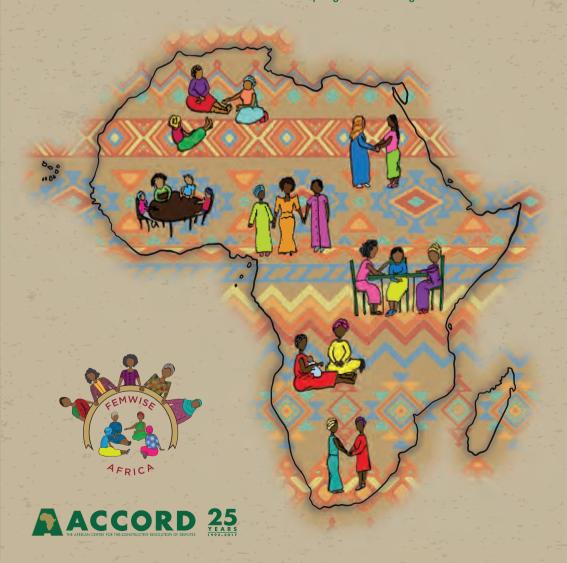# THE POWER OF COLLECTIVES: FEMWISE-AFRICA

Pravina Makan-Lakha and Kapinga Yvette-Ngandu

THE POWER OF COLLECTIVES:

F E M W I S E - A F R I C A

PRAVINA MAKAN-LAKHA AND KAPINGA-YVETTE NGANDU

Acknowledgements

African Union

The African Union (AU) is a continental union comprising 55 countries in Africa. The body was established on 26 May 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and launched on 9 July 2002 in South Africa, effectively replacing its forerunner, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The OAU's main objectives were, inter alia, to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and apartheid, promote unity and solidarity among African nations, coordinate and intensify cooperation for development, safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, and promote international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations. The advent of the AU shifted focus from supporting liberation movements in the erstwhile African territories under colonialism and apartheid to spearheading Africa's development and integration. The AU's vision is to achieve "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena".

ACCORD

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is a non-governmental organisation working throughout Africa to bring creative solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. ACCORD's primary aim is to influence political developments by bringing conflict resolution, dialogue and institutional development to the forefront as alternatives to armed violence and protracted conflict. ACCORD has for the past 25 years been working across Africa in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Disclaimer

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Contents

Foreword by the African Union Commission

One year ago, about 80 leading women from 24 African countries, friends and partners, held an earnest and deep conversation on the important issue of women's inclusion in pre-conflict mediation, at the peace table, and in social cohesion. That gathering was convened by the African Union Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise), in Constantine, Algeria, in December 2016.

That meeting polished and fine-tuned the modalities for the creation of a Pan-African network of women mediators, code-named "FemWise-Africa". Since then, an exceptionally rapid series of events has been recorded, moving us closer to FemWise-Africa becoming fully operational. These important milestones include, among others: the AU Peace and Security Council's endorsement of the modalities for FemWise-Africa on 13 March 2017; the United Nations Security Council endorsement of FemWise-Africa two weeks later, on 27 March 2017 in New York as part of an Arria Formula; and most importantly, the formal establishment of FemWise-Africa through a decision of the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 4 July 2017, which not only institutionalises once and for all the place and the role of women at the peace and negotiation table, but also records one of the fastest operationalisations of any AU instrument in its history!

As Commissioner for Peace and Security, I look forward to continuing to accompany the process of fully operationalising FemWise-Africa as a gathering of women experts, specialists and those who hold personal interest in inclusive conflict resolution processes, because it is the right thing to do! Indeed, FemWise-Africa has been born out of the need to alleviate the acute shortage of women in conflict prevention and women mediators at the various levels of intervention, but at the same time to acknowledge the powerful force that exists in the involvement of women in these processes at all tracks.

It is clear that FemWise-Africa's contribution to uplifting the role of women in conflict prevention and peace mediation through the designing of more inclusive processes must be visible on the ground. It must not only touch the hearts and minds of communities, but also respond to the needs of people on the ground, turning words into concrete actions through quick impact projects and peace strengthening and sustaining projects, especially in vulnerable countries, thus leading to improved social cohesion conditions in all countries.

The AU Commission holds in high regard partnerships with other entities with shared values and mandates. For this reason, the Commission welcomes the partnership with the United Nations, as well as similar mechanisms around the world, such as the Nordic Women Mediators Network, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network and the Commonwealth Women Mediators Network. More partnerships will continue to be built as FemWise-Africa takes

root. Among those are partnerships with South East Asian women's networks (such as Sangat and partners in the Philippines), Latin American networks, and women's platforms such as those in Colombia and Brazil.

By publishing the *Power of Collectives: FemWise-Africa*, which chronicles the establishment of FemWise-Africa, the AU ensures that the story and lessons learnt are accessible to as many individuals as possible, particularly women at the grassroots level and those involved in conflict resolution/mediation efforts (and peacemakers in general). This is so that FemWise-Africa can assist in triggering actions and legislations at the national level to give national expression to FemWise-Africa, and to contribute to diffusing, preventing, managing and resolving disputes at their root.

The mediation mechanisms and approaches used in multilateral organisations must evolve to become more people-centric, and only then can we hope for more effective conflict prevention and mediation results. This challenge requires political courage and the commitment of time and resources. This is not a "eureka" moment, but the gauntlet has been thrown down!

Ambassador Smail Chergui
Commissioner: Peace and Security, African Union Commission

Foreword by ACCORD

The last few decades have seen significant progress regarding gender equality and women's empowerment globally. On the African continent, the efforts of diverse actors have resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive normative framework on issues of women's rights, gender equality, and the role and involvement of women in peace processes. In addition, the intense lobbying by gender activists over the last two decades has borne fruit, and today many African women have been appointed to key positions in governments at national, regional and international levels. Alongside these commitments and appointments into high political office, the women's movement continues to be driven by the power and mobilisation of grassroots organisations working for women's rights at all levels throughout the African continent.

