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ECA - CEA



ECA/ACGD/MR/CAP/2002

RAPPORT DE MISSION

Participation à la Cinquième Conférence des Femmes Africaines
Ministres et Parlementaires
Sal, Cap Vert, 15-18 Octobre 2002

Thème: Genre et VIH/SIDA : renforcer la réponse nationale

Par

Joséphine Ouedraogo

Directeur du Centre africain pour le genre et le développement

Soyons plus précis : un ministre chargé des transports devrait se sentir responsable non seulement de la lutte contre le sida auprès des 300 à 500 agents de son ministère, mais encore, il ou elle, devrait engager des actions de sensibilisation contre l'avance du VIH/SIDA chez les transporteurs, femmes comme hommes.

Nous avons tous la responsabilité d'amener nos gouvernements à prendre ses responsabilités en ce qui concerne les coûts et l'approvisionnement en médicaments et la création de services de dépistage et de conseils appropriés auprès des femmes et des jeunes filles.

Vous, élues parlementaires, vous devriez en plus, vous sentir interpellées par l'évolution du VIH/SIDA dans la vie de vos électeurs.

Si à ce jour, vous manquez des ressources financières adéquates, prenez donc la décision de consacrer 1/3 de votre temps de travail à la lutte contre le Sida sur votre propre terrain de responsabilité.

Si par notre implication personnelle, quelques milliers de jeunes et de femmes sont épargnés par la maladie, nous aurons assumé nos responsabilités face à l'histoire. En tant de guerre, arracher une vie des balles de l'ennemi, constitue une victoire morale énorme.

Madame la Présidente de la Conférence,

Je ne doute pas que les discussions qui seront menées tout au long de la semaine vont nous aider à situer encore plus clairement nos rôles et nos responsabilités. C'est pourquoi je félicite le FNUAP pour le choix de ce thème.

Je voudrais assurer Madame Fama BA, de la disponibilité de la CEA à travers son Centre africain pour le genre et le développement, à collaborer pour la mise en œuvre des

I. Cadre et justification de la mission

Le Réseau des femmes ministres et parlementaires d'Afrique sub-saharienne a été créé immédiatement après la Conférence Mondiale sur la Population et le Développement tenue au Caire en 1994.

Ce Réseau a pour objectif de mobiliser et d'impliquer les femmes africaines leaders politiques dans la mise en œuvre des recommandations issues de la Conférence du Caire, notamment en ce qui concerne la santé de la reproduction.

Les membres du Réseau sont convenu de se réunir tous les 2 ans autour d'un thème précis. Le Fonds des Nations Unies pour la Population et le Développement apporte un appui technique et financier à toutes les activités du Réseau.

La Commission économique pour l'Afrique à travers son Centre africain pour le genre et le développement a toujours été invitée à participer aux Conférences organisées par le Réseau, et d'y apporter sa contribution technique.

Cette fois-ci le Secrétaire exécutif de la CEA a été invité à faire une allocution à l'ouverture de la Conférence. J'ai été déléguée par Monsieur K.Y. Amoako pour lire son allocution, et saisir cette opportunité pour approfondir les voies de collaboration durable avec la Division du FNUAP pour l'Afrique.

II. Objectif de la Conférence

Quatre objectifs spécifiques étaient assignées à la rencontre:

- (i) Approfondir l'analyse sur les aspects sexo-spécifiques de la pandémie du VIH/SIDA.
- (ii) Explorer les stratégies adéquates de lutte contre la pandémie du VIH/SIDA, essentiellement en ce qui concerne les femmes et les filles.
- (iii) Echanger des expériences en la matière dans le cadre des réponses nationales.
- (iv) Evaluer les performances et l'efficacité du Réseau des femmes africaines ministres et parlementaires et proposer des mesures pour le renforcement du Réseau.

III. Les résultats de la Conférence

Après lecture du Projet de Discours préparé par la Division des politiques économiques et sociales de la CEA, chargé des questions relatives au VIH/SIDA, j'ai pris la responsabilité de refaire le discours parce que je l'ai trouvé inapproprié quant au contexte et aux objectifs de la Conférence. Le Discours proposé par DPES (en anglais) et celui que j'ai préparé et prononcé (en français) sont tous deux joints en annexe.

- (i) La Conférence a connu une très forte participation des membres du Réseau: deux tiers des 17 pays d'Afrique sub-saharienne étaient présents au niveau ministériel et au niveau parlementaire.

A l'ouverture, le Président de la République du CapVert a présidé la cérémonie. L'intervention de M. Stephen Lewis, Envoyé Spécial du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies pour le VIH/SIDA en Afrique, a été très fortement appréciée.

- (ii) Les thèmes ayant fait l'objet d'exposé suivi de discussion en plénière, ne semblaient pas 'nouveaux' et les participants ont exprimé une certaine 'impatience' à cet égard. Ils avaient le sentiment d'entendre des analyses et des chiffres déjà connus.
- (iii) Les travaux de groupes ont permis aux participants de réfléchir de manière plus stratégique sur les défis et les opportunités qui se présentent aux leaders politiques qu'elles sont, pour accélérer la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA.

Elles ont exprimé des préoccupations importantes, parmi lesquelles:

- La difficulté de concilier la lutte contre le SIDA avec les autres priorités qui se présentent aux états africains: comment éviter la dispersion des ressources.
- Les femmes et les filles sont plus exposés au virus du SIDA, mais la lutte ne saurait être sélective car les hommes sont les principaux vecteurs du Virus.
- Les ressources financières existent auprès de la communauté internationale mais les conditions d'accès à ces ressources restent trop restrictives, peu transparentes et compliquées: face à l'urgence les procédures fixées pour l'accès au Fonds Global, ces procédures s'avèrent inefficaces.
- Les méthodes de protection physiques, tel que le condom

masculin et féminin, démontrent des limites objectives. Il ne faut pas exclure l'abstinence des jeunes et la fidélité dans le mariage, qui restent des valeurs traditionnelles sûres.

- Si l'éradication de la pandémie du VIH/SIDA est liée à la lutte contre la pauvreté et à l'élimination des inégalités, hommes/femmes, il faut effectivement s'engager dans une approche multisectorielle qui dépasse l'effort d'un seul département ministériel, fut-il celui de la promotion de la femme.

(iv) En ce qui concerne l'évaluation des performances du Réseau et les mesures à prendre pour son renforcement, les participants ont évoqué ce qui suit :

- Le Réseau a démontré son utilité en ce sens qu'il est le seul espace de rencontre et d'échange entre les femmes leaders politiques africaines. Il doit être maintenu en tant que tel;
- Les résultats du travail du Réseau sur le terrain national restent très limités parce qu'il n'existe pas de mécanisme de suivi et d'appui technique après chaque Conférence;
- Les rencontres des membres du Réseau au niveau sous-régional et régional doivent servir surtout au partage des expériences.

