



GEAR

UN GENDER EQUALITY ARCHITECTURE REFORM

AFRICA CAMPAIGN

URGENT CALL TO ACTION!

GEAR is a global campaign of over 300 organizations in over 50 countries that advocates for **stronger gender equality architecture within the United Nations system.**

The GEAR Campaign believes that the creation of a new, consolidated and stronger United Nations entity for women will greatly advance gender equality, the empowerment of women and women's human rights throughout the world.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CAMPAIGN



Gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to achieving development, democracy, peace and security, and human rights in Africa.

Over the last 3 years United Nations (UN) Member States have agreed that the current structures responding to the UN gender equality and women's empowerment agenda are under resourced, not very well coordinated and have no direct access and voice in the decision making structures of this overall international governing body.

Currently there are four gender-specific entities in the UN:

- UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)
- Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI)
- Division of Advancement of Women (DAW)

In addition there are gender units, gender advisors, gender focal points and Gender Theme Groups throughout the UN system, addressing gender equality and mainstreaming at the country, sub-regional and regional levels.

However the system as currently structured lacks a coordinated, coherent, system-wide approach that links inter-governmental decision and policy making and the implementation on the ground.

In 2008, the 4 programmes combined received only US\$ 221 million of the UN's US\$ 27 billion budget.

UNIFEM's budget in 2008 was US\$ 215.4 million, a very small fraction compared to the budgets of other UN bodies in the same year, for example, UNICEF's budget of over US\$ 3 billion and UNDP with over US\$ 5 billion.



WHAT WILL A NEW ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT LOOK LIKE?



The UN Secretary General, the Deputy-Secretary General and the President of the 63rd General Assembly all endorsed the creation of a new UN entity on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Additionally, many member states and most NGOs that have been involved in the process have expressed a strong preference for having the one institution model, also referred to as the Composite Model (Option D in the Deputy Secretary General's July 2008 Paper: *Institutional Options to Strengthen United Nations Work on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*).

A stronger, well resourced and adequately represented body in the UN will be in a better position to prioritise the concerns and needs of African women in its agenda and that of the United Nations.

It will also be better placed to enable member states to meet their commitments to women's human rights instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women, CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The proposed New Gender Entity (body): will have

- o **Autonomy:** with a mandate to hold the UN system accountable for delivering on gender equality
- o **Ambitious and regularized resources:** both financial and in terms of personnel with high levels of expertise at the different levels
- o **Universal country presence** – to ensure that gender equality and women's rights programming are carried out effectively at all levels
- o **Policy setting responsibility** – to create and set global policy for gender equality across the UN system and work with member states to adopt and adhere to it as well
- o **Monitoring capacity** – to ensure accountability on gender mainstreaming throughout UN system
- o **Civil Society participation on the Executive Board** – systematic and meaningful participation of civil society, particularly women's organizations, to be ensured.



URGENT CALL TO ACTION

The 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly in SEPTEMBER 2009 is critical for the GEAR Africa Campaign and African women!

We call on African member states to support the adoption of the Resolution to create a New, Strengthened and Consolidated gender entity based on the composite model (Option D in the Deputy Secretary General's July 2008 Paper Institutional Options to Strengthen United Nations Work on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) during the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2009.

We invite African women, women's organizations and other stakeholders to contact and write to your country's Permanent Representative to the UN and the Ministries of Gender and Foreign Affairs to urge them to push for the adoption of the resolution during the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2009.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR AFRICA?

Achieving development, democracy, peace, security and human rights in Africa requires increased investment in gender equality and women's empowerment. However, African women face several harsh realities. For example:

- **The lifetime risk of dying in pregnancy and childbirth in Africa is 1 in 22**, while it is 1 in 120 in Asia and 1 in 7,300 in developed countries. As many as 10,000 women die every week in developing countries from treatable complications of pregnancy and childbirth.
- **About 60% of adults living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are women** and about 75% of all infections among young people aged 15 to 24 years are among young women.
- Some of the **largest gender gaps in primary school enrolment** are in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, gross enrolment rate of girls in secondary schools in countries such as Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Niger, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania is estimated at being below 10 per cent.
- Statistics paint a **horrifying picture of the economic, social and health consequences of violence against women** in Africa. A survey among 1,366 South African women in 2004 showed that women who were beaten by their partners were 48 percent more likely to be infected with HIV than those who were not. Violence against women and girls is also aggravated by conflict situations, where rape is increasingly being used as a weapon of war, for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Darfur region.
- **Less than 1 in 5 working women** in sub-Saharan Africa receive regular wages or salaries, compared to a third of employed African men.
- Women in Africa are still not adequately represented in leadership and decision making. As of June 2008 the **percentage of women in parliament in sub-Saharan Africa was 17.2% and less than 10% in Northern Africa.**

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Visit the following website (s), for more information on:

- **GEAR Campaign:** <http://gear.groupsite.com/main/summary>
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/gea.html>
- **FEMNET and the GEAR Campaign in Africa:**
<http://www.femnet.or.ke/viewcampaign.asp?ID=7>
- **Sign-on Petition for the GEAR Campaign:**
<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/1/GEAR>
- **UN Reform:** <http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/issues/2063?theme=alt4>
- **List of the current Permanent Representatives to the United Nations:**
<http://missions.un.int/protocol/documents/HeadsofMissions.pdf>



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United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

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Cover photo: by FEMNET during the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra, Ghana- Sept. 2008