At ACCORD, we have had more than 20 years of commitment – working initially with Somali women in 1995 – to building the capacity of women, designing and advocating for policy around women's empowerment and parity, and creating mechanisms to ensure that the policies are implemented. Our work over the last 25 years in peace and security has enabled us to recognise the complex nexus between gender and conflict, and the importance of not only involving women in peace processes but, more importantly, also ensuring that peace agreements are sensitive to the challenges and needs of women. We have, therefore, ensured that we play a decisive role in the Women, Peace and Security initiative, particularly advocating and working for the implementation of Resolution 1325.

In ACCORD's 2017–2021 Six Pillar Strategy, Pillar Three speaks to Enhancing the Role of Women in Peace Processes, and this will therefore remain a key focus of our work into the foreseeable future. We will continue to invest our organisational capacity and resources into building and strengthening the capacity of women to influence and participate meaningfully in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Our work includes active lobbying and involvement in several gender initiatives in Africa. ACCORD is a founding member of the continental Gender is My Agenda Campaign, which regularly convenes civil society organisations from across Africa to dialogue, advocate and draft recommendations to continental structures regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. We have also been involved in various regional and national programmes aimed at enhancing women's capacities to facilitate their increased participation in peace processes throughout the continent, such as the Southern African Women in Development initiative, the Southern African Women Mediators Network and the Gertrude Shope initiative.

FemWise-Africa is an initiative that represents years of work in gender activism in Africa. The many challenges, successes and changes we have experienced in Africa regarding women's rights and gender equity have brought us to this significant juncture with the establishment of FemWise. We are proud that – alongside a dedicated and committed group of gender activists, both women and men – we are a part of the conceptualisation, establishment and ongoing operationalization of FemWise-Africa. We look forward to continued collaboration with our various partners involved in this important initiative. Women's networks such as FemWise-Africa add impetus to the global movement, using collective strategies to address the complex challenges we face.

The time is ripe for harnessing the wisdom of those who have contributed to the achievements we celebrate, and for using the momentum of the current moment to collectively propel us into a more inclusive, unified and peaceful future!

Vasu Gounden
Founder and Executive Director, ACCORD

Acronyms and abbreviations

ABIC	Angie Brooks International Centre
ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AGA	African Governance Architecture
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUWC	African Union Women's Committee
AWCPD	African Women Committee on Peace and Development
AWLN	African Women Leaders Network
CAFOB	Le Collectif des ONG et Associations Féminines du Burundi
CCNOSC	Civil Society Consultative Framework
CCP	Concerned Citizens for Peace
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
COCAFEM/GL	Concertation des Collectifs des Associations Féminines, Great Lakes Region (Collective of Women's Associations of the Great Lakes Region)
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSW	Committee on the Status of Women
DIRCO	South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DPA	UN Department of Political Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAS	Femmes Africa Solidarité
FemWise-Africa	Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GIMAC	Gender is My Agenda Campaign
GPDD	Gender Policy and Development Division
IAI	Istituto Affari Internazionali
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
KPTJ	Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice
KWCG	Kenya Women's Consultative Group

LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MDPHASG	Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender (Burundi)
MFFPS	Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security in Burundi
MP	Member of Parliament
MSU	Mediation Support Unit
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NWM	Nordic Women Mediators
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PanWise	African Union Pan-African Network of the Wise
PoW	Panel of the Wise
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	AU Peace and Security Department
QIP	Quick impact project
REC	Regional economic community
REPSFECO	Women's Peace and Security Network of the Cedeao Space
RM	Regional mechanism
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALW	Small arms and light weapons
SAWID	Southern African Women in Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
UN	United Nations
UNEP	UN Environment
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WAP-BURUNDI	Women in Action for Peace in Burundi
WGDD	Directorate of Gender, Women and Development (AU Commission)
WID	Women's Initiative for Development
WIIS	Women in International Security
WIPNET/WANEP	Women in Peacebuilding/West African Network for Peacebuilding
WIPSEN-Africa	Women Peace and Security Network Africa
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WSR	Women's Situation Room

Introduction

The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) was established in December 2016 at the 4th Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise) High-Level Workshop in Constantine, Algeria, and was officially endorsed by the African Union (AU) at its 29th Assembly on 4 July 2017. FemWise-Africa forms part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as a subsidiary mechanism of the Panel of the Wise (PoW). This continental network of women was formed to enhance collaboration, strengthen advocacy and increase women's meaningful participation in peace efforts across Africa, as well as to grow complementarities between Track 1, Track 2 and Track 3 diplomacy on the continent, particularly with regard to conflict prevention and mediation.[1] FemWise-Africa will play a significant role in the ongoing journey towards realising the interdependence of the aspirations of gender equality, women's empowerment, and inclusive and sustainable peace in Africa.

FemWise-Africa emerges in the context of continual work being done across the continent and the world to achieve the implementation of various normative frameworks around Women, Peace and Security (WPS). African conflict resolution practitioners, policymakers and academics have long recognised that sustainable peace is inextricably linked to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), with increasing evidence to suggest that sustainable peace is not achievable without women's meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making, in political processes, and in conflict prevention and peace processes.[2] Studies have shown that women's participation in formal peace processes leads to a 35% increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least 15 years.[3] Similarly, a study

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1   Track 1 diplomacy refers to official diplomacy by governments or a technique of state action, which is essentially the process whereby communication from one government goes directly to the decision-making apparatus of another. It is conducted by official representatives of a state or state-like authority, and involves interaction with other state or state-like authorities – heads of state, state departments or ministry of foreign affairs officials, and other government departments and ministries. Track 2 diplomacy involves unofficial dialogue, discussions or even negotiations between ordinary citizens (who may include conflict resolution specialists, private citizens, NGOs or businesses) about topics that are usually reserved for diplomats – for instance, arms control agreements or negotiations to end long-standing international conflicts. Track 3 diplomacy involves unofficial third parties working with people from communities and various sectors of society to find ways to promote peace and work towards reconciliation. This work is typically aimed at rebuilding broken relationships and establishing new channels of communication across lines of division. The premise for Track 3 diplomacy is that peace must be built from the bottom up, thus emphasising the importance of local ownership of peace processes. [ACCORD and AU (2014) *African Union Mediation Support Handbook*. Durban: ACCORD.]

2   Coomaraswamy, R. (2015) *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*. USA: UN Women, p. 41.

3   Conciliation Resources. (n.d.) Supporting women's meaningful participation in peace. Infographic, *Conciliation Resources* [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.c-r.org/news-and-views/multimedia/supporting-womens-meaningful-participation-peace> [Accessed 12 June 2017].

of data over a 20-year period demonstrated that as the percentage of women in parliament increases by 5%, a state is five times less likely to use violence when faced with an international crisis.[4]

Despite the existence of an international and continental normative framework regarding WPS, attempts over the past 15 years to implement policies in line with the WPS Agenda have yielded limited results in increasing women's meaningful participation in peace processes. The number of women who are negotiators and mediators is still very low: in 31 global peace processes between 1999 and 2011, less than 3% of chief mediators and 9% of negotiators were women.[5] Of the 16 formal peace processes that took place on the African continent between 1992 and 2011, only two included any women signatories, while three included women as lead mediators.[6] There is thus growing evidence to motivate for the establishment of bodies and mechanisms, such as FemWise-Africa, that are geared towards increasing women's meaningful participation and influence in peace processes.

This booklet chronicles the history that has given rise to the vision of FemWise-Africa, and maps out the wider continental and international context in which it has emerged as a key role-player for the implementation of the WPS Agenda, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and mediation in Africa. As such, the booklet outlines some of the work being done on the African continent and beyond to develop, implement and monitor frameworks such as the landmark United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325, through the creation of various mechanisms and collectives. The booklet places FemWise-Africa in the wider context of these initiatives and highlights the unique contribution this network can make in the dynamic and evolving landscape of WPS. It also celebrates and commemorates the contributions made by individuals, networks and institutions in the ongoing implementation of the WPS Agenda in Africa and internationally, specifically with regard to issues of conflict prevention and mediation.

The title of the booklet, *The Power of Collectives*, serves as a reminder of the enhanced strength, reach and efficacy of collective efforts and unity, which are embodied by FemWise-Africa and other similar networks around the world. It is hoped that by capturing the experiences, lessons and success stories of individuals and collectives engaged in this work, the booklet will serve to inspire collaboration and renewed impetus in the ongoing journey towards sustainable peace, gender inclusivity and continental unity.

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4   NGO Working Group on Women , Peace and Security. (2017) *Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council: 2016*. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, p. 1.

5   Conciliation Resources. (n.d.) Women in peace processes. Infographic, *Conciliation Resources* [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.c-r.org/news-and-views/multimedia/infographic-women-peace-processes> [Accessed 15 June 2017].

6   Abdulmelik, S. (2016) *African Union Commission Report: Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa*. Addis Ababa, African Union Commission, p. 20.

Context mapping

FemWise-Africa emerges in the context, and builds on the foundations, of numerous discussions, initiatives and mechanisms put in place throughout Africa to prevent, manage and resolve conflict effectively, and thereby achieve inclusive peace. African conflict resolution experts, practitioners and policy-makers recognise the complex nexus between gender issues and peace and conflict, and have worked to establish policies and mechanisms that acknowledge the gendered dimensions of conflict, while seeking to leverage women's agency as actors for peace in various conflict situations on the continent. This chapter highlights some of the individuals and initiatives that have played a role in this effort, while noting that this is by no means an exhaustive account, and that there has been notable work in this regard that remains to be documented.

The African Union

The African Peace and Security Architecture

The APSA was outlined in the 2002 Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and is made up of several key pillars, including the PSC, PoW, Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), African Standby Force (ASF), and regional economic communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms (RMs) for conflict prevention, management and resolution. To complement these fundamental pillars and consolidate gender mainstreaming in the APSA, the AU Commission (AUC) launched a five-year Gender, Peace and Security Programme in 2015 to oversee and support gender mainstreaming across the APSA through a network of gender focal points at the AUC, as well as within liaison offices and missions, and the RECs. These gender focal points form part of a larger gender mainstreaming system put in place throughout the AU, which aims to advance gender equality through advocacy, partnerships with key stakeholders, capacity building, and sharing of good practices. It resonates with one of the founding principles of the AU, as outlined in Article 4L of its Constitutive Act, which calls for the promotion of gender equality throughout the AU.

The Panel of the Wise

The PoW is one of the critical pillars of the APSA. It was created according to Article 11 of the Protocol establishing the PSC, which sets out a five-person panel of "highly respected African personalities from various segments of society who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of peace, security and development on the continent" with a task "to support the efforts of the PSC and those of the Chairperson of the AUC, particularly in the area

of conflict prevention".[7] It is for this reason that FemWise-Africa – a network specifically targeted at conflict prevention and mediation – was established as a subsidiary mechanism of the PoW.

In pursuit of its mandate, the PoW has produced thematic reports on issues relevant to peace and security such as non-impunity, women and children in armed conflicts, and electoral disputes.[8] FemWise-Africa has its origins in the PoW's understanding of the challenges of women and children in conflict situations, and recognising the important role women and young people can play in peace efforts. Having recognised this, the Panel's first action in this regard was to commission a research paper on the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. This research paper led to the process that culminated in the establishment of FemWise-Africa, the appointment of an AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, as well as a redefinition of the WPS Agenda in Africa, among others.

The African Union and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Africa has steadily built up an extensive normative framework around gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels. Major among these commitments at the continental level are: Article 4L of the Constitutive Act of the AU, which explicitly commits to promoting gender equality; the Protocol to the African Union Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). There are several other instruments and policies at the regional and national level, as well as UNSC Resolution 1325 and subsequent United Nations (UN) resolutions that form the international normative framework on WPS (namely 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation 30.

In 2000, the AU established the Directorate of Gender, Women and Development (WGDD) within the AUC. The Directorate promotes gender equality in Africa and within the AU through the design of programmes and projects, based on policies adopted by AU member states. It also oversees the development and harmonisation of gender-related policies, initiates gender mainstreaming strategies within the AUC and for AU organs and member states, and supports capacity building by providing training on gender policies and instruments. The Directorate has two divisions: the Gender Policy and Development Division (GPDD), and Gender Coordination and Outreach. It also acts as the Secretariat for the AU Women's Committee (AUWC).[9]

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7   African Union Commission. (2002) *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*, Article 11: Panel of the Wise. African Union, p. 16.

8   African Union. (2016) Panel of the Wise. *African Union Peace and Security* [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.peaceau.org/en/page/29-panel-of-the-wise-pow> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

9   African Union. (n.d.) Women, gender & development. *African Union* [Internet]. Available from: https://au.int/en/wgd> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

In 2009, the WGDD developed the AU Gender Policy, which was subsequently adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, and which advocated for stronger gender commitments and the regional implementation of these commitments. This led to the creation of the Fund for African Women, a pioneering programme that uses the financial resources of member states to invest in a more gender-equal economic future. In 2010, the WGDD set forward a bold vision – the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) – which identified 10 themes that set the agenda for the current decade, addressing one theme a year. The 10 thematic areas are: fighting poverty and promoting the economic empowerment of women and entrepreneurship; agricultural and food security; health, maternal mortality and HIV and AIDS; education, science and technology; environment, climate change and sustainable development; peace, security and violence against women; governance and legal protection; finance and gender budgeting; women in decision-making positions; and the promotion of young women's movements.

The Directorate has also collaborated with several other commissions in the AU to ensure further gender mainstreaming across the AU's organs and policies. For example, it worked with the Peace and Security Department (PSD) to develop a gender-training manual to mainstream gender in peacekeeping operations, demonstrating real-world implementation of the continent's commitments to the UNSC resolutions on WPS. In partnership with various women's networks, the Directorate advocated with African governments to ratify all continental legal instruments on the rights of women, such as the Maputo Protocol. The WGDD spearheaded the process by which government officials reviewed and amended guidelines for reporting on the SDGEA, and successfully advocated for improved reporting. Twice a year, the WGDD convenes a gender pre-summit before the AU Heads of State Summit, to bring together relevant stakeholders – including civil society organisations (CSOs), AU gender focal points, representatives from government and the RECs/RMs, women's rights advocates and development partners – to incorporate a much-needed gender perspective into the highest-level meeting in Africa.

The Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security

In addition to these efforts in the area of gender equality and women's inclusion, the then Chairperson of the AUC, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, appointed Bineta Diop as the first Special Envoy for WPS in January 2014, in furtherance of the PoW's recommendations. The Special Envoy for WPS is mandated to "ensure that the voices of women and the vulnerable are heard much more clearly in peace building and in conflict resolution".[10] Her mission is to promote the protection and advancement of the rights of women and

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10 African Union Commission. (2017) Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security. *African Union Peace and Security* [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/bineta-diop-special-envoy-on-women-peace-and-security> [Accessed 10 November 2017].

children – particularly those affected by violent conflicts in Africa – and to ensure gender mainstreaming and equal participation of women in peace processes, including in conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The Special Envoy's work aims to close the gap between policy and implementation of the landmark UNSC Resolution 1325, subsequent related UN resolutions, and AU instruments and policies. It is therefore articulated around the four pillars of UNSC Resolution 1325:

- the prevention of violence against women and girls in conflict, situations of insecurity and in times of peace;
- the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, including in humanitarian situations;
- the participation of women at all levels of decision-making in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict and peacebuilding processes; and
- the recognition and incorporation of gender perspectives in relief and recovery efforts.

In keeping with these objectives, the Office of the Special Envoy has developed three key messages for individuals and groups working towards the realisation of the WPS Agenda in Africa. The first message, *Women Transform*, recognises women as agents of peace and development – hence, transformation – in Africa. The second, Secure Women, Sustain Peace, appeals to decision-makers, policy-makers, practitioners, women's CSOs and activists, research institutes and academia, to work towards ensuring human security (i.e. improving the social, economic and political conditions of women and communities) to provide the basis for sustaining peace, and appeals to peacekeepers and practitioners to promote accountability and zero tolerance on issues of sexual exploitation and abuse. The third message, *Together Women Deliver*, encourages the creation of women's networks for peace.[11] This final message of the Office of the Special Envoy, in particular, resonates with and supports the development of FemWise-Africa and other similar networks.

African women in mediation

Over the past few decades, a number of influential women have emerged as mediators in Africa, with a wealth of experience in peace processes across all three tracks. These women have actively laid the foundation for much of the progress seen today with regard to the implementation of the WPS Agenda, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and mediation. They have braved difficult and often adversarial conditions in their pursuit of sustainable,

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11 The Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security. (2016) *The Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security at a Glance*. African Union Commission.

inclusive peace on the continent, and have opened new avenues for women to participate in and influence peace processes at all levels. Women such as **Graça Machel (Mozambique), Betty Bigombe (Uganda), Catherine Samba-Panza (Central African Republic), Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe (Uganda), Marie-Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Bineta Diop (Senegal), Mary Chinery-Hesse (Ghana), Leymah Gbowee (Liberia), Salimata Porquet (Côte d'Ivoire), Anran Abdundi (Somalia), Nana Pratt (Sierra Leone), Theresa Leigh-Sherman (Liberia), Marie-Louise Baricako (Burundi), Yvette Chesson-Wureh (Liberia)** and countless others engaged in peace efforts across all levels have contributed to creating an enabling environment, out of which FemWise-Africa has emerged.

