

SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A force for freedom



MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
POUR LES DROITS
DES FEMMES AFRICAINES

Une force pour la liberté

MP Maputo
20 Protocol
at 20

ACCELERATING THE PROMISE OF THE MAPUTO PROTOCOL FOR AFRICAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

November 30, 2023

Ladies and gentlemen of the press,

We are the [Solidarity for African Women's Rights](#) (SOAWR), a Coalition that was formed in 2004, comprising about 80 civil society organizations in 33 African countries whose mission is to ensure that girls and women's rights, as outlined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (commonly referred to as the Maputo Protocol) are prioritized by Member States of the African Union.

Concerns:

The Maputo Protocol is celebrated as Africa's primary human rights treaty on the rights of women and girls. In particular, the Protocol is a powerful instrument for preventing and protecting women and girls from violence. Our [Report on the Progress of the Maputo Protocol; 20 years later](#), revealed that governments are yet to achieve full domestication and effective implementation of the Maputo Protocol. To realize the promise that African Governments made to their women and girls, they need to invest in tangible legislative, institutional, financial, and administrative actions to ensure that women and girls live in a world that is free from violence and discrimination.

As we commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence this year, we strongly urge AU Member States to adopt all necessary measures to accelerate the elimination of all forms of discrimination that result in or perpetuate violence against women and girls.

We therefore:

1. Urgently call upon the following nine (9) States to ratify the Maputo Protocol: the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Chad, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Eritrea, the



Republic of Madagascar, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Niger, the Federal Republic of Somalia, and the Republic of Sudan and encourage the Republic of Botswana to formally deposit the instrument of ratification with the African Union Commission. We also urge the Central African Republic, which took steps to ratify the Maputo Protocol in 2012, to urgently complete the process by depositing the instrument of ratification with the African Union Commission.

2. Call upon all AU Member States to enact and effectively implement appropriate legislative or regulatory measures prohibiting and curbing all forms of discrimination against women and girls, taking corrective and positive action in those areas where discrimination against women and girls continues to exist.
3. Urge all AU Member States to invest in public education, information, communication, and other strategies to achieve the elimination of harmful cultural and traditional practices and all other practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles.
4. Appeal to AU Member States to adopt and enforce legislative, administrative, social, and economic measures to prevent, punish, and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls, ensuring the protection of every woman's right to dignity.
5. Exhort AU Member States to employ appropriate national legislative measures to guarantee that women enjoy equal rights as men and are regarded as equal partners in marriage, at entry, after separation, divorce, or annulment.
6. Further call upon AU Member States to take specific positive actions, including affirmative action, enabling national legislation, and other measures to ensure that women are represented equally and effectively at all levels in all electoral and decision-making processes.
7. Impress upon AU Member States to adopt and enforce legislative and other measures to guarantee that women have equal opportunities in work, career advancement, and access to other economic opportunities, including the freedom to choose their occupation, equal remuneration for jobs of equal value, adequate and paid pre- and post-natal maternity leave in both the private and public sectors and further take adequate measures to recognize, redistribute, reduce, and reward unpaid care work.
8. Further impress upon AU Member States to urgently adopt and enforce legislative and other measures to guarantee that women's right to health, including sexual and reproductive health, is respected and promoted and that women have the right to control their fertility, choose any method of contraception as well as access to medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest, and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the fetus.
9. Implore AU Member States to urgently adopt all appropriate measures backed with sanctions, explicitly prohibiting harmful cultural practices, including Female Genital Mutilation, non-consensual marriages, and marriage of girls below the age of 18 years,



ensuring that women's right to live in a positive cultural context and to participate at all levels in the determination of cultural policies is upheld.

10. Strongly urge all AU Member States to honor their treaty reporting obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights by submitting their periodic reports under Article 62 of the Charter as read together with Article 26 of the Maputo Protocol, indicating the legislative and other measures undertaken for the full realization of the rights of women and girls as guaranteed by the Maputo Protocol.

