

## *Declarations & Recommendations*

The Members of the ..

4th African Congress for Women Entrepreneurs &  
8th Afro Arab Congress for Business & Professional Women  
8th Mediterranean Congress for Business & Professional Women  
In Collaboration with  
10th International Congress of  
Business and Professional Women – Egypt &  
Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA)  
Which is organized by?  
Business and Professional Women Egypt ( BPW – Egypt )  
Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA)  
African Alliance for Women Empowerment (AFRAWA)  
Afro – Arab Network for Women Empowerment  
Cairo Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and  
Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA) &  
Organization for Women in Trade - Egypt  
( OWIT – Cairo – Chapter )  
Under the Theme of  
Women Empowerment to Meet the Millennium  
Development Goals (MDGs)  
Under the Patronage of  
H.E. Mrs. Suzan Mubarak  
First Lady of Egypt  
Who met in Cairo , Egypt 23 – 25 April 2009 at Mena House Oberoi Hotel

Expressed their deepest thanks to H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak for her Patronage of this Congress emphasizing her Excellency's major role in Empowering Women and operationalizing their roles in all the fields & showing the political will of the Government of Egypt for Empowering Women under the presidency of H.E. President Mohamed Hosny Mubarak .

The members also sent their thanks to the Government of Egypt for hosting the Congress and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt & H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Aboul Ghiet Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt who gave all the support to the Congress.

The participants addressed all their thanks of to H.E. Ambassador Nihad Zikry Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs for Cultural Affairs, for her inauguration of the Congress representing H.E. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt & to H.E. Ambassador Mona Omar Assistant Deputy Minister of African Affairs & H.E. Ambassador Ahmed El Orabi Assistant Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt for their support to the Congress.

The participants also addressed their thanks to H.E. Dr. Ali Mossielhy the Minister of Social Solidarity of Egypt who supported the Congress & addressed the participants during the Closing Ceremony of the Congress and who always supports the efforts of the Civil Society Organizations in Egypt.

This year the congress is privileged to have the Guest of Honour of the congress H.E. Mrs. Maria Terez Fernandez De La Vega First Vice President of Spain and President of the African Spanish Women's Network for a Better World. The participants thanked H.E. for her efforts to empower women in Africa and around the world setting a role model for the Leaders for the Real Partnership and the real commitment for Empowering Women in Africa.

The participants also thanked UNECA. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for Co- organizing this congress and thanked H.E. Mr. Abdullaie Jannah for his commitment towards the development of Africa and the Economic Empowerment of Women of Africa .

The participants also addressed their thanks to the COMESA Secretariat for supporting the Congress & to H.E. Ambassador Naglaa Al Hussieny Assistant Secretary General of COMESA for Administrative & Finance Affairs who inaugurated the congress representing H.E. Sindiso N. Ngwanya Secretary General of COMESA for the commitment of the COMESA Secretariat for the Economic Empowerment of Women .

The participants also thanked the International Trade Center (ITC) & addressed their thanks to Mrs. Patricia Francis the Executive Director of ITC for the efforts of the ITC to empower Women in Trade the thanked the representative of the ITC, Mrs. Meg Jones, Gender Program Advisor, sharing ITC experience in fostering women's economic empowerment through trade.

The participants also addressed their thanks to H.E. Ambassador Soad Shalaby Head of the Cairo Regional Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa for supporting the Congress & Organizing a Training Workshop during the Congress for Women Empowerment in Conflict Zones .

The participants also thanked the sponsors of the Congress with a Special thanks to Casa Africa for its Sponsorship to the congress which maximized the participation of the African Delegates to the Congress & strengthened the real partnership between the Government of Spain & the African Continent . The participants also Thanked to the major sponsor of the Congress, The Housing and Development Bank of Egypt that emphasized the role of the private sector as a partner of development and emphasized the Social Corporate Responsibility .