IV. Les échanges avec d'autres organisations présentes à la Conférence.

FNUAP (Mme Fama BA, Directrice de la Division pour l'Afrique)

Nous avons échangés sur les points ci-après:

- Implication de la CEA dans la gestion du Réseau des femmes africaines ministres et parlementaires : il a été convenu que la prochaine conférence se tiendrait à Addis-Abeba et que le processus de préparation permettra au FNUAP et à la CEA de mettre au point le mode de partenariat entre les deux institutions.
- Le FNUAP a l'intention de créer un Institut de formation en genre pour les pays d'Afrique francophone. Cet Institut serait basé au Cap Vert. Le FNUAP souhaite une collaboration technique avec le CAGED pour le lancement des programmes de formation.

UNIFEM (Mme Laketch Dirasse, Directrice du Bureau de l'UNIFEM pour l'Afrique)

Nous sommes convenus de ce qui suit :

- L'UNIFEM participera à la réunion du Panel des Conseillers sur 'l'Indicateur du développement et des inégalités entre les sexes en Afrique', prévue les 5 et 6 novembre 2002 à Addis Abeba.
- L'UNIFEM s'engage à soutenir le processus de suivi/évaluation à l'échelle sous-régionale dans le cadre de la revue de Beijing + 10 pour l'Afrique.
- L'UNIFEM confirme sa volonté de participer au programme de renforcement des capacités pour l'intégration du genre dans la comptabilité nationale et le budget national.

Banque Mondiale (Mr Mark Blackden, du bureau du Directeur chargé de la réduction de la pauvreté et de la gestion économique)

Nous sommes convenus de ce qui suit

- La participation effective de la Banque mondiale, à travers Mark Blackden à la réunion du Panel des Conseillers sur l'Index africain genre et développement, prévue les 5 et 6 Novembre 2002 à Addis Abeba.
- Mark Blackden saisira cette opportunité pour préciser les voies de collaboration avec le CAGED sur le programme d'intégration du genre dans la comptabilité nationale et le Budget national.
- Le thème majeur de la revue de Beijing + 10 pour l'Afrique pourrait être 'genre, croissance et réduction de la pauvreté'. Dans le processus de préparation de cette revue, il est essentiel d'impliquer les ministres africains chargés des finances et du développement économique. A cet effet il faudra s'assurer que ce thème sera inscrit à l'ordre du jour de la prochaine conférence des ministres africains chargés des finances et du développement économique en 2003.

Femmes, Afrique, Solidarité (Bineta Diop, Directrice exécutive de Femmes Afrique Solidarite)

Nous avons échangé sur le suivi des décisions du Sommet de Durban sur l'Union Africaine, notamment sur la nécessité d'engager des actions qui aboutiront au recrutement effectif de femmes commissaires à hauteur de 50%.

Le CAGED devra faire des propositions concrètes très rapidement pour faciliter la mobilisation des candidatures.

ANNEXES

Executive Secretary's Office
Bureau du Secrétaire exécutif
12 SEP 2002
ECA, ADDIS ABABA
CEA, ADDIS-ABEBA

14 August 2002

Dear Mr. Amouko,

**Fifth Regional Conference of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians,
Cape Verde, 15-18 October 2002**

I am pleased to inform you that UNFPA is organizing in close collaboration with the Government of Cape Verde, the 5th Regional Conference of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians in Cape Verde from 15 - 18 October 2002. The theme of this 5th conference is "Gender and HIV/AIDS: Reinforcing the National Response."

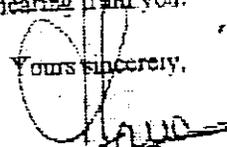
The Conference will bring together about 100 Ministers and Parliamentarians from Sub-Saharan Africa as well as key partners and regional and international experts to share experiences on the theme of the Conference. A particular focus of the meeting will be to discuss and agree on strategies for a dynamic and constructive role for the Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians in ensuring that gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic are addressed. The Conference aims to underscore ways in which the national response to HIV/AIDS takes into account in a relevant and concrete manner the specific needs and priorities of a critically affected group in the region - the women and girls of Africa.

We would like to extend an invitation to you to participate in this conference of an important group of stakeholders - Women Ministers and Parliamentarians. We would appreciate it if you would make a statement at the opening session of the Conference on HIV/AIDS, particularly relating to gender dimensions of the epidemic as well as some reference to follow-up of the African Development Forum recommendations on these issues. It would be very useful to participants if you would highlight your vision of the way forward and the leadership role required in our critical fight against HIV/AIDS. We are confident that your insights will make a valuable contribution to the deliberations. The agenda of the conference is being finalized and will be sent to you in the next few days.

We would appreciate if you could inform us at your earliest convenience of your availability to participate in the Conference by return fax to Ms. Fama Hane-Ba, Director, Africa Division, Fax no. 212 297 4951.

We hope you will consider our invitation favorably and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,


Fama Hane-Ba
Director, Africa Division

Mr. K.Y. Amouko
Executive Secretary
ECA
P.O. Box 5901
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 1 51 65 13
Fax: 251 1 44 52 27

OPENING CEREMONY

**FIFTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF
AFRICAN WOMEN MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS
October 15 - 18, 2002
SAL, CAPE VERDE**

THEME : GENDER AND HIV/AIDS: REINFORCING THE NATIONAL RESPONSE

Tuesday, October 15, 2002

Chair: The Honourable Cristina Fontes Lima, Minister of Justice and Internal Administration
(Cape Verde)

- 9H00 - 9H05 - Statement by Mr. Basilio Mosso Ramos, Mayor of Sal
- 9H05 - 9H15 - Statement by The Honorable Cristina Fontes Lima,
Minister of Justice and Internal Administration, Chairperson of the
Conference National Committee
- 9H15 - 9H20 - Statement by The Honourable Orlanda Ferreira, MP,
Cape Verde
- 9H20 - 9H30 - Statement by The Honourable Netumbi Nandi Ndaitwah,
Representative from Namibia
- 9H40 - 9H50 - Statement by Mr. Stephen Lewis, the Secretary
General's Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa
- 10H00 - 10H10 - Statement of the Executive Secretary of the Economic
Commission for Africa by Ms. Josephine Ouedraogo, Director,
African Center for Gender and Development
- 10H10 - 10H25 - Statement by Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA
- 10H25 - 10H40 - Opening address by His Excellency Pedro Pires,
the President of the Republic of Cape Verde
- 10H40 - 11H00 - **Break**

AGENDA

FIFTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN WOMEN MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS October 15 - 18, 2002 SAL, CAPE VERDE

THEME : GENDER AND HIV/AIDS: REINFORCING THE NATIONAL RESPONSE

Monday October 14, 2002

- 15H00 – 18H00 - Registration/distribution of conference documents
- 18H30 – 19H00 - Briefing/ sessions for chairpersons, rapporteurs and resource persons

