

**Planning Meeting on 2011 Priorities on Women Peace
and Security and the 2nd African Union (AU) Peace
and Security (PSC) Open Session on Women Children
and Conflict in Africa-March 2011**

Organised by Oxfam Panafrika Programme
Gender Justice Pillar

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACCORD	African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AU	African Union
CEDAW	UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEWARM	AU Continental Early Warning and Response Mechanism
COVAW	Coalition on Violence against Women-Kenya
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DAW	Former UN Division for the Advancement of Women
UNECA/ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EW/ER	Early Warning/Early Response
FAS	Femmes Africa Solidarite
FIDA-K	Federation of Women Lawyers-Kenya
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INSTRAW	Former UN International Training and Research Centre for Women
IPI	International Peace Institute
ISIS WICCE	ISIS International Women Cross Cultural Exchange
IWD	International Women's Day
OSAGI	Former UN Office of Special Advisor to Secretary General on Gender Issues
PRC	AU Permanent Representative Committee
PSC	AU Peace and Security Council
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
UAF-A	Urgent Action Fund-Africa
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	Former United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss areas of engagement and future strategies for dealing with the AU PSC on matters of women, peace and security in 2011 and to prepare for the Open Session with African Union's Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) scheduled for 28th March.

The AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) is a critical organ of the AU and has a critical role to play in ensuring women's protection in situations of conflict and their full participation in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction. In that regard, the meeting drew an extensive and experienced group of women and men participants from across the continent working in the field of peace and security.

Objectives

1. Get an update on progress made in implementing the commitments made by the AU PSC in March 2011-AU, Women, Gender and Development and Peace and Security Directorates, UN Women and Femmes Africa Solidarite;
2. Explore effective strategies for engaging the AU PSC and involving women affected by conflict in the 2011 session and beyond;
3. Establish a roadmap for negating the PSC in 2011, resources available from different partners and come up with a fundraising plan;
4. Harmonise key messages and demands that the women's rights organisations and UN Women will pass to the AU PSC in 2011;
5. Define roles for all partners towards the Open session including how to remain connected and in touch over the interventions and actions agreed upon;

1.2 Background¹

Sexual violence against women and girls remains one of the most horrifying and devastating aspects of armed conflict. Sexual violence has become a major strategy that has turned men into weapons and women's bodies into battle grounds in times of conflict. The women and girl victims suffer physical, sexual and mental abuse and torture, their bodies and spirits tortured, mutilated, broken and traumatized. This violence against women continues long after the guns go silent. Countries like DRC, Guinea, and Uganda have reported mass rape by members of rebel groups and of government forces alike.

The AU PSC, at its 223rd meeting, held on 30 March 2010, deliberated on the situation of women and children in armed conflicts. They heard statements from *Femmes Africa Solidarité* (FAS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). A briefing note on Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Women and Children in armed conflicts was also presented by AU Commission at the session. In the Communiqué arising from the meeting, the PSC called for the domestication and implementation of AU instruments on women and children; mainstreaming of gender in all AU peace and security efforts-deployment of gender experts in all AU liaison offices and peace support

¹ See Annexe B for Concept Note

operations, women ambassadors of peace and special envoys and representatives; involvement of women in peace processes and appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women and children; and an end to impunity by prosecuting perpetrators of violence against women and children².

The PSC noted that a focus on women and children brings into sharp focus the wider human security dimensions of the AU peace and security agenda. They then agreed **‘to devote every year an open session to the theme of women and children and other vulnerable groups in armed conflicts’**. It is against this background that Oxfam and its partners convened the meeting that brought together various relevant actors and to provide a platform for women’s organisations working on women, peace and security and UN Women to identify priorities for 2011 and come up with strategies to input into plans of the Peace and Security and AU Women, Gender and Development Directorates of the AU Commission for the open session.

2.0 PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY

2.1 Lessons from engaging the AU PSC, Florence Butegwa, Representative of UN Women to AU/ECA

The PSC open sessions are forums geared for interactions between Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and the PSC. Thus it is important women to understand how they can benefit from this interaction in terms of strategy and action. So far, interactions with women’s organisations have elicited the following reactions both negative and positive from the PSC.

1. A feeling of a ‘holier than though’ attitude from the women’s organisations particularly when they seem to only demand, whine or deliver long lists of recommendations without specific ideas on how they or the PSC can work separately or jointly to implement them;
2. An assumption that the PSC is unaware of the challenges and plight faced by women in conflict situations and in peace time. As representatives from African countries, some of which are ravaged by war, the PSC has a good understanding of the plight faced by women;
3. The absence of clear value added inputs. The presentations tend to be general and hardly focus on specific issues for intervention and/or areas for critical research. Thus the dialogue hardly moves beyond updates;
4. Occasionally the AU PSC views CSO with great suspicion in part because of they have an obscure constituency and/or are perceived to have vested interests. It is because of this that they are not seen as a critical source for information, ideas and updates. A case in point is on the question of information gathering. The PSC often seeks guidance from UN missions on the ground and not CSO;
5. The PSC recognises the gravity of mass rape and is in solidarity with women suffering this misfortune, however most reports from women’s organisation seem to focus mainly on mass rape and violence against women, but rarely touch upon other spheres of challenge that affect women. For instance, trafficking of women across borders during war is a rampant exercise. However there is little empirical data or research to demonstrate this difficult situation.

On a positive note, the PSC is not only interested in ensuring effective interaction with CSO but it is also mandated to do so. The spirit and letter of the PSC Protocol outlines a clear role for CSO. Another key document that informs the level and type of interaction envisioned by AU PSC and CSO’s is Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General’s report on CSO interaction with the UN. This report ‘We the People: Civil Society, United Nations and Global Governance’ based on the realisation that public opinion is a key factor in influencing intergovernmental and governmental policies and action recognises the need to involve a diverse range of actors, including those from civil society and the private sector, as well as local authorities

² Peace and Security Council 223rd Meeting 30 March 2010 Addis, Ababa, Ethiopia **PSC/PR/COMM.(CCXXIII)**

and parliamentarians, as an essential component for effective action on global priorities. It is also a form of protection against further erosion of multilateralism. The UN report outlines modes of engagement with the CSO. The report sees CSO has technical resources that have legitimacy in terms due to the stronger interface between the people, in comparison to the UN. This is recognised across other multilateral organisations including the AU.

While both the PSC and CSOs are open to interaction, at the crux of this interaction is how to make it worthwhile for women rights advocates and for the PSC. A very clear two way relationship needs to be generated in order to find solutions to problems common to women.

