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Delegates reject homosexual clause

October 7, 2013



A CONTROVERSIAL provision almost derailed the adoption of the Addis Ababa Declaration at the close of the African Regional Conference on Population and Development last Friday.

In a clear reflection of the position of most African countries on homosexuality, the majority delegates shot down a clause that would seek to promote gay and lesbian rights.

African ministers concluded a 2-day segment of the Regional Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014 with the adoption of an Addis Ababa declaration. After extensive discussions and an informal meeting of heads of delegations, countries agreed on all commitments, except 3 on which 17 countries have reservations as is normal in such kind of negotiations.

Delegates underscored the need to respond to new and emerging challenges relevant to population and development and to the changing development environment. They stressed the need to reinforce the integration of the population and development agenda in global processes related to development.

The document reaffirms the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, as well as other international and regional instruments relating to human rights and international law. These include, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on the Right and the Welfare of the Child.

The document emphasises implementation of the declaration through a number of channels, such as mainstreaming it into the work plans of the African Union and UN Economic Commission for Africa and the Post-2015 development agenda.

Prior to the adoption, debates had ensued around what some considered a loaded emphasis on human rights and fundamental freedoms for all; with controversy emerging on the phrase, 'without distinction of any kind' because of its elastic interpretation to meanings that might be unacceptable in Africa for various reasons. The reservations were raised, inspite of the fact that the three commitments that caused the reservations include a phrase that says, 'in accordance with national laws and policies.'

Some delegates argued, however, that human rights language was key to curbing discriminatory practice on a range of issues, such as the protection of Albinos. They stressed that human rights language pertaining to freedom of speech and choice are important elements of a people-centred development. The final version of the

[Myka Okafor](#) on October 11, 2013 at 3:30 am

The retrogressive 'development' of the current Western cultures must not only be aggressively nipped in the bud in Africa; but the truly developing countries and people of Africa MUST reverse that ugly western imperialism, and take back civilization to the babarians as we actually did in the 1st – 6th centuries AD!

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