



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS (FIDA) AFRICA
FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES FEMMES JURISTES
FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE ABOGADAS

PRESS STATEMENT

TOWARDS 30 YEARS OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION:

UNITE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Africa commemorates 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), an annual international campaign which commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, to raise awareness on violence against women, a perennial human rights violation.

Under the theme, ***Towards 30 Years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Unite to End Violence against Women***, this year's campaign aims to take stock of progress made around the priorities of the Beijing Platform for Action, identify the gaps and provide strategies to close the gaps. It calls for accountability from policymakers, concrete actions, punitive laws, and increased funding to women's rights movements.

Most countries in Africa have acceded to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), also known as the Maputo Protocol. This Protocol defines violence against women as "all acts perpetrated against women which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, including the threat to take such acts; or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peace time and during situations of armed conflicts or of war".

GBV manifests in various forms like intimate partner violence, early marriage, sexual harassment, as well as online sexual exploitation and abuse. Available evidence collected at country and regional levels confirms high prevalence rates of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. The economic costs of GBV in some African countries are well documented running into millions of dollars annually.

In 2022, UN Women and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that of the 89,000 women intentionally killed globally, Africa had the highest number of reported femicides compared to other regions. The African Union's Agenda 2063 recognizes that GBV acts as a barrier to human security, peace and development. African subregional instruments like the SADC Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for addressing GBV (2018 – 2037) aims to provide a holistic and coordinated

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approach to addressing GBV in Africa and is intended to stimulate sub-regional interventions. Some challenges identified in some regions in Africa are:

- Insufficient disaggregated data,
- Lack of clear minimum standards for GBV reporting, referral and case management,
- Limited involvement of men and boys in GBV prevention and response,
- Underreporting due to social norms, beliefs, including inadequate strategies to address social and cultural practises as well as norms that perpetuate GBV, and
- Inadequate financial and human resources to support implementation of GBV interventions.

As we move towards the Beijing +30 Global Review, FIDA Africa urges its national chapters review national obligations in the fight against GBV and together with CSOs, state actor and all relevant stakeholders find strategies to close the gaps. To this end, FIDA Africa is committed to facilitate regional cooperation to work together with all relevant stakeholders to accelerate the elimination of gender inequality, the root cause of GBV.

(Signed)

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