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MINISTERIAL HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
COMMEMORATING 20 YEARS OF THE PSC BY TAKING STOCK OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND
LEADERSHIP IN PEACE PROCESSES IN AFRICA

23 MARCH 2024
SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA

PSC/MIN/CONCL.INAUGURAL (2024)

CONCLUSIONS



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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) organized a Ministerial High-Level Seminar on Women, Peace and Security, in Swakopmund, Republic of Namibia, on 23 March 2024. The Seminar was held under the theme: “Commemoration of the 20 years of the PSC by taking Stock of Women’s Participation and Leadership in Peace Processes in Africa”. Apart from the PSC Members, other participants included representatives of some Member States, the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention (FemWise-Africa) and its regional chapters, African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), Pan African Women’s Organisation (PAWO), as well as representatives of the United Nations (UN) and partners, including African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and think tanks.

The High-Level seminar was **officially opened by Hon. Dr. Peya MUSHELEGA (MP), Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of March 2024.** During the opening ceremony, statements were delivered by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and H.E. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of United Nations Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU).

NOTING the briefing by H.E. Mme Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Women, Peace and Security and H.E. Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, United Nations Secretary-General Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa on the progress made thus far on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in line with the relevant AU and UN instruments and policies;

ALSO NOTING the presentations by H.E. Amb Liberata Mulamula, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tanzania, AWLN Steering Committee Member and Member of the FemWise-Africa Network, Hon. Justice (Rtd) Effie Owour, Co-Chair of FemWise-Africa and Member of the AU Panel of the Wise, H.E. Ambassador Willy Nyamitwe, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Burundi to the AU and Ambassador Perpetua Dufu, Coordinating Director for Multilateral and International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana;

FURTHER NOTING the presentations by Ms. Mpule Kgetsi, African Youth Ambassador for Peace for Southern Africa; Faida Mwangilwa, Woman Peace leader who participated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) peace process; Ms. Koiti Emmily, Signatory of the Revitalized Agreement on The Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and Dr. Renata Hessmann Dalaqua (PhD), Head of Programme: Gender and Disarmament, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.; and

FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE DELIBERATIONS, PARTICIPANTS:

RECALLED the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights; the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325;

APPLAUDED the PSC for **celebrating its 20th Anniversary** and for its dedication to championing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda; **COMMENDED** the AU Commission for the progress made thus far, including the institutionalization of the Office of the Special Envoy on WPS, the establishment of FEMWISE Africa, African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), cooperation with the African First Ladies Peace Mission and the inclusion of female African Youth Ambassadors for Peace that enhancing women’s participation in peace processes in the Continent;

REAFFIRMED the AU’s commitment to promoting meaningful participation of women, particularly in the leadership of peace processes, including in conflict prevention, resolution, management, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, in line with the commitments to gender equality enshrined

in 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 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and other relevant universal human rights instruments and relevant Assembly and PSC decisions.

UNDERScoreD 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 by the Year 2030.

EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN over the continued prevalence of violent conflicts in the Continent, which have a disproportionate impact on women;

ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER the continued underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes, despite the various institutional mechanisms in place at national, regional and Continental levels;

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 one (I) mediation processes and the importance of inclusion of women in leadership of peace processes; in this regard, **UNDERLINED** the imperative for peace agreements to include gender provisions to address women's security in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

