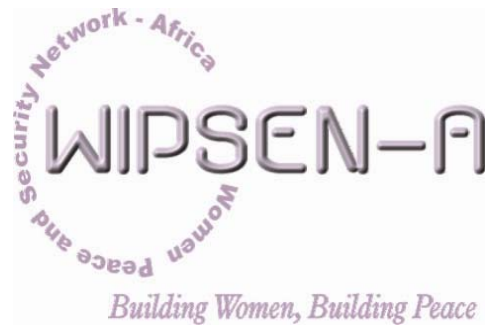




WEST AFRICA CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE



1ST WEST AFRICAN WOMEN'S POLICY FORUM

“Assessing the Gains, Advancing the Agenda”

Policy recommendations



African Women Development Fund
(AWDF)

Introduction

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) and Women Peace and Security Network, Africa (WIPSEN-Africa) with support from the African Women Development Fund (AWDF), the International Women's Programme of the Open Society Institute, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and Abigail Disney organised the 1st annual West African Women's Policy Forum in December 2008 to inform, guide, influence and monitor policy formulation and implementation on issues that affect women in West Africa.

The Forum provided a platform for women's groups, associations, coalitions and women in government and other decision-making positions to reflect on women's roles and participation in governance, development, peace and security in the region and to design concrete strategies for influencing and informing policy processes.

The uniqueness of the Forum was that it provided a tactical space for cross section of women from different fields to reach consensus on topical issues facing women in West Africa. It is envisaged that the Policy Forum will serve as an annual gathering of West African women given the fluid nature of the region's policy environment.





The overall goal for instituting this annual forum is to address the prevailing lack of strategy and chasm in women's collaboration and broad based advocacy to influence policies in the region.

The Forum brought together over 50 participants from West Africa including women's groups, networks, women in government, gender machineries, and ECOWAS. Women from other parts of the African continent and the world were also represented.

Aim and Objectives of the Forum

The central aim was to convene the 1st West African Women Policy Forum by creating a platform for women working in different sectors to jointly deliberate on strategic topical issues affecting women in the region, such as the representation of women in governance, development and peace and security processes.

The Forum had four (4) main objectives:

-  To establish a platform for women across West Africa to strategise on maximising efforts towards influencing policies on women's issues;
-  To enhance collaboration between women in civil society and governments;
-  To serve as an annual reflection space for a cross section of women in the region;
-  To provide an avenue for West Africa women to form linkages with women working in other regions of the world.

The full report of the 1st West African Women's Policy Forum is available at WACSI Secretariat. Contact info@wacsi.org for more information.

Themes of the Forum

The following seven (7) issues formed the basis of presentations and discussion at the forum:

- ✚ Reviewing the “Status of Women’s Leadership in West Africa”
- ✚ Tracking current issues affecting women
 - *Drug Trafficking*
 - *Sub-regional integration , Migration and Free movement of people*
 - *Peace and Security*
- ✚ The Prospects of linking policy and practice in West Africa;
- ✚ Revisiting women’s networking and collaboration in West Africa;
- ✚ Succession Planning in Women’s Leadership
- ✚ Establishing Regional and International Linkages
- ✚ Designing Regional Strategy for Women’s Policy influencing

List of women Parliamentarian in West Africa (October, 2008)