Tuesday, October 15, 2002

Opening Ceremony

Chair : The Honorable Cristina Fontes Lima, Minister of Justice and Internal Administration
(Cape Verde)

- 9H00 - 11H00 - Statement by Mr. Basilio Mosso Ramos, Mayor of Sal
- Statement by The Honourable Cristina Fontes Lima, Minister of Justice and Internal Administration, Chairperson of the Conference National Committee
- Statement by The Honourable Orianda Ferreira, MP, Cape Verde
- Statement by The Honourable Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah, Representative from Namibia
- Statement by Mr. Amara Essy, Chairman of the African Union
- Statement by Mr. Stephen Lewis, the Secretary General's UN Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa
- Statement by Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of ECA
- Statement by Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA
- Opening address by His Excellency Pedro Pires, the President of the Republic of Cape Verde

11H00 - 11H30 **Break**

- 11H30 – 13H00 - Overview of the Conference by Ms. Fama Hane-Ba, Director Africa Division, UNFPA
- Appointment of Officers
- Appointment of Drafting Committee
- Adoption of the Agenda

13H00 – 14H30 **Lunch**

SESSION I
Overview of Gender and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa

Objective of this session: Setting the context for gender and HIV/AIDS

Chair: Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA
Rapporteur: Ms. Tabitha Seii, MP (Kenya)

14H30 – 16H30

Topic 1:

Gender and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa: An Overview

Presenters: Mr. Stephen Lewis, Secretary General's Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa;
Ms. Laketch Dirasse, Chief, Africa Section, UNIFEM;
Mr. Mark Blackden, Lead Economist and Gender Advisor, World Bank

Plenary discussion

16H30 - 16H45

Coffee Break

Chair: Ms. Edna Madzongwe, Deputy Speaker of the House (Zimbabwe)

16H45 – 17H45

Topic 2:

UNFPA HIV/AIDS Strategy /Millennium Development Goals

Presenter: Mr. Sibili Yelibi, HIV/AIDS Advisor, CST Dakar

Plenary discussion

19H00

Reception hosted by the Government

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

SESSION II
Multi-sectoral dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic

Objective of this session: building a consensus on key multi-sectoral dimensions of HIV/AIDS

Chair: The Honourable Museleng Cooper, Ministry of Gender and Development (Liberia).
Rapporteur: Mme Ascofare O. Tambora, MP (Mali)

9H00 – 10H30

Topic 3:

Socio-economic Impact and Socio-cultural Dimensions of gender and HIV/AIDS

Presenters: Ms. Mere Kisekka, Socio-cultural Advisor, CST Addis Ababa; Mr. Roland Msiska, Director, UNDP Regional Programme on HIV/AIDS

10H305 – 10H45

Coffee Break

10H45 – 11H15

Topic 4:

Gender and HIV/AIDS in Conflict Situations

Presenter: Ms Bienta Diop, Executive Director, Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS)

11H15 – 13H00

Plenary Discussion

13H00 – 14H30

Lunch

Chairperson: The Honourable Candida Celeste da Silva, Minister of Family and Women's Empowerment (Angola)

Rapporteur: Mme Baloukina-Eza Nimon, MP (Togo)

14H30 – 15H30

Topic 5: (Panel Discussion)

Youth and HIV/AIDS: Rising to the Challenge

Presenters: Dr.Charlotte Ndiaye, President, Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA); Ms. Rima Salah, UNICEF Regional Director, West and Central Africa Office

Plenary Discussion

15H30 – 18H00

Working Groups (Coffee Break in- between)

20H00

Reception

Thursday October 17, 2002

SESSION III

Towards gender sensitive national HIV/AIDS action plans

Objective of this session: Agreement on strategies and mechanisms for mainstreaming gender in the national response

Chair: Senator Khairat Adul Razaq-Gwadae, Chairperson of National Assembly Forum for Responses to HIV/AIDS (Nigeria)

Rapporteur: Ms. Chantal Simbiyara, MP (Burundi)

9H00 – 10H30

Working Group reports and discussions

10H30 – 10H45

Coffee break

10H45 – 11H15

Topic 6:

Advocacy Kit on Gender and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa

Presenter: Ms. Wariara Mbugua, Senior Technical Officer, Gender, Culture and Human Rights Branch, UNFPA

11H15 – 12H00

Plenary Discussion

12H00– 13H00

Topic 7:

Experiences on Gender and HIV/AIDS from selected Countries (Cape Verde, Botswana, Rwanda and Senegal)

13H00 – 14H30

Lunch

Chair: The Honourable Yvette Cenline Seignou, Minister of Public Health (Benin)
Rapporteur: Dr. Abrehet Gebrekidan Tessema, MP (Eritrea)

14H30 – 15 H00	Topic 8: Resource mobilization within the framework of the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Presenter: Mr. El hadjy Sy, Advisor, Technical Committee, the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
15H00 – 15H30	Topic 9: Report on evaluation findings and recommendations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development- Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians Presenter: Mr. Mamadou Diallo UNFPA Representative, Sierra Leone
15H30 – 16H30	Plenary Discussions
16H30 – 18H30	Working Groups (Coffee Break in-between)
19H30	Reception hosted by UNFPA

Friday October 18, 2002

SESSION IV Creating a consensus on the way forward to respond to challenges of gender and /HIV/AIDS
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Chair : The Honourable Awa Colle Seck, Minister of Health and Prevention

09H00 - 10H30	Report of Working Groups and discussions
10H30 – 10H45	Coffee Break
10H30 – 13H00	Free Time (Finalization of the Sal Commitment by the drafting committee)
13H00 – 14H30	Lunch
15H00 – 16H30	Plenary discussions and adoption of the Sal Commitment

Closing Ceremony

16H45 – 18h00	Vote of Thanks Presentation of the Sal Declaration Statement by UNFPA Closing statement
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N.B. : Given the background and the goals of the meeting I took the responsibility to disregard this Statement and prepare another Statement I think is more appropriate. (See 'Discours d'ouverture').

Josephine Ouedraogo

**Keynote address to Fifth Regional Conference of African Women
Ministers and Parliamentarians
Theme of the Conference: 'Gender and HIV/AIDS: Reinforcing
the National Response'**

**By Josephine Ouedraogo,
Director, African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD)**

**On behalf of
Dr. K.Y. Amoako,
Executive Secretary of ECA**

**Cape Verde
October 2002**

**Keynote address to Fifth Regional Conference of African Women
Ministers and Parliamentarians**

**Theme of the Conference: "Gender and HIV/AIDS: Reinforcing the
National Response"**

by Josephine Ouedraogo,
Director, African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD)

on Behalf of
Dr K. Y. Amoako,
Executive Secretary of ECA

**Cape Verde
October 2002**

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring you these remarks on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission (ECA), Mr. KY Amoako, who is unable, much as he'd have loved to, to be present here. He asked me to convey his regrets to you. As many of you know, the ECA is at this same time holding a Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Finance, Economic Planning and Economic Development, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Mr. Amoako sends you warm felicitations and thanks you for extending an invitation to him to attend this very important meeting of African women leaders organized by African Women Leaders in collaboration with UNFPA whose focus is on a problem that affects ALL African women irrespective of social and leadership stations – HIV/AIDS. Mr. Amoako has asked me to convey his regrets for his inability to attend this very important Conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Imagine when you were in your early twenties. Beginning to break loose of the constraints of family and attempting to socialize into a much larger world than the world of your parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins, you were filled with vigour, vitality and hope. You had dreams of yourself twenty years hence. You planned, perhaps coherently and perhaps incoherently like many of us, for the future. You considered career choices, perhaps based on role models. You imagined yourself a scientist, a lawyer, a writer, an economist, a physician, a politician or even a soldier. And above all you imagined yourself a parent, like your parents, suffering the pains and restrictions of parenthood and basking in the joy of having that which you can completely and without an iota of doubt call your own – your children. Whatever you imagined or dreamed yourself to become there was that scintilla of hope – that inadequate financial resources aside – that with hard work you'd become what you dreamed yourself to become. You also knew that with a little bit of luck and some more hard work, you could exceed yourself. In our twenties, the world was at our feet, waiting to be conquered and owned by those among us willing to take on it.

Place yourselves distinguished ladies and gentlemen in the shoes of today's youth. They constitute what we can call the HIV/AIDS generation. Their life, their hopes and aspirations, their dreams, their being have been framed and dominated by HIV/AIDS. Were HIV/AIDS a "person", it would, now be in its twenties. Occasionally, I hope it were, so that it can articulate the feelings and sentiments expressed above. And I wonder, if seeing the enormous pain it has inflicted on so many, the hopes and aspirations it has truncated, it would still continue to rampage and foreclose the possibilities of dreaming and planning for the future for many of its age-mates with such lethal vitality. Like young people, HIV/AIDS has experienced some setbacks. The success of anti-retroviral therapies, better knowledge of its dynamics, barrier technologies etc, have slowed it down a bit. But like a raging and uncontrollable wild fire it seeks and finds escape from these and continues to ride roughshod over humanity, foreclosing hopes for the future for many.

Women have been especially affected by HIV/AIDS. Gugu Dlamini who was stoned to death by young men in her community in Kwazulu, South Africa, when she courageously went public on World AIDS Day a few years ago, epitomizes the relationship between women and HIV/AIDS. They are the primary care givers of the infected. Grandmothers have been forced out of retirement to care for their grandchildren orphaned by AIDS. Women are the chief mourners for the dead. And they themselves have been victims of the virus. I shall not bore you with statistics because I

believe that you are like me very well aware of the numbers. But a few will suffice. Globally, the incidence of HIV/AIDS among women has risen but it has risen even much faster in SSA. The figures are alarming:

- 18.5 million of the 37 million adults (aged 15 to 49) living with HIV are women.
- 55 % of all HIV positive adults in Sub-Saharan Africa are women.
- Last year 1.3 million women died of AIDS.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, teenage girls are 5 times more likely to be infected than boys, since girls are mostly infected not by boys their own age, but by older men.
- In Zimbabwe, a UNIFEM focus group revealed that of those who had experienced a negative income shock due to HIV, 77.6% were female.

Gender inequality is fuelling the rapid spread of HIV with women divested of control over their lives and their bodies. Many women and girls are not in a position to say no to unwanted sex, nor can they negotiate condom use. Many women are infected with HIV by their husband or intimate partner. Violence against women, such as trafficking, forced prostitution, incest and rape - including marital rape - all put women and girls at risk of contracting HIV. In many of our continent's many armed conflicts, rape has been used as a weapon of war and has contributed to the spread of the disease among women.

Without doubt HIV/AIDS is a health issue. But it is also a gender issue insofar as the unequal power and asset relationship between men and women is implicated in its spread among women. Dealing with this requires leadership.

Under the theme "**AIDS: the Greatest Leadership Challenge**" African Leaders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders met in Addis Ababa, at the invitation of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), slightly over two years ago. Their purpose was to address the rampaging scourge of HIV/AIDS in the Africa. The forum – ADF2000 - provided a platform for African leaders and Africa's development partners to collectively articulate responses to the scourge and to commit themselves at the personal, community, national, regional, and international level to the campaign against HIV/AIDS. The agreements reached and commitments made at ADF2000 are summarised in the document entitled "**The African Consensus and Plan of Action: Leadership to overcome HIV/AIDS**".

A lot has been done since ADF2000. At the continental level, African Heads of State met in the Special Summit Abuja 2001 and adopted the Abuja Declaration against HIV-AIDS, TB and malaria. This document declared HIV-AIDS as Africa's number 1 development challenge. The Framework Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Abuja Declaration - which listed the goals and objectives that member states should work to achieve and the variables according to which it would be monitored. At the international level, Africa leaders worked hard to ensure the convening of the United Nations Special Session on HIV/AIDS and for the setting up of the Global Fund for AIDS, TB, and Malaria (ATM).

There has also been progress at the sub-regional level. For example, IGAD member-states at a recent Summit meeting adopted the Kampala Declaration on HIV/AIDS while the Southern Africa Developing Cooperation Council (SADCC) has prepared a report on the situation of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. In the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria, and Other Related Infectious Diseases (ORID) African leaders declared HIV/AIDS as the continent's number one development challenge and committed themselves personally, to bring resources to bear in combating these

diseases. In particular, they committed to allocate no less than 15% of their annual total expenditure to health.

But the challenge of stemming the HIV/AIDS pandemic remains numbing. Although success in reducing prevalence has been reported in countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya the potential consequences for the future of our continent remains nonetheless, alarming.

None among us can afford to be indifferent to this very depressing situation. Aggressive efforts are required of each of us as human beings whose welfare.

You are all probably aware of the "New Partnership for African Development" (NEPAD), a new vision and framework for Africa's development, which was adopted by African Heads of State at the OAU Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001. NEPAD gives expression to the commitment of African governments to the 2015 goal of reducing poverty by half and articulates the strategies and course of action that the continent will pursue in order to realise it. These strategies include renewed emphasis on human resources development, agricultural and rural development, better targeting of expenditure on social programs such as education and health, sound macro-economic management, among others.

The realization of this goal is contingent upon a healthy population. People are the most important resource for development. Good health is fundamental for the optimal employment of this resource. Evidence abounds that a healthy workforce is important for economic growth and development. Put differently, good health is productivity enhancing. And increased productivity is vital for improving the well being of citizens.

Your work at this meeting could be an important input into the process of actualising the vision articulated in that document and a contribution to our collective efforts to tame this apparently.

We at the ECA have not relented in our efforts to contribute to efforts to the struggle against this disease. We contribute according to our strength. We have organized a number of training workshops on HIV/AIDS and gender. ADFIII – which was on regional integration - had a focus group on the implications of HIV/AIDS for Regional Integration in Africa. To add rigour to our advocacy and policy work on HIV/AIDS, we have set up a Health Economics Unit within the Social Policy and Poverty Team of the Economic and Social Policy Division. This Unit is undertaking rigorous analysis of the multifaceted implications of diseases –including HIV/AIDS – and poor health for Africa's Development prospects. Joint with the African Union, the UNAIDS and WHO we are producing a Report on the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria and UNGASS Declarations. It is our hope that this Report will serve as an advocacy tool for our collective efforts to stem the spread of this disease.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My vision is an Africa free of HIV/AIDS and the other diseases of poverty. My vision is an Africa where parents do not bury their children. My vision is an Africa where grandmother is allowed to quietly enjoy her ripe old age and to make the progress to eternity at her own pace, without the stress of looking after her grandchildren the life of whose parents had been cut short by HIV/AIDS. It is a vision of life in Africa that is neither circumscribed by poor health or by poverty.

I am wedded to this vision. Over the past several years, in addition to the ADF2000, I have in various ways found space to share this vision – as one of the commissioners of the WHO Commission on Macroeconomics and Health.

I am sure that you are very well aware of the issues surrounding “HIV/AIDS and Gender”. I am also sure that you have each individually thought of and considered ways to address and resolve them. Your Conference will be innovative and of immense value if it considers very critically and proposes brave ways to deal with the gender implications HIV/AIDS. It is my hope and expectation that your meeting will make concrete and valuable recommendations on the way forward for halting the spread of one of the diseases that make life in our continent brutal and short.

I wish you a successful conference.

KYA

**Discours d'ouverture de la cinquième Conférence des
femmes ministres et parlementaires africaines**

**Sujet de la conférence : « Genre et VIH/SIDA : Renforcer la
Reponse Nationale »**

par : Joséphine Ouedraogo

**Directrice du Centre Africain pour le Genre et le
Développement**

Au nom de :

**Dr. K.Y. Amoako,
Secrétaire Exécutif de la CEA**

**Cap Vert
Octobre 2002**

Excellence, Monsieur le President de la Republique du Cap Vert,

Madame la Presidente de la Conference,

Excellences, Mesdames les Ministres et Mesdames les Deputes

Madame la Directrice Executive du FNUAP,

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Membres du Corps diplomatique,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

J'ai l'honneur de m'adresser à vous au nom de Monsieur K. Y Amoako, Secrétaire Exécutif de la Commission économique pour l'Afrique qui n'a pas pu se trouver parmi vous aujourd'hui, quand bien même il aurait souhaite le faire.

Il m'a demande de vous exprimer son profond regret, car, comme vous le savez deja, la CEA, organise à Johannesburg, cette semaine la Conférence des ministres africains des finances, de la planification et du développement économique et social.

Permettez-moi de vous transmettre les compliments de Monsieur Amoako et ses remerciements les plus chaleureux pour l'invitation que vous avez eu l'amabilité de lui adresser en vue de participer à cette Cinquieme Conference des Femmes africaines ministres et parlementaires.

Le theme choisi pour cette rencontre est d'une tres grande importance car il nous implique tous, sans distinction aucune de sexe, de rang ou de statut social..

Excellences,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Les chefs d'Etat africains, reunis en Avril 2001 a Abuja, ont indique dans leur Declaration finale que la pandémie du sida constituait un etat d'urgence en Afrique.

En effet, selon le dernier rapport de l'organisation des Nations-Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO), les morts dus au VIH/SIDA dans les dix pays africains les plus touches, reduiront la population active de 26% d'ici 2020. Le meme rapport souligne, et je cite : « Il n'est guere de crises dans l'histoire de l'humanite qui aient menace de maniere aussi aigue la sante humaine et le progres economique et social, que l'epidemie du VIH/SIDA. » Fin de citation.

Nul ne peut ou ne doit ignorer aujourd'hui la menace que fait peser le SIDA sur le continent africain, et en particulier sur la jeune generation. Et pourtant, la progression qu'enregistre la maladie sur le terrain semble nous laisser croire que cette menace n'est pas reconnue comme telle par tous.

Certes, nous ne pouvons pas negliger les succes remportes par un pays comme l'Ouganda, qui est devenu un cas d'ecole. Non plus, saurions-nous passer sous silence les resultats de la lutte farouche enclenchee au Senegal, au Nigeria, au Kenya et au Botswana.

Cependant, a l'echelle du continent nous ne pouvons pas encore nous satisfaire de ces donnees positives.

Les pays qui se felicitent aujourd'hui d'etre epargnes par la pandémie pourraient se laisser surprendre par les faits au cours des 5 a 10 prochaines annees, car le virus du Sida n'a pas besoin de visa pour franchir les frontieres.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Comme vous le savez déjà, les chiffres ne cessent de nous alarmer. Au risque de nous repeter constamment, rappelons-nous que:

- 55 % de tous les adultes sero-positifs sont des femmes ;
- L'année dernière, 1,3 million de femmes sont mortes du sida ;
- En Afrique sub-saharienne, les adolescentes sont 5 fois plus atteintes que les garçons, puisque les filles sont la plupart du temps contaminée, non pas par des garçons de leur âge, mais plutôt par des hommes plus âgés qu'elles.
- Au Zimbabwe, un Groupe de travail de l'UNIFEM a révélé que, parmi les personnes ayant connu une régression dans leurs revenus à cause du VIH/Sida, 77,6% étaient des femmes

Les inégalités entre les sexes ne font qu'aggraver l'expansion du virus, vu que les femmes africaines n'ont pas encore beaucoup de contrôle sur leur parcours de vie. Nombreuses sont les femmes et les filles qui ne sont pas en mesure de négocier l'utilisation des préservatifs par leurs partenaires pour se protéger. Nombreuses aussi sont celles qui attrapent la maladie par leurs maris officiellement ou officieusement polygames.

La violence à l'encontre des femmes- telle que la traite des filles, la prostitution forcée, l'inceste, le levirat et le viol- y compris le viol conjugal, exposent davantage les femmes et les filles au risque d'attraper le sida

Dans les conflits armés le viol a été utilisé comme une arme de guerre et a énormément contribué à répandre la maladie parmi les femmes.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Il est vrai que les dirigeants africains se mobilisent et prennent des engagements de plus en plus fermes pour la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA.

Recemment les etats membres de l'IGAD ont adopte la Declaration de Kampala sur le VIH/SIDA, tandis que les pays de la SADEC font deja le point de la situation dans un Rapport sur le VIH/SIDA, la tuberculose et le padulisme.

