



**Fifty-Ninth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
UNHQ, New York, 9 - 20 March 2015**

**Concept Note for Side Event: High-Level Interactive Dialogue
Towards a Continental Results Framework on Women Peace and Security in Africa**

Date: Tuesday, 10th March 2015

Venue: Conference Room 11, General Assembly Building

Time: 1:15 PM to 2:30 PM

1. Background:

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union, at its 476th meeting held on 16 December 2014, adopted a press statement, PSC/PR/BR.1(CDLXXVI), in which it urged the African Union Commission to formulate a Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security in Africa to serve as a tool for monitoring implementation by Member States and other relevant stakeholders of the various instruments and commitments to the agenda on women, peace and security in Africa. Its development will be coordinated by the Office of the Special Envoy of the AUC Chairperson on Women Peace and Security.

The proposed framework resonates with other continental efforts aimed at the empowerment of women and promotion of gender equality in all spheres, including in peace and security. *Inter alia*, the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration of the African Union, the 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063, and the mid-term review of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020), which collectively call for the full and active participation of women in all continental and regional endeavours. It also aligns with the recommendations of the Ninth African Regional Conference on Women of November 2014, which are contained in the "*Addis Ababa Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: Towards a Transformational Change for Women and Girls in Africa*".

This proactive effort by the African Union's Peace and Security Council and the proposed framework is consistent with the vision of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which is contained in its recent Presidential Statement on Women, Peace and Security, S/PRST/2014/21, of October 2014. *Inter alia*, reaffirming that women's and girl's empowerment and gender equality are critical to efforts to maintain international peace and security; and welcoming efforts at national and regional levels to implement resolution 1325 (2000), including by developing national action plans and other national, sub-regional and regional-level strategies and implementation frameworks.

Furthermore, the focus of the proposed framework on '*implementation*' and '*results*' is in sync with global efforts to accelerate and enhance the effective implementation of all policy instruments on women, peace and security; in particular the Beijing +20 review and the 15th anniversary of resolution 1325 and all related subsequent resolutions. In its Presidential Statement of October 2014, the UNSC reiterated its intention to convene a High-Level Review in October 2015, to commemorate the 15th anniversary of resolution 1325 and assess progress made in its implementation at the global, regional and national levels. The review process will be based on a global study that will, *inter alia*, highlight examples of good

practice, implementation gaps and challenges, as well as emerging trends and priorities for action. In this regard, the UNSC encouraged “Member States and regional organizations with frameworks and plans for implementing resolution 1325 to start reviewing existing implementation plans and targets, and to accelerate progress and prepare to formulate new targets”. The process of developing the proposed Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security is therefore opportune for simultaneously assessing the progress made by African Member States and regional organisations in implementing resolution 1325. It is also timely for reviewing existing national and regional action plans on resolution 1325 in light of current challenges, with aim to identifying priority actions and new targets.

Linking regional efforts to global efforts, it must be noted that approximately 13¹ of the 48 countries that have adopted national action plans for resolution 1325 are in Africa. In addition, two African sub-regional organizations, namely the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) have adopted regional action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325. Although these plans provide a blueprint for taking action, their implementation has been lagging, inconsistent and poorly resourced at all levels. In this respect, the ongoing processes at regional and global levels provide new opportunities for ensuring the accelerated and enhanced implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, including through renewed political commitment, consistent action, targeted resource mobilization, monitoring impact assessment and mainstreaming across all peace and security efforts.

2. Why a Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security in Africa:

It is undoubted that in the last fifteen years since its adoption, UNSC resolution 1325 has been essential and instrumental for retaining a focus on and galvanizing action to advance the women, peace and security agenda, across the world. Tremendous progress and achievements have been made at the normative, strategic and operational levels. At the normative level, for instance, the UNSC has adopted six additional resolutions on women, peace and security; namely 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013). In addition, as stated earlier, 13 African Member States and two African sub-regional organisations have respectively developed national and regional action plans for the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 and related subsequent resolutions.

At the strategic and operational levels, there have been increased representation and participation of women in decision making in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, including in the security sector, special political missions and peacekeeping operations. Female candidates have been appointed as special representatives and envoys, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Envoy to the AUC Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security. Gender-sensitive training has become an integral component of pre-deployment training for peacekeepers and is increasingly being integrated into national training programmes for military, police and civilian personnel. This is to ensure the protection of and respect for the human rights of women and girls in situations of conflict and post-conflict. Interaction with civil society, including women’s organizations, has increased and gender expertise is increasingly deployed in various peace and security processes, including elections, disarmament,

¹ Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda,

demobilization and reintegration, security sector and judicial reform and wider post-conflict development.

In spite of these achievements, significant challenges remain and are also emerging and overall progress is inconsistent. As the Secretary-General noted in his report to the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security (S/2014/693) of September 2014, progress has been uneven and unacceptably low overall, with stagnation and even regression in some contexts. There are persistent implementation deficits in the women, peace and security agenda. Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is widespread as a result of armed conflicts, insecurities arising from poverty and inequalities, and growing terrorism and violent extremism. Across the epicentres of terrorism in Africa, women and girls are frequently victims of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, as they are increasingly abducted as the targets for rape, forced marriages and sexual slavery. More recently, girls and young women have been forcefully used as weapons of war, notably as suicide bombers for terrorist groups. There continues to be widespread impunity for perpetrators of these violations against women as well as against women's rights advocates and human rights defenders who are increasingly subjected to violence, in some contexts, for advocating for the prosecution of offenders.

