

ZANZIBAR DECLARATION

WOMEN OF AFRICA FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, 20 May 1999

We, Women of Africa,

1. Gathered at the Pan-African Women's Conference on a Culture of Peace in Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, 17-20 May 1999, on the eve of the new millennium and the International Year for the Culture of Peace, consider this Conference as an irreversible climax for African women. We resolve to launch a Pan African women's peace movement to stop violent conflicts and war, and appeal to women and men, also on other continents to join us in our efforts.

2. After the social, economic and cultural devastation caused by colonialism, Africa has witnessed in the post-independence years economic and social deprivation, uneven distribution of wealth and opportunities among people, violent conflicts, military coups, political instability, dictatorship and corruption. Abject poverty, gender inequality, policies of exclusion, illiteracy, the lack of social, economic, religious and political security and the limited participation of women in the democratisation processes have marginalised us and denied Africa the use of women's talents, experience and skills as agents for peace and development. We are determined to use our visions and capacities to redress these imbalances and help ensure sustainable development and durable peace.

3. Africa continues to loose resources through unfavourable economic systems which have been causing a widening gap between Africa and other regions. As a result, despite the substantial contribution that Africa has made to global development, the continent is in danger of loosing direction and being marginalised in the current trend towards globalisation and open market economies. In that regard, we call for debt cancellation by the international community.

4. Having suffered massive violations of fundamental human rights and having had to shoulder the burden of sustaining our societies while at the same time handling traumas, miseries, violence, social injustices and poverty, we commit ourselves to promote non-violent means of conflict resolution and African values for a culture of peace.

Women participation in peace promotion

We, Women of Africa,

5. Regret the fact that current peace negotiations are male dominated, regardless of women's efforts and initiatives to resolve conflicts and promote peace on the continent including through consensus-building and dialogue,

6. Advocate that a culture of peace requires strong determination to confront and transform the institutional frameworks, attitudes and behaviour patterns that polarise people along economic, social, religious and gender lines.

7. Commit ourselves to promote human rights as well as non-violent means of conflict prevention by supporting networks for:

- Detection and response to early warning systems;
- Conflict resolution harmonised with traditional African mediation strategies;
- Co-ordination of efforts to strengthen women's capacity for peace building.

8. Therefore, urgently appeal to all African governments, the OAU, other regional and sub-regional bodies and organisations such as the African Women Committee for Peace and Development (AWCPD), the international community, including the UN system, to take prompt and effective action to enforce equitable representation of women in decision making processes, notably in the areas of conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace negotiation.

Demilitarisation and disarmament

We, Women of Africa,

9. Recognise that people's security is not only a matter of state and military security, but a question of economic livelihood and overall well-being,

10. Condemn the proliferation of arms that fuel conflicts, wars and jeopardises the development of Africa and call upon African governments to put in place mechanisms for the reduction and control of the arms trade,

11. Condemn the use of African children as soldiers and commit ourselves to help release, demobilise, re-socialise, protect and actively integrate these children into constructive development processes,

12. Support the sub-regional initiatives on demilitarisation, disarmament and drug control, such as the ECOWAS moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons and its Program of Co-ordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED).

13. Reaffirm that disarmament is a necessary tool for lasting peace and dedicate ourselves to mount a massive international campaign to collect all illicit arms and to help ensure that Africa becomes a zone free from all types of weaponry, including land-mines and radioactive materials and elicit the support of the international community in this endeavour.

14. Appeal to African governments and parliaments to reduce military expenditures and rechannel these resources to people's basic development needs,

15. Commit ourselves to work with governments to revisit all education systems in order to:

- Establish a culture of peace as the pillar of education and socialisation;
- Include counselling and special programs and training modules in conflict resolution and peace negotiations in curricula at all levels of formal and non-formal education.

Networking between African women's movements and international movements

We, Women of Africa,

16. Invite our governments, the private sector, civil society, sisters and brothers of African descent and the international community to support the peace movement of Africa and to contribute to the strengthening of African women's capacities to sensitise, mobilise and reconcile the entire continent to the importance of peaceful means of conflict prevention, resolution and transformation.

Communication, information and dissemination

We, Women of Africa,

17. Strongly advocate for full access to and use of appropriate communication tools and technology in order to effectively strengthen networking and solidarity among women at all levels. A Pan-African radio program on gender and peace issues should be created as an effective tool for civic and peace education, communication and mobilisation which will give visibility to African women's quest for peace.

18. Commit ourselves to engage in extensive consultations, research and networking with women and men in all walks of life to develop a comprehensive and gender sensitive view of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Resource mobilisation

19. Whilst committing our time, energies, skills, and talents to build peace in our homes, communities and nations, *We, Women of Africa,* call upon the OAU and other sub-regional institutions, the UN and its agencies, other international organisations, national governments, NGOs, the private sector, women and men who cherish peace, to recognise, as well as to give moral, technical and financial support to our peace-making and peace-building efforts

Finally,

We, Women of Africa,

20. Gathered in Zanzibar, the United Republic of Tanzania, express appreciation for

UNESCO's initiative and efforts to build a culture of peace and thank the organisation for bringing together some 300 African women from different walks of life to this important Pan-African conference "Women organise for peace and non-violence in Africa". By virtue of its mandate, we recommend that special attention be given to follow-up action by UNESCO's governing bodies in pursuing and strengthening activities for African women and a culture of peace within its regular Program and Budget, as part of the Organisation's Medium Term Strategy as well as a continuation of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

21. Thank the host country and the people of Zanzibar for their hospitality and appreciate the support given to African women's peace initiatives by the OAU, ECA, other African sub-regional bodies and organisations of the UN family, including FAO, ILO, UNCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WFP and WHO,

22. Strongly urge the OAU, ECA, ADB, the African Women Committee for Peace and Development, all international, regional and sub-regional bodies such as ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD, as well as NGOs, governments and the donor community to support and implement the Zanzibar Declaration and the Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace in Africa, adopted in Zanzibar, 20 May 1999.