Graça Machel and Kenya's inclusive peace process 2008–2013[12]

When violence broke out in Kenya after contested elections in 2007, a number of international mediation visits took place, which eventually led to the establishment of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities under the chairmanship of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. This Panel, which also included Machel and former president of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, facilitated the official Track 1 peace talks – named the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation – which was launched on 29 January 2008. The dialogue process contained four agenda items and, in only a few weeks, produced agreements that were implemented and monitored by several post-agreement commissions. The process was notable for its inclusivity and transparency, particularly the key role played by civil society and women's groups, which provided insight and recommendations throughout the peace process.

Prominent among other civil society groups that played a role in the Kenyan peace process was the Kenya Women's Consultative Group (KWCG), which sought to assess the national situation from women's perspectives and influence the negotiation agenda. Women also took part in the peace process through two other organised civil society groups – the Concerned Citizens for Peace (CCP) and Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice (KPTJ) – and through public consultations. These were important spaces for participation, since the public hearings formed the basis of the commissions' reports. Machel, a member of the AU's Panel, strongly supported a group of 20 women from the KWCG to overcome their grievances and differences, prepare for consultations, and issue a joint statement to enable their voices to be heard at a higher political level. The women from this group presented a joint Women's Memorandum to the mediation team – which, among other issues, addressed the gender dimension of the conflict, land distribution, constitutional reform, women's rights and mainstreaming gender-sensitive language in the

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12 Taken from Charvet, E. (2016) Case study: women in peace and transition processes. Kenya (2008–2013). In: *Women in Peace and Transition Processes*. Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

negotiation agenda and agreements. The memorandum was presented to the AU Panel and the negotiating parties. The group also met several times with Annan, and provided him with suggestions for the next round of negotiations and agreements.

Machel's presence as part of the mediation panel was crucial for Kenyan women. She helped women's groups to overcome their grievances and differences, and advised them to unite on common ground, put aside political differences and support the development of the Women's Memorandum. The women's recommendations resonated with critical issues relevant to Kenyan civil society at large. As a result, Annan also invited the women to present the memorandum to the negotiation delegations, and directly consulted them for suggestions in subsequent rounds of negotiations.

The Kenyan peace process provides an example of the positive advocacy role that women's groups and individual women in key positions can play, to ensure that more inclusive peace agreements are reached and implemented. It also demonstrates the importance of ensuring that systems and avenues are in place which enable the voices of women to be heard in such processes.

Betty Bigombe and the Ugandan peace process[13]

In 1986, a few years after the overthrow of Idi Amin in Uganda, Bigombe was appointed a Member of Parliament (MP) during a period marked by rebel fighting in Uganda's northern districts. Although Yoweri Museveni was president, several new rebel movements had also emerged, including Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which used violent guerrilla tactics and child soldiers to kill thousands of civilians. As the war dragged on, more than 1.7 million people were displaced and thousands more died.[14]

In 1988, Bigombe was appointed as the Minister of State for Pacification in northern Uganda. In this position, she worked to establish stability and reconciliation in the region, becoming one of Uganda's most prominent peacemakers. One of the greatest challenges to the peace process was convincing Kony and his army to enter into dialogue with government representatives. Bigombe initiated contact with Kony in June 1993, when she travelled with a small team to the northern districts, to urge him to stop the violence and participate in talks with the government. This initial contact set the stage for face-to-face negotiations between the LRA leaders and Ugandan government officials. These negotiations, dubbed the "Bigombe talks",

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13 Taken from Tanenbaum. (n.d.) Betty Oyella-Bigombe. Peacemakers in Action Network [Internet]. Available from: <https://tanenbaum.org/peacemakers-in-action-network/meet-the-peacemakers/betty-oyella-bigombe/> [Accessed 5 December 2017].
Inclusive Security. (2012) Betty Bigombe. *Inclusive Security* [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/experts/betty-bigombe/> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

14 Invisible Children. (2014). History of the war: 1986 to now. *Invisible Children* [Internet]. Available from: <https://invisiblechildren.com/challenge/history/> [Accessed 13 December 2017].

generated global interest, and members of the international community observed the negotiation. Bigombe belonged to the same tribal group as most of the rebels, and realised that they would not surrender unless the Government of Uganda addressed some of the root causes of the conflict. She thus promoted change from all sides: locally, as well as by advocating to move the government's approach to pacification. She succeeded in ratifying an amnesty law, and in so doing, brought thousands of rebels to participate in the negotiations.

Bigombe's attempts to pacify LRA violence were controversial. She was frequently the object of harassment and death threats. Compounding the danger of her work was the fact that she is a woman, operating in a high-profile role traditionally reserved for men. Yet she persevered, dedicating many of her own financial and personal resources to the peace process. She worked tirelessly to bring food and medical assistance to communities affected by the conflict, and to create wider awareness of their needs. Her firm commitment to the negotiations won her the honour of being named Uganda's Woman of the Year in 1994.

In the wake of the Barlonyo massacre near Lira town in northern Uganda in 2004, Bigombe felt compelled to return to Uganda from her position at the World Bank. She served as the chief mediator on a second wave of LRA peace negotiations, which ended in 2005 and created a foundation for the Juba talks, which took place on the border of Uganda and Sudan. Bigombe's work in adverse and sometimes life-threatening circumstances paved the way for peace in northern Uganda, and demonstrated that negotiation and dialogue – no matter how difficult or lengthy the process – are always preferable to violence as a means of sustainably resolving conflict.

Marie-Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue[15]

Kalala-Ngoy, a lawyer by training and in practice, is vice president of the Civil Society Consultative Framework (CCNOSC) and national coordinator of Common Cause (Cause Commune). This platform of women's networks and associations aims to defend and promote the rights of women, and advocates particularly for their representation in decision-making positions. As a member of the PoW from 2010 to 2014, Kalala-Ngoy also participated in a high-level mission dispatched to Guinea by the National Democratic Institute and the AU Pre-Electoral Assessment Mission to Burundi.

Kalala-Ngoy played an important role in various peace processes undertaken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and is the only woman signatory to all DRC peace agreements – from the Sun City Agreement in 2003 to the latest agreement signed in 2016. As Minister for Human Rights,

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15 Taken from Whitman, S. (2006) Women and peace-building in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: an assessment of their role in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 2006 (1).

she participated in the 2001–2003 Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), which was the first of the DRC's peace processes to actively encourage and create space for women's inclusion. During the process, Kalala-Ngoy was one of the women who united to help set the tone that, above all, peace in the DRC was paramount to any ethnic, regional or political divisions that existed. Most importantly, when last-minute disagreements arose over technical issues on the day when the agreement was scheduled to be signed, the women delegates at the 2002 ICD formed a human chain to block the venue's exits, and refused to move until the agreement was signed.

Women's participation in the ICD also resulted in specific recommendations being made concerning women. It was agreed that rehabilitation centres needed to be established for women and young girls traumatised by the war. The Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Commission also determined that the dignity of women needed to be restored in the DRC, so that they could fulfil their valuable roles in society. In addition, the Commission called for the creation of a national watchdog body on human rights, which should enforce and monitor compliance by the authorities in the DRC with national, regional and international measures relating to human rights. It was also agreed that women's effective integration in all vital areas of national life should be ensured through the application of a 30% quota for participation of women in decision-making at the national level. It was also agreed that the marriageable age of girls should be increased to 18 years of age.

Salimata Porquet[16]

Porquet is a founding member and former president of the Women's Peace and Security Network of the Cedeao Space (REPSFECO). This network was established to coordinate and optimise the role and initiatives of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, security and the promotion of human rights, particularly for women and other vulnerable groups, to achieve sustainable peace in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. She played a significant role in advocating for a peaceful resolution to the civil wars in Côte d'Ivoire, both in 2002 and 2011.

In 2002, Porquet was part of a group that brought together then-president Laurent Gbagbo and rebel leaders from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, in an attempt to facilitate an end to the violence. When violence erupted again in 2011, Porquet addressed the UNSC, calling for the protection of women and children in the crisis. She also spoke on behalf of a group of women from across West Africa, who had mobilised on the margins of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government Summit in solidarity with the women of Côte d'Ivoire. Their statement, read by Porquet to the Summit delegates, called for an urgent end to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in light of the killing of

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16 Taken from Biography: Honourable Porquet Salimata Sanogho. 2017.

seven women in a peaceful march earlier that month and widespread violence against civilians, especially women and children. Following this statement, a decision was made by the heads of state the next day, which favoured a resolution of the crisis.

Porquet has been a member of the Club du Sahel in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since 1995, and acts as a focal point in Côte d'Ivoire, for peacekeeping, prevention and conflict management. As president of REPSFECO, she has trained over 30 women as mediators for the ECOWAS region, and has been active in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Mali, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Togo. She was also the coordinator of the Women and Youth Situation Room in Côte d'Ivoire, to promote peaceful and credible elections in 2015, and is the president of the platform of women and young people for credible and peaceful elections in Côte d'Ivoire.

Leymah Gbowee and Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace[17]

When a second civil war broke out in Liberia in 1999, Gbowee responded by mobilising an interreligious coalition of Christian and Muslim women and organising the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement. Through Gbowee's leadership, thousands of women staged pray-ins and non-violent protests, demanding reconciliation and the resuscitation of high-level peace talks. This pressure pushed President Charles Taylor into exile in 2003, and smoothed the path for the election of Africa's first female head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Gbowee and Sirleaf received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for their work in leading this women's peace movement, which effectively brought an end to the second Liberian civil war. They shared the prize with Tawakkol Karman of Yemen. Gbowee and Sirleaf became the second and third African women to win the prize, preceded by the late Wangari Maathai of Kenya. Their work demonstrated the power of social cohesion and relationship-building in the face of instability and violence.

Gbowee has continued to build women's agency in fighting for sustainable peace, and is a founding member and former coordinator for Women in Peacebuilding/West African Network for Peacebuilding (WIPNET/WANEP). She also co-founded the Women Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-Africa) to promote cross-national peacebuilding efforts and transform women's participation as victims in war into mobilised armies for peace.

17 Taken from Nobel Women's Initiative. (2017) Leymah Gbowee. *Nobel Women's Initiative* [Internet]. Available from: <https://nobelwomensinitiative.org/laureate/leymah-gbowee/> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

Bineta Diop and Femmes Africa Solidarité[18]

Diop, the current AU Special Envoy for WPS, has been a human rights activist for 35 years. She institutionalised the role of women in peace processes by founding Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), a global NGO that seeks to foster, strengthen and promote the leadership role of women in conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution on the African continent. FAS was formed in 1996 in Geneva, Switzerland, in response to the recurrence of wars and eruptions of violence in Africa, and the negative impact of this on African women's lives. It has played a significant role in supporting, training, coordinating and advocating with women's groups across the continent for women's increased participation in peace processes, becoming an important role-player nationally, regionally and internationally with regard to implementation of the WPS Agenda.

