



STOPPING TO SAVOUR THE MOMENT

Lest You Forget

The 1995 [World Conference on Women](#) was magic, a rupture, watershed, revolutionary and a galvanizing force. It was unforgettable to the extent that today, after 20 years, if you randomly pick a person on the street, in a remote part of any African country and ask them what they know about women's rights, whatever the tone of voice; angry or excited, they are likely to mention Beijing. They might not even know where Beijing is, whether it's an obedient or rebellious woman, an ideology or dream, but they have heard about it, it represents either women's liberation or transgression.

On a day to day basis, in public or private spaces, we are impacted by the [Beijing Platform for Action](#), a road map to equality. We, at Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa), connect with the Beijing World conference in a special way because we were conceived as a result of some of the discussions that took place at the NGO Forum held in Huairou, north of Beijing and attended by 40,000.

Nevertheless, we all remember Beijing differently whether we were part of the group that made it happen, were at the [official governmental meeting](#) or the parallel [NGO Forum](#), or were in Beijing to staple papers for the 'big' people, to witness the occasion, were teenagers or just toddlers at home; whatever the case, we are part of the historical moment.

Given its significance, in the lead up to the 20-year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (**Beijing+20**), should we not stop whatever we are doing, look back, savour the moment and smell the flowers? Should we not take a moment to consciously bring Beijing to wherever we are?

Martin Luther King reminds us that; *"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"*. Let us remember everything, speak and not forget anything, retrieve herstory from memory and from written notes.

Urgent Action Fund-Africa invites you to reflect on Beijing by telling your story.

Why?

- It's important to hear all the stories related to Beijing; the suffering, joy, and chaos that were necessary for the Beijing to happen; preserve and pass them down to those after us.
- Knowing the herstory of our movement is key in shaping our collective identify.
- Our past has a huge impact on our future and we need that inspiration to give us a better understanding of the women's world and some of the forces that have shaped it into what it is today.
- Most importantly, we need to tell our own intergenerational stories lest we get erased from history.

What?

We are inviting you to answer two questions:

1. Where were you in 1995?
2. Do you think that we need a Fifth World Conference on Women? If so, why and if not, why not?
- 3.

From what will evolve out of the stories across countries, cultures, different age groups and sexualities, we will use the information to imagine alternative perspectives for change and craft new visions.

You will get the opportunity to read other sisters' stories both online and in a hardcopy coffee-table book.

Could you kindly respond by 8th March, 2015 to tooni@urgentactionfund-africa.or.ke

UAF-Africa family