



Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
Programme des Relations Islamo-Chrétiennes en Afrique



WOMEN STATEMENT

**FRANCOPHONE WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA
REGIONAL INITIATIVE FOR CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM
RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**MAROUA, CAMEROON
6 – 10 JANUARY 2013**

STATEMENT ON WOMEN IN CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

We, Christian and Muslim women from Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Rwanda, Guinea, Cameroon and Democratic Republic of Congo who participated in the PROCMURA Christian and Muslim religious leaders initiative on peace and development, held at Hotel le Sahel in Maroua, Cameroon from 6th to 10th January 2013, had the opportunity to meet as sisters to discuss issues of importance to women in Christian – Muslim relations which were in line with the conference proceedings.

Having shared openly and frankly on issues that affect both Muslim and Christian women and all women in our regions and indeed Africa at large, we came to the conclusion that our respective religious traditions if interpreted properly recognise the importance of women in society.

We lamented, however, that there are certain cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and rising vices such as child trafficking and rape that call for concerted efforts to eradicate.

We were agreed that illiteracy poses the greatest challenge yet in the development of the girl-child and vowed to work together to ensure that education is taken more seriously since that forms the foundational base of eradicating several vices meted against women.

In spite of some of the challenges mentioned, we were encouraged by women political leadership in a number of countries and even in the African Union and at various levels of science and economics among others, and pledged to consciously work towards ensuring that such a trend continues.

In the context of the proceedings of this particular conference which has a focus on Muslim and Christian leaders being proactive in the pursuit of peace and development we would like to call on:

- Peace activist in the continent to always ensure that women are included in peace negotiations as we are often at the receiving end in conflict situations.
- Religious leaders most of whom are men, to appreciate the role of women more than ever before in the material and spiritual development of society.
- On governments to take account of women in the leadership development of the countries in the region and Africa as a whole.

On our part we pledge our commitment to:

- Push for the training of Christian and Muslim women on the tenets of their religion to the highest level possible, so as to equip them with relevant knowledge that will assist them to embark on interfaith relations with confidence.
- Advocate for the creation of structures in religious organizations that would assist all and sundry to practice their religious faith without prejudice either as majorities or minorities in any given situation
- Work towards creating a network of Christian and Muslim women that would collaborate and work together on issues of particular concern to women in Christian-Muslim relations and to the wider society
- Advocate for, and promote unity in diversity as an acceptable norm of Christian and Muslim leaders in the society and the countries from which we come
- Strongly advocate for the involvement of women in the promotion of peace and development and live in solidarity with one another as we vigorously pursue peace by example.
- Commit ourselves to promote PROCMURA's ideals of Christian and Muslim constructive engagement for peace in Africa and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

Done in Maroua, January 10th 2013

