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SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER
EQUALITY IN AFRICA

The Heads of State and Government of Member States of the African Union, meeting in the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia yesterday made a solemn declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

Among other things, they reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of gender equality, endorsed the recommendation of the creation of an African Women's Committee, which will serve as an Advisory Body to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on gender and development. It also called for periodic reporting by the Heads of State on steps taken to implementation of the Declaration.

The Presidents of Botswana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Namibia, Angola and Zimbabwe, who took the floor during the debate on gender, expressed readiness to make Africans in general, and women in particular to play a greater role in society.

The Summit also committed African Leaders also committed to putting an end to the phenomenon of child soldiers and sexual exploitation of girl children on the Continent, particularly in conflict zones.

The Heads of State furthermore, accepted to establish and African Trust Fund for Women for the purpose of building the capacity of African Women with the Commission working out modalities for operationalization of the Fund with special focus on women in rural areas.

Addis Ababa, July 7, 2004