



330 FULLER STREET, DORCHESTER, MA 02124 P: 617-287-0096 F: 617-287-0170

**AFAB International Women's Day
March 8, 2007**

The Association of Haitian Women in Boston/Asosiyasyon Fanm Ayisyen nan Boston (AFAB) commemorates the brave and courageous women that have contributed to the livelihood of all women across the globe. These women date back to heroines of the 1917 Copenhagen Women's Conference in Germany. They were also the stoic Haitian women of 1791. We acknowledge and honor the heroic contributions of many Haitian women that resulted in the success of the Haitian Revolution of 1804, which ignited the movement for a free New World.

Today we find strength in the spirit of our Haitian heroines to face the challenges of inequality as we fight for a fair and just society. As an immigrant organization, we focus on the specificities of immigrant women challenges; yet we find clear connections with overall women's efforts that are linked to the larger global vision of women and community empowerment.

Our 2007 theme "Immigrant Women and Access" underpins our endeavor to open more doors for education, training, health, and housing. The skyrocketing anti-immigrant sentiments since the Patriot Act of 2001 have alerted us of a dire need for increasing economic empowerment in immigrant communities. AFAB has for many years supported immigrant women enduring harsh abusive relationships as they feel socially isolated and economically powerless. AFAB's role has been to find effective strategies to help women reclaim their confidence to re-build their self-esteem in order to take the necessary next steps towards progress.

From Haiti to Boston, we have surmounted a multitude of obstacles as a collective of immigrant women. AFAB continues to be the voice for women who are used, abused and discriminated against everyday by their partners, husbands, employers, industries, and the 'system'. In Haiti, our women are raped, mutilated and disregarded; In the US, they are raided at their workplaces, arrested and deported without any 'Due Process'. Are they not human beings? Don't they deserve to be united with their families as the laws of this country prescribed? Don't they deserve justice? Don't they have civil rights as human beings?

The heroic strength of our Foremothers enables AFAB to continue with the work of

women's empowerment for just and equitable treatment through advocacy and organizing. We have embraced the ongoing challenge of organizing around fair and comprehensive immigration policies. Knowing that we are a community of strong and powerful immigrants, coupled with the support of all progressive brothers and sisters, reassures us of a brighter future.

Today, while we focus on advocating for access for individual women to make important achievements, we steadfastly believe that there must be structural changes for more even distribution of the country's wealth. Only then, we will be able to stop the hurt and the abuse in our society. Together, we can take action to make the world a better place for women and their families.