

## **ABANTU for Development**

In 1991, ABANTU for Development was founded as an international non-governmental organization. “Abantu” means “people” in different African languages of the Bantu group and symbolizes the people-centered philosophy of ABANTU.

The focus of ABANTU’s work is on training, providing information and advice on mobilizing resources towards sustainable development in Africa.

The organization aims to empower African people, particularly women, to participate at local, national, regional and international levels in making decisions that affect their lives. ABANTU strives to eradicate the cultural, legal and political obstacles to women attaining economic independence and equality before the law.

To achieve these objectives ABANTU follows different strategies:

- To provide African people with skills in the areas of policy analysis, economics, health care, media and the environment;
- to establish and support a group of trainers and non-governmental organizations;
- to improve information exchange opportunities for trainers and consultants;
- to enhance the access of African people to the resources available in the North and South.

### Collaboration with FES

With regard to the national elections in December 2004 ABANTU and FES decided to develop a **“Women’s Manifesto”**. Supported through three studies and publications commissioned for this purpose, (Women in Politics and Public Life in Ghana; The Role of Women in Ghana’s Economy; Women in Agriculture in Ghana) the Women’s Manifesto presents a set of demands of the greatest possible coalition of women and gender activists of Ghana.

It has been produced to serve as a lobbying and advocacy tool to promote women’s active participation in political processes. Women who are interested to be in Parliament can use the Manifesto as a guideline. It provides rich “raw materials” for gender sensitive politics may thus be a good preparatory volume for future female candidates.

In December 2004 ABANTU for Development and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) organized an International Conference on the theme **“Women in Politics and Gender Policies – African International Experiences and Lessons Learned”** between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2004, in Accra, Ghana.

The conference brought together 35 participants from across Africa (Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and Ghana) to explore the strategies and initiatives that have been used to promote women and gender issues in public decision-making. It also sought to create a forum to enable women who have played crucial roles in promoting women into positions of political decision-making to meet and share their experiences and challenges, and draw out the lessons learnt.

In 2005 a follow up on the theme **“Promoting Gender through Policy Advocacy – are we making a difference?”** was held on November 30<sup>th</sup>-December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2005.

Drawing female parliamentarians, women in leadership positions in political parties and renowned gender activists from 11 African countries, this conference provided for exciting self-reflections and networking opportunities.

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