Way Forward for Win-win interactions between women's organisations/CSO's and the PSC

1. Discussions should move beyond assumptions and general updates but should be specific, timely and focus on strategic interventions that the PSC can work on. Through this women's organisations need to generate research ideas, innovative interventions and two to three specific advocacy messages; These interventions have to be delivered in a timely and relevant;
2. In order to help the PSC respond in a timely and effective manner CSOs are well positioned here because they are on the ground and can contribute in the provision of verifiable and credible information on violations and the state of play in conflict areas through information gathering and data collection for the purposes of early warning/early response and intervention;
3. The PSC works at ambassadorial level and these representatives are based at the headquarters in Addis Ababa. They are able to meet and act quickly. CSOs need to take advantage of the position these representatives hold by interacting with them. However they need to bear in mind that these representatives are usually career civil servants or political appointees and it is unlikely that they possess the technical expertise on particularly areas such as issues of women peace and security. CSOs can provide short policy briefs that simplify and capture some of the technical and key areas for the ambassadors to focus on;
4. CSOs need to ask themselves whether they are adding value to the work of the PSC. They also need to negotiate a partnership that is founded on a more solid basis.

2.2 The Peace and Security Council: AU Peace and Security Architecture, Mary Wandia, Gender Justice Lead, Pan Africa Programme, OXFAM

The PSC Protocol was adopted in 2002 in Durban, South Africa, came into force in 2003 and was established in 2004. It comprises 15 member states of the AU and it is the standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. It has a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa. The member meets at least twice a month at permanent representatives Committee-PRC- (ambassadors) level and annually at EC and AU Assembly levels in closed sessions.

The PSC's mandate is peacemaking and peace building functions aimed at resolving conflicts. This also includes the authorisation to mount and deploy troops to peace support missions. They also recommend to the AU Summit interventions within a member state in respect of severe circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. They also institute sanctions whenever an unconstitutional change of government takes place as was seen in Guinea and Togo. They implement the common defence policy of the AU in addition to the provision of support and in facilitation of humanitarian action in armed conflicts or in major natural disasters.

Closely linked to peace is good governance. In that regard they track progress on the promotion of democratic practices, good governance, the rule of law, protection of human rights and other fundamental freedoms, respect of the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law by member states. The normative Framework is guided by the Constitutive Act of the AU (2002) articles;

1. sovereign equality of member states (Article 4a);
2. non-intervention by member states (Article 4g);
3. African solutions to African problems;
4. respect of borders existing on achievement of independence (Art.4b);
5. non-use of force/peaceful settlement of disputes (Articles 4e, 4f, 4i);
6. Condemnation of unconstitutional changes of government (Article 4p)
- 7.

The PSC work is also informed by the Solemn Declaration on the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) established in 2004, the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework and the Peace and Security Council Protocol itself.

The African Union (AU) Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is made up of five institutions and a Peace Fund. The PSC supreme decision-making body is supported by the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force (ASF) for peace missions in crisis regions and a special Peace Fund to cover costs. The AU Commission, the African Union's executive body, supports the PSC in fulfilling its mandate and is responsible for establishing and developing APSA.

The PSC has supporting institutions that hold various responsibilities;

1. **AU Commission-** which consists of the following offices, the Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Peace and Security Directorate for Peace and Security and the Secretariat to the Peace and Security Council;
2. **A five member Panel of the Wise** consisting of 'highly respected African personalities' that works a proactive conflict prevention team.
3. **Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)** - Together with regional early warning systems, like the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)' conflict early warning mechanism (CEWARN), AU's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is set to anticipate and prevent conflicts in Africa through collecting data and information at their respective levels to advise/inform the PSC on potential conflicts and threats and recommend the best course of action. It is also supposed to help the PSC to take decisions that will guide the African Standby Force (ASF) in the deployment of its troops. Priority has been given to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) whose early warning systems are less developed than others. The highlighting of flashpoints is very crucial here. For example Oxfam's report on the LRA warning of possibly attacks over Christmas 2010.
4. **African Standby Force** is intended to be an international, continental African military force, with both a civilian and police component, under the direction of the African Union. It is to be deployed in times of crisis in Africa. In 2003, a 2010 operational date for the force was set. It is composed of 5 standby contingents
 - North Africa: Through the new mounting body, the North Africa Regional Capability has now been created to take on the role of the REC for Northern Africa and through this a regional brigade will be created.
 - West Africa: The ECOWAS Standby Force is being established as a 1,500 strong ready battalion group as the first element of a 6,500 strong brigade. In mid 2008 a first exercise at Bamako, Mali evaluated the capabilities of the assigned units of the force;
 - Central Africa: The Economic Community of Central African States is the nominated regional organisation. A meeting of Defence Chiefs of Staff was held in Brazzaville in October 2003, at which it was decided that a brigade-size peacekeeping force, the Central African Multinational Force (French acronym FOMAC) would be created in order to intervene in unstable Central African areas;
 - East Africa: The Brigade HQ and logistics base are both located at Addis Ababa while the planning element is in Nairobi. EASBRICOM is the supporting secretariat;
 - Southern Africa: A SADC brigade (SADCBRIG) has been used already as the basis for AU deployments. The brigade was officially launched on 17 August 2007 in Lusaka,

Zambia. The Brigade planning element is located in Gaborone, Botswana, as part of the SADC Secretariat.

5. **Military Staff Committee** composed of the Chiefs of Defence Staff or their representatives (of the countries serving on the PSC) to advise and assist PSC on military and security requirements.
6. **A Special Peace Fund** – this is largely funded by the European Union and these funds are used to cover the costs of the above activities.

When it comes to parameters for engaging with CSO, the PSC have devised the Livingstone Formula. This phrase was coined after a meeting between CSO and the PSC held in Livingstone, Zambia. It formalises the interactions between PSC and CSOs in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa and was established in 2008. CSO should use this platform to submit reports to the PSC and/or receive update or provide additional inputs during AU's field missions in Liberia, Darfur, Somalia etc. CSO can interact with these field missions as a channel to provide information, for example PSC went to Cote D'Ivoire in 2010, as a field mission and if CSO's were aware then this would have been a useful channel to provide information.

Under article 21 and 22 of the PSC Protocol, the PSC is mandated to hold meetings annually with the AU main civil society engagement mechanism-the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) - in Addis Abba, Ethiopia which is an advisory organ of the African Union consisting of a variety of civil society groups from member states: professional groups, non-governmental organization, social groups, community based organizations, workers, traditional, religious and cultural groups. The PSC is also mandated to develop relationships with the RECs, UN, the Pan African Parliament and African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR).

The PSC is an institution with a broad mandate but may not necessarily have the requisite capabilities. The lack of sharing information is a two way problem- AU PSC needs to share information with CSO to enable them to act and vice versa. The absence of key advisors such as a gender advisor or a CSO liaison as a bridge between women CSOs and PSC complicates accessibility between these two groups. However, possible areas of entry will be through synergies between AU's Gender Directorate and the PSC Directorate who are working on modalities on training peace keepers on gender mainstreaming in peace operations. Also the open sessions offer a strategic opportunity for continued engagement.

Emerging Entry and Actions Points

1. Gender mainstreaming in peace keeping missions, the deployment of gender experts in the PSC Directorate and field missions and partnerships to offer the civilian dimension of a Africa Stand By force;
2. Generation of a roster of women mediators and negotiators;
3. Strategic planning for the open sessions in particular the upcoming one on 28th March 2011. This will ensure that the meeting identifies keys issues and anticipates key outcomes. It is important for women to have a voice but it is more critical to focus on the why and what you want to get out of the open sessions;
4. Need to reflect on relationships between AU and CSOs from organisation that work with the AU such as the African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in training on mediation and the civilian dimension of the stand by force. This will highlight challenges and successes in PSC/CSO interaction;
5. Early Warning/Early Response mechanisms (EW/ER) - the AU needs to strengthen this aspect and CSOs can play a critical role here through sharing of credible information and a partnership with AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECS). The regional group ECOWAS provides a useful case study on a hybrid system of information gathering between states and CSOs;
6. CSOs can strengthen their capacity to share information on their work, achievements and challenges through the use of media, social networking tools like USHAHIDI, FACEBOOK and TWITTER;

7. While appointment of women peace ambassadors such as that of the Togolese musician Angelique Kidjo is welcome, the process of appointment needs to involve suggestions from CSO, identify clear roles for the ambassadors and how they interact with stakeholders including CSO's.

2.3.1 Looking Back: the 2010 PSC Open Session on Women, Children and Conflict, Vicky Luyima , Femmes Africa Solidarite

The first AU Peace and Security Council Open Session on women and children in armed conflicts in Africa was held on 30 March 2010. During the session, Femmes *Africa Solidarité* (FAS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) presented statements and recommendations on women and children in armed conflicts in Africa. The AUC Director for women, gender and development directorate also made a presentation and recommendations to this effect

At the conclusion of the meeting the AU PSC decided to devote an open session, every year, to the theme of women, children and armed conflicts. Among the recommendations made by the CSOs, UN Agencies and the AU Women, Gender and Development Directorate, the following were adopted and included in the AU PSC 223rd meeting Press Statement Communiqué:

- Domestication and implementation of AU instruments on women and children;
- Mainstreaming of gender in all AU peace and security efforts;
- Deployment of gender experts in all AU liaison offices and peace support operations;
- Appointment of women ambassadors of peace and special envoys and representatives;
- Involvement of women in peace processes;
- Appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women and children;
- AU to take steps to end impunity by prosecuting perpetrators of violence against women and children.

What has been done so far?

1. To contribute to the achievement of the 2010 Year of Peace and security in Africa goal, the AU Panel of the Wise in partnership with FAS and the International Peace Institute (IPI) commissioned a report titled "*Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts*";
2. A workshop in DRC in May 2010 where report above was reviewed by experts including CSOs to identify quick impact projects that can further strengthen the implementation of the international and African commitments on women and children in armed conflict was organised. This will be followed another workshop later in 2011 to finalize the report;
3. In May 2010 the AU Women, Gender and Development and the Peace and Security Directorates developed a gender training manual for the AU peace keepers and modalities to appoint gender experts in AU liaison offices. A gender expert was appointed for Sudan;
4. In July 2010 a Civil Society meeting was held in Kampala on The Year of Peace and Security in Africa and the UNSC Resolution 1325 10th Anniversary. This meeting was attended by Oxfam, ACCORD, FAS, ISIS WICCE, Realizing Rights and MARWOPNET among others. The outcome of this meeting formed part of the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) recommendations to the UNSCR 1325 10th anniversary in October 2010. The meeting agreed on follow up actions and some were implemented as follows:
 - In September 2010, Urgent Action Fund organized a workshop for women human rights CSOs to agree on practical steps for holding African governments accountable in the implementation

- of global, regional and sub-regional commitments on the inclusion of women in peace and security processes. This meeting was also attended by UNIFEM, Oxfam, AU Peace and Security and Women, Gender and Development Directorates. An action plan on how to engage the AU including entry points was developed;
- In October 2010, ACCORD organized a “*High Level Seminar on UNSCR 1325 in 2020*”. ACCORD was mandated to convene a task force to develop a concrete work plan for a vision of realizing resolution 1325 in 2020;
 - In January 2011 a meeting was held on the sidelines of the GIMAC on “*Opportunities for Collaboration on Women, Peace and Security in 2011*” The meeting was attended by FAS, UAF Africa, Oxfam, ISS WICCE and Institute for Inclusive Security. The meeting agreed to support African women in conflict and post-conflict countries to attend the 2011 AU PSC open session on women and children in armed conflict and raise issues affecting them;
 - Finally, the AU Panel of the Wise has requested FAS to organise a one-day preparatory meeting for women survivors of sexual violence to produce a statement consolidating their views and recommendations to the AU Peace and Security Council on the interventions regarding prevention of sexual violence and the rehabilitation of survivors and share the statement and testimonies at the open session on March 28, 2011.

2.4 A Discussion on the Priorities For Women, Peace and Security in Africa, Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng, ISIS-WICCE

Women have suffered greatly in conflicts. The major situations that women face are;

1. Their sexuality is targeted, through rape, sexual violence and other forms of violence. This has dire consequences in the transmissions of sexually transmitted diseases (STD), fistula that is triggered by violent sexual assault and prolapses of the uterus. The woman’s body therefore becomes a battle ground and its integrity is deeply violated. These problems are more common amongst grassroots women.
2. Social and economic well being is affected because they cannot fend for themselves.

Challenges

In order to change this detrimental situation for women, there is need to advocate for practical responses to the plight of women but this remains a challenge. For instance, in Southern Sudan, documenting women’s experiences was near impossible because there is no capacity. There is currently an extensive focus on maternal mortality however this has not been looked when it comes to women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Mental health is a special component that is unattended. People in conflict settings undergo deep trauma and without taking the mental state and psychosocial needs into account the situation will deteriorate. Often mental health problems continue to manifest themselves in a renewed cycle of conflict, usually domestic in nature. For example, it was recently reported that 21 women were raped in Northern Uganda. This incidence qualifies as an effect of the war, and unless underlying causes of gender based violence (GBV) and the crisis of traumatised people is looked this situation will only worsen.

The failure to include inputs from women during the design and planning of peace and recovery programs is equally problematic. For instance, Liberia is praised for its successful implementation of UNSC Resolution

1325, but this success has seen minimal inputs from women in the country. The same happened in Northern Uganda during the implementation of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan of Uganda (PRDP). Documents are either quickly cobbled up to involve women as a token without clear incorporation into budgets and women are involved in an adhoc basis. States need to take issues of women, peace and security seriously by incorporating them into their budgets and government plans and to look to women who have the requisite technical and resource skills to assist in incorporating gender aspects. The national gender machineries need to be at the centre of designing peace processes.

In an attempt to respond to the gender concerns, States tend to utilise women in the political arena. Although this action is welcome, in some unfortunate incidences some of these women have limited knowledge of peace and security issues. There is an absence of skills amongst women in peace, security and early warning and early response (EW/ER). Without a standard tool and training for women the status quo will remain.

Finally, women participate in peace and security process mainly at the village level but their numbers dwindle at district, national, regional and continental levels where concrete engagements happen and decisions affecting or made without considering their issues are taken. This means that their problems hardly see the light of day.

Some specific proposals for the AU

1. Medical interventions are critical and as an emerging issue. However it has fallen through the cracks. Therefore, the civilian component of any peace support operation should have medical personnel to tackle problems specific to women. Developing a core of medical personnel who can be called upon is a proposal that can be put forth for consideration by the AU and member states. This can be a first step towards identifying various roles and capacities needed and pass on these suggestions to AU;
2. There is need to heal the 'body integrity' of a woman as well as trauma and reproductive and sexual health complications. This coupled with tackling of relationship dynamics including intimate ones and on assessing the role of post conflict trauma is very important. Due consideration should be given to incorporate a much larger portion of budgets to psychosocial needs which currently have much less resources. Emphasis on training and counselling is equally important here;
3. An assessment of what women term personal security is needed. This will provide answers and possible guarantees for maintaining women's security in both the personal and public sphere. For example, good governance is the pillar of ensuring security, however processes have been very incomplete even though the intentions are to involve women e.g. case of Uganda election, women election officials hardly received protection;
4. Need to change the mindset of what security means particularly when it comes to the governance and justice system. Women's issues are not heard because they are marginalised in the first place;
5. Women play a critical role in EW/ER because they have a good ear on the ground. They have the grassroots pulse much better than governments, they are often aware when men meet to plan and organise acts of violence or conflict. However, they need to be prepared in order to understand how to report and to identify key signs and signals to look out for in EW/ER;
6. Building successful coalitions for grassroots and community bases. For example, Kenya has a network of peace committees at district level which incorporate both state and non-state actors. These committees are sanctioned by the state and play an active role on EW/ER as well as resolution of community conflicts. This can be replicated by other countries and with a level of funding and capacity building, they can serve as a bridge to the AU PSC EW/ER;

7. Underlying causes of conflicts are well known however, the response has always been hard power military deployment and there is little recourse to the use of soft power. Elections have emerged as one of the chief triggers and multiplier of tensions in African contexts. CSOs can play a role in conflict prevention and in the provision of specific ideas to avert conflict. This in turn will contribute to the PSC's role in enforcing the principles of conflict prevention;
8. Lessons from Asian and Latin American women who decided to consolidate the grassroots women and secure a strong support base within which mass action platform was created should be a source of inspiration to the African women's movement. Thus building solidarity that will support ideas and generate resources will be crucial.

3.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTION IN ENGAGING AU PSC ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY

3.1 Findings from the Rapid SWOT Analysis, facilitated by Pravina Makan-Lakha, ACCORD

The SWOT analysis assisted in assessing the context, issues and challenges as well as helped to narrow down priority issues. It was suggested that there is a need to look beyond planning for the open session but instead prepare the medium term vision for the coming three. It steered focus on where energies should be directed because there are already representatives at various sectors. The entire SWOT process which was done in groups stressed that good governance underpins peace and security and without effective governance there cannot be sustainable peace. The group discussions also tackled emerging issues and key messages and identified roles and timelines. This will be done in three levels

- Level one- strategy for the AU PSC open session in 2011;
- Level two – strategy for engagement with the PSC;
- Level three – strategy for dealing with long and short term capacities.

The meeting decided to narrow down the issues into three key focus areas;

1. Early Warning Systems and how CSO can be involved;
2. A focus on Women's bodily integrity/ Trauma and responses can be improved;
3. Strengthening the voice on participation, good governance and women.

The factors were seen as crucial for the effective implementation of the strategies developed during the SWOT analysis are discussed below.

Participation

1. Availing information for decisions and building relationships and making CSOs indispensable to the PSC as a sources of information;
2. Working with academic institutions who are interested in gender dynamics as well as peace and security dynamics;

3. Consider that the position of gender expert at AU PSC needs to have broad functions in the Peace and Security Directorate. In turn, AU liaison offices in post conflict countries need to link with local women organisations in the short term. However it has to be determined, where they have been appointed, who and where they will work so that CSOs are aware;
4. On evidence-based data there is already ongoing research sponsored by UN Women on the situation of women in conflict and to map CSOs working on women, peace and security. More research is needed by African CSO as most studies on peace and security in Africa are conducted by academics and CSOs in the West;

Early warning

1. Need to understand what EW/ER really means;
2. Need to be aware of the challenges of existing conflict early warning (CEWARM) mechanisms before new strategies are generated-ECOWARN, AU CEWARM etc;
3. For Effective EW/ER strong partnerships are needed with institutions such as churches, the youth and governments and at all levels, local, national and regional levels;
4. Need to draw from existing networks and resources.

Body integrity and recovery

1. It needs to be an element of peace, security and justice particularly because there is already existing information from advocates in this sector;
2. Organisations like EASSI doing interesting work in DRC, Akina Mama Wa Afrika is working in Sierra Leone and DRC, Africa Unite campaign network. These initiatives should be harnessed to provide information for the PSC;
3. Creating greater understanding of the issues and disseminating them and preparing issue briefs that articulate problems and response gaps as well as strengthening the advocacy messages;
4. The aspect of mental health and trauma should be included within the TOR for medical professionals in conflict and post conflict situations;
5. The aspect of impunity and prosecutions for sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations is a priority to build on efforts made in DRC to prosecute commanders etc and engagement of between CSOs and the PSC on this during the PSC 2011 session is critical;

Strategic Objective for the Open Session March 2011

1. Need for accountability and responsibility for the actions to be undertaken during this meeting;
2. Need to identify aspects that should guide the advocacy particularly when involving survivors of sexual violence in the open session, what concerns will be voiced? Will there be an opportunity for empowerment which can influence what they are doing on the ground?;
3. Need to make some specific demands bearing mind that the UN Special Rapporteur , on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Margot Wallstrom will be present and consider how the open session can reinforce her presentation and optimise this opportunity for women survivors;

4. AU often questions the links to CSO constituencies. The open session provides an opportunity for CSOs demonstrate that link clearly by supporting survivors of sexual violence to participate from Guinea, DRC, Northern Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Southern Sudan and Cote D'Ivoire to speak for themselves;
5. Need to be conscious of the politics involved with AU for example AU is divided on Cote d'Ivoire and that may defray from the meeting
6. The survivors of sexual violence will be prioritised. However, there is need to confirm that they are credible by developing a selection criteria and to ensure they are well briefed on the aim of their participation and prepared;
7. Revisions of the concept note developed by FAS on the open session 2011 in light of the discussions above and to develop a list of those who will attend session and identify and accompany women survivors of sexual violence;

SWOT Analysis and Strategies-short term, medium term and long term

1. Bodily Integrity and Recovery- to get the AU PSC and its supporting organs to prioritise women's bodily integrity and recovery in policy and operations;
2. Participation: address the marginalisation of women in formal peace processes;
3. Strengthening and linking the existing and emerging CEWARM at local, national and regional Levels from a gender perspective.
4. AU PSC Open session-Women, Children and Conflict 2011

1. Bodily Integrity and Recovery- to get the AU PSC and its supporting organs to prioritise women's bodily integrity and recovery in conflict and post-conflict operations

Strengths & Opportunities	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Persistence, passion in highlighting – the numbers and willingness to speak out 2. Documentation – impact of war on women's bodily integrity 3. Knowledge on the nuances of GBV in different contexts 4. Willingness of survivors to speak out 5. Open session with AU PSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating at open session; - Issue papers highlighting scope of issues; mental health care issues, recovery issues/needs to be shared with PSC, others (Documentation already exists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate the strategic information for the continental documentation on bodily integrity of women, analyse, so that the report is responsive - Survivors responding to and reviewing the continental analysis/ report - Avail the data in formats where it can be shared; multiple formats; positioning it to fill in the AU information gaps and needs – MT; Actors: Isis WICCE; COVAW; FIDA in various countries (analysis of files); UWONET; WIPNET/WANEP; Grace Yeanay's organisation in Liberia; FEMNET; WILDAF (esp. in West Africa); Masimanyane; Girl Power (Nigeria). Approx 3 year; FAS 	

6. Expanded laws, jurisprudence, legal frameworks at national and regional levels on women's rights – African Charter on Democracy; Protocol on Women, national laws 7. Successful criminal prosecution for VAW	Outcome 6 of Campaign – specific focus on VAW; Linking this to work/objectives around bodily integrity; Africa UNiTE Campaign (sits in UN Women AU Liaison Office)	- Advocacy for AU to include in field missions medical personnel and who can understand, collect information and respond to bodily integrity issues - Terms of reference for mediators, for Panel of the wise, military staff committee, early warning systems to integrate bodily integrity in how they review, the questions they ask, their TORs etc. – UN Women, Oxfam, FAS, FEMNET, Isis WICCE, UAF-Africa, AWDF	
8. Proposed post conflict/ Reconstructive framework of AU			
9. Technocrats and bureaucrats within the AU who are alive to the gender issues/ increase in number of women ambassadors			
Weaknesses and threats	Short term	Medium term	Long term
1. Weak links with other institutions to integrate bodily integrity into school education curriculum			- Using education curriculums attitude change on bodily integrity rethinking masculinities.
2. Linking women's bodily integrity to socioeconomic, political, cultural discussions	- writing papers, articles in various forums that enable us to link bodily integrity issues in other socio-political discussions; ACCORD; UAF-Africa; UN Women, FEMNET, many others		
3. Lack of timely and adequate response 4. Mental health care – weak responses 5. Justice for women on bodily integrity	- rapid response – UAF-Africa, women's funds - issue paper highlighting scope of issues; mental health care issues, recovery issues/needs to be shared with PSC,	- Advocacy for AU to include in field missions medical personnel and who can understand, collect information and respond to bodily integrity issues - Terms of reference for mediators, for	

	others (Documentation already exists)	Panel of the wise, military staff committee, early warning systems to integrate bodily integrity in how they review, the questions they ask, their TORs etc. - TORs should include questions that establish what is justice for the women affected; what local justice mechanisms that WORK for women - UN Women, Oxfam, FAS, FEMNET, Isis WICCE, UAF-Africa, AWDF	
6. Not many CSOs have technical expertise in wholesome response to GBV		- Forming coalitions among groups working on different aspects of response to GBV and bodily integrity	
7. Financial capacity -	- strengthen our allies, women's funds	- strengthening allies - linking GBV and bodily integrity to the socioeconomic, political issues - tapping into new philanthropy and corporate responsibility opportunities	

2. Participation- Address the marginalisation of women in formal peace processes

GROUP ON PARTICIPATION			
Strategic Objective: Address the marginalisation of women in formal peace processes			
Strengths	Short Term Action	Mid Term Actions	Long Term Actions
Linked to the constituency	Mobilise women for engagement in the Open Session		
We have diversity and expertise	Optimise the expertise that we already have.	Where possible push for the appointment of women who are passionate on peace and security	
Evidence Based Data			
Commitment to engage women in peace, and security.	Develop and circulate a database of women mediators (ACCORD)	Capacity building in peace mediation skills and processes	
Opportunities	Short Term Action	Mid Term Actions	Long Term Actions
Opening up of the AU to discuss women, peace and security	Keep popularising the importance of women's representation	Develop objectives to be achieved over the Women's Decade	
PSC position for gender	Be very deliberate around this appointment. Ask women in the movement to apply. Ask the PSC to have 2 women CSO representatives to sit on the interview panel (to push – Florence) See if we can input into the TOR for this position?		
AU liaison offices	There is a need to optimise this. Develop relationships with the AU Liaison offices and even have a rotational representative		

UN WOMEN	Share programme and organisation reports	Report to her office on what is happening in the countries for forward action where needed	
Weaknesses	Short Term Action	Mid Term Action	Long Term Action
Gaps in Networking	Create linkages between what is happening at the PSC and share this information with CSOs Florence Butegwa and Mary Wandia	Need to think critically around the use of social media to network with ourselves. Need to see how we can network better, smarter.	
Lack of Data/research analysis		Be deliberate around our efforts in developing relevant research. Partner with Academic Institutions to carry out relevant research and also receive relevant research where this has already been undertaken. (e.g. ACCORD/Uppsala). Initiate and develop other strategic partnerships (e.g. ACCORD and CMI)	
No database of experts	Collate names of different women in peace processes (ACCORD)		
Limited strategic engagement	Make sure we are talking to: friendly ambassadors, visit the ambassadors, extend invitations to them to our meetings. Also. Make our recommendations to relevant parties succinct, compact and clear.		
Lack of 'on the ground points' for women affected by conflict.	Work alongside local organisations that can continuously feed the AU on what is happening on the ground. Also, take members of grassroots organisations to the AU where needed.		

