

## Mozambique: Guebuza Receives African Gender Award

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Dakar — Mozambican President Armando Guebuza received in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, on Sunday the 2009 African Gender Award, promoted by the NGO "Femmes Africa Solidarite".

This award acknowledges the efforts that Guebuza has been making to open up opportunities for Mozambican women.

The award was delivered during a banquet offered by Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade.

Speaking on the occasion, Guebuza said that this award not only increases the government's responsibilities, but also generates new expectations in the emancipation of Mozambican women, who have a key role to play in the nation's agenda.

He stressed the increasing role played by women in Mozambican politics. Thus the current chairperson of the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, is a woman (Veronica Macamo), and 39 per cent of the parliamentary deputies are women.

As for the government, Guebuza added that 28 per cent of the ministries are headed by women.

Guebuza also stressed that the new Family Law, and the law on violence against women passed last year are part of the permanent efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination and strengthen the emancipation of the Mozambican women.

Awards were handed to two women in the name of Mozambican civil society and of the private sector.

The medallions were handed to Natividade Bule, representing ECOSIDA, a business organization operating in the area of fight against HIV/AIDS, and to Graca Samo, representing the Women's Forum, a coalition of civil society bodies active on women's issues that was instrumental in ensuring that parliament passed the law on violence against women, despite outraged male howls that it "discriminated against men".

Guebuza is the fourth head of state to receive the award, following Abdoulaye Wade, president of the host country, and former South African President Thabo Mbeki, who were awarded in 2005. Rwandan President Paul Kagame received it in 2007.

Gertrude Mongella, former chairperson of the Pan-African parliament, and chairperson of the awards Selection Commission, praised Guebuza's efforts, saying that he has been tirelessly working to try and establish gender equity, and reiterated her demand that African leaders should create more opportunities for women.