COMMENDED Member States that have already adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of the UNSC Resolution 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. The AU to have a gender parity policy for all AU-led and co-led mediation processes and to reinforce the AU gender parity policy in the selection and appointment of local, national and continental mediators, special envoys and technical teams in all peace processes, as well as intergenerational inclusion in all AU-led and co-led processes;
2. The AU Commission to track and monitor the implementation of gender parity policy in peace processes and to develop accountability frameworks for meeting this target; including through annual reporting to the PSC on the progress made. In this regard, the Participants requested the AU Commission to develop a Policy Framework of Women Quotas in Formal Peace Processes across Africa, which will guide the Continent to meet the statutory minimum of thirty percent (30%) gender quota for women's participation in all conflict prevention and management missions, peace processes and election observation missions led by the AU; while reaffirming its adherence to the goal of full gender parity;
3. Member States and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) to enhance cooperation and coordination to ensure the protection of women in formal and informal peace processes, as well as to develop a rapid response mechanism and a robust monitoring system that tracks the security situation of women representatives;
4. The AU and its Member States to adopt measures to capacitate and include women experts/gender experts in mediation and conflict management and resolution processes, drawn from, among others, the FemWise-Africa Network and African Women Leaders Network;

5. The AU to facilitate the establishment of platforms for consensus and coalition building among women to promote and amplify their collective voice and common agenda and ensure women's representation in technical or thematic working groups set up to lead thematic discussions in a national dialogue, as well as to enhance women's economic empowerment;
6. The AU, through the existing frameworks, to facilitate consultations with civil society organisations (CSOs) working on women and girls living in conflict settings to leverage their lived-in experiences and technical expertise in promoting peace and security at the community, local, and regional levels, with a view to deepening understanding of the particular needs and perspectives of women and include gender, women, peace, and security provisions in the outcomes.
7. The need to support women's CSOs and networks, with a view to strengthening women's peace networks and local movements advocating for gender equality and women's participation in peacebuilding.
8. The need for mobilization of financial resources, technical assistance, and capacity-building support to empower women-led initiatives and organizations working on peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
9. The need to provide support for CSOs to champion and advocate for gender-transformative policies that counter patriarchal norms, women's elevated positions in society, and the work of formal women delegates and representatives in peace negotiations and bodies tasked to implement conflict response initiatives throughout a peace process;
10. Need to redouble efforts in implementing the UN Security Council resolution 1325(2000) and for Member States to ensure that the National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security are costed and budgeted for, as a way of operationalizing the key interventions and programmes therein; in this regard, agreed to dedicate one session of the Peace and Security Council to focus on financing women, peace and security agenda in Africa;
11. The need to raise public awareness through engagement with policymakers, government institutions, civil society organizations and the general public to mobilize support for gender quota measures and initiatives aimed at increasing women's participation in peacebuilding. In this regard, highlighted the need for the special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Women Peace and Security, with the support of the AU Commission, to spearhead the campaign of raising awareness on the Continent;
12. The need to further enhance partnership and ensure synergies between the AU and the UN within the Joint AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security on the promotion of women's participation and leadership in peace processes, in line with the principles of complementarity and building on comparative advantages;
13. The need to include women, peace and security agenda, in line with the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the PSC, should be one of the agendas during the annual consultative meeting between the PSC and the UN Security Council;
14. The need for regular engagements of the PSC on women, peace, and security agenda at the ministerial level and in this context, agreed to institutionalize the '**High-Level Ministerial Seminar on Women, Peace and Security in Africa**' to be formally called the '**Swakopmund Process**,' to be held biennially on a rotational basis, as a platform for the PSC to engage with local, national, regional and continental actors on women peace and security matters.

FURTHERMORE, PARTICIPANTS:

PAID TRIBUTE to H.E. Hage Geingob, the late President of the Republic of Namibia, for his distinct role in championing meaningful participation of women in decision-making globally; and **EXPRESSED** sincere condolences to the Government and People of the Republic of Namibia on his passing.

EXPRESSED GRATITUDE to the Government and People of the Republic of Namibia for graciously hosting the First Ministerial High-Level Seminar on Women, Peace and Security in Africa; and **CONGRATULATED** the Republic of Namibia on celebrating its 34th year of independence on 21 March 2024.

Adopted on 23 March 2024 in Swakopmund, Namibia

2024-03-23

Conclusions of the Inaugural Ministerial High-Level Seminar on Women, Peace and Security held on 23 March 2024, Swakopmund, Namibia.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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