



Dakar forum hails role of African women

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Dakar, Senegal (PANA) - Gertrude Mongella, president of the Pan-African Parliament, has indicated here that African women fought beside their men to dismantle apartheid and slavery in Africa.

Mongella, who was speaking on Sunday at the opening of an international forum on dialogue with Arab women focusing on economic and political issues, stressed that the war waged by African women was less to ask a favour from anyone than to ask for their dues.

"We are not asking anybody for a favour. We only demand what we deserve," she mentioned.

While underlining that the forum has the objective of facilitating dialogue between Africa and other regions of the continent, Mongella also said that the African continent is yet to prepare an economic, social and cultural policy for the other regions.

According to her, all was done for "our continent." The focus should be today on the need to make a shift in order to allow Africa to play a leading role in the development of other regions of the world.

"This forum offers today the opportunity to pave the way to development for other areas of the world," Mongella said, while adding that Africa has made great strides since the dismantling of apartheid.

"The acknowledgement of the gender dimension is a reality, especially in South Africa, where 25 per cent of women are represented in Parliament. In this regard, Rwanda is the first African country in terms of high women representation in parliament, with 48 per cent," she noted.

She also stressed that Africa was able to achieve much more than what has been achieved so far because we "have the necessary capacities and means."

"However, we need to work hand in hand with women from other countries and regions of the world. The Dakar meeting is part of that process," she added.

The international forum on dialogue with Arab women on economic and political issues currently holding in Dakar for two days was initiated by the regional office of "Femmes Africa Solidarite," a Dakar-based NGO, through its Pan-African centre on gender, peace and development.

The forum's objective is to ensure a better future for women of the African continent.

It will also serve as a setting for the launching of the first edition of the "African Gender Award," whose recipients are Presidents Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa.