

JOS DECLARATION

WOMEN OF JOS, PLATEAU STATE

Made at the Ceremony to Mark the Achievements of the HD Jos Forum and the Commencement of the Implementation Phase

Jos, Nigeria

11 December 2014

Preamble

1. After a series of consultations and communal meetings in and around Jos, Nigeria, facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre or HD), lasting from January to July 2013, the HD Jos Forum formally began its deliberations in August 2013. The Forum consisted of delegations from the communities of Afizere, Anaguta, Berom, Fulani, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, and South-South peoples resident in the four Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Jos North (which is substantially Jos City), Jos South, Barkin Ladi, and Riyom, all in Plateau State. These LGAs have been riven by communal strife for the past twenty years. The HD Jos Forum was convened to deliberate on an agreed list of matters at issue between the eight communities, in monthly week-long sessions lasting from August 2013 to April 2014. Subsequently special grass-roots sessions were convened in Jos South, Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs, where conflict in the countryside between Berom farmers and Fulani pastoralists was still acute.
2. There were women members of most of the communal delegations to the HD Jos Forum. Nevertheless, after further consultations with a number of women and women's groups, a separate Women Steering Committee was formed, to devise and implement a parallel process that would allow women to have their own separate voice, and express their unique perspectives and concerns, as part of the overall deliberations of the HD Jos Forum. The members of the Women Steering Committee included prominent women religious leaders, civil servants, academics, and leaders of NGOs focussed on women issues, as enumerated in the names and signatures below.
3. The Women Steering Committee proceeded to convene dialogue sessions of women belonging to the eight communities separately, and further sessions in the four LGAs involving women of all communities resident there together. These meetings were held from June 2013 to January 2014. There was also a plenary meeting of delegates from the different groups in April 2014, which also included women stakeholders from other parts of Plateau State as well. The meetings were well and enthusiastically attended, in fact often well beyond the expectations of the Women Steering Committee, which planned and facilitated them. The participants spoke eloquently and passionately. Records were made by official reporters of what they said. This Declaration sums up what the women said.

Declaration of the Women of Jos, Plateau State

We, the women of Jos, Plateau State,

1. Having met in our various groups to dialogue together over the continuing communal crises in our communities.
2. Having shared concerns and issues directly affecting women, youth, men and the Plateau communities relating to killings, terrorism, burning and looting, sexual violence, detention and torture, loss of home and property.
3. Noting that the security environment in the Plateau State continues to be characterized by fragility.
4. Expressing frustration at the continuous clashes and killings in the countryside around Jos City, and the bombs within Jos City, resulting in deaths, injuries and displacements affecting all our communities.
5. Emphasizing the desperate nature of the humanitarian crisis shared by people and particularly women in Plateau State; a crisis that does not discriminate across ethnic, religious, agricultural or pastoralist lifestyles.
6. Committed to define our common priorities for the future and peaceful co-existence of our ethnic and religious communities.
7. Recalling that inclusion of women in peace processes is in line with the International Declarations and Conventions that the Government of Nigeria has ratified and is signatory to, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace, and security UNSCR 1325 (2000), UNSCR 1888 (2009), UNSCR 1820 (2008), UNSHR 1888 (2009) UNSCR 1889 (2009), and UNSCR 1960 (2010) as well as the convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), underpinned by the UN Charter, the Constitutive Act of the AU and the Regional ECOWAS Treaty, which all stress that women must be represented in all peace processes.
8. Frustrated by the lack of implementation of previous findings and white papers on enquiries into the violent conflict crisis in Jos Plateau.
9. Taking cognizance of the measurable progress the West African Region has made in promoting values that uphold peace and security in the last two decades, and specifically
10. Also taking cognizance of the existence of initiatives, structures and institutions of both the Plateau State and the Federal Governments on peace and security and noting that they are not in themselves enough to secure lasting peace.

Hereby reaffirm our commitment to:

11. The on-going initiative of the HD Jos Forum in the Jos, Plateau State, undertaken by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, that has identified root causes of violence and seeks to transform structural dynamics of conflict through promotion of religious tolerance and respect for traditional leadership structures.
12. The recognition that the initiative presents opportunities for women's engagement as well as the most credible effort in Plateau State so far to build and sustain peace and security.

Declare our determination to:

13. Commit to the responsibility of sustaining peace in Plateau State through supporting non- violent means of conflict prevention.
14. Commit to supporting the education systems in Plateau State to include counselling and training modules in conflict prevention and transformation in curricula at all levels of formal and non-formal education.
15. Work with the private sector, civil society and the Government towards peaceful means of ending the conflict in Jos.
16. Encourage trust building between women and women, and the women and children, youth and men of Plateau State across all ethnic and religious communities.
17. Promote business across ethnic and religious communities, buying and selling from each other, building on economic and social interaction.
18. Promote intermarriage across ethnic and religious communities.
19. Actively encourage learning and respecting of other people's customs and traditions.
20. Actively interact between us women to discuss common problems on a frequent basis through organizing women's informal bi-monthly meetings across ethnic and religious communities.
21. Promote joint developmental projects between women that join city and rural areas as a means of bringing the two together.
22. Develop the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhance their role in the peace process in Plateau State, Nigeria.

We call on the Government of Nigeria to:

23. Ensure equal participation of women in all stages of peace and security talks based on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and armed conflicts.
24. Take effective security measures in girls' schools to prevent female students from harm and violence.
25. Take specific measures to reduce violence by organizing educational courses and initiating campaigns that raise awareness on sexual violence and violence against women.
26. Use positive political rhetoric for the benefit of women and removal of obstacles and security concerns that hinder their progress and lack of participation in political life.
27. Build partnerships and work on trust building between non-governmental organizations and the Government in the formulation of broad policies, strategies and implementation of peace building processes. Inclusion of women is a necessary cornerstone to this arrangement.
28. Establish networks between Government and non-governmental organizations concerned with women's issues on peace and security at the local, regional and international levels.

29. Promote women's economic independence in the rural and urban areas, taking into account the structural causes of poverty that reduce women to the lowest strata of the social class that, with children is most affected by violent conflict. Measures such as ensuring women's access to credit facilities, vocational training, information, communication and markets for their products, will work towards a strong foundation for women.
30. Take positive steps towards disarmament, the removal of weapons from civilian hands.
31. Prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls;
32. Develop the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhance their role in the development process by committing more gender sensitive resources to support conflict prevention and resolution.

We call on the Elders' Councils to:

33. Work with the strengths that women bring in conflict prevention and peace building as well as early warning and reconciliation that can prompt early response, strengths developed as mothers, caregivers that come from the practice of holding families together.
34. Take a clear path towards bringing about change in cultural concepts on women and men as related to addressing the new challenges in terms of peace and security that continue to present themselves to Plateau State and involve women in all aspects of peace processes. Women and men united will have a stronger capacity to prevent and respond to conflict.
35. Lead in efforts to remove barriers to women and girls education and participation in peace processes because of such factors as ethnicity, culture or religion. African cultures, the Bible and Koran have several examples of strong women leaders, who could only have been so because of the support and provision of space to do so by Elders Councils.
36. Promote regular intra and inter-ethnic and religious dialogue among the people in Plateau State inclusive of women.

We end this Declaration, proud as the WOMEN OF JOS to have participated in the HD Jos Forum Inter-Communal Dialogue Process in Jos Plateau State, the first peace process to include women. We have participated in identifying and addressing the root causes of conflict that we have established and are now actively moving towards addressing these causes.