Rappelons que dans la Declaration d'Abuja, les leaders africains se sont engages personnellement a pourvoir des fonds pour aider a combattre ce fleau et a allouer au moins 15% de leurs depenses totales annuelles au seul secteur de la sante.

Mesdames les Deputes, tout ces engagements pris au plus haut niveau devraient constituer un programme de suivi et d'interpellation des gouvernements par vos parlements respectifs.

Nous sommes conscients que l'ensemble des strategies developpees par le continent pour la realisation des objectifs du millenaire au niveau des secteurs economique et social seront compromises si la population africaine reste sous la menace constante d'etre decimee par la pandemie du Sida.

A la CEA, nous militons pour la mise en place de mecanismes de reddition afin de pousser les responsables politiques a se sentir lies par leurs engagements.

A cet egard, la CEA est en train de developper des indicateurs de gouvernance qui devraient etre utilises a travers le mecanisme d'evaluation conjointe, « peer review » en anglais, adopte par les etats dans le processus de mise en oeuvre du NEPAD.

La semaine passee, a Johannesburg, le Comite Femmes et Developpement, un organe subsidiaire de la CEA, compose de 21 etats africains a tenu sa reunion ordinaire et a insiste sur le

principe d'inclure des indicateurs de genre dans les indicateurs de gouvernance pour la mise en oeuvre du NEPAD.

Ces indicateurs, que le Centre africain pour le genre et le developpement est en train d'elaborer a travers un Index africain Genre et Developpement, prendront en compte des indices socio-culturels de differentiation hommes/femmes parmi lesquelles pourrait figurer le degre d'elimination des facteurs a risques pour le femmes en ce qui concerne le VIH/SIDA.

Mesdames les ministres et parlementaires,

Votre action politique devrait pouvoir s'appuyer sur des instruments de suivi et d'evaluation, qui apporteront une vigueur scientifique et strategique a vos plaidoyers.

La CEA est en train de travailler dans ce sens et proposera le mois prochain a la deuxieme reunion du Groupe Inter-agence sur les femmes et l'Egalite des sexes en Asfrique, un cadre de collaboration pour le developpement de ces instruments.

Si la pandémie du Sida a ete declaree comme un etat d'urgence par nos chefs d'etat, comment devrions-nous nous faire l'echo d'une telle declaration au niveau national, et en particulier au niveau de responsabilite ou vous vous tenez en tant que femmes ministres et parlementaires ?

Au cours du Forum pour le Developpement de l'Afrique organise par la CEA en decembre 2000 sur la lutte contre le Sida, chaque individu a ete interpelle comme leader potentiel d'une initiative de lutte contre le Sida a quelque niveau qu'il se trouve : que ce soit a l'echelle de sa famille, de sa communaute sociale, de son entreprise, ou au niveau de la nation.

L'existence d'un Comite national de lutte contre le Sida ne saurait disculper qui que ce soit de ses responsabilites personnelles a l'echelle ou il est place, fut-ce a la tete d'un departement ministeriel ou a celle d'une circonscription electorale.

decisions et recommandations qui emaneront de cette Conference.

Je vous souhaite un tres grand succes et vous remercie de votre aimable attention

Speech given by
His Excellency the President of the Republic,
Commander Pedro Pires,
In the Opening Ceremony of the
5th Conference of African Women
Ministers and Parliamentarians

Vila de Santa Maria, Sal Island, October 15, 2002

Government Ministers and Secretaries,
Representatives of Parliament,
Executive Director of FNUAP,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Cape Verde, Women Ministers and Parliamentarians!

Be assured that it is with great satisfaction that I am here today among you, women, or more precisely leaders from the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, regional and international specialists, people committed to the sharing and socialization of individual experiences, but also pledged to the search for solutions to problems that stubbornly plague us.

Your presence alone is at the same time encouraging and promising, for it reflects the important gains made by African societies over the past forty years of history. A gain, for sure, but also an appeal to the conscious of every one of us regarding our personal and collective responsibility in combating the ills our nations and peoples suffer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is only just to recognize that humanity has undertaken considerable efforts throughout its entire history in order to promote human dignity in all of its dimensions. It is human dignity itself that demands a world of freedom, mutual respect, justice, equal opportunities, solidarity and tolerance. The full enjoyment of this dignity requires the systematic combat and progressive elimination of social, racial, cultural, religious and gender discrimination.

In today's world, there exists a general consensus that Human Rights represent a universal gain of which the gender dimension is an inseparable part. I believe that we are all in agreement on this affirmation. Lacking, perhaps, are the political will and adequate strategies necessary to overcome resistance and the obstacles that hamper all people's full enjoyment of these rights, a fact that should not be taken lightly in our dealings.

Some scholars defend the idea, with which I agree, that shortcomings of social, cultural and technological order may represent the most significant obstacle to the sustainable development of Nations – in other words, that the success of economic, social and cultural development processes requires all the energies and the full utilization of the human potential of Nations, with no exceptions. As such, it is vital that we create and generalize equal opportunities in access to health, knowledge and technical abilities, and, equally, to assure the political and social participation and free initiative of all of society, paying special attention to the female population.

Advances obtained through human development in various different latitudes confirm this conclusion: many societies won the battle of economic, cultural and especially health-related development when they were able to leave behind habits, taboos and prejudices related to the female gender. Nevertheless, we must admit that we are facing social changes that are not at all simple, as well as a battle of universal and multi-generational dimensions.

Ministers and Parliamentarians,

Referring to the central issue of this, your 5th Conference, *Gender and HIV/AIDS*, it seems to me unnecessary to re-affirm the danger that HIV/AIDS represents for humanity. Even so, it may be useful to highlight several of the most relevant aspects of this pandemic.

It seems that the international community is beginning to ponder in a clearer, more realistic and more comprehensive way the dimensions of this catastrophe of universal reach, the expansion and consequences of which are far from being fully predictable and completely dominated.

Because of its universal reach and the enormous human loss it has caused, AIDS calls for global participation on the part of the international community and all of the States that it encompasses, as well as the commitment of the entire international community. The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, approved in the June 25-27, 2001 extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly, confirms this idea.

The figures are dramatic and appeal to the conscious of all. In 2001, according to UNAIDS, there were more than 40 million people infected with HIV; three million people died of AIDS and five million more became infected. Since its discovery in 1981, this epidemic has killed some 20 million people. Every day, 15,000 more individuals are infected by the virus, while another 8,000 die. There are more than 14 million AIDS orphans, and to this number we may see 25 million more added by the year 2010, if current growth trends are not halted and reversed.

The outlook is alarming. According to data from studies conducted, if measures able to turn the current expansive trends around are not taken, 45 million more people could be infected in the next 20 years, and 70 million could become mortal victims of this pandemic. "The unprecedented devastation brought about by the HIV/AIDS epidemic over the last 20 years will multiply manifold in the coming decades if the fight against this disease is not intensified considerably," predicted Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS, on the occasion of the 14th International AIDS Conference in Barcelona.