S/N	Country	Lower Houses				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections Year	Number of Seats	Women Seats	% of Women	Elections Year	Number of Seats	Women Seats	% of Women
1.	Benin	Mar. 2003	83	9	10.80%	--	--	--	--
2.	Burkina Faso	May 2007	111	17	15.30%	--	--	--	--
3.	Cameroon	Jul. 2007	180	25	13.90%	--	--	--	--
4.	Cape Verde	Jan. 2006	72	13	18.10%	--	--	--	--
5.	Congo	Jun. 2007	137	10	7.30%	Aug. 2008	70	9	12.90%
6.	Cote D'Ivoire	Dec. 2000	203	18	8.90%	--	--	--	--
7.	Gabon	Dec. 2001	120	20	16.70%	Feb. 2003	91	14	15.80%
8.	Gambia	Jan. 2002	53	5	9.40%	--	--	--	--
9.	Ghana	Dec. 2004	230	25	10.90%	--	--	--	--
10.	Guinea	Jun. 2002	114	22	19.30%	--	--	--	--
11.	Guinea Bissau	Mar. 2004	100	14	14.00%	--	--	--	--
12.	Liberia	Oct. 2005	64	8	12.50%	Oct. 2005	30	5	16.70%
13.	Mali	Jul. 2007	147	15	10.20%	--	--	--	--
14.	Niger	Dec. 2004	113	14	12.40%	--	--	--	--
15.	Nigeria	Apr. 2007	358	25	7.00%	Apr. 2007	109	9	8.30%
16.	Senegal	Jun. 2007	150	33	22.00%	Aug. 2007	100	46	40.00%
17.	Sierra Leone	Aug. 2007	121	16	13.20%	--	--	--	--
18.	Togo	Oct. 2007	81	9	11.10%	--	--	--	--

Source: The Inter- Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Country with highest %	Country with lowest %
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Policy Recommendations

The 1st West African Women's Policy Forum held in Accra, Ghana on December 2 to 3, 2008 offered Sixteen (16) key policy recommendations to enhance the involvement of women in leadership and decision making processes across the region.

The recommendations outlined below are directed at ECOWAS, national governments, and civil society.

ECOWAS:

- ✚ As the most progressive regional body on the continent, ECOWAS should increase the numbers of women in key decision making positions at the Commission and other institutions. It is important that the African Union's standard of gender parity be adopted at all levels;
- ✚ ECOWAS and in particular the Gender and Development Centre in Dakar and the Gender Unit at the Commission should develop more inclusive ways of working with women's groups to achieve the implementation of its protocols and other policies. The Centre should be a "rallying ground" for women in the region. For example, given the unique impact of migration on women, the Gender Centre should lead the process of placing women at the core of implementing the Protocol on Free Movement, Right of Residence and Establishment;
- ✚ First Ladies in West Africa through the auspices of the ECOWAS Gender Centre and national gender ministries should be targeted to become involved in policy formulation processes at national and regional levels;
- ✚ ECOWAS leaders should invest in strengthening the Gender and Development Centre in Dakar, to enable it play a more influential and constructive role in policy influencing in the region;

National Governments:

- ✚ Governments should close the gap between signing and adopting instruments and implementation. There should be more commitment by States to fully domesticate CEDAW, The Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women, and the ECOWAS gender policy;
- ✚ Given the appallingly low representation of women at national decision making structures, governments in the region should recommit to ensuring at least 30 per cent of women in all levels of government;
- ✚ West African women in government positions should view women in civil society as allies and forge more strategic and interdependent relationships that will enhance women's ability to influence policies;

The full report of the 1st West African Women's Policy Forum is available at WACSI Secretariat. Contact info@wacsi.org for more information.

Civil Society:

- ✚ Women's organisations should intensify their commitment to mentorship by creating opportunities for young girls to participate and benefit from training programmes, workshops, and leadership initiatives in order to facilitate continuity in women's representation in decision making;
- ✚ Civil society should make overtures towards women in government and endeavor to provide technical assistance on issues that affect women in the region. A starting point should be for women in both sectors to work on the common cause of increasing the numerical representation of women at all levels of decision making;
- ✚ Women's groups in civil society should increase their visibility within the sector and across the region by playing more critical roles in policy formulation processes;
- ✚ Women's groups should enhance mechanisms for quality collaboration by maximizing efforts and reducing unhealthy competition and rivalry. A database of women's initiatives outlining areas of specialization should be developed to improve cooperation.