Additionally, displacements arising from the various conflict situations across Africa, environmental stresses and the impact of the recent outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease have further exacerbated the vulnerabilities of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. For instance, women and girls are increasingly targets of conflict-related sexual violence, they constitute the majority of those that are forcibly displaced as a result of armed conflicts, women and girls were doubly jeopardised and more susceptible to contracting the Ebola virus because of their traditional roles as caregivers to the sick.

Opportunities to promote women's leadership, participation and agency in peace and security structures and processes remain limited at all levels; and often mainstream peace and security institutions do not systematically and consistently consider or integrate issues pertaining to women in their work. This erroneously classifies the 'women, peace and security' agenda as an issue for women only, rather than a security issue, thereby undermining accountability for its effective implementation. The effective implementation of the women, peace and security agenda is also severely undercut by inadequate means of implementation, including financial resources, technology and capacity development, as well as a lack of reliable and quality data on the impact of conflict and new security threats on women and girls. In addition, efforts to ensure women's protection are prioritized over ensuring their equal participation. This highlights the possible lack of understanding of the importance of women's agency and empowerment at every stage in conflict prevention, management, resolution and post-conflict rebuilding.

The proposed continental results framework provides an opportunity to galvanise action and mobilise resources to address these gaps and accelerate implementation of the women, peace and security agenda across the pillars of prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery. It will also be vital for generating inputs for the road map for the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 flagship project on "silencing the guns and achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2020". As one of the flagship project of Agenda 2063, the silencing the gun agenda, *inter alia*, strongly commits to empower women, remove all obstacles to women's full participation and promote gender equality.

Moreover, the proposed framework will also be important for aligning continental and global efforts on women, peace and security. This is noting that the process of developing the framework will be essential for generating inputs for the Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325 that has been commissioned by the Secretary-General in preparation for the High-Level Review by the UNSC in October 2015. Also, the proposed framework development process will be vital for generating inputs for the annual report of the Secretary-General to the UNSC on women, peace and security, focusing on progress, gaps and challenges as well as recommendations for full implementation of resolution 1325. UN-Women has been requested to lead on the authoring of this report and recently undertook a regional consultation that was hosted by the African Union in Addis Ababa, on the margins of its 24th Summit in January 2015. This framework will also assist the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) in galvanizing support for the 2015 theme of the AU Summit. Additionally, the recommendations from this meeting will be incorporated into the Report of the Secretary-General on the “*Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*”, which OSAA is mandated to prepare. As such, this side event is critical and timely to highlight good practices from the region and challenges to implementation, as well as to gather recommendations and inputs not just for the Global Study and the annual report of the Secretary-General on implementation of resolution 1325, but also for the Peace Operations Review Panel and Peacebuilding Architecture review currently underway. This is to ensure that the women, peace and security agenda is central to the DNA of the peace and security architecture of the United Nations.

3. Purpose of Event:

The main purpose of the event is to undertake advocacy at the global level in support of the proposed African Union Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security in Africa. In doing so, the event will also generate inputs for the global study that is underway on the implementation of resolution 1325, in preparation for the High-Level Review in October 2015. In addition, the event will highlight other ongoing processes and initiatives that are relevant for advancing the women, peace and security agenda, including the Beijing +20 review, implementation of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and its First Ten-Year Action Plan, the mid-term review of the African Women’s Decade (2010-2020), negotiations on the post-2015 development framework and the series of other initiatives to be implemented by both the African Union and its RECs throughout the 2015 African Union’s Year for women’s empowerment and development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063.

4. Specific Objectives:

1. Take stock of progress, and raise awareness of Africa’s good practices, in implementing UNSC resolution 1325, including efforts and plans to establish the proposed Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security;
2. Discuss existing gaps and challenges to the effective implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in Africa;
3. Share good practices and lessons learned on developing and implementing action plans on women, peace and security, with a focus on monitoring, evaluation and results.
4. Identify emerging trends, new priorities and targets to inform the formulation of the continental results framework and the road map for Agenda 2063 flagship project on silencing the guns, as well as contribute to the 2015 High-Level Review; and

5. Proffer recommendations on mobilizing the means of implementation at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels.

5. Expected Outputs:

The key expected outputs from the event include:

1. Proposals on gender equality and women's empowerment considerations by the African Union Commission in developing the road map for implementation of Agenda 2063's flagship project on silencing the guns and achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2020;
2. Proposals for the Global Study on emerging trends and priorities for accelerated action to enhance implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in Africa;
3. Suggestions for the Peace Operations Review Panel and the Peacebuilding Architecture Review Panel on issues and priorities on women, peace and security in Africa, including the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325; and
4. Concrete proposals on emerging trends, new targets, priority actions and opportunities for mobilizing means of implementation for consideration by the African Union Commission in the formulation of the Continental Results Framework on Women Peace and Security.

6. Format of Event:

The event will be structured as a moderated interactive dialogue to encourage full and active participation. The interactions will be preceded by presentations that address the specific objectives of the side event, in order to set the tone for the ensuing dialogue.

7. Participation:

All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations will be invited and are expected to share their perspectives on these issues, particularly countries with existing national action plans on UNSC resolution 1325. African Ministers of Gender and Women's Affairs, parliamentarians, representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), women's NGOs, civil society groups and the media, as well as the wider United Nations system, in particular Members of the Advocacy and Communications Cluster (ACC) of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, will also attend the event.

8. Co-organizers:

1. Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA)
2. African Union (AU):
 - ❖ Office of the Special Envoy of the AUC Chairperson on Women Peace and Security
 - ❖ The African Union Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations.
3. UN Department of Public Information (DPI)
4. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security
5. Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS)