



Dismantling patriarchal approach to and conception of politics and power pre-requisite for gender inclusive culture of peace in Africa

Amani Africa Statement submitted to the 987th ministerial level session of the PSC

Dear your excellency Ambassador Raychelle Omamo, SC, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya and PSC Chairperson for March 2021

- Excellencies ministers members of the PSC
- Your excellency Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security,
- Your excellency Ambassador Amira Elfadil Mohammed Elfadil, the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development
- Your excellency Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security
- Your excellency Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative of Secretary General to the AU and Head of UN Office to the AU
- Distinguished colleagues and guests

Good morning or good afternoon from wherever you have joined this meeting.

Amani Africa would like to start by thanking the Republic of Kenya for holding this session on theme of particular significance, for doing so in particular at a ministerial level.

It was in 2010 that the Council took a decision to have the women, peace and security theme as its standing thematic agenda. However, this is the first time that the PSC is convening this standing session at the level of Ministers.

Amani Africa, as an organization that supports the work of the PSC towards the implementation of the PSC Protocol through research, technical support, policy analysis, training and convening, welcomes the focus on 'gender inclusive culture of peace'. This framing helps us to discuss the source of oppression of women and girls in society, which exposes them to and renders them targets of some of the most barbaric acts of violence, particularly in times of conflict as reports from ongoing conflict settings attest.

At the heart of the challenges facing women and girls is patriarchy and how patriarchy defines the roles and place of women and men in society. Patriarchy sustains the conditions for oppression of Women and girls. As the renowned Egyptian author and feminist advocate, Nawal El Saadawi, who passed away yesterday, put it, men are also less free due to the burden that patriarchy puts on them.

Indeed, the way politics is organized and mobilized as well as the continuing hold of patriarchal conceptions of power which not only enables cultural traits of domination and violence in society but also inhibits gender inclusivity. The resultant absence or weakness of gender inclusive culture of peace both exposes women and girls to domination and violence even in times of relative peace and makes them more vulnerable to becoming targets of violence in conflict situations.

Gender inclusive culture of peace as a matter of necessity thus requires the dismantling of the association of politics and power to masculinity. The dismantling and reframing of the patriarchal approach to and conception of politics and power is indeed a pre-requisite for ensuring a gender inclusive culture of peace and thereby minimize the vulnerability of women and girls to become targets of violence both in times of peace and during conflicts.

With respect to the representation and participation of women in peace processes, this session presents an opportunity to discuss the mechanisms through which increased representation of women in peace support operations as well as in prevention,



mediation and peace-making initiatives could be realised. Ensuring that women assume leadership positions at various levels of decision-making at the national level is essential, as that is the pool from which women can be recruited to participate in peace processes.

Additionally, there is a need for the creation of gender sensitive conditions of work in peacekeeping operations and in mediation and peace negotiation as critical measure for ensuring their effective participation in these processes free from the constraints.

Peace agreements and other peace supporting initiatives should also have components that are cognizant of and address the disproportionate impacts of conflicts on women. One example is the assignment of explicit mandate for peace support operations or mechanisms such as the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security for monitoring, tracking, documenting, analyzing and reporting on Sexual and Gender Based Violence as basis for designing evidence-based responses for addressing the disproportionate impact of conflicts on women and girls.

In the context of the theme of the year "Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want", it is of paramount importance for the AU and AU member states to ensure that the activities on the AU theme of the year are designed to promote gender inclusive culture of peace and enhance delivery on women's rights to peace and participation in peace processes in Africa.

Africa's rich arts, culture and heritage offers huge resources that the AU and member states should tap into in championing gender inclusion in all areas of life of society and dismantling the patriarchal approach to and conception of politics and power that facilitates tendencies of domination of and violence against women and girls and impeded the equal enjoyment of rights by women and girls. The rich resources in the music, literary and performing arts also avails materials that enhance the promotion of culture of peace and make culture of peace gender inclusive. Gender inclusivity in the conception and promotion of the culture of peace is the foundation on which the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda depends.



Finally, in addressing the challenges of gender based violence, which has shown major spike during the health pandemic of COVID19, the call made during the 34th AU summit for the adoption of a convention against gender based violence in Africa is a commendable initiative that the PSC may welcome.

Excellencies, we thank you for your time and attention.