Joint Recommendations

- ✚ The forum recommended the formation of a "West Africa Women's Advisory Panel" comprising of women in government, civil society and the private sector to support the gender structures at ECOWAS and provide policy advice to national governments;
- ✚ Peace and security remains a high priority issue in West African countries, therefore, all actors should enhance efforts to domesticate the implementation of related peace and security instruments such as the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. The processes of developing national action plans for Resolution 1325 should be accelerated in all countries. Lessons should be learned from Liberia's experience of developing a national action plan on the Resolution;
- ✚ Given the male dominated state of the security sector in countries across West Africa, women's advocacy on engendering the security sector should increase. This advocacy should involve calling for institutional gender policies that guide the recruitment, retention and protection of women in the security sector;
- ✚ Women from all sectors should organise around upcoming elections in West Africa and become more engaged in pre and post electoral processes. Lessons on the roles of Ghanaian women in Ghana's 2008 elections should be documented and shared in the region;
- ✚ Finally, women should advocate for the visible inclusion of women in the implementation of the proposed ECOWAS vision 20/20 **"ECOWAS of the People: Towards a Democratic and Prosperous Community"**.

The full report of the 1st West African Women's Policy Forum is available at WACSI Secretariat. Contact info@wacsi.org for more information.

APPENDIX 1 About the organisers

WACSI

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) was created by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) to reinforce the capacities of civil society in the region. The Institute was established to bridge the institutional and operational gaps within civil society.

Vision: To strengthen civil society organisations as strategic partners for the promotion of democracy, good governance and national development in the sub-region.

Website: www.wacsi.org

WIPSEN-Africa

The Women Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-Africa) is a Pan-African Non-Governmental Peacebuilding Organisation with a focus on women, peace and security broadly defined. WIPSEN-Africa seeks to promote women's strategic participation and leadership in peace and security governance in Africa.

WIPSEN-Africa's mission is to institutionalise and mainstream women, peace and security by enhancing women's leadership capacities and promoting constructive, innovative and collaborative approaches to non-violent transformation of conflicts, peacebuilding and human security in Africa.

Website: www.wipsen-africa.org

OSI International Women's Programme

The OSI International Women's Programme was established by the Open Society Initiatives (OSI) as one of its inspiration to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, free and open societies, human rights and economic, legal and social reform.

Mission: The mission of OSI IWP is to use grant-making and programmatic efforts to promote and protect the rights of women and girls around the globe where the principles of

good governance and respect for the rule of law are absent because of conflict.

Website: www.soros.org/initiatives/women/about

OSIWA

The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) was created in December 2000 as part of the world network of 32 autonomous foundations founded and supported by George Soros. OSIWA share in the commitment to work for an "open society". Based on the principle that no one has monopoly of the truth, an open society recognises the different points of view and always remains open to improvements.

In practice, open societies are characterised by the priority of law, democracy, respect of diversity and human rights, liberalisation of markets, information to the people and the dynamism of civil society.

Website: www.osiwa.org

AWDF

African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) is a grant-making foundation which supports local, national and regional organisations in Africa working towards women's empowerment. AWDF through institutional capacity building and programme development seeks to build a culture of learning and partnerships within the African women's movement.

Website: www.awdf.org

Abigail Disney

Abigail Disney is a Philanthropist and heads the Daphne Foundation based in the United States.

The full report of the 1st West African Women's Policy Forum is available at WACSI Secretariat. Contact info@wacsi.org for more information.

APPENDIX 2 LISTS OF PARTICIPANTS

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

S/N	NAMES	DEPARTMENTS
1	HON. VABAH GAYFLOR	MINISTRY OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT, LIBERIA
2	HON. JENEH KANDEH	MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE, GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS, SIERRA LEONE
3	HON. BERNADETTE LAHAI	SIERRA LEONE PARLIAMENT
4	HON. BAMBA MASSANY	COTE D'IVOIRE PARLIAMENT
5	CECILIA KAIKAI	PRISONS SERVICE SIERRA LEONE
6	CLLR. ABLA G. WILLIAMS	IMMIGRATION SERVICES, LIBERIA
7	JULIA DUNCAN-CASSELL	SUPERINTENDENT LIBERIA
8	MARIAM TACKIE	MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS, SIERRA LEONE
9	MRS. SALIMATA THIAM	ECOWAS (EDGC), DAKAR, SENEGAL
10	BARKIE N. REMOE-DOHERTY	SIERRA LEONE HIGH COMMISSION IN ACCRA
11	DR. SINTIKI UGBE	ECOWAS, NIGERIA