3.Strategic Objective On Strengthening and linking the existing and emerging CEWARM at local, National and Regional Level from a gender perspective

Need to establish and sustain localised Conflict Early Warning & Response System; community scans and mapping of conflict hot-spots; and training of peace actors in Government and CSOs.

Strengths

1. Establish local focal persons for CEWS comprising of key women at local level

Strategy

- Link local CEWS with national Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (Community members recognize and willingly communicate credible information of potential triggers of local conflict and violence to their cluster response team in a timely fashion.
- Creation of local Peace Committees
- Capacity Building on the CEWARM and role of women in Peace transformation.
- Increase women's Participations in Peace and security architecture
- Sensitization of peace and security architecture on the importance of safeguarding women's rights

Opportunities

Build Capacity among women on Use ICT for CEWARM

Strategy: An SMS centre would be an invaluable tool for conflict early warning and response. The Peace monitors based all over the country would be supported to send threats and potential threats to peace, to the SMS centre, and the staff manning the

centre rapidly responded to the highlights, by linking with government, civil society, community leaders and the humanitarian organizations.

Threats

1. Continuous engagement with Governments to prioritize governments allocations in the national budgets to preventive measures to conflicts such as CEWARM and peace dividends
2. Resource Mobilization

Weakness

Lack of Capacity on EW/ER within civil society

Strategy

Build Capacities on CSO on EW/ER mechanisms

4.AU PSC Open Session 2011-Women, children and conflict in Africa

Ensure effective participation of Women's Organizations working on Peace and Security issues in Africa in the March 2011 African Union PSC Open Session on Women, Children and Conflict

What do we want to achieve?

- Building capacity of the women and the organizations that work on Peace and security in Africa
- Legitimize the demands that are made by African women as they are voiced by those most affected by VAW/ GBV in situations of Conflict/ post conflict
- Make specific demands to the AU that will motivate AU to take concrete actions address the issue of sexual violence.

Effective Participation will involve:

- Quantitative and qualitative representation
- Adequate preparation
- Adoption of a strong statement that informs the work of the PSC
- Debriefing session in Addis to facilitate agreement on actions to undertake moving forward

Strategy

Allow for the participation of a representative group of women affected by conflict and those representing organizations working on women and conflict in Africa. A group of at least 15 women will attend the meeting on the 27th of March 2011 (The criteria for identifying the women from conflict affected countries/ post-conflict includes:

Priority countries: to identify survivors of violence they have to be drawn from Uganda, Guinea, DRC, Somali, Cote d'Ivoire and Southern Sudan. Participants must be able to communicate in English/ French. The survivors are those that are working on the issues we discussed in their respective countries.

Survivors should be involved in developing the statement. The statement will focus on the three themes identified in this meeting. It may be helpful to have a draft copy of the statement so that the country groups work with this draft before the meeting on the 27th of March 2011.

Priority Actions:

- Liaise with the Peace and Security Department to obtain critical information on the preparatory process and one organization to take the lead in sharing this information on a regular basis;
- Prepare the women to be at the one day meeting and the Open session in Addis Ababa at the country level;
- Collect materials for the exhibition – visual aids for strengthening the message to the PSC.
- Logistics for the travel and accommodation for the violence survivors resulting from conflict and in post- conflict situations;
- Identify Facilitator for the one day meeting and the debriefing session (bilingual Facilitator will be preferable or interpretation must be provided);
- Develop a draft joint statement as women organizations working on Women, Peace and Security in Africa to submit to the PSC. This will be finalized in the margins of the One day meeting.
- Working with the women survivors of violence to complete their statement to present to the PSC.
- Resource mobilization

Key Actions

Action	Period	Organization providing leadership	Other Key Actors
Liaise with PSC & facilitating Coordination	10 th – 29 th March	FAS Provide information on a weekly basis	UN Women
Completion of the Concept note to facilitate resource mobilization including a budget	10 th – 15 th March	FAS/ UN Women	All participating organizations in the strategy meeting to identify the possible partners -
Country level preparations in the five countries	12 th – 15 th March Complete the list by the 15 th of March & have 2 survivors per country	FAS, ISIS – WICCE/ YWCA/ UAF	The country level partners
Logistics for travel & accommodation	15 th – 25 th March	FAS/ UN Women	UN Women Oxfam GB Urgent Action Fund
Identify Facilitator/ arrange for the conference room & interpretation (explore possibility of using a meeting at the AU complex) & identify the interpreters	By 15 th March	FAS/ UN Women	AUC
Statement for the survivors		FAS/ISIS - WICCE	

Drafting Statement for the Women's CS actors	Draft available by 20 th March	FAS to lead the process	All organizations at this meeting
Evaluation	The immediate debriefing session	FAS	UN Women

4.0 Emerging Issues/Challenges in Peace and Security in Africa

4.1 Emerging Political and Conflict Issues, Pravina Makan-Lakha and Beatrice Nzovu-Ouma- ACCORD

The key political and conflict contexts that women's organisations need to start pondering over

1. The political situation in North Africa;
2. The successful trial of commanding officers in DRC for mass rape;
3. The successful referendum in South Sudan and smooth transition in the post referendum implementation;
4. The status of the Cote d'Ivoire election crisis.

These political developments are both a cause for both celebration and concern because they will;

1. Provide an opportunity for women to participate in bringing about social change and to engage at the political sphere;
2. Pose multiple vulnerabilities for women including increased humanitarian needs, sexual violence, insecurity;
3. Bring to question the role of women's organisations in provision of timely and adequate responses to early warning and resultant emerging situations.

In North Africa

The violence is still ongoing in Libya while unrest continues in both Tunisia and Egypt complicating the humanitarian and refugee crisis along the Egypt-Libya and Tunisia-Libya borders. The lack of remittances to Egypt and Tunisia has been an immediate major consequence of the situation. It is likely that EW/ER mechanisms could have done more to protect women from the resultant violence. The looming challenge is how to respond to the 'power-vacuum' and the 'crisis of expectations' created by the removal of leaders and the expectations from the revolutionaries respectively.