Remembering that AIDS has already killed more than "all wars and all natural catastrophes," Nelson Mandela qualified the epidemic as a "war against humanity" and "the worst aggression against humanity." In the Barcelona Conference, he appealed for the commitment of world leaders and a courageous and firm leadership in order to provide an effective response against AIDS. On the same occasion, former President

Clinton expressed the conviction that the epidemic is already "a threat to world security" and posed a question that illustrates the contradictions of the contemporary world: "How would you explain to an extraterrestrial that a preventable disease is devastating the world?"

The responsibility of the international community in this urgent fight in favor of all of humanity is more than obvious, as is the need for simultaneous and coordinated action on an international, national and community level. The active involvement of the richer nations is a moral duty, for 95% of HIV-positive individuals live in underdeveloped countries. However, of the 10 billion dollars per year intended for the launching of an effective program of prevention and treatment with generic drugs and to be injected into the Global Fund for the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, created by the UN in 2001, only 2.13 billion dollars in contributions have so far been guaranteed, an amount representing one-fifth of that deemed necessary. This fact speaks for itself and is not a good sign.

Ministers and Members of Parliament,

The situation of the region we represent and that we are here to discuss is very complex, particularly regarding the limited participation of the international community in the face of the enormity of the financial and technological efforts needed.

AIDS threatens an entire generation in Africa. Indeed, in Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 28.5 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS, a number corresponding to 70% of all reported cases throughout the world. According to UNAIDS, 9% of the adult population from 14 to 49 years of age has contracted the disease, and every year 700,000 children are born infected with the virus.

In 2001, 2.2 million people died victims of the epidemic in Africa. In the rich nations, where 500,000 people received treatment with anti-retroviral drugs, only 30,000 people died. And in Africa, a mere 30,000 people were able to benefit from adequate treatment. Indeed, the intensity of the AIDS drama varies according to the economic power of the country in question. This gives it the character of a disease essentially affecting poor societies.

The enormity of the challenge that we Africans have before us is clear. The success of the fight against AIDS depends on the will and effort of all societies and the public, private, community and individual actors, as well as on the effectiveness of the strategies employed and the means available.

In your previous conferences, you highlighted the need for the creation of environments conducive to the implementation of equity and equality of rights between men and women and favorable to the materialization of the decisions and proposals made, among which the guarantee of the right to reproductive health and sexuality for women and girls stands out. You also gave special attention to the information, education, awareness-

building and commitment of societies and governments to AIDS prevention and combat. Peace was considered one of the essential components of such a favorable environment.

I would like to give you my opinion, with all frankness, on these issues. Our continent is at a crossroads. The consolidation of African States and the construction of African Nations has been a complex and painful process with high social and human costs. We are currently witness to extremely troubled and disconcerting political transitions and substitutions of generations of politicians. The conflicts inherent to them are causing serious harm to Africa's interests and credibility.

Peace, political stability, security and predictability truly are pre-requisites for the success of any economic or social policy. This challenge merits greater attention from us. The recent events that have taken place in the Ivory Coast highlight the costs of the civil wars that have disrupted the African continent.

For the actions you defend I consider there to be a clear vision of the objectives to be reached and the paths to be followed. But the obstacles, which are many and varied in nature, should not be minimized. Gender equality and, particularly, the effective and systematic battle against AIDS raises a series of questions and places at risk countless established social rules and a series of ingrained behaviors, habits and taboos in African societies that generally function in detriment of the female gender. We are faced with the need for profound alterations in the behaviors and values that block the application of measures indispensable to the success of the health policies demanded for effectively combating AIDS. Who should be chosen and how should we proceed to take the lead and promote such changes for the elimination of discriminatory practices and traditions harmful to women's rights and interests? This is a pertinent question. I am thinking in particular of the more traditional and conservative environments. I believe that the situation in urban environments is more favorable.

The success of actions aimed at halting the expansion of AIDS and reducing its prevalence requires courageous and committed leadership, as well as the involvement of governing bodies, institutions from civil society, religious groups, communities and each and every citizen on an individual level. The responses are political and depend on the priorities established by government institutions.

I think that we, the poorer nations, without substantial external aid, will always have trouble offering the ill indispensable material and pharmacological means, and as such our strategy should privilege and reinforce information, education and prevention, without, however, ignoring serious treatment for patients.

Not all is negative in this process. There are gains! Barriers that obstructed the manufacture of generic drugs in the southern nations have been brought down. India, Brazil and Thailand have managed to produce generic drugs at a price far below that practiced by the multinationals, thus reducing the costs of treatment. In terms of treatment and prevention there are successful cases. As an example I cite the success of Uganda and Brazil.

It would be pointless to discuss the challenge that is the systematic battle against AIDS without placing it within the complex social and political context in which it occurs on the African continent. In addition to this urgent fight, we must without delay guarantee food security throughout vast regions, help heal the lasting effects of wars and consolidate the peace process in various countries, as well as combat armed rebellions in others. The challenges and tasks are immense, and all are of equal urgency.

I am sure you will agree when I say that these situations pose very serious political, economic and social problems to African leadership, and especially to the new generations of politicians. It is urgent, then, that we strengthen our states in order to make them work and strengthen regional organizations and the African Union. At the same time, we must without delay make our economies viable and dynamic, overcome social problems, invest in education and health and make our political regimes more credible, both internally and abroad.

It is up to you, Ministers and Parliamentarians, or rather, it is up to your generation, to take a prominent role in the struggle to offer our countries new perspectives for a future of peace, stability, sustained progress and justice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fight of universal dimensions that is being waged against AIDS has fortunately uncovered human values and valuable and moving feelings of fraternity and solidarity that reveal the uniqueness of humanity and the communion in a more promising destiny that together we must all assure to future generations. These facts serve as inspiration and duty to believe in the success of the actions we are developing and a reason for us to continue tirelessly in the search for a better tomorrow.

Curiously, among these intrepid warriors and dedicated humanists, two women stand out, women who decided to put their knowledge and their professions to the service of their fellow citizens and to the noble cause of halting and beating the AIDS pandemic. They are the Brazilian Eloan Pinheiro dos Santos and the Thai Krisana Kraisintu, known as Mrs. Generic Drugs. Both are pharmacists by profession and investigators by choice. Eloan explains her involvement with the following words: "Perhaps women have a more acute consciousness of the needs of their children and the rights of all people."ⁱⁱ She defends the local production of medicine, including the raw materials used in making them, "because that is where the know-how and benefits are." One of Krisana Kraisintu's decisions has been to export her know-how to Africa. Her laboratory has signed accords with Zimbabwe and Ghana to produce generic drugs in those two countries. She believes that "these countries should not be underestimated, because they are perfectly capable of doing the same thing I did in Thailand for their own benefit and that of their neighbors."ⁱⁱⁱ

Before closing, I would like to congratulate the UNFPA in the person of its Executive Director present here today for the precious work it has carried out in favor of African women and girls and in striving for a more secure future for all of us.

