

**Proclamation of the First Ladies of Cape Verde, Senegal and Zanzibar
for the
Promotion of Early Childhood Development**

**Colloquium of First Ladies of Africa
Fourth African International Conference on Early Childhood Development**

12 November 2009

In light of the urgent needs of young African children and their families, the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the 10th anniversary of African International Conferences on Early Childhood Development (ECD), and the 25th Anniversary of the ADEA Working Group on ECD, we dedicate ourselves to giving African children a better future. Noting that research demonstrates how integrated ECD services provide the foundation for human development, educational achievement, good health and nutrition, and national productivity, we issue this "Call to Action" to:

- Ensure the rights of all young children and mothers are respected;
- Expand and improve services for preconception and prenatal education and care, and children from birth to age 8, with emphasis on the period from birth to 3 to ensure good brain development, health and nutrition;
- Focus also on mothers and young children affected or infected by HIV/AIDS;

We hereby:

- Call upon all African countries to give priority to expanding investment in integrated services for ECD, including education, health, nutrition, protection and sanitation;
- Encourage all African nations to adopt and vigorously implement ECD Policies and Strategic Plans to improve child development and fulfil national commitments to the CRC;
- Promote the expansion of promising national ECD programmes to ensure all vulnerable children are served from conception to age 8;
- Commit ourselves to communicate key ECD messages for parents and children through radio, television, Internet and print media, for both resident and expatriate citizens;
- Invite all other First Ladies of Africa to join in strengthening the Network of First Ladies to focus very especially on ECD;
- Affirm we shall collaborate with the ADEA Working Group on ECD;
- Declare our strong support for the Communiqué of the Fourth African International Conference on ECD; and
- Express our gratitude to the First Lady of Senegal, Mme. Viviane Wade, for her inspiring leadership in ECD for Senegal and Africa.