Possible actions

Already taking place is the women of Egypt calling for a 'Million Women March' on International Women's Day (IWD) to advocate for their inclusion in the new political system. Required actions:

1. Call on adherence to the responsibility to protect by international, regional and national actors against gross and systematic violation of human rights as identified in Libya;

2. Lobby the AU and other regional actors to ensure political actions do not undermine the protection of women's rights;
3. Demand for 50% representation of women in accordance with the SDGEA in the new political regimes being formed;
4. Lobby for adequate humanitarian support;
5. Conduct a solidarity mission to the women of North Africa;
6. Create safe spaces for women activists under threat because of their efforts to bring about social change;
7. Create a central information depository unit for women that is accessible for instance through use of social networks and other channels to foster timely and unified response to emerging issues;
8. Prepare and organise women to take on leadership roles in the new dispensation for example through capacity building.

In DRC: The Baraka Trial in Eastern Congo

This trial will provide an opportunity to;

1. Demand for the same actions to be adopted in the justice systems in the DRC and across the continent;
2. Call for timely accountability for acts of rape, violence and all other forms of human rights violations;
3. Call for zero-tolerance to acts of sexual abuse and violence;
4. Promote the implementation of key international, regional and national mechanisms including CEDAW, UNSCR 1820, SDGEA and national constitutions;
5. Draw lessons on the importance of creativity for example in mobile gender solidarity and cross-sector collaboration;
6. Access the ruling for lessons learning, internal dynamics.

In Southern Sudan: The Referendum Outcome and Implications

The successful referendum in South Sudan and acceptance of results by President Bashir presents an opportunity for women to:

1. Call for deliberate affirmative action;
2. Take advantage of the new economic opportunities;
3. Enhance and strengthen Southern Sudanese women's ability to participate in public life including politics;
4. Harness the divide between elite and grassroots women by creating a consolidated women's voice;
5. Learn from both the North which has longer and more established history of women's activism and the South offers a more enabling and open environment;
6. Prepare women to take advantage of the political quota made available;
7. Lobby for addressing of key social issues including education and health;
8. Advocate for the protection of women returnees from all forms of human rights violations; Sudanese women parliamentarians;
9. Access technical capacity building for women across states such as ISIS-WICCE training on women in trauma counselling;
10. Reintegration of returnees from surrounding countries by taking advantage of their experiences and build on existent partnerships.

In Cote D'Ivoire

The Political stalemate continues unabated and there is an estimated 70,000 people who have fled their homes. Human rights violations are being committed including sexual violence and the humanitarian needs are escalating and are compounded by power cuts and water shortages affecting key institutions including hospitals. The shift in the world's attention to North Africa has increased vulnerabilities.

1. Need to advocate to ensure the situation is not forgotten;
2. Organise a solidarity mission to support the women;
3. Call for a stop to all forms of human rights violations including sexual violence;
4. Hold accountable within the shortest time possible, all those committing atrocities;
5. Use available networks to share information and have discussions on the situation;
6. Call upon the AU and other actors to resolve the political stalemate as a matter of urgency.

Summary of action points

1. Develop a collaborative strategy to strengthen women's early warning and response mechanisms;
2. Promote women's agency, visibility and participation in political processes by strengthening their capacities;
3. Take cognisance of upcoming electoral processes across the country and their implications on women's participation. This can be done by working with existing networks on the ground and a follow-up of triggers of conflict;
4. Have a system to influence regional and international organisations and ensure they uphold their obligations in terms of protecting and promoting women's rights;
5. Need to investigate the impact of sanctions on the populations for example, the cocoa ban in Cote D'Ivoire, overall sanctions in Zimbabwe;
6. Make considerations for HIV/AIDs under bodily integrity and looking at the intersection of violence, HIV/AIDs and conflict and the medical interventions required to address the intersection such as emergency provision of post exposure prophylaxis o survivors of sexual violence to protect them from HIV infection;
7. Build a database of women mediators but with an understanding that mediation is not purely a technical affair but that political weight and gravitas play an important part in the identification of mediators in a particular conflict;
8. Need to carry out more networking, communication and consultation on who is working on what. For example, UAF provides many grant requests on women in conflict and human rights defenders and it would be good link this work to organisations working on peace and security.

5.0 ROLE of UN WOMEN

Role of UN Women, Florence Butegwa, Representative of UN Women to AU/ECA

UN Women was created by General Assembly resolution A/64/289 para 49 on 2 July 2010 to provide, through its normative support functions and operational activities, guidance and technical support to all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions, at their request, on gender equality, the

empowerment and rights of women and gender mainstreaming and to conduct its work in ways that lead to more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system. It is guided by global and regional inter-governmental agreements, such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, Security Council resolutions 1325 and others, and the Millennium Development Goals.

It consolidates the work of four previously separate entities (DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM), thus bringing together the normative and operational side. It is intended to be a more robust organization that will support stronger coordination on gender issues across the UN system, provide stronger support to Member States on advancing national priorities related to gender equality, upon request. Also, the resolution set the level of leadership of the organization on par with other Funds and Programmes. In September 2010, Michelle Bachelet, former president of Chile agreed to take up the post of Under Secretary General for UN Women. She has been leading a process of transition that ended officially on 1 January 2011. She has since launched a Vision and 100 Day Action Plan that will guide the organization going forward, including in the development of its strategic plan (2012 – 2013).

UN Women's Strategic Plan (2012-2013)

It is aligned with the period of strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and serves four main purposes. UN Women's ability to provide support, develop programmes and have the staff and infrastructure required to operate is dependent on the approval of the Strategic Plan. It is the main accountability document, enabling staff, governments and other partners to understand the main results that UN Women will support and how it will measure progress.

Purpose of Strategic Plan:

- Sets overall direction for UN Women for the next two years (2012-2013);
- Identifies the results that UN Women will assist partners to achieve and how it will track progress;
- Strengthens UN Women's accountability by clarifying its organization-wide commitments;
- Presented to the UN Women Executive Board in June 2011 for approval of the plan and budget.

Its formulation is currently ongoing, so the ongoing meeting was a good opportunity to share in the consultations and involve as many partners. The consultations are intended to offer a vehicle to feed directly into the way that UN Women shapes the goals, principles, results, indicators and budgets that frame its work. It will build on the vision and action plan that the USG, Ms. Bachelet, has issued. The consultations should help articulate and validate key country and regional gender equality priorities and opportunities; clarify what type of support Governments (programme countries and donors), women's groups and others in civil society, and UN organisations require from UN Women; build on the 100 Day Vision and Action Plan to generate agreement around the broad outcomes to which UN Women should contribute; understand where within the UN where UN Women leads, where it supports and where it partners.

