

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

4th AFRICA FORUM ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY 13-14 December 2023

We, the participants of the **4th Africa Forum on Women, Peace, and Security**, whose theme is: **“Enhancing Women’s Participation and Leadership in Peace and Security Processes in Africa,”** convened in Addis Ababa, from 13-14 December 2023,

COGNIZANT of our common objective of advancing the women, peace and security agenda in Africa towards the attainment of Agenda 2063;

ACKNOWLEDGE the timeliness of the Forum, especially given the 20th Anniversary of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the 23rd Anniversary of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1325), and the 28th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BPfA);

APPLAUD the leadership of H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, the President of Ethiopia, in Addis Ababa, in the convening of this 4th Annual Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Forum;

FURTHER APPLAUD the Special Envoy of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace, and Security, and other AU Departments/ Divisions/ Programmes such as the Gender, Peace and Security Programme (GPSP) and the FemWise Secretariat for their collective efforts towards ensuring that the WPS Agenda remains a priority for African leaders;

GUIDED BY the various normative instruments and decisions that advance the WPS Agenda in Africa, including the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000); Article 4(I), of the AU Constitutive Act, the Maputo Protocol on Women’s Rights (2003), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004), the African Women’s Decade (2010-2020), Aspiration 6 of the Agenda 2063; and the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2018-2028, amongst others;

FURTHER GUIDED BY the AU Continental Results Framework (CRF) for Monitoring and Reporting on the WPS Agenda;

APPLAUD the commitment by African leaders, and H.E Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), towards advancing the WPS Agenda in Africa, including establishing a Panel of the Wise, which has 50 percent gender parity, and institutionalizing women-led AU Electoral Observation Missions (AU EOMS), some of which have been deployed in Madagascar and Egypt;

FURTHER COMMEND the AUC for investing in efforts to strengthen women’s participation in peace and security processes through its establishment of mechanisms such as the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise) and the African Women’s Leadership Network (AWLN);

CONGRATULATE the AUC for the publication of its 3rd Bi-annual Report on the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Africa (2023), which fosters accountability and is critical for monitoring progress;

APPLAUD the Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and their Member States for their efforts in implementing the WPS agenda through the adoption of six (6) **Regional Action Plans (RAPs) and thirty-five (35) National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325, making Africa the continent with the highest number of NAPs and RAPs;**

COMMEND the efforts of African women in different contexts to promote peace and security at local, sub-national and national levels, including undertaking solidarity missions to conflict contexts;

HOWEVER, NOTE WITH CONCERN the gendered impact of the persistent conflict situations in the continent, including those in Burkina Faso, Chad, DRC, Niger, Mali, and Sudan, which are compounded by emerging peace and security threats such as climate change, displacement and digital gender-based violence;

REMAIN CONCERNED that despite the advances noted, women remain grossly under- represented as peace negotiators, mediators, envoys, delegates, signatories and observers to peace processes in Africa;

FURTHER NOTE WITH CONCERN, persistent challenges such as the underfunding of NAPs, limited capacities to implement the WPS Agenda; and lack of quantifiable data and siloed approaches to peace and security processes;

CALL for the redoubling of efforts to fully implement and advance the WPS agenda through the following measures:

1. **Strengthen and support women's peace networks, especially in countries in conflict situations and political crises** by deploying Solidarity Missions to Sudan, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali. This will not only amplify women's voices, representation and participation, but will also send a strong message of the AU's commitment towards finding lasting and inclusive peace in these contexts;
2. **AU Peace and Security Council should call for the participation of women in the ongoing peace process in Sudan.** ensuring that a Women's Reference Group is established to support the Special Envoy on WPS in pushing for a more inclusive and gender-responsive peace process.
3. **AU PSC must adopt a Policy on Gender quotas in all AU-led conflict response efforts:** The AU Peace and Security Council should adopt a Policy which calls for a **minimum of 30 percent gender** quota for women's participation in all conflict prevention/ management missions, peace processes, and election observation missions led by the African Union.

