

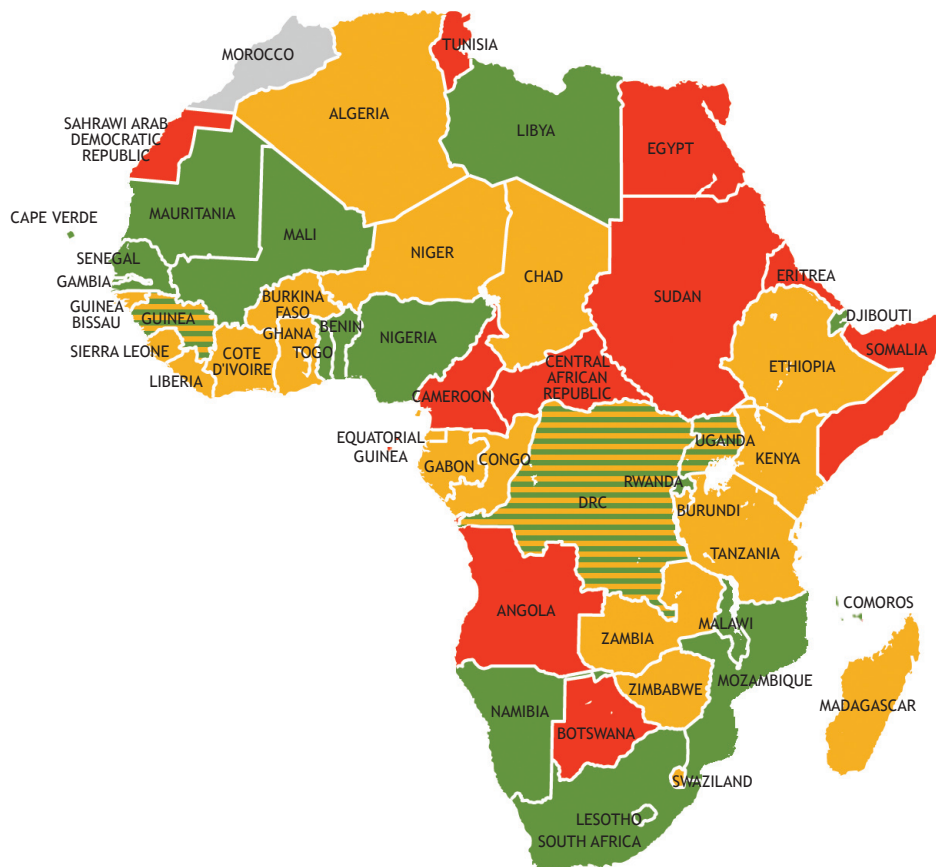
## SOLIDARITY FOR AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A force for freedom



## MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ POUR LES DROITS DES FEMMES AFRICAINES

Une force pour la liberté



### RED CARD

These countries have not signed the protocol

Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia

### YELLOW CARD

These countries have signed the protocol but have not yet ratified it

Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Niger, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe



### YELLOW STRIPED CARD but should soon be upgraded

These countries have signed the protocol and are in the process of ratification

Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Uganda

### GREEN CARD

These countries have signed and ratified the protocol

Benin, Cape Verde, the Comoros, Djibouti, The Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo



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## **VICTORY FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AFRICA AFRICAN PROTOCOL ON RIGHTS OF WOMEN ENTERS INTO FORCE**

Nairobi, Kenya – Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR), a coalition of groups across Africa campaigning for the popularisation, ratification and domestication of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, welcomes the 15th ratification by Togo of the protocol on 26 October. The protocol will now come into force within 30 days, marking a milestone in the protection and promotion of women's rights in Africa and creating new rights for women in terms of international standards.

The other countries that have ratified the protocol are Cape Verde, the Comoros, Djibouti, The Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Benin.

For the first time in international law, this groundbreaking protocol explicitly sets forth the reproductive right of women to medical abortion when pregnancy results from rape or incest or when the continuation of pregnancy endangers the health or life of the mother. In another first, the protocol explicitly calls for the legal prohibition of female genital mutilation, and prohibits the abuse of women in advertising and pornography. The protocol sets forth a broad range of economic and social welfare rights for women. The rights of particularly vulnerable groups of women, including widows, elderly women, disabled women and 'women in distress', which includes poor women, women from marginalised populations groups, and pregnant or nursing women in detention are specifically recognised.

'The 19 national, regional and international organisations of SOAWR have been working tirelessly

since July 2003 when the protocol was adopted for ratification,' said Muthoni Wanyeki of FEMNET, a coalition member. 'This moment is a testament to their work and the work of other civil society groups working across Africa for ratification.' The coalition delivered to heads of state a petition for which signatures were collected from across Africa by pen, email, online and by text messaging (SMS) from people encouraging their governments to ratify the protocol. 'To our knowledge, this is the first time that SMS technologies have been used on a mass scale on the African continent in support of human rights,' said Firoze Manji of Fahamu, the SOAWR member that developed the technique.

'The protocol should not be viewed in isolation,' added Hannah Forster of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies. 'It would be prudent to approach its domestication and implementation in consonance with other relevant international instruments.' Added Gladys Mutukwa of coalition-member WiLDAF, 'There are 38 member states of the African Union that have not yet ratified the protocol. Our work will not end until they too show their commitment to women's rights in Africa and become party to the protocol.'

'The coming into effect of the protocol is just the first step in securing the protection of the human rights of African women,' explained Faiza Jama Mohamed of Equality Now, another coalition member. 'However our task remains incomplete until state parties exercise the political will to protect, promote and respect these rights.'

**For more information contact:**

Equality Now - SOAWR Secretariat

Tel +254-20-2719832; +254-722-805539 Fax.+254-20-2719868

Email: [equalitynow@kenyaweb.com](mailto:equalitynow@kenyaweb.com) [www.equalitynow.org](http://www.equalitynow.org)