Delivered at Mombasa, Kenya on 30th November 2023 :

By the SOAWR Steering Committee on behalf of the Members of the SOAWR Coalition:

1. Action for Development (ACFODE), Uganda
2. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), The Gambia
3. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Kenya
4. Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), Uganda
5. Alliances for Africa, Nigeria
6. Association de Promotion de la Culture Environnementale (APCE)
7. Association des Juristes Maliennes (AJM), Mali
8. Association des Juristes Sénégalaises, Senegal
9. Association of Egyptian Female Lawyers (AEFL), Egypt
10. Atwar Organization for Research and Social Development (Atwar), Libya
11. BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria
12. Cellule de Coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelles Affectant la Santé des Femmes et des Enfants (CPTAFE), Guinea
13. Center for Health Human Rights and Development (CEHURD), Uganda
14. Centre for Justice Studies and Innovations (CJSI), Uganda
15. Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), Kenya
16. Centre for Reproductive Rights (CRR), Kenya
17. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), South Africa
18. Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW), Kenya
19. Collectif des Associations et ONGS Féminines de Burundi (CAFOB), Burundi
20. Communication Techniques for Development (ACT)
21. Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), Uganda
22. Equality Now, Kenya
23. Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya (FIDA-Kenya), Kenya
24. Fondation Pour l'Égalité/ CIDDEF, Algeria
25. Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue (FDHRD)



26. Forum Mulher, Mozambique
27. Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights and Development (GLIHD), Rwanda
28. Haki Nawiri
29. Help Age International
30. Her Voice Liberia
31. Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS), Nigeria
32. Initiative for Gender Equality and Development in Africa (IGED), Ghana
33. Inter-African Committee (IAC), Guinea and Ethiopia
34. Ipas Africa Alliance for Women's Reproductive Health and Rights, Kenya
35. Jossour, Morocco
36. KADIRAT, Tunisia
37. Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists, Kenya
38. La Journal Féministe Algérien (JFA) (The Algerian Feminist Journal), Algeria
39. Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), Tanzania
40. Make Every Woman Count, Guinea
41. Malawi Human Rights Resource Center, Malawi
42. MPower, Mauritius
43. NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN), Malawi
44. Oxfam GB, Kenya
45. People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), South Africa
46. Question des Femmes, Togo
47. Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement (RFLD), Bénin
48. Réseau Inter Africain des Femmes, Médias, Genre et Développement/Inter-African Network For Women, Media, Gender and Development (FAMEDEV), Senegal
49. Sister Namibia, Namibia
50. Sources of Peace Organization (SPO), Libya
51. Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), Uganda and Sudan
52. Support the Empowerment of Women and their Rights for Development (STEWARDSWOMEN), South Sudan
53. The Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue (FDHRD), Egypt
54. The National Association for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms NADRF, Egypt
55. The Network Against Female Genital Mutilation [NAFGEM], Tanzania
56. The New Generation Girls and Women Development Initiative (NIGAWD)
57. Tomorrow's Child Initiative (TCI), Kenya
58. Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre (TLAC), South Africa
59. Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), Uganda
60. Union Nationale des Femmes de Djibouti (UNFD), Djibouti
61. University of Pretoria Centre for Human Rights, South Africa
62. Voix de Femmes, Burkina Faso



63. Well Being Africa (WBA), South Africa
64. Women's Advocacy and Communication Network (WANET), Cameroon
65. Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA), Zambia
66. Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA) Zimbabwe
67. Women Counselling and Information Centre (WCIC), Cameroon
68. Women for Justice and Equality
69. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), Zambia
70. Women Lead Movement Madagascar
71. Women NGO's Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), Liberia
72. Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET), Liberia
73. Women on the Watch(WOW) Society Initiative
74. Women Peace Initiatives Association (WPI), Cameroon
75. Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternatives (WRAPA), Nigeria
76. Young Liberian Women Organization For Improvement (WOFIM), Liberia
77. Y-Peer Petri, Morocco