



**FINAL COMMUNIQUE OF THE FIFTH ROUND TABLE
OF THE COMESA FIRST LADIES**

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
8th June, 2009

*THEME: Consolidating Regional Economic Integration through
Value Addition, Trade and Food Security*

We the First Ladies of COMESA Member States convened at the Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe for the Fifth COMESA First Ladies Round Table in parallel with the Thirteenth Summit of the COMESA Authority of Heads of State and Government.

The Fifth Round Table was held under the able leadership of Mrs. Grace Mugabe, First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Host of the Fifth COMESA First Ladies Round Table.

The First Ladies Round Table considered the following issues aimed at making a contribution to the realisation of the full participation of Women in the COMESA Economic Integration Agenda:

- (a) Economic empowerment of women
- (b) Agriculture and food security
- (c) Empowerment of women in decision making
- (d) Promotion and preservation of our cultural heritage
- (e) Youth empowerment for responsible citizenship
- (f) Care and protection of the elderly, orphans and other vulnerable children
- (g) Promotion and enhancement of education
- (h) Environmental conservation
- (i) Production and value addition

Having discussed the above mentioned issues at length, We COMESA First Ladies:

REITERATED our commitments made at previous COMESA First Ladies' Round Tables held in Nairobi, Djibouti, Kigali and Kampala respectively;

APPRECIATED the continued support from the COMESA Member States to the role played by the First Ladies of COMESA in advocating the mainstreaming of women and gender in the COMESA Economic Integration Agenda through the Implementation of the COMESA Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Action Plan;

WE the First Ladies of COMESA Member States, hereby:

1. **CALL UPON** COMESA Member States to ensure adequate human, financial and material resources in planning and implementing home-grown sustainable programmes intended to eliminate gender inequality and inequity;
2. **URGE** COMESA Member States to put in place social transformation programmes to ensure development of human and economic capital;
3. **CALL UPON** COMESA Institutions to facilitate programmes in member States that would enhance production and value addition in pursuit of economic empowerment of women in the region;
4. **REITERATE** our call for COMESA Member States to adopt and implement existing regional and international humanitarian instruments that advocate the promotion, protection and

empowerment of the elderly, youth, orphans and other vulnerable groups;

5. **REQUEST** COMESA Member States to put in place a regional strategy to implement the Millennium Development Goals which have been set for reducing maternal, mortality, eradication of poverty and food insecurity, enhance education and create employment for all by 2015;
6. **ENCOURAGE** COMESA Member States to adopt policies and programmes that would protect our environment and address climate change;
7. **REITERATE** our call upon COMESA Member States to put in place a regional strategy to enhance girl-child education and to ensure the elimination of all harmful traditional and cultural practices that prevent the access of girls to education;
8. **URGE** all COMESA First Ladies to continue playing an advocacy role on the full participation of women at all levels in the COMESA Economic Integration Agenda.
9. **APPLAUD** the host of the Fifth COMESA First Ladies Round Table, Mrs. Grace Mugabe for being gracious in organising and facilitating a very successful Round Table.

10. **EXPRESS** our special recognition to the outgoing Chairperson of the First Ladies Round Table, Mrs. Lucy Kibaki, E.G,H., First Lady of Kenya for her message of goodwill to COMESA in general and to the COMESA First Ladies in particular. We congratulate her on the job well done.

Finally, **WE**, the First Ladies of the COMESA Member States, express our appreciation to His Excellency, Robert Gabriel Mugabe President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, the Government and people of Zimbabwe for having hosted the 5th COMESA First Ladies' Round Table.

Long Live COMESA CUSTOMS UNION

Long Live COMESA First Ladies Round Table