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Women Want Certain Action Taken

The Inquirer (Monrovia)

NEWS

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A cross section of Liberian women, who participated in a five-day National Women Conference organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Gender, have underscored the need for certain actions to be taken in advancing women's rights in peace building, recovery and development in the country.

In a nine count resolution they issued at the end of the National Women Conference, which was held from May 9-14, 2008, under the theme, "Advancing Women's Rights in Peace Building, Recovery and Development in Liberia," the women called for enhancing the capacity of financial institutions to coordinate and provide diverse saving and loans services and establish minimum collateral funds for women to guarantee access to financial services.

The women, who were drawn from all districts and counties in Liberia, called for the provision of training in market analysis and business management and direct policies to research and adopt low technology and high yield tools to increase food production and security.

They called for the compliance with ECOWAS protocols on free movement of goods and people and the provision of training for customs, security and immigration officers at border posts and the enforcement of stringent measures against sexual exploitation of women engaged in cross border- trade.

On the issue of education, the women called for the provision of scholarships and fellowships at the tertiary level and increased professional exchange programmes on the job training for women; direct policies to harmonize schedules of traditional school systems and academic schools in Liberia that would ensure the strict code of conduct for school teachers and administrators.

Dwelling on health, the women called for the provision of safe homes for battered wives and survivors of rape and other gender based violence.

On the issue of protection and security, the women said they want community policing and early warning systems to strengthen and improve the citizen-police relationship.

They also called for the establishment of gender oversight committee to ensure the quality of gender and human rights training provided to law enforcement and judicial officers and represent women's concerns in the security sector. They proposed that the committee should include civil society, government representatives as well as the Ministry of Gender.

Relative to the issue of shelter and environment, the women called for the provision of training for women's group and organizations on protection of environment and natural resources management.

On the issue of governance and leadership, the women called for the development and provision of special leadership training programmes for women and young girls and to encourage them to contest in local elections.

They also called for the adoption of gender sensitive human resources policy to ensure gender equality in all positions at all levels in government and public institutions.

On legal reform, they called for codified land tenure system, customary and civil including clear demarcation of traditional lands and the issuance of community ownership certificates to dissuade illegal transfer and sale of land.

They called for a review of the juvenile justice system and laws with a specific focus on rehabilitation and reform of the juveniles.

On conflict resolution, the women called for capacity building of both government and women's rights organization on gendered research and analysis; mainstreaming gender and peace- building in all development and reconstruction programmes and policies.

They called for direct policies for the establishment of girls organizations in schools to promote leadership skills and their involvement in community peace and conflict resolution activities.

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