

“Act now or never on women's empowerment” – ECA Officials in presentation of five year follow-up strategy

ECA Press Release No. 71/2011

Addis Ababa, 17 May 2011 (ECA) - A five year follow-up strategy for the Beijing + 15 regional review outcomes and related events was presented on Tuesday by the African Centre for Gender and Social Development (ACGSD) at the 7th Session of the Committee on Women and Development (CWD). The overall objective of this strategy is to provide concrete actions in order to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and to address the gaps, limitations and obstacles that have been identified.

The four-day-meeting on gender equality and women's advancement opened on Tuesday morning at the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with more than 100 experts in the field of women empowerment in attendance.

The presentation took into consideration seven critical areas for Africa to focus on in order to facilitate the implementation of the BPFA. They include Economic Empowerment of Women; Peace, Security and Development; Violence against Women; Representation and Participation of Women in Decision-making; Sexual and Reproductive Health; Climate Change and Food Security; and Financing for Gender Equality.

“We must all work as a team, because this is not only about women machineries,” said Elizabeth A. Eilor, Social Affairs Officer at the African Centre for Gender and Social Development (ACGSD), who presented the lessons learned from the BPFA and the proposed strategies. “We must all put our heads together, come up with a way forward and act now or never,” she urged.

With regards to Economic Empowerment of Women she pointed out that one of the lessons learned is that “Microfinance is not a magic bullet” and does not cause social and economic transformation. The proposed strategies in this field include investments in infrastructure; provision of legal literacy at all levels to ensure that women know their rights; and access to credit and enhanced employment creation.

In the field of Peace, Security and Development emphasis was made on bringing justice to those who violate the human rights of women and girls. This, it was noted should be done in accordance to international laws. In addition, the presentation underscored the need for effective reintegration of ex-combatants. “The use of the media is very critical, especially when it comes to the public's understanding of women's rights,” Eilor said.



A reception to launch the Multi-Sectoral Approach to Women's Rights in Africa Manual, took place later that evening according to ECA's Information and Communication Service.

Ends.

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