The Plan builds on the founding documents that established UN Women. GA Resolution **A/RES/64/289** (July 2010) and The **Report of the Secretary-General: Comprehensive proposal for the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women (January 2010)** - These two documents, along with the vision and action plan, are the basis upon which the strategic plan will be built. This will lead to more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system". At country

level, UN Women will work with the UN Country Team to support countries to implement global and regional agreements, such as CEDAW, Security Council resolutions and other inter-governmental decisions.

The governance of UN women is guided by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the normative support functions and provide normative policy guidance to the Entity. It is however unique in that it brings together normative and operational functions of the four UN entities that were merged to create it: the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Special Advisor on Gender Issues, INSTRAW and UNIFEM. This is unusual and means that it is difficult to compare UN Women to any other UN organization. It also means that decisions and guidance from the UN about UN Women's priorities and programmes will come from a variety of sources. As the founding resolution states, normative policy guidance will come from the General Assembly, UN ECOSOC and the Commission on the Status of Women. Decisions about practical arrangements, like budgets, presence, staffing and other operational issues will come, primarily, from the UN Women Executive Board. It is composed of 41 UN Member States. Its focus areas are;

1. Expanding women's voice, leadership and participation;
2. Ending violence against women;
3. Strengthening implementation of the women, peace and security agenda;
4. Enhancing women's economic empowerment;
5. Making gender equality priorities central to national, local and sectoral planning and budgeting.

In addition to these five priority areas, UN Women will support UN partners who are leading the response in areas such as HIV and AIDS, migration, the Rule of Law, environmental degradation and climate change, and maternal and child health. As guided by the following core principles generated from the 100 days of action:

1. Providing **demand-driven support** to national partners to enhance **implementation** of international agreements and standards;
2. Supporting **intergovernmental processes** to strengthen the global normative and policy framework on gender equality;
3. **Advocating** for gender equality and women's empowerment, championing the rights of women and girls — particularly those who are **most excluded**;
4. Leading and promoting **coherence in UN system** work on gender equality;
5. Acting as a **global broker of knowledge** and experience, aligning practice with normative guidance.

Opportunities for partners

1. UN Women mandate to support national partners to implement global commitments for example in the General Assembly, UN Commission on the Status of Women, Security Council;
2. Mandate to lead and coordinate the UN system response on gender equality towards a more robust and coordinated support to gender equality priorities at country level;
3. Close ties to interests and aspirations of women and women's groups worldwide. UN Women was created in response to advocacy by women's networks in all regions of the world.;
4. With leadership at Under Secretary-General level UN Women is able to bring voices of women directly to the highest level UN decision making.

UN Women challenges

While there are benefits already emerging, these early days of UN Women must also take note of the challenges. And there are two in particular that the strategic plan must confront. First, gender discrimination is pervasive and global. The demand for UN Women's support and for it to play an effective driving role within the UN is enormous. At the same time, while the outlook is positive, it still lacks the human and financial resources needed to respond to this huge demand. So, we must be ambitious and visionary in thinking through the plan, but also realistic about the time that it will take for UN Women to develop the capacities required. Second, early days of UN Women mean that many aspects of the organization – staffing, budget, presence are still being worked out

Ongoing Questions for consultation

1. **Comparative advantage:** What are UN Women's unique strengths?
2. **Change / results:** What are the primary changes to advance women's rights and empowerment that UN Women and the UN should be supporting (in this country/region/globally)?
3. **Accountability:** How should government, UN and non-governmental organizations be involved in advising UN Women on its programmes and policies?
4. **UN Coordination:** What are the most effective ways that UN Women can support improved coordination, coherence and accountability within the UN on GE? CSO needs to ask within the UN, UN Women leads, where it supports and where it partners
5. **For Governments and women's organizations:** What are the main gender equality priorities that you would like to see UN Women focus on over the next two/three years; What are the primary changes to advance women's rights and empowerment that UN Women should be supporting within these priority areas? Who are the key partners in your country or region with which UN Women needs to connect in order to drive implementation? What recommendations would you give to UN Women to improve its support to countries to make progress on gender equality and women's rights?

Challenges from CSOs

There is a high expectation on UN Women and thus there is need to improve connection between women on the ground and the institution itself.

- UN Women needs to sustain focus on the bigger issue and/or 'less sexy' topics as a means to ensure change on issues and also to ensure that not only the issues that make big news are focused on but rather there is continued work on all key aspects of gender. To deal with this, UN Women will focus on governance peace and security in tandem with all other broad issues and in mobilising resources on Violence Against Women in general and this trust fund has continued to grow. They will provide larger grants for a longer period, with the idea that this will give partners more time to show results and reverse trends;
- Technical capacity needs to focus on the groups in Africa. CSOs have a role to play in assessing the different skills such as research, data analysis and on the methodology of economic empowerment which is very unclear, there is need to provide women with economic knowledge there is need to balance an injection of resources with providing technical knowhow. UN Women is aware of the need to engage in economic empowerment, improved agriculture, microfinance etc;

- Movement building to enable participation without making it a project is a concern for CSO organisations. Movement building aimed at enhancing the voices of women in whatever thematic area is critical. African CSOs need learn lessons from Latin America that has good examples of movement building on right based approaches, workers rights etc.

5.0 Overall Feedback From the meeting, Evaluation and Conclusions, Grace Maingi, FIDA-Kenya

1. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to network as well as the email contacts and felt that the interactions led to strategic action on proposed key issues;
2. The logistics was properly organised such as the provision of documents in advance which was good preparation. The programme was exercised with a level of flexibility;
3. Work done in smaller groups was positive;
4. Roles and responsibilities will need further developments as they were not clearly defined during the meeting. A clear action plan and aspects of accountability and responsibility are required;
5. Meeting could have benefitted from the presence of academic institutions/think tanks;
6. There is increased knowledge on peace and security which will help to integrate issues in the work of organisations represented;
7. Sound quality was not so good and hindered some participants from hearing all discussions. A public address system should be prioritised in future;
8. Contributions have helped organisations like FEMNET generate ideas for future work and it opened up learning opportunities and entry points for joint work for the YWCA , and it was extremely relevant for the National Cohesion and Integration Commission-Kenya because its mandate is linked to matters of peace and security;
9. Information on the AUPSC and UN Women was very useful;
10. There was good participation from everyone and people were engaged, in ideas and new ways of thinking were generated;
11. A clear strategy for the open session was developed;
12. The meeting could have benefitted greatly from AU PSC and Gender and Directorate presence.

List of Participants

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>ORGANISATION</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
1	Beatrice Nzovu - Ouma	Programme officer	The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)	beatrice@accord.org.za	South Africa
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24	Tony Waithera	Senior Programme Officer	ABANTU for Development	tony@abantu-roesa.org	Nairobi Kenya