



PRESS RELEASE

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Happy International Women's Day!

This year (2020) marks the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, it is therefore an important year for advancing Gender Equality worldwide. Several milestones on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment at Global, Regional and National levels have been achieved. They include the following:-

- Globally, reaching 20 years of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR No. 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (2000) which links the issue of gender equality with peace and security;
- 10th Anniversary of UN Women which is dedicated to realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women; and
- Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals with specific Goal No. 5 on Gender Equality,

At Regional level, among many milestones, is the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for the period of 2018-2028 which sets forth a plan to realize six aspirations of the Africa Union's Agenda 2063. It is worth noting that different strategies and resolutions have been put in place to ensure that gender equality and women

empowerment is achieved across all sectors i.e. in economic, social, political and in decision making bodies.

Notably, CPA Africa Region has also made an important step towards the increase of women MPs in National Parliaments. Evidently, we have witnessed the number of women in some Parliaments reaching the Beijing target of at least 30 percent. These include the Parliaments of Rwanda (61.2%), South Africa (46.2%), Namibia (42.7%), Mozambique (41.2%), Tanzania (36.9%) and Uganda (34.8%).

However, there are also Parliaments with percentages of women even lower than 20 percent. These include Botswana (10.77%), Eswatini (9.59%), Ghana (13.09%), Nigeria (3.43%), Sierra Leone (12.33%) and Zambia (16.77%). Nevertheless, we acknowledge that, the number of women MPs in CPA Africa Region has increased from 25.75 percent in 2015 to 27.5 percent in 2020 which is slightly above the global percentage of 24.5 percent.

Statistics in Nigeria reflect a slight increase in the number of women in parliament following election tribunal victories arising from 2019 election petitions. In the Federal House of representatives, the number of Women Members of Parliament increased to 13 while the Senate recorded the 8th female senator. This sounds to be a small victory but it is a big gain for the women of Nigeria.

Subsequently, I commend the Governments of those Parliaments which have seen the increase of number of women MPs which is contributed by, among other issues, gender quotas/ affirmative action policies in their countries. This should be encouraged to other countries to adopt the same.

However, transformative policies leading to accelerated and irreversible change on a broad scale remain necessary. Women continue to be more likely than men to live in extreme poverty, they also remain significantly underrepresented in decision making roles and leadership roles across all sectors. In addition, women and girls continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination based on age, class, ethnicity and race.

In this regard, we as CWP through our National Parliaments have to ensure that our Governments maintain the commitments to gender equality such as obligations under Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063.

Moreover, while we acknowledge the importance of the increase of women in decision making bodies through affirmative actions, we should also look beyond descriptive representation, where progress should be made on substantive representation so as to be able to translate the gains of the increase into changing status and lives of women at large.

As we celebrate this year's International Women's Day, I urge all CWP Branches in Africa Region to continue striving for girls and women rights by pushing for their social, economic, cultural and political achievements. Moreover, as we mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, we must realize that 'gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when different behaviors, aspirations of women and men are equally valued and favored'

So on this day, let's celebrate what has been achieved so far while continuing to encourage more efforts towards transformative policies leading to gender equality on a broad scale. Let everyone, in their capacity, talk, think and act equally, this will create a ripple effect that benefits everyone.

End of Statement