



RESO-Femmes

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Good morning Mr Chairman, distinguished members and NGO representatives. I am the president of RESO-Femmes. RESO-Femmes international is based in Geneva, and RESO-Femmes network, composed of different organisations, is based in West Africa. We began with a pilot project in 2005 in Mopti, Mali, to try to systematize the observation of the status of empowerment in that region from rural and urban women and how to improve their conditions and statutory situations. We were very surprised to see that ideas and local women innovations already existed in Mali but was hardly acknowledged by the international community and in the context of bilateral partnerships.

Therefore we initiated a research-action program to work on improving the visibility of isolated rural and regional groups of women and to help them structure their own civil and democratic movement. We based our approach on integrating different groups of women coming from local organisation. For that we tried to gather the new elected women with leaders recruited from different associations which already covered the different fields of MDG goals. Actually 8 specific approaches are integrated to our programs named “Gender, empowerment, parity” to allow more equitable access of women to resources and greater equity in assisting the forgotten people in the world. Without entering into details, I would like to name a few good indicators selected directly from the women’s point of view matching the different themes of this conference. First, I think that we need to integrate other local value systems to evaluate women participation and even broaden the concept of women empowerment from the African history conception. We know for instance from our experience of Mopti, that international institutions have poor knowledge of local political participation and that it is very important to train women together and to develop innovative tools and methods if we want to promote women’s equal access in political, social and

economic decisions. I will now present three main points illustrating the importance of our network and would like to emphasize the necessity of feminist actions before setting up women's structures and their movements.

1- To encourage political action and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against all women : We have developed society projects integrating political figures from the top and from the bottom and gave their network enough resources to understand and reach fixed objectives. Our Geneva team is focused on research based on those results and their diffusion.

2- To foster social action : we train together and with the same program all kind of women and give them enough power and self-esteem to believe that they can become human right ambassadors of their community and also for their whole nation. From our results we are now trying to systematize our training programs for 6 countries after Mali : Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Bénin, Togo. Our website has more information on those programs.

3- To spur economic action : we have recently created a new project "EAA" customised to local needs and the voice of women. This project is a concrete action and is proving very helpful to train women regardless of their social and political recognition. Our research department has been structured so that it answers and we hope will give the right orientation to global issues. This project has come out from local empowerment practices and women's gender experiences over 6 years (when our NGO was created). This project "Water, Sanitation, Food" presents the advantage to force other partners (often dominant) into going through our members to work with population, instead of going around them. There is still even now a lot of resistance justified by the alleged lack of women background in this field and lack of competencies, grounded on entrenched stereotypes. I thus would like to make the voice of my West African partners here and hope that we can speed up our actions through financial and logistical support. We are very happy to see that UN Women is now operational and we hope to find the right support for our members here. We thank you very much for this opportunity to speak on behalf of our members. Nadège Chell, president & anthropologist.