The Scientific Program of the congress covered different topics that help to achieve the goal of Economic Women Empowerment through Empowerment of Women through Education , through support of Small & Medium Enterprises and exchange of Experience of different Associations from Africa, the Arab World & the Mediterranean region, Europe, Asia , U.S.A. and all over the World.

The participants discussed along 3 days Empowering Women to meet the MDGs through Multiple approaches through

- Entrepreneurship Promotion
- Capacity Building
- Business Development
- Marketing and Trade
- Empowering of Women through Franchising and in the Service & Hospitality Sector .

The participants shared experiences & success stories The program also included Empowering Women in conflict Zones and showed an Example of a success story for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Darfur .

There was also a training workshop for Women Empowerment in conflict zones that included Empowering of Women through Negotiation Skills & Crisis Management and another Training workshop on Leadership & Emotional Skills.

**Declaration and Recommendations of the Congress:  
Women Empowerment to Meet the Millennium Development Goals  
Cairo, Egypt 23-25 April 2009**

1. We, women and men from 30 countries, who came together in Cairo to consider Women's Empowerment to Meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), recognize that whilst much has been done in Africa to meet these goals, there remains an urgent need to prioritise and realise the economic empowerment of women, if the MDGs are to be met by 2015.
2. The achievement of each of the 8 MDGs hinges on a business and political environment favourable to the advancement of women. Having shared our experiences as representatives of private enterprises, governments, women's business organisations and associations and other non-governmental organisations, we are convinced that no constraint to trade or women's participation in decision making exists, that cannot be overcome. Political will in support of the economic empowerment of women is expressed in in the MDGs, in the African Union Gender Policy, gender policies adopted by the Regional Economic Commissions and at the national level. Now is the time to convert commitment into concrete results : now is the time for implementation.
3. In the interests of, *inter alia*, realizing the empowerment of women to meet the Millennium Development Goals, we call on governments, intergovernmental organisations, the private sector and non-government organisations to:
  - a. Recognise that enterprise development programmes that support women entrepreneurs and strengthen women's business organisations and associations and improve their connection to government institutions that support trade, yield results. We therefore commend the Government of Egypt for constituting the National Council of Women and the establishment of the Women's Business Development Centre. We urge other governments to replicate this as a best practice, supported by adequate financial and human resources, and to ensure operations in rural as well as urban areas.
  - b. We call for the training and capacity building of women entrepreneurs in product development, value addition, including through packaging, designing & branding and the establishment and full-functioning of trade information centers that will serve to overcome the challenges met by women to increase intra African trade.
  - c. We encourage the development of franchising opportunities for women and access to procurement opportunities through a targeting of 5% of government/corporate/intergovernmental/NGO contracts to go to women-owned enterprises. We request the International Trade Centre to identify and report on such procurement possibilities at our meeting in 2010 and to organize a Trade Fair for women entrepreneurs in Egypt in 2011.
  - d. A favourable business environment is essential for the growth of entrepreneurship in general, with several factors impacting women in particular. This includes, but is not limited to, women's access to credit and trade finance (underpinned by lack of ownership or control over land), transport, training, tax advice and equal treatment by tax and other officials in government administration. We call for further research be conducted to highlight best practice in overcoming gender-based constraints to business and trade.. This compendium could then be launched at a subsequent African Congress of Women Entrepreneurs and distributed to business women's organizations and associations for onward transmission to governments.
  - e. Build on the relationship established between AFRAWE & CASA Africa to foster the partnerships & strengthen the relations between CASA Africa & the Women organizations in Africa for the economic Empowerment of Women in Africa to consolidate a concrete project that will target the Economic Empowerment of Women of Africa.
  - f. Intra-African regional trade poses specific issues for women cross border traders, who constitute the majority of informal traders. Lack of knowledge of customs officials of regional agreements and protocols leads to the arbitrary assessment of customs duties. Body searches of women by male

officials is commonplace, despite this being illegal in some countries. Several other key concerns such as inadequate infrastructure at border crossings (lack of accommodation,) contribute to the high incidence of HIV/AIDS transmission at inefficient border crossings. We commend the efforts of COMESA in instituting trade information centres and urge COMESA to realise their commitment to the establishment of Trading Houses for women, to help address the multiple gender-specific constraints faced by women cross border traders. These facilities are required in all regions of Africa and we call on the Regional Economic Commissions to make and realise such commitments.

