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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

2ND MINISTERIAL HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

9 SEPTEMBER 2026

COTONOU, BENIN

PSC/MIN/CONCL.2 (2026)

CONCLUSIONS



CONCLUSIONS OF THE 2ND MINISTERIAL HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) organised its 2nd Ministerial High-Level Seminar on Women, Peace and Security, in Cotonou, Benin, on 9 September 2026, under the Chairship of H.E. Corinne AMORI BRUNET, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin and Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council for the Month of September 2026, **WHILE COMMEMORATING** African Union Day through the historic Sirte Declaration of 1999, when African leaders took the decisive step towards creating the African Union.

The Seminar was held under the theme: “**Operationalizing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda – Quotas, Accountability, and the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG).**” Apart from the PSC Members, other participants included representatives of some Member States, the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) and its regional chapters, as well as representatives of UN Women, partners, African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and think tanks.

The High-Level seminar was officially opened by H.E. Corinne AMORI BRUNET, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin and Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council for the Month of September 2026; and H.E. Speciosa Naigaga Wandira Kazibwe, Former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda delivered the keynote address as the Guest of Honor. H.E. Amb. Liberata Mulamula, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Women, Peace and Security delivered the opening remarks, and Ms. Doris Mpoumou, UN Women Special Representative to the AU and UNECA delivered remarks during the opening ceremony.

The Seminar **welcomed** the progress made in ensuring meaningful participation of women in governance, peace and security processes in Africa, and emphasized that quotas level the playing field and open the doors for women’s active presence and meaningful participation in decision-making, including in Track I mediation and other peace processes.

NOTING the briefings made by various presenters and the contributions by Member States, experts and representatives of civil society organizations on the following agenda:

- i. Beyond 25 Years of UNSCR 1325: Reimagining the Next Decade of Women, Peace and Security in Africa;
- ii. Operationalizing the Swakopmund First Edition Decisions: The AU Policy Framework on Women's Quotas;
- iii. Women in Early Warning: Strengthening Participation to Enhance Conflict Prevention; and
- iv. Advancing the Participation of Women in Defense, Security Forces, and Peacekeeping Missions.

The discussion focused on the four main pillars of the WPS agenda, namely Prevention, Protection, Participation and Relief and Recovery.

FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE DELIBERATIONS, PARTICIPANTS:

RECALLED the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (1986); the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2025); the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004); the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions;

APPLAUDED the PSC for its dedication in championing and institutionalizing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda; and **EXPRESSED** appreciation to the AU Commission, through the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security and FemWise-Africa, as well as UN Women, for tireless efforts to ensure and enhance women's participation in peace processes on the Continent;

REAFFIRMED the critical importance of promoting and implementing the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, the Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (2025), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and subsequent resolutions, as well as other relevant universal human rights instruments and relevant Assembly and PSC decisions;

NOTED WITH CONCERN the complex nature of conflict in Africa, the geopolitical global shift, and its impact on women and girls, and in this regard, **RECOGNIZED** the critical role that women have played since the establishment of Pan-African Women's Organization (PAWO) in 1962, and the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) / African Union (AU) in 1963 and 2002 respectively; and their current efforts of creating a conflict free Africa that is conducive for women, girls and youth in line with "The Africa We Want";

ALSO RECOGNIZED Africa's long tradition of women's leadership in matters of governance, peace and security, such as the history of the Queen Tassi Hangbe of Dahomey;

REAFFIRMED the AU's commitment to actualise Agenda 2063 and all its Aspirations, particularly Aspirations 3, 4 and 6, as well as the flagship programme of Silencing the Guns in Africa;

UNDERScored the critical role of women in the promotion of peace, security, stability and development in Africa, including the importance of women's participation in Track I mediation processes, and their inclusion and leadership in peace processes;

COMMENDED Member States that have already adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security and **ENCOURAGED** them to submit their reports to the Commission through the Continental Result Framework (CRF); **ALSO ENCOURAGED** Member States which are yet to adopt their NAPs to do so without further delays; and **REQUESTED** the Commission to provide the required technical support to accelerate the adoption and implementation of NAPs.

