



# **BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights**

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## African Women's Health and Rights Day February 4<sup>th</sup> 2011

### Press Statement

The African Women's Health and Rights Day (AWHRD) is an annual event to raise awareness and advance critical debate around Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of women throughout the African continent both national and local levels. This year's event is another opportunity to assess the state of women's Health & Rights advancement across the region from the Referendum in Sudan, the tensions around elections in Nigeria, the crisis in Democratic Republic of Congo which includes sexual violence and rape as a weapon of war, the Women's Human Rights abuses in Uganda based on sexuality, and the crisis in Cote D'Ivoire arising from that country's last elections and the impact of all of these political issues on the political will to implement measures towards the protection of women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

BAOBAB for Women's Human rights is a not for profit, non-governmental organization working to promote and protect the human rights of women under customary, statutory and religious laws. As part of the organization's advocacy work into February 4<sup>th</sup> commemoration this year, based on the fact that Africa is saddled with a lot of issues tied to the continent's development including but not limited to the poor state of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and the lack of political will on the part of the various governments to implement all the regional instruments they have committed themselves to, BAOBAB calls on various governments to adhere to provisions they undertake to protect the Human Rights of citizens. This includes women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Until all the issues surrounding these rights are resolved or at least reduced to the barest minimum, moving forward will be difficult and development will be meaningless.

One critical factor, amongst a host of others, is the lack of information on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women on the continent which is fundamental to the development of the continent as a whole; governments **MUST** make concerted efforts to make this available so that women can make informed decisions about their reproductive and sexual health, for example having information on family planning, HIV/AIDS, etc and reverse the lamentable rise of gender based violence.

BAOBAB is once again using this occasion to call on all governments on the continent to expedite action on their commitment to the regional instrument - Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. BAOBAB insists that the protocol if well implemented will not only raise the status of women's health on the continent but will be a factor for fast development in the various countries. We believe that fulfilling the protocol is equal to taking a giant step towards the realization of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, specifically goals 4, 5 and 6. BAOBAB also calls on all the governments to review and implement the African Union Maputo Plan of Action for Universal Access to Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Services. Most governments in the region are yet to expedite actions on this and we say delay is no longer an option – the time is **NOW**.

Signed

Sindi Medar-Gould  
Executive Director