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CONCEPT NOTE

UNSCR 1325 BEYOND 2020: WALK THE TALK FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP

BACKGROUND

The promotion of gender has been an integral part of the efforts of the African Union (AU) in the promotion of peace, security, stability and development on the continent. Africa's commitment to the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender inclusion is reinforced in the provisions of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (2000), the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol, 2003) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) in 2004. Furthermore, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU has also repeatedly emphasized the imperative for women's participation and engagement in peace, security, governance, and development processes in the Continent.

In 2018, the AU launched the Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in which **Leadership, voice, and visibility** constitute one of the four pillars. The Strategy encourages the systemic promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality across all sectors. One of the specific objectives of the strategy is to give a voice to women in order to be equally represented in all areas of decision-making, at all national, regional and continental levels, and be able to participate with impact, through the removal of formal and informal barriers. At its heart, the Strategy seeks to promote gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the AU, as well as complementing global efforts in line with the Security Council Resolution 1325 and other related Security Council Resolutions.

The year 2020 is a landmark in the efforts at promoting and protecting women's rights globally and continentally. It marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the twentieth anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325; the seventeenth anniversary for the Maputo Protocol, and the sixteen anniversary of the SDGEA. The anniversary of UNSCR 1325 provides a useful platform for a clarion call to various stakeholders on the need to accelerate efforts at achieving the objectives of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. UNSCR 1325 also provides a powerful normative framework for galvanizing multifaceted and multi-level action to ensure women's needs, voices, and perspectives to prevent, resolve and recover from conflict and build sustainable peace are effectively represented.

There is no doubt that some progress has been made in advancing the women, peace, and security agenda in the continent. Yet, more needs to be done, particularly in narrowing down the gender gap in intervention relating to peace and security. Structural barriers still inhibit

women's participation; the absence of and failure to use gender-disaggregated data present lopsided analyses and masks the impact of plans, programmes, and actions on men and women. Similarly, the lack of gender-disaggregated data makes the contribution of women to developments in all spheres of life invisible.

It is against this background that the Gender Peace and Security program and the Peace and Security Council Secretariat, in collaboration with the Training for Peace (TfP) Africa Program as well as the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) Gender and Peace and Security Clusters, are launching a campaign on the 20th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Women Peace and Security Agenda on the continent, the challenges faced and way forward in addressing those challenges. The campaign, titled **“UNSCR 1325 beyond 2020: walk the talk from the bottom to the top** is proposed to have three main components, namely:

- to identify useful lessons in the efforts of the African Union and its Member States in the promotion of women's rights and gender equality to build on the strides made;
- to acknowledge and document the role and contributions of civil society organizations, in particular those working on women's issues, in the implementation of the WPS agenda; and
- call for further enhancement of the efforts at the promotion and protection of women's rights through more gender-responsive decision-making that is guided by gender-sensitive reporting.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this campaign is to take stock of progress made on the implementation of the WPS agenda and to provide a platform for the CSOs and women's group to share experiences of their efforts and actions on WPS toward the full and effective implementation of the WPS Agenda. Also this campaign intends to provide an opportunity to identify challenges on WPS with a view to provide options for further enhancing efforts at implementing the WPS agenda.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE E-CAMPAIGN

Considering the critical role that events and campaigns play in mobilizing mass emotions, and shaping political perceptions, the virtual campaign will mainly aim to achieve the specific objectives:

- To highlight the contributions of the AU, RECs/RMs and Member States to the implementation of the WPS agenda and achieving the four action areas of UNSCR 1325;
- To highlight the role and contributions of Women's Civil Society Organisations in advancing the WPS agenda;
- Production of a book titled **“My voice my action”** documenting all the key achievements of Women's group and the Peace and Security Department (PSD) in implementing the UNSCR 1325 across the 4 areas of action(participation, prevention, protection, relief and recovery)

- To raise awareness on the need to redouble Africa's efforts to ensure gender equality and women's inclusion in all aspects of our peace and security agenda;
- To encourage the PSC to ensure gender-responsive decision making.

FORMAT

Given the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, the campaign is will take place through online platform. The campaign, which will run through the month of October, shall comprise the following activities:

- Robust awareness-raising on the AU and UN normative framework on WPS; national efforts to implement the WPS agenda and efforts of the PSC to implement the WPS agenda on various social media platforms;
- A Webinar with CSOs to highlight the key achievements of African Women's group and challenges in implementing the WPS agenda in Africa
- Launch of ECOSOCC Advisory opinion group on WPS agenda
- Five Regional consultations with experts, Womens' group, CSOs, Center of Excellences on WPS to discuss challenges in the implementation of the WPS agenda and options for accelerating implementation;
- Online presentation of a draft Gender- Responsive Tool Kit for decision making to the PSC
- ECOSOCC Advisory opinion group on WPS agenda
- A booklet highlighting the key achievements and contributions of Women CSOs and AU -PSD
- Launch of the Peace and Security Gender, Women Peace and Security Knowledge Management

Expected Outcome

The online campaign is expected to contribute to galvanizing action to enhance the implementation of the WPS agenda.