PARTICIPANTS AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING:

1. Welcomed the progress made by Member States, AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and partners in the implementation of the Conclusions of the Inaugural Swakopmund Process;
2. Noted with appreciation that Africa has the highest number of National Action Plans for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, with 37 Member States having adopted their NAPs, as well as six Regional Action Plans (RAPs); the Seminar called for the implementation, robust monitoring and reporting, as well as predictable financing of the plans, and incorporation of key priorities of the NAPs into national development plans and budgets; and appealed to Member States who are yet to develop NAPs to do so;
3. Commended all Member States who are leading on women's representation at national level; and emphasized the importance of a shift from policy development to implementation,

including the provision of technical assistance, and capacity-building support to empower women-led initiatives and organizations working on early warning, peacebuilding and conflict resolution;

4. Underscored that women are not only the victims of conflicts and violence, but they are peacemakers, mediators, negotiators, peacebuilders, and decision-makers; and in this regard it is an obligation to ensure women's full representation and meaningful participation at all levels in governance, peace and security;
5. Stressed that women need to be protected from conflicts and violence to ensure their meaningful participation in the peace and security processes; and in this context commended the Member States that have signed and ratified the CEVAWG, and further called upon all Member States to ratify the Convention in order to accelerate its entry into force;
6. Emphasized on evidence-based data on WPS to inform policy development, implementation of programmes and accountability; and urged Member States to ensure systematic collection of data at national level and reporting through the Continental Results Framework (CRF) on the implementation of WPS;
7. Noted with concern the global regression of women as mediators to 5% in 2025 from 7% in 2024, and further noted that only 31% of the peace agreements included at least one provision referencing women and girls, or sexual violence; in this regard, the Seminar called for the ongoing development of the AU Policy Framework on Women's Quota in AU-led and co-led mediation and peace processes ensures that women's equal participation is guaranteed at all stages, and that their perspectives, needs and priorities are fully integrated in peace agreements/deals;
8. Took note of the statutory minimum of thirty percent (30%) gender quota for women's participation in all conflict prevention, peace support operations, peace processes, and election observation missions led and co-led by the AU, and recommended that the 30% should be a departure point, and proposed for the increase of the quota to 50%, noting that quotas level the playing field and open the doors for women's active presence, visibility and meaningful participation in decision-making and Track 1 peace mediation processes;
9. Recognized the critical role that FemWise-Africa mediators, women peacebuilders, and women civil society organizations continue to play in local and national mediation and dialogue processes; and emphasized the need to establish a transfer mechanism that enables the upward transmission of women's contributions from the community level to Track 2 and Track 1 processes; and conversely, ensure that decisions made at Track 1 level are also effectively communicated back to the grassroots;
10. Strengthening women mediators' networks, their in-depth training, and their systematic inclusion in early-warning mechanisms should be prioritized. The AU and its Member States to adopt measures to capacitate and include women and gender experts in mediation and conflict management and resolution processes, including those drawn from the FemWise-Africa Network;
11. Called for a comprehensive approach that links the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda with economic empowerment, human rights, and the peace-security-development nexus, while also addressing emerging challenges related to climate change, forced displacement, and digital violence;

12. The WPS agenda in Africa to take into account indigenous mechanisms and cultural practices of conflict prevention, management and resolution, while taking into consideration the evolvement of the current geopolitical shifts;
13. Looked forward to the 3rd High-Level Seminar on Women, Peace and Security to be held in 2028.

Furthermore, Participants:

EXPRESSED GRATITUDE to the Government and People of the Republic of Benin for graciously hosting the Second Ministerial High-Level Seminar on Women, Peace and Security in Africa. Participants also expressed gratitude to UN Women and GIZ for their support.

Adopted on 9 September 2026 in Cotonou, Benin.