REPORT ON THE LAUNCH OF THE ALL POLITICAL PARTIES WOMEN ASSOCIATION (APPWA) CODE OF CONDUCT

THEME: “Wi taya for klap en dans; wi wan for dea insai tranga wan”

BACKGROUND

The Commission with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the project ‘conflict prevention and mitigation during the electoral cycle in Sierra Leone’ organized a two-day national delegate’s conference for the All Political Parties Women Association (APPWA). The conference attracted Five Hundred and Eighty-Eight (588) women from all the registered Political Parties drawn from the districts across the country.

The All Political Parties Women’s Association (APPWA) is a collection of the various women structures of the Political Parties that seek the welfare of women in politics by promoting, protecting and respecting their views. It was established in 2011 by the then four (4) active political parties in the country namely: All Peoples’ Congress (APC); National Democratic Alliance (NDA); Peoples’ Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC); and the Sierra Leone Peoples’ Party (SLPP) with the aim of working with their Political Parties, Electoral Management Bodies (EMB’s), National and International Organizations to achieve the following objectives:

- To engage and raise the awareness of women on leadership, democratic principles and the rule of law;
- To advocate for adherence to the tenets of good governance through the implementation of policies for the inclusion of women in politics, decision making and governance at all levels;
- To work in solidarity and build women coalition/alliances around a shared cause and explore relationships between political party activists, elected officials and civil society to champion the increased participation of women in governance at all levels;
- To build the capacity of women in political parties in order to sustain peace, stability and non-violence;

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1 We are tired of clapping and dancing. We want to be active participants
CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES
Prior to the conference, consultative meetings were held with the APPWA National Executives to discuss the agenda and three objectives were agreed on as follows:

I. Presentation and adoption of the APPWA, Code of Conduct;
II. Review and adoption of its constitution and;
III. The selection of National Executive Members for the association.

PROCEEDINGS
The programme was called to order by the PRO of the association in the person of Mrs. Hussianatu Randul and was followed by Christian and Muslim prayers. Mrs. Hussianatu Randul welcomed delegates and stated the purpose of the conference which among others include the ratification and adoption of the APPWA’s Constitution, adoption of the Code of Conduct as well as the election of new executive members of the association. The conference was chaired by Dr. Fatou Taqi, president of the 50/50 Group².

STATEMENTS
One of the key APPWA long standing partners UN Women and the various political parties all made brief remarks on the importance of this conference. Below is the summary from each:

• **UN Women**

The representative from the UN Women Mr. Lahai said the organization was established to create gender equality and parity. Speaking on behalf of the Country Representative, he stated that APPWA is an initiative that brings all women together irrespective of their political affiliation. Women are integral in any national development and hence the need for more support for them. He committed his institution to continued support towards empowering women and APPWA especially.

• **Alliance Democratic Party (ADP)**

The National Secretary General of the ADP Mrs. Isata Abdulai noted that, women’s role within the political landscape is important. Women make up 52% of the nation’s population and their contribution to societal development cannot be over emphasised. “Women can do it better than their male folks” she added. The development of the country should be a collective responsibility of both women and men. Women are role models in every society. She encouraged every woman to serve as a role model. Finally, she pledged her party’s committed to every drive that will empower women.

² Women’s organisation that advocates for equality with emphasis on women in all spheres of life
• All Peoples Congress (APC)

Arrived after the statements.

• Citizen’s Democratic Party (CDP)

The National Secretary General of the CDP Mr. Victor King echoed the previous speaker’s point that women should be activists and advocate for greater women involvement in politics since they have an important part to play. He wished delegates well in their deliberations.

• National Grand Coalition (NGC)

Haja Memunatu Koroma speaking on behalf of the National Secretary General of the NGC referenced the theme of the convention; “wi taya for klap en dans; wi wan for dea insai tranga wan”. She stated that the theme can only be a reality with sacrifice from all the women’s leaders and their membership. Women should be independent and collectively the dream can be achieved. Women will be aspiring for political party symbols and as such women should come forward to compete with the male folk in the forthcoming elections.

• National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

The representative of the party, Mr. Sheriff Barrie gave a brief background on the steps women have taken over the years within the political sphere. Now is the time that women should clap and dance for fellow women. He encouraged political parties to award symbols to women in winnable areas. “The future of the country lies in the hands of women and they should crab every opportunity given to them”.

• Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP)

Speaking on behalf of the party, the National Secretary General Mr. Napoleon Koroma Esq. stated that women’s participation is very important. He said the SLPP has a track record of giving more opportunities to women. He said, when his party was in power, the three gender act was passed because the party realized that women’s role within the context of development cannot be under estimated. He noted that the party has space for women within its party structures. Furthermore, the party he says will create space for women to be given more symbols in the forthcoming awards of their party’s symbols. He said, women and men must walk side by side. He pledged his party’s commitment in ensuring an increase in women’s political participation in the country. He committed, on behalf of his party, to always work with APPWA as an association for women in politics.
• **People’s Democratic Party (PDP)**

The national Chairman of the PDP, Mr. Prince Coker appreciated the work of APPWA and said his party has always supported the association. He thanked the executive for their relentless effort since 2012 in ensuring increased women’s participation in politics. He thanked his party’s out going executive member and women’s leader in the party for representing the party well in the association. He took the opportunity to welcome the in-coming executive committee members into the fold and committed his party’s support to the association. He encouraged women to step forward in the forth-coming elections and informed delegates that the PDP is open to awarding more symbols to women.

• **Peace and Liberation Party (PLP)**

The National Secretary General of the PLP Madam Theresa Faye thanked the 50/50 group for their support in sensitizing women about their importance in the political scene. She said women should be supportive of each other irrespective of the political party the woman is coming from. She encouraged women to move forward and stated that power to the women is important. Party colours should be a thing of the past; she pleaded that women must be supportive of each other.

• **People’s Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC)**

The representative of the party stated that women are yet to be ready to occupy any political office because they are not united and not supportive of each other. He said ‘women do accept to have a second or third wife in the home but don’t want to be supportive of their women folks’. This must change! If women support each other there is no position they cannot win. He suggested that PPRC, APPWA and 50/50 must come together and hold public lectures for women (political and non-political). Women must come together and forge ahead. Women are disadvantaged in politics but he encouraged each and every woman to step forward and help change the status quo.

• **Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP)**

The representative of the political party said women suffered the more during the rebel war. He stated that this is the time for equal opportunity for women. RUFP is ready to push the agenda of women forward. He committed his party to awarding more symbols to women.

• **Unity Party (UP)**

The party representative said women are tired of pushing men’s agenda. She said her party is happy for APPWA. The leader of the party is a visionary for women’s empowerment. She appealed to the women to be supportive of each other and pleaded with the women to vote and support her presidential candidate in the person of Madam Femi Claudius Cole.
• *United National People’s Party (UNPP)*

The Acting National Secretary General Mr. Osman Koroma said, women played a significant role in the development of the country. He said in 2012, the party gave more symbols to women. He reflected on the days when the party had as its running mate a female candidate in 2002. He pleaded with the outgoing executive to work with the incoming executive and stated that his party is ready to award symbols to more women. Women must be supportive of each other he emphasised in closing.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE OUTGOING APPWA EXECUTIVE**

This was done by the National Secretary General in the person of Mrs. Augusta James-Teima. Each executive member introduced themselves to the delegates.

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS - YVONNE AKIN-SAWYER**

She delivered the statement on behalf of the APPWA President, Madam Elizabeth Mans. In the statement, she thanked the executive members for their role and support in managing the affairs of the association over the past few years. She expressed her appreciation to every woman for attending the delegate’s conference. Women have grown so much in APPWA in that they have overcome petty jealousy, strife, malice and so many other negative issues ascribe to women in any grouping. More women have been nominated to the Diplomatic Corps, Public sector, Ministerial positions and many more. Hon. Elizabeth Mans thanked her executive for a job well done and wished her successor well. Women can do it better as demonstrated in most African countries. APPWA will propagate inclusivity at all levels thereby creating more opportunities for women in all facet of the society. All of the dreams of women can come true through cooperation. She concluded by saying that women have strong values which can be translated into action for the development of the State.

Madame Yvonne quoted former Malawian President Joyce Banda stating that the ‘seed of success in any nation, must be planted in every woman and child’ and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf ‘if your dream doesn’t make you to be afraid, then you have not dreamt big enough’. She concluded by wishing all delegates a fruitful outcome of the conference.

**PRESENTATION OF THE APPWA CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Acting Registrar of the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) Mrs. Zainab Umu Moseray presented the draft Code and highlighted salient points under each of the following chapters:
a. Application of the Code  
b. Adherence to the Code  
c. Compliance with the Electoral Laws and Processes  
d. Women’s participation and representation in Politics  
e. Media and communication  
f. Intimidation and violence  
g. Campaigning conduct  
h. Collective subscription to the code

ADOPTION OF THE APPWA CODE OF CONDUCT
The delegates were given copies of the code to go through in their respective party groups and thereafter, in plenary, make inputs and suggestions. At the completion of this exercise, women agreed that the Code adequately addressed all their needs and concerns. Rev. Kate Fornah NDA Chairperson, Moyamba district moved a motion that the code be adopted as presented and Fatmata Bangura from CDP seconded the motion. Delegates unanimously agreed that the Code of Conduct be adopted as presented.