With regard to advocacy and solidarity, FAS actively lobbied for the protection of women in Darfur in 2007, and addressed the UNSC on the issue. In terms of its wider continental impact, FAS played an important role in the creation of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) in the AU, which later became the AUWC. It also organised an advocacy campaign within the AWCPD that led to the adoption of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the inclusion of a gender parity requirement in the statutes of the AU. The gender parity requirement, which is the first of its kind in a continent-wide body anywhere in the world, was fulfilled by the AU in July 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique, with the election of five AU women commissioners out of 10. FAS also contributed to the adoption of the SDGEA on 8 July 2004.

FAS was selected by civil society and the AU as the coordinator for the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC). Since the launch of the GIMAC, the AU Pre-Summit Women's Consultative Meetings have been facilitated by FAS, and have allowed the women's movement to progress significantly on the monitoring and implementation of the SDGEA, and adopting new relevant lobbying instruments for submission to the AU Summit, such as civil society shadow reports. These meetings on the margins of the AU Summit have taken place consistently over the past 15 years, and have provided an important platform for women's concerns and issues to be articulated and influence the outcomes of the Summits.

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18 Taken from Jobson, E. (2014) Bineta Diop: My African Union mandate is to echo women's voices. *The Guardian* [Internet], 5 March. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/mar/05/african-union-bineta-diop-women-voices> [Accessed 5 December 2017]; and Femmes Africa Solidarité. (n.d.) Femmes Africa Solidarité [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.fasngo.org/> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

MARWOPNET

The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) was born out of FAS's capacity building and advocacy programme involving the three countries of the region, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Its early action contributed to preventing the outbreak of hostilities between the three countries by bringing their leaders back to the negotiating table. In his report to the Security Council in April 2001, UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, commended MARWOPNET's positive contribution to peacebuilding. In December 2003, the UN General Assembly awarded the Network the prestigious UN Human Rights Prize in recognition of its achievement in this area. FAS also supported a delegation of women from MARWOPNET Liberia during the June 2003 Akosombo Talks during which the leader of the delegation, Theresa Leigh-Sherman, signed the peace accord as a witness. This subsequently brought the transitional government and transitional peace accord into effect. Following the Akosombo Talks of June 2003, Liberian women formed part of the National Transitional Government of Liberia as per the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Accord. Together with MARWOPNET, an election observation mission was organised for the national elections in Liberia in October 2005, which saw the appointment of Liberia's and Africa's first female Head of State, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

With regard to its wider international impact, FAS lobbied for and embraced the adoption of Resolution 1325, ratified by the UNSC in October 2000. It contributes to the implementation and monitoring of Resolution 1325 through the Working Group on Peace in New York and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Committee on the Status of Women (CSW), which is chaired by FAS in Geneva, Switzerland. FAS has been using its participation in the sessions of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva and the UN CSW in New York to advocate for the concerns and priorities of African women, bringing women from the field to share their experiences and concerns.

Overall, Diop has campaigned for almost two decades to ensure that women are involved in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Her work with FAS at the grassroots level in some of Africa's most fragile states, and her establishment of an international network of likeminded individuals and groups in FAS, provide a solid foundation and springboard for other initiatives, such as FemWise-Africa, going forward.

Multitrack diplomacy by women: examples from Kenya and Somalia[19]

Women have played an important role in managing security in the region between Kenya and Somalia. They have contributed towards decreasing tensions and resolving disputes at a local level. From 1992 to 1993, a small women's civic group helped set in motion a peace process that eventually culminated in a relatively durable peace among the three main clans on either

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19 Taken from Wasike, S., Okoth, P.G. and Were, E. (2016) The nature of track 3 diplomacy and its influence on cross-border security relations between Kenya and Somalia. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*, 4 (6).

side of the border in Wajir, and produced a new type of civic–government partnership for security management, which went on to become a model for peace committees along the entire border region of Kenya and Somalia.

In 1996, the Coalition for Grassroots Women Organisation was formed in Somalia, with members drawn from Dadaab, Fafi and Liboi. The main agenda of this organisation was to address peacebuilding, through negotiations with numerous warlords. Women have also been effective in mobilising resources to finance peace meetings. In Somalia in 1994, women intervened when male clan elders failed to control armed teenage militia mobilising on the streets. These women managed to pay for the services for both disarmament and demobilisation.

In 2014, the chairperson of the Together Women Group in Ifo, Anran Abdundi, staged rescue missions along the border to save women and children from the danger posed by the presence of Al Shabaab and other armed militia groups in the region. She used her organisation, The Frontier Indigenous Network, to mobilise other women peacebuilders and rights activists to reach the hunger-stricken and vulnerable population by setting up shelters along the border. Abdundi's organisation engaged stakeholders and addressed the issue of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) as a way of reducing violence and rape within the conflict. This process led to drafting of a regional master plan on SALWs, which established coordination between civil society actors and government agencies and targeted the network of cartels behind the trade. Local communities also got involved in pursuing the arms traffickers, by sealing conduits used by the smugglers and traders along the border.

Women in the region have also encouraged their husbands and sons to surrender illegal firearms. For example, in the Saretho location, Dadaab district, a man who was involved in highway banditry was arrested and his firearm recovered after his wife, who was trained in peacebuilding, cooperated with the government when he failed to heed her plea to voluntarily surrender. Women from both Kenya and Somalia often share experiences to enhance cross-border peace initiatives and sensitisation on the dangers of SALWs. Sometimes, during periods of violence, women from both Kenya and Somalia travel between clans to create an informal diplomacy that appeals for an end to the violence, and for peace negotiations to begin. These women maintain communication channels and deliver messages between clans, performing a key role in managing and resolving local level conflicts in the region.