4. **Establish a flexible funding mechanism for the implementation of the WPS Agenda:** The AU Peace and Security Council should task the AUC Chairperson's Office to establish, under the auspices of the Peace Fund, an Urgent Action Fund/ Flexible Funding mechanism to enable the mobilization of resources to facilitate women's participation in peace and security processes. This Fund should have a protection component reserved for women participating in peace and security processes.

5. **Support Member States to adopt measures to further women's participation in decision-making:** The AUC's Political Affairs and Peace and Security Department (Conflict Management Division's Democracy and Electoral Support Unit), working in collaboration with REC/RMs, should support Member States to adopt measures to strengthen women's participation in electoral processes, such as constitutional, electoral and political party quotas.

6. **Highlight and act on the nexus between climate change, peace and security:** The AU Special Envoy on WPS should focus on climate change as a peace and security issue in its bi-annual reports on the state of the WPS Agenda in Africa. Additionally, the Special Envoy should work with mechanisms such as the African First Ladies Peace Mission Forum (AFLPMF); FEMWISE and AWLN to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation in peace processes, and help with design of **Climate-sensitive Mediation Guidance**.

7. **Establish and harmonize the national structures for women's participation in peace and security issues:** AU Member states should undertake efforts to harmonize the various decentralized structures for women's participation in peace and security processes, including national chapters of FemWise-Africa and AWLN;

8. **Allocate sufficient and tailored budgetary resources towards implementation of the WPS Agenda:** AU Member States' Treasury Departments, working with the responsible WPS Focal Points should ensure that NAPs are accompanied by a costed Implementation Plan. **Investing in the WPS Agenda without allocating the adequate financial resources will not yield impactful results.**

9. **Leverage on the roles of Pan-African Parliament, Regional and National Parliaments in Advancing the WPS Agenda:** The Pan-African Parliament (PAP), together with regional and National Parliaments should be capacitated to push for the implementation of the WPS Agenda, including ensuring that they can adopt laws that seek to strengthen women's participation in politics, decision-making and

peace processes. **PAP can play a role in developing Model Laws for adoption by National Parliaments.**

10. **Strengthen National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems on WPS:** AU Member states' NAP Coordinating mechanisms, working with National Statistical Offices, should strengthen their data collection, documentation, monitoring, and evaluation by institutionalizing the generation of bi-annual reports on the implementation of the WPS Agenda, which can feed into the AU Continental Results Framework (AU CRF).
11. **Strengthen Capacity Building processes:** AU Member states' Gender Machineries and WPS Focal Points, working with CSOs and RECs/ RMs should strengthen the capacities of stakeholders on WPS, to ensure a whole-of society approach towards the implementation of the agenda, and to facilitate intergenerational transfer of knowledge.
12. **Capitalize on the reform of the global peace and security architecture to influence transformation:** The AU Peace and Security Council, working with Office of the Special Envoy on WPS and the AU Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, relevant organs and specialized institutions, should leverage the ongoing reforms of the global peace and security architecture for a more inclusive multilateral system that is gender-responsive and inclusive.
13. **Amplify the voices of African women's voices in global platforms such as the UNSC and UN General Assembly:** Mechanisms such as FemWise-Africa, AWLN , supported by the Special Envoy on WPS to address these platforms and provide briefings on the status of the WPS agenda in Africa, and highlight key demands from women.
14. **Document the roles and contributions of women peacebuilders at Track II and III levels:** Women's networks, CSOs and centres of excellence must collaborate with initiatives such as **She Stands for Peace; An Initiative by the United Nations Office of the African Union and the AU, as part of the** documentation process for the work being undertaken by women in informal peace tables.
15. **Utilize the media as a mechanism to raise awareness on the WPS Agenda:** Traditional, digital and social media should be fully engaged as an ally of the WPS Agenda, to document the value and contributions of women in peace and security processes, while spotlighting concerns and outstanding challenges.

16. **Ensure the Outcome Statement is shared with the AU PSC and relevant organs:**
Present the Outcome statement to the AU PSC and ensure follow-up on the recommendations.

17. **Undertake a mid-year review of the WPS Annual Forum** to assess progress before the 5th WPS Forum.

Addis Ababa, 14 December 2023