



PRESS RELEASE

## **African Union and PSI Call For Continent Wide Advocacy and Communications Campaign to Protect Women**

The African Union (AU), headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and its partner Population Services International (PSI) recently hosted an expert consultation on the problem of the increased vulnerability of women and Girls to HIV/AIDS infection.

Calling on experts on gender and HIV/AIDS from around the world, the AU and PSI reviewed the factors that result in young women being up to six times more likely to contract HIV than their male peers. Ample evidence documented how gender based inequities create situations which expose women, and in particular young women, to increased sexual violence, transactional sex, and a dramatically increased risk of HIV infection.

The AU and PSI, along with their partners from UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, The African Development Bank, UNDP, UNFPA, FIDA and many African non-governmental organizations called for a ten year, continental “advocacy and communications campaign aimed at ending harmful social norms and practices which endanger or damage the health of African young women and girls.”

The African Union’s resolutions also emphasized the need for “legal reforms for better protection of young women and girls against all forms of sexual violence.”

These resolutions and the current call to action are grounded in previous policy statements including: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, The International Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Additional Protocols, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

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