Finally, I salute the Cape Verdean delegation and assure them of my solidarity and unconditional support in the struggle, common to us all, for the equality and full participation of women in our society, in all realms of activity.

There are reasons to believe and continue!

I wish you the greatest success in your work. Thank you for your attention.

Santa Maria, Sal Island, October 15, 2002

ⁱ El País, 7/14/2002

ⁱⁱ Le Monde, 7/13/2002

ⁱⁱⁱ Idem.

Statement by
Ms. Fama Hane- Ba, Director of Africa Division, UNFPA

**Theme: “Gender and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa :
Reinforcing the National Response”**

I am honored to address this conference on behalf of UNFPA Africa Division. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the President, the Government, the National Preparatory Committee, and the people of Cape Verde for their warm hospitality and for accepting to host this important meeting.

We are also very pleased at the high level of response to our invitation to participate in this Conference from you Ministers and Parliamentarians despite your many responsibilities in your respective countries. This is a testimony to your commitment to the Network and the seriousness with which you view the theme of the Conference.

➤ **Recall of Previous Conferences:**

As you will recall, the Fourth Regional Conference of the Networks of African Women and Parliamentarians held in July 2000 in Windhoek, Namibia provided an opportunity to share experiences and to speak about the challenges of meeting the reproductive and sexual health needs of adolescents.

The Third Regional Conference Held in July 1998 in Port-Louis Mauritius focused on the challenges that African political leaders and policy makers face in implementing the Cairo and Beijing agenda particularly in the area of reproductive health and reproductive rights.

The Second Regional Conference held in October 1996 in Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania firmly established the foundation for the networks of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians to advocate for and advance gender equality and women's empowerment in sub-Saharan African countries.

The first meeting in July 1995 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso created the momentum and stressed the need to ensure that the voices of African women continue to be heard on key issues affecting their lives. This meeting provided a forum to shape Africa's agenda for the Beijing Conference.

This 5th conference is taking place at a time when issues of gender and political commitment and leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS have emerged as equally critical issues as having adequate funding and health services, to launch an effective response. The need for leadership and for addressing gender dimensions has been explicitly and strongly endorsed in a number of major international and regional agreements and compacts.

It may be necessary to also briefly review some critical recommendations of the five years.

➤ **ICPD + 5 on Gender and HIV/AIDS**

The ICPD+5 not only underscores the need for urgent action to address HIV/AIDS but also calls on Governments to ensure that prevention of and services for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS are an integral component of reproductive and sexual health programmes at the primary healthcare level. Gender is also highlighted as one of the main factors for differences in vulnerability to HIV infection.

➤ **The Millennium Development Goals**

One year after this review, in September 2000, the Millennium Summit adopted the Millennium Development Goals signed by 189 UN Member States and sets forth-explicit goals on HIV/AIDS and on Gender. Goal number 3 is aimed at promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and particularly targeting the closing of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels by 2015. Goal number 6 aims to combat HIV/AIDS by setting specific reduction targets as well as access to HIV-prevention information and services for young women and men.

➤ **The Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS**

Heads of State from the region met in Abuja in April 2001 at a special summit devoted specifically to address the exceptional challenges of HIV/AIDS. One of the significant outcomes of the summit was an unambiguous commitment from Heads of State to "take personal

responsibility and provide leadership for the activities of the National AIDS Commissions and Councils and to lead from the front the battle against HIV/AIDS". The issue of gender inequalities is also recognized as an important dimension in effectively addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

➤ **The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS**

The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the Special Session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in June 2001, is another key enabling instrument for addressing issues of gender and HIV/AIDS. It not only further endorses the recommendations emerging from the ICPD + 5 review but establishes a set of targets to be met by 2003 and 2005 and provides a road map for governments seeking to make sustained and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS. It explicitly calls for national strategies to empower women to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection by 2005. It is also significant for shifting the focus on HIV/AIDS from being a public health issue to recognizing it as a major development and security challenge. Therefore, the response to HIV/AIDS has to be set in a multi-sectoral framework and based on a rights-based approach.

➤ **The Problem**

But, what is the major challenge we face today as regards the epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa? The facts and figures and the stories all

underscore one undeniable reality: **Women and young girls are at the heart of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa since the disease not only affects them disproportionately but they also bear the greater burden of care for family members who are HIV-infected.**

➤ The Lesson

The means to address this unprecedented epidemic are many but one key lesson has been learnt: **A key lesson from the last decade is that strong political commitment is a common thread in all countries with positive experiences in responding to HIV/AIDS**

➤ The Way Forward

In looking to future strategies and approaches to ensure an effective national response it is important to work within the priorities and goals that Governments in the region have already set themselves such as NEPAD. **It is important to mainstream HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support programmes into this “blue print” for African development.**

A regional response such as NEPAD should be translated into a national response bringing with it the value added of a common vision and a common set of guiding principles.

But there are also other important considerations. I will name just a few:

- Prevention should be the mainstay of any response in a country or community regardless of the magnitude of the epidemic;
- This means an intense level of awareness raising is needed particularly targeting women and girls to raise awareness regarding HIV prevention,
- Reproductive and sexual health programmes provide needed information

And services and provide entry points for addressing the social and behavioral changes that are crucial to slowing the spread of HIV infection

Now let us come back to the purpose of the Conference

This conference is a timely and significant as it follows through on the important themes of gender and HIV/AIDS that emerged both at UNGASS and the recently held global meeting on HIV/AIDS in Barcelona, Spain. The purpose of this conference is to review the role of **your Network** - the African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians to proactively and positively influence national policy making related to the response to HIV/AIDS building on the experience and lessons learned so far. In particular, to take into account the special needs and priorities of women and girls as well as men in the sub-Saharan region. Specifically, to identify entry points

and strategies for mainstreaming gender equality concerns in the structures, processes and activities of the national response as defined by your respective countries. This is a dimension that is critical to achieving an expanded and sustained response to HIV/AIDS.

Objectives

- To ensure continued commitment to the implementation of the ICPD and the recommendations of the ICPD + 5.
- To elaborate follow-up strategies and action to mainstream gender concerns in national responses to HIV/AIDS.
- To introduce an advocacy kit specifically prepared for the conference as a tool for effective advocacy work on gender and HIV/AIDS by Network members.
- To establish partnerships between different Network and other key actors including the media, HIV/AIDS experts, and towards an expanded gender and HIV/AIDS response.
- To promote learning on regional experiences, particularly best practices on gender and HIV/AIDS.

I wish you all a productive deliberation and a successful outcome of the conference. Thank you.