

Speech on behalf of AGFA Selection Committee and Femmes Africa Solidarité

By Honourable Ambassador Gertrude Mongella

- Your Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and Madame Wade;
- Your Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia
- Your Excellency Muammar al-Gaddafi, Leader of Libya
- (Vice president of Gambia)
- Your Excellency Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye, prime minister of Senegal
- Honorable Heads of State
- Excellencies, the First Ladies
- Honorable Jean Ping, Chairman of the AU Commission
- Honorable Abdoulie Janneh, United Nations Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission of Africa
- Honorable Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank
- Honorable Ms Gertrude Mongella, Former President of the of the Pan-African Parliament and Chair of the selection committee of the Gender Award
- Mrs. Bineta Diop, Founder and Executive Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité;
- Representatives of the United Nations
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by expressing my congratulations to his H.E. President Wade, the Government and the people of Senegal for the 50th anniversary of the Independence of Senegal.

For the women of Senegal; today's celebration marks an important turning point in history for the women of Senegal. Only recently we met in New York at the UN during the Commission on the Status of Women to evaluate the achievements made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. The evaluation from different countries show clearly that the political will exists but the actions still fall short of realizing the goals of gender equality; protection of women against violence; economic empowerment of women, women's participation in political and decision making activities in our societies.

On the African continent, leaders have expressed their commitment to the promotion of women's rights and development in many ways collectively by adopting new positive instruments such as the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The adoption and national implementation of these continental instruments were milestones in the lives of women in the African Union. . It is these achievements made individually by a country that the African Gender Award celebrates.

The first recipients of the African Gender Award were their Excellencies Presidents Abdoulaye Wade and Thabo Mbeki Mbulwa respectively Presidents of the Republics of Senegal and South Africa. In the second edition of the African Gender Award, the award was given to His Excellence President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of RWANDA. The women of Africa have great appreciation of the work these three Presidents for contributing to making gender parity a reality for African.

All of the awards have been presented in Senegal under the support of President Wade who is a strong believer and promoter of gender equality.

This year, the African Gender Award Selection Committee after searching into all the presidents of Africa came out strongly convinced that his Excellency President Guebuza of the Republic of Mozambique deserves the award due to his personal vision and commitment to the advancement of women in his country. By giving Mozambique the African Gender Award, the Selection Committee and Femmes Africa Solidarité wished to acknowledge the political will of Mozambique for preventing its country from relapsing into war, reforming its Constitution in 2004 and including gender and women on its political agenda.

Applauding once again the His Excellency the President of Senegal for his commitment to gender and women's issues, the President of Mozambique for his leadership and reiterating our congratulations to the previous recipients of the African Gender Award. The work towards the achievement of gender equality remains massive and need the commitment of all leaders of Africa. I thank you all for your support and commitment to gender equality and the rights of women in Africa.