- g. The important role of women in peace and security and post conflict economic reconstruction is well documented with calls for action by member states articulated in UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 and the Monrovia Declaration. Urgent action is required : The body of African women has been used as a battleground for too long.
- h. Targeted efforts to train women and achieve better outcomes in negotiations by including gender expertise on negotiating teams, is needed. The meeting welcomes the suggestion of HE Ambassador Dr. Mahmoud Farghal of the Cairo Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa to organise a one week training course for women in negotiating skills and conflict resolution. We note that women were a driving force in Manu River negotiations, that ultimately lead to peace in Liberia. We further note the important role Sudanese women in striving for the resolution of conflict in their country. We call for a greater inclusion of women with gender expertise in ‘hard talks’ as well as in preparatory phases of negotiations, particularly in Sudan.
- i. Foster partnerships with international partners for the economic empowerment of women in Africa, that includes training, capacity building, business development, marketing and trade – especially targeting women in rural areas and the enhancement of infrastructure, with a special focus on enlarging access to transport for women and the girl child.
- j. Attracting women from the informal sector to be part of the formal sector and making targeted efforts to reduce unemployment rate of women through improving their opportunities to have their own businesses in order to have greater personal-economic and societal empowerment
- k. Encouraging women to be more involved in decision making and in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of macroeconomic policy and to increase the political empowerment of women.
- l. Capacity building for women entrepreneurs and enhancing their negotiating skills, training, leadership and emotional intelligence.
- m. Promoting women empowerment through networking at all levels of action between women entrepreneurs and women in decision-making roles in the economy.
- n. Promoting women empowerment through partnership with partners in the regional and international levels.
- o. Promoting women empowerment through Media awareness and positive role models and sharing success stories and experiences.
- p. Greater Societal awareness and having stronger voice for women in business, with advocacy training to help women mobilize and engage in public dialogue.
- q. Joining forces and expertise in all fields with a common agenda of harmonized actions saving the scarce resources.
- r. Promoting Networking among Women in Africa and Women in Spain through the Africa Spanish Women Network for a Better work
- s. Promoting Women empowerment in franchising, hospitality and service industry.
- t. Promoting Women empowerment in conflict zones & their training on peace building and peace keeping.

- u. Promote networking among women, sharing of experiences & best practices, including through trade missions, trade fairs & exchange of visits among women entrepreneurs .
- v. Promote the rights of women in Africa to have access to land, property, resources & finance and ensure the full-functioning of mechanisms to enforce those rights.
- w. Popularize the importance of Women Empowerment among all sections of the society including business leaders and politicians .
- x. Empowerment of girls through education & address any cultural aspects of discrimination against the education of the girl child .
- y. Promote the mainstreaming of gender at all levels & the hiring and promotion of women to the top executive and decision making levels.
- z. Achieve the empowerment of women in conflict zones through capacity building in negotiations and women's involvement in peace negotiations, together with fostering a culture of peace-building through the promotion and implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820.

We, delegates to the 4th African Congress for Women Entrepreneurs, have directly experienced that which research makes plain : When women earn money we spend it on the health and education of our children. We make every effort to educate our girls to the same level as our boys. We see that educating our nation's girls is a way to break inter-generational poverty and this is what we want, for our own families, for our communities, for our countries and for our continent, Africa. We will work towards achieving this goal in the coming year, and we encourage all governments, intergovernmental organisations, private sector representatives and NGOs to join us in realizing the recommendations in this Declaration.