 April 1994

KAMPALA ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN AND PEACE

***Adopted by the Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development
(Jointly organized by OAU, UNECA and the Government of Uganda, Kampala,
22 - 25 November 1993)***



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Kampala Action Plan

Regional Conference on Women and Peace

22-25 November 1993
Kampala, Uganda

Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace

Preamble

The Regional Conference on Women and Peace which took place in Kampala, Uganda between 22nd and 25th November 1993 is the first of its kind in Africa. It was convened on the initiative of the Ministry of Women in Development, Culture and Youth of the Government of Uganda. This initiative was in response to the concerns of women about the increasing number of intra-state wars and violent conflicts in the continent in which they have been the major victims, and in the context of the wider goals and objectives of the United Nations Women's Decade whose strategies and action plan emphasized the need for the promotion of equality, development and peace. It was considered to be an opportune time to examine the situation of women in the process of political changes and the role they play in conflict resolution and peace-building preparatory to the Fifth Regional Conference in Dakar, Senegal 1994, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, Republic of China 1995.

The convening of the Conference was endorsed by both the 28th Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Conference of Ministers and the 29th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The Conference reaffirmed the regional and global strategies on women as exemplified in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos (1980); the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action on Population and Self Reliant Development (1984); the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women Beyond the United Nations Decade (1984); the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985); the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1987); the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s (1989); the Arusha Declaration on Popular Participation (1990); and the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (1991), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Covenants, and the various ILO Labour Standards.

The deliberations of the Conference focused attention on four areas of concern: the nature and effects of conflict and underdevelopment, women in the struggle for peace, the empowerment of women in the peace process, and peace education.

It was recognised that there were several underlying causes of the use of force, and ultimately war in conflict situations. These included ideological and economic domination, injustice, obscurantism, and a culture of intolerance and violence.

It was also realised that peace is not just the absence of war, violence and hostilities, but a situation in which all people have equal access to economic and social justice, and to the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in which the environment is protected.

It was further realised that if peace is to be attained, conflicting factions in society must be harmonised and not polarised. The traditional African way of conciliation in resolving conflict is more relevant to our current problems than adversarial methods of adjudication in which there is a winner and a loser, and the winner takes all.

Conflicts in Africa, as elsewhere, share many common attributes of misery. They bring destruction, despair, desolation and death. Though the consequences of conflict affect all peoples in society, women bear a disproportionate burden. While women suffer the magnitude of hardship in war, they are hardly involved in decisions that lead to war, nor in matters of security and peace.

There is a need if we are to have peace, to understand and eliminate the causes of war, to mediate existing armed conflicts, and create conditions where peace can be sustained. Action for peace has to start in the home, and be furthered through committed leadership at local, national and international levels. Women have a special and crucial role in this process, and particularly the rural woman, who is the one most disastrously affected by the violence of war.

A sustainable peace therefore needs the empowerment of women, which in itself is a prerequisite of development. The justification of targeting women is therefore the effective utilisation of human resources rather than the issue of equity. If women are to play an equal part in securing and maintaining peace they must be empowered politically and economically, through knowledge and education.

In order to give substance to these concerns, the Conference adopted the following Action Plan

Action Plan

The Action Plan urges the following courses of action:

- (1) The articulation by national Governments of meaningful policies on women that ensures the full involvement of women in political and economic issues, and those of social and human development.
- (2) The establishment of institutional mechanisms for enhancing and coordinating interventions and strategies for such policy implementation.
- (3) The provision of legal protection and special assistance for women to ensure their participation.
- (4) Affirmative action to ensure the representation of women at all levels of decision-making.

Social Justice

Governments should be urged to respect international conventions which outlaw the use of children as soldiers or armed combatants.

The rights of children as provided in the several UN Children's Charters should be respected, and enshrined in national laws.

As a result of the breakdown of traditional mechanisms to resolve intra-family conflicts, especially between husband and wife, there was a need to create Counselling Services at grassroots to mediate and deal in a conciliating way with domestic conflicts which could lead to violence.

Urge Governments to enact, consolidate and codify laws to prevent all forms of violence against women and children in society, and create appropriate machinery to deal with such sensitive cases.

To provide assistance to create or strengthen legal clinics at community level to provide counselling and advice to women and girls.

Re-examine and reject cultural traditions which undermine peace or which serve to disempower women.

Empowerment

Governments who have not ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women are urged to do so without further delay.

Women should be encouraged by each other to reject negative perceptions of their abilities, to take confidence in themselves and to appreciate their own self-worth.

Governments are urged to take affirmative action to ensure that women are represented at all levels of decision-making.

Even though most constitutions provide for equal human rights there are still laws which discriminate against women. All such discriminatory laws should be abrogated.

Governments and NGOs are urged to develop and support positive programmes to improve access to and control over productive resources by women.

Governments and NGOs are urged to develop and support programmes to assist women entrepreneurs with credit, management and investment knowhow, and access to market information.

Women should be encouraged by all possible means to compete for political position, and to appreciate the contribution women can make when appointed to high position.

Solidarity among women and the development of networks between women's organisations, should be encouraged.

Mechanisms should be developed to ensure that women at the grassroots are more actively involved in the resolution of issues considered elitist.

Disabled women should not be left out but integrated in all women's organisations.

Education

Education is a key issue in development and peace processes. The lack of or low level of education of girls and women is a main constraint to the empowerment of women politically, economically and most specifically in the peace process, and limits their access both to productive resources and the power structure. National governments and NGOs are urged to make every effort to improve the capacities and capabilities of girls and women, and in particular to:

- (1) Undertake affirmative action to improve and promote the education of girls and more specifically to increase the number of girls who complete primary school, through family life education, and incentives to their families.

