



## **International Women's Day 2020: Message from the President of the Network of Local Elected Women of Africa (REFELA)**

My name is **Madame Dao Macoura**. I am Mayor of the Commune of Foubolo in Côte d'Ivoire, and **President of the Network of Local Elected Women of Africa (REFELA)**.

REFELA, was set up as the permanent committee for gender equality of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, UCLG Africa, the Pan-African representative organization of local and regional government of the African continent.

REFELA is mobilizing for African cities to take action to achieve the Equal Generation in Africa.

International Women's Day, 08 March 2020, marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the **Beijing Conference on Gender Equality** and gives me the opportunity, in my capacity as President of REFELA, to make an appeal to local and regional governments in Africa to be the **standard bearers of the Equality Generation on our continent**.

To African States and the African Union, I call on them to ensure the implementation of provisions of the protocol for the **African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa**, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union at their conference held on 11 July 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique, as well as those of Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the United Nations Agenda 2030.

**The Equality Generation** will not be achieved as long as violence against women persists; as long as women are discriminated against in access to work and positions of responsibility; as long as women's concerns are not taken into account in the definition and implementation of public policies.

Every woman in the world knows that a society that cannot protect children is unworthy. This is why REFELA has launched the **African cities without street**

**children campaign**, which I hope as many cities as possible will join. We need everyone to support this campaign. The very dignity of our societies is at stake.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, REFELA sends a message of compassion and support to all migrant women who, sometimes at the risk of their lives and those of their children, brave immense difficulties and suffer many abuses in the hope of a better life. It is unacceptable that women and their children are left to their sad fate only to receive indifference to their cry for help.

I hope that, on this day of celebration of International Women's Day, greater solidarity will be shown towards these courageous women and that, in each one of us, there will be a resurgence of that part of humanity and conviviality which, we must never cease to remember, should be the hallmark of the human race.

**Happy International Women's Day!**