In the Chairperson’s closing remarks for the first day, she reminded APPWA executive that the association should be an advocacy group. She encouraged women to join the 50/50 group.

DAY 2
The Conference was called to order by the Chairperson, Dr. Fatou Taqi and her co-chairperson Madam Baindu Massaquoi from UN Women. This was followed by opening prayers. Annex 3 the agenda for day 2

SIGNING OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR APPWA
Dr. Taqi called on the fourteen registered political parties women’s leaders to sign the code of conduct in front of their women. All of them appended their signatures to the Code.

A copy is attached as Annex 4.

REVIEW OF THE APPWA CONSTITUTION
This session was moderated by the APPWA Secretary General, Mrs. Augusta James-Teima. The constitution was read line by line to all delegates and the following amendments were made:
ARTICLE 7 – MEMBERSHIP

2.0 MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS AND DUTIES

(c) All Parties Parties shall pay a specific contribution to the general operations of APPWA

ARTICLE 8

3.1 COMPOSITION – The NE shall be constituted as follows:-

- Advisers (Ex-Officio) added

ARTICLE 8

5.15 ADVISER

2) Ex-Officios members

ARTICLE 17

1.1 FUND RAISING

Funds can be raised through the following means:

a) Fund raising activities
b) Donor supports
c) Contribution from the public
d) Membership annual contributions

ARTICLE 18

1.1 Adherence to the Code of conduct for APPWA

The code of conduct for AAPWA shall be an addendum to this constitution.

The following measures shall be taken against defaulters of the code of conduct-

1. Reprimand
2. Suspension
3. Expulsion from APPWA
DISSOLUTION AND SELECTION OF APPWA NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

The Co-Chairperson Madam Baindu Massaquoi led the process by thanking the out-going executive for leading the association over the past four years and then dissolved the committee.

The women leaders from all the political parties met and unanimously agreed on the structure of the National Executive between the first ten Political Parties whose tenure is two years. In that meeting it was agreed that the four new Political Parties (Alliance Democratic Party, National Progressive Democrat, National Grand Coalition and Unity Party) should serve as observers for a year and after which they will be incorporated into the executive structure of the association. The agreed list and positions to be occupied by the various Political Parties was presented to the Chairperson who presented it to the delegates. All the delegates were over the moon as the National Executives were presented. The conference climaxed to jubilation as the women sang and danced behind their leaders.

The positions were filled as follow:

1. **Position: President**
   Name: Mrs. Augusta James-Teima
   Name of Political Party Representing: National Democratic Alliance

2. **Position: Vice President**
   Name: Madam Selwina Francis
   Name of Political Party Representing: Peoples’ Movement for Democratic Change

3. **Position: Secretary General**
   Name: Madam Elisabeth Mans
   Name of Political Party Representing: All People’s Congress

4. **Position: Director of Project**
   Name: Madam Fatmata Sawaneh
   Name of Political Party Representing: Sierra Leone People’s Party

5. **Position: Financial Secretary**
   Name: Madam Kadie Johnson
   Name of Political Party Representing: Citizens Democratic Party

6. **Position: PRO**
   Name: Madam Halima Lucy Deen
   Name of Political Party Representing: United Democratic Movement

7. **Position: Treasurer**
   Name: Madam Kadie Mansaray
   Name of Political Party Representing: People’s Liberation Party
8. **Position: Organizing Secretary**  
   Name: Madam Fatmata Mansaray  
   Name of Political Party Representing: Revolutionary United Front Party

9. **Position: Asst. Secretary General:**  
   Name: Madam Isatu Bobor  
   Name of Political Party Representing: People’s Democratic Party

10. **Position: Asst. Public Relations Officer**  
   Name: Madam Sento Alpha  
   Name of Political Party Representing

The out-gone President in her handing over statement thanked the PPRC and APPWA for a wonderful work done and gave best wishes to the new President. She pledged to support the new National Executive Committee.

**STATEMENT BY THE NEW PRESIDENT**

Mrs. Augusta James Teima started by glorifying God for His grace and called on all Political Parties to lend their support. She further said for the association to succeed, all should put hands on deck to make it happen as women are co-workers in development. She congratulated and welcomed the four new Political Parties. This was followed by the inauguration of the newly registered political parties.

**CHALLENGES**

1. Re-cycling of members by the PLP, UDM and UNPP i.e one member belonging to both APPWA and the All Political Parties Youth Association
2. Use of fake identities by political party representatives e.g PLP, UNPP and UDM
3. Inconsistent signatures due to the fact that two people showed up claiming the same identity
4. Inconsistent signatures

**ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS**

1. DSA’s/transport allowances identified party representatives were withheld after the program
2. Political Party Representatives are now required to come along with the voter Identity Cards for proper verification.