- (2) Devise policies to promote the education of girls, and to ensure that they get equal access to available scholarships for training programmes at higher levels.
- (3) Develop and support programmes which ensure basic training in numeracy and literacy for women at grassroots level.
- (4) Provide occupational and educational guidance and counselling services to girls at all levels of the educational system in respect to career choices, and personal development.
- (5) Support research on priority areas for policy development in respect to the education of girls and women.
- (6) Support female researchers, especially in the fields of science and technology, in order to promote the capacity of women at the highest levels of human scholarship and endeavour.
- (7) Ensure that statistics on education recognise and analyse the issue of gender by the disaggregation of all educational data.

Peace Education

Peace education is a life long process that is based on the concept of partnership between men and women. It illuminates and advocates the necessity of eradicating all types of violence in society, at familial and community levels. It encourages all people, and in particular girls and women to take more interest in politics, international affairs, and all aspects of decision making.

The Conference therefore endorsed the following actions:

- (1) Peace education to be included and be compulsory in school and college curricula.
- (2) Seminars to be organised to sensitize community leaders on the important role women should play in developing a culture of peace in the family, and in society.
- (3) Young people, and especially girls, to participate in all conferences and fora devoted to peace.
- (4) Women to be educated in their civic rights and sensitized about criminal and civil procedures.
- (5) Subjects on human rights and humanitarian laws to be included in all school syllabi.
- (6) Regional research and training institutes to carry out research on women in the peace process and identify and analyse policies and action programmes in respect to women's role in the peace process.
- (7) Women prisoners, distressed women and those in especially difficult circumstances to be rehabilitated through the provision of guidance and counselling services.

- (8) Exchange of visits and information be organised between women leaders from different states to observe how others deal with conflict situations.
- (9) Mechanisms should be set up which ensure that women, parents, and families have access to information and training with regard to issues of parenting for peace.
- (10) Recognition and support should be given in respect to the role of women in peace education for husbands, sons, fathers and brothers about the futility of war, in view of the fact that it is generally men who initiate and prosecute war, and young men who take up arms and perpetuate violence.
- (11) Censorship be instituted to limit distribution of violent and immoral films.
- (12) Women and men in the media, and communications specialists commit themselves to playing a positive role in the presentation of peace issues, and design innovative ways of analyzing, packaging and disseminating information to foster and promote peaceful co-existence and collective security.

Institution and Capacity Building

Noting with concern the total absence, or at best limited presence of women in decision making positions and various fora, where issues concerning their lives are addressed, decided and policy formulated, the Conference recommended that:

- (1) Governments of member states of OAU and UNECA should be urged to emphasize and strengthen existing machineries and mechanisms, or create new ones with clear mandates and adequate facilitation to address issues and concerns of women in order to ensure effective articulation of women's concerns, and implementation of policies.
- (2) A Committee of Women Ministers and/or Plenipotentiaries, including Ministers of Womens Affairs, should be set up, whose functions shall be
 - (a) to network and articulate womens views on regional and global issues.
 - (b) to address and formulate programmes and policies that will effectively deal with women's issues and concerns towards the betterment of the status of women in particular, and society in general.
- (3) Representatives of this Committee should be included at all levels in the new institutions and mechanisms being created by the OAU for conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and to all other policy organs and sectoral fora of the OAU and ECA.
- (4) Urge the OAU and UNECA to revive and strenghten the PanAfrican Women's Organisation and its network of national women's structures to ensure it plays an active role in the empowerment of women, and operate as a pressure group to foster the building of peace.

Action for Peace

In view of the destructive nature of militaristic conflicts and their devastating effects on women and children, International Organisations, National Governments and NGOs are urged to take the following actions to promote peace:

- (1) Reduce expenditure on armaments, and "defence", and devote the money so saved to improved science and technology for peaceful development, and social services.
- (2) Pledge certain proportions of their defence budgets for the promotion of peace and social development.
- (3) Tie aid to the ratio between military and social expenditures.
- (4) Reinforce those aspects of culture which enhance the status and importance of women in the peace process.
- (5) Organise and demonstrate in favour of peace and against divisive elements in society.
- (6) Set aside a regional day for women in positive action for peace.
- (7) Identify potential situations of violence in a timely way and to take preventive measures to avert it instead of responding only when fighting has actually broken out.
- (8) Provide for the practical empowerment of peacemakers, and reconciliation of warring parties through the offer of amnesty and assistance for resettlement and rehabilitation which are more successful than punishment in securing cessation of armed struggles. The conference urged that such methods should be standardised.
- (9) Develop and support programmes to introduce and promote and sustain peaces.
- (10) Recognise and support the national machineries of women and NGOs to work as pressure groups and mobilize necessary action at all levels to ensure that women achieve a critical mass at the national cabinet level in key Ministries and Departments at national level, and in international organisations that make or influence policy with regard to matters related to collective security and peace.

The OAU is furthermore requested to take a more active role in averting, managing and resolving conflicts, and in participating peace-keeping endeavours. To this end, Member States are urged not only to support the newly established Mechanism but also to contribute to the Special Fund for Conflict Management and Resolution.

The OAU and UNECA should review, monitor and appraise the implementation of the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace and periodically convene conferences to assess progress and promote implementation.

As a leading organisation in peace education, the United Nations should set the example and include women in all peace keeping and peace making missions at all levels, and ensure that the military contingencies dispatched by member States in this regard also include women at all levels. The UN should ensure further that the interests of women are adequately represented in the Security Council.

The United Nations should ensure the inclusion of women at the highest levels in its agencies that determine and/or influence socio/economic development policy at the international level, particularly the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and the United Nations Development Fund.