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

S/N	NAMES	ORGANISATIONS
1	HON. KHADY FALL TALL	AFAO-WAWA, DAKAR
2	ACHOLA PALA OKEYO	MANTHA FOUNDATION
3	ROSE MENSAH KUTIN	ABANTU FOR DEVELOPMENT
4	HELEN SCANLON	ICTJ /CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
5	BISI ADELEYE-FAYEMI	AWDF, GHANA
6	YVONNE MOORE	DAPHNE FOUNDATION, USA
7	ABIGAIL DISNEY	DAPHNE FOUNDATION, USA
8	CLLR. YVETTE C. WUREH	INT'L WOMEN'S COLLOQUIUM, SECRETARIAT LIBERIA
9	CORNELLIE AYITE	MAGAZINE LE FLEURON
10	DEWEH GRAY	ASSOCIATION OF FEMALE LAWYERS OF LIBERIA (AFELL).
11	BUNMI DIPO-SALAMI	LA-RENS CONSULTING NIGERIA
12	NEMATTA MAJEKS-WALKER	50/50 GROUP SIERRA LEONE
13	BERNICE SAM	WILDAF-GHANA
14	ADJOA BAME	WISE, GHANA
15	GLORIA STEINEM	WOMEN'S MEDIA CENTER, USA
16	HADJA RAMATOULAYE SOW	GUINEE (AFEG), GUINEA.

17	IHEOMA OBIBI	ALLIANCES FOR AFRICA, NIGERIA
18	IRENE S. JAYEE	LIBERIA REFUGEE WOMEN ORGANISATION (LIREWO)
19	MARLENE SEÏDOU BABIO	BENIN (FAWE BENIN)
20	MS. DOROTHÉE EBINA MUMBAMBI	(CAAD/TOGO)
21	KANYERE EATON	THE SISTER FUND, USA
22	NUALA LAWLOR	KAIPTC, GHANA
23	OLUFUNMILAYO ALENXANDER BALOGUN	(IPPF) NAIROBI. KENYA
24	PATRICIA FORMADI	WADEP
25	RUTH JIAMBO OCHIENG	ISIS WICCE, UGANDA
26	SALIMATA PORQUET	(FEFEDES - CI) & FIFEM & ECOSOC
27	SINDI MEDAR GOULD	BAOBAB, NIGERIA
28	TATEY ADZOAVI NYUITO	ASS. DE FEMMES POUR LA SANTEETLE DEVT. (ALAFIA)
29	ZINA PIERRE	WASHINGTON LINKAGE GROUP
30	YASMIN JUSU-SHERIFF	MARWOPNET SIERRA LEONE
31	SUSANNE J. NAMATOVU	NESI NETWORK, KENYA
32	WYNYFRED ONUNG ACHU	(KIND), NIGERIA.
33	JENNY ALU	WACSO, NIGERIA
34	ROSALIE LO NDIAYE	WIPSEN-AFRICA, BOARD MEMBER
35	BLANCHE SELMAH	WIPSEN-AFRICA/LIBERIA
36	ECOMA ALAGA	WIPSEN-AFRICA
37	LEYMAH GBOWEE	WIPSEN-AFRICA
38	VIVIAN ARMAH	WIPSEN-AFRICA
39	CHRISTABEL NORTEY	WIPSEN-AFRICA
40	DUCLoux AMELIEN	WIPSEN-AFRICA
41	GERALDINE GRAINDORGE	WIPSEN-AFRICA
42	THELMA EKİYOR	WACSI
43	ADAMA SIRA BAH	WACSI
44	KATHERINE ADARKWA	WACSI
45	OMOLARA BALOGUN T.	WACSI
46	LADY WILLIE HARRY	WACSI

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