



AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION

APU

RCF 08/37/14

RESOLUTION

on

“Microfinance as a means of fighting poverty and promoting the economic empowerment of women in Africa”

The Committee of African Women Parliamentarians, meeting on 31 October 2014 in Rabat, Morocco,

Considering that the economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for instituting sustainable development and growth, with a view to reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals,

Considering that innovative approaches and partnerships are key to scaling up efforts to enhance the economic activities of women,

Aware that gender equality, as stipulated in our Constitutions, women’s empowerment, the opportunity for women to fully exercise their fundamental rights and elimination of poverty are factors that determine economic and social development,

Considering that the economic empowerment of women is an integral part of their rights and the building of equal opportunity societies,

Considering that in the area of paid work, women face obstacles at different levels and that they do most the unpaid family and domestic work,

Considering the lack of funding for state-owned microfinance institutions in spite of the growing demand for their services;

Considering that the same interest rate are applied to two categories of poor women, notably very poor women and vulnerable women;

Recommends:

1. The introduction of appropriate government policies, the adoption of a comprehensive approach and commitment by all development stakeholders;
2. The adoption of national laws that recognize the legal capacity of women to have access to microcredit and their right to manage their own finances;

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3. A better extension of microfinance and awareness policy for micro entrepreneurs;
 4. The mobilization of substantial and ongoing funding to enable microfinance institutions set up by the State to play their full role;
 5. Substantial investment by countries in areas that can help eliminate or eradicate illiteracy;
 6. Improved support by microfinance institutions (MFIs) to women and individual projects in rural areas, as well as provide adequate training for women in microcredit management;
 7. Raising the awareness of beneficiaries about the need for a savings and insurance culture;
 8. The introduction of mechanisms to facilitate the creation of microfinance institutions to enable project holders (men, women and youth) to have a wide choice of financing offers;
 9. Access by women to economic resources and tools, such as employment, financial services, landed property and other means of production, training and market information;
 10. More equitable access to resources and services, such as land, water, technology, innovation, credit and banking services, to enhance the rights of women, increase agricultural productivity, reduce hunger and improve economic growth;
 11. The designing of infrastructure programmes that would enable people to benefit fully from the road network, transport services, telecommunications, energy and water, thereby contributing to poverty reduction;
 12. Improving job opportunities for women; better recognition by development actors of the value of unpaid family and domestic labour, which contributes to economic prosperity.
 13. The inclusion of the category of poor women in the application of interest rates for the repayment of loans;
 14. Focusing more attention on social issues that will see an improvement in economic policies (health and education) to eradicate poverty;
 15. Ensure access to markets for women who have been granted loans;
 16. The emergence and expansion of an African middle class (not only individuals) to enable them move out of the cycle of poverty;
 17. The provision of rewards for competitiveness, creativity and innovation;
 18. Promoting cooperation among businesses engaged in the fight against poverty and combine their efforts to achieve useful and positive results;
 19. The search for simple technological means to improve output at places of work.