Multitrack diplomacy by women: examples from Burundi[20]

Burundian women have been organising themselves and collectively advocating for peace and women's inclusion in peace processes at the Track 1, 2, and 3 levels for the past two decades. When a political crisis broke out in 1994 following the assassination of President Cyprien Ntaryamira, women's groups around the country began to work together to form a widespread movement for peace, which included the NGO Women for Peace, led by journalist and political activist Catherine Mabobori. Mabobori went on to lead an umbrella organisation of women's groups, called Le Collectif des ONG et Associations Féminines du Burundi (CAFOB), which formed out of this movement. CAFOB, together with other prominent regional and international women's groups, successfully advocated for women to be included in the Arusha peace talks that began in 1998. Although the group was only given observer status during the talks, it successfully advocated for the August 2000 peace agreement to be engendered: a number of the women's recommendations were included in the agreement, including the definition of rape and other sexual abuse during conflict as a war crime. In addition, the local women activists demanded throughout the process that a female electoral quota be included in the agreement, resulting in a 30% quota to ensure women's representation in post-transition institutions, such as the government and Parliament. Following this peace agreement, women in Burundi have been instrumental in peacebuilding activities, including organising dialogue frameworks and implementing follow-up mechanisms for the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

In 2015, violence erupted once again in the lead-up to elections. A variety of women's community networks emerged, such as the Women Network for Peace and Dialogue, and the Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security in Burundi (MFFPS), led by Marie-Louise Baricako. The Women Network for Peace and Dialogue has been working with government, CSOs and local communities to prevent violent conflict and promote dialogue at the Track 3 level. It consists of 534 mediators working across all municipalities in Burundi, who had addressed over 5 000 conflicts at the local level by 2015. They also initiated dialogues in 17 provinces with political actors, security forces and civil society. In a tense political context, these women mediators have been tackling family, social and land-related conflicts at the community level, which can easily be politicised and risk destabilising communities.

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20 Taken from UN Women. (2016) Women mediators promote peace in Burundi. *UN Women* [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/1/women-mediators-promote-peace-in-burundi> [Accessed 4 December 2017]; Habitat III. (2016) Speakers: Catherine Mabobori. *Habitat III: The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development* [Internet]. Available from: <http://habitat3.org/the-conference/programme/speakers/catherine-mabobori/> [Accessed 5 December 2017]; Women and Girls Movement for Peace and Security in Burundi. (n.d.) Historique. *MFFPS Burundi* [Internet]. Available from: <http://mffpsburundi.org/historique/> [Accessed 5 December 2017]; and Faure, G. (2017) 'Rape is used as a weapon': the women trying to bring peace back to Burundi. News Deeply [Internet], 25 July. Available from: <https://www.newsdeeply.com/womenandgirls/community/2017/07/25/rape-is-used-as-a-weapon-the-women-trying-to-bring-peace-back-to-burundi> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

They have gained the confidence and practical skills to tackle political and electoral conflicts and have increasingly dealt with sensitive issues. The women diffuse tensions – for example, by mediating between security forces and protesters – and advocate for the release of demonstrators and political prisoners. They promote non-violence and dialogue, and counter rumours and exaggerated fears with verifiable information.

Complementing the work of these women mediators is the MFFPS, a women-only advocacy group of over 300 members who use peaceful methods of mobilisation and protest to advocate for a return to legality, peace and security in Burundi. Like many CSOs, the MFFPS continually advocates for the protection of citizens and the holding of an inclusive dialogue between the Government of Burundi and all stakeholders in the crisis. They use demonstrations, press releases, awareness messages, interviews, lobbying, position papers and advocacy missions to achieve these goals. They also lobby for the active involvement of women and girls in all crisis resolution processes, including the inter-Burundian dialogue process and in citizen awareness-raising for the strengthening of a culture of peace in Burundi.

In preparation for the inter-Burundian dialogue process in 2017, various women's groups in Burundi – including the Women's National Forum, the Platform of Women's Organisations for Peace and Security, Women in Action for Peace in Burundi (WAP-BURUNDI) and the Women's Initiative for Development (WID) – were brought together by the Burundian Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender (MDPHASG), Concertation des Collectifs des Associations Féminines, Great Lakes Region (COCAFEM/GL) and ACCORD Burundi, with support from UN Women. These women's groups had been involved in various peacebuilding initiatives and offered analyses of the Burundian crises through a gendered lens. The groups met to establish a Common Agenda for Burundian Women in the peacebuilding process, which was validated on 10 February 2017. This Common Agenda synthesised and consolidated the various recommendations made by the women's groups to facilitate a unified voice for women at the inter-Burundian dialogue. Following the drafting of the agenda, the groups spontaneously united to form a collective women's group, with a view to implementing the actions on their agenda.

These networks of women in Burundi demonstrate the power of collectives at the community level through their tireless work to prevent violence and promote peaceful dialogue, as well as to ensure that women's voices and concerns are heard at the negotiation table. They also demonstrate the value of including women in peace processes – not just for achieving inclusive peace agreements, but also for enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment post-conflict.

Women's Situation Rooms[21]

Over the years, in response to electoral challenges, various actors have employed different mechanisms and implemented initiatives to reduce and prevent the violence that sometimes accompanies elections in African countries. Among these initiatives is the Women's Situation Room (WSR), a women-led approach to preventing and reducing violence during and after the electoral cycle. Several countries have established the WSR, which seeks to reduce cases of violence and sexual violence during elections, and to increase the number of women in electoral processes – either as voters, candidates, supporters or observers.

The WSR is a peacebuilding initiative that empowers women to be a leading force for democratic and peaceful elections. The concept was successfully implemented during the 2011 Liberian elections by Yvette Chesson-Wureh, coordinator for the Liberia-based Angie Brooks International Centre (ABIC), an NGO working for women's empowerment. The WSR is an initiative that mobilises the expertise and experiences of women to mitigate potential conflict that could emerge before, during and after elections. It empowers women and youth to play an active and direct role in peace and security efforts, and to engage in peace processes and conflict prevention mechanisms in accordance with UNSC resolutions 1325 and 1820. The WSR has been successfully replicated in Senegal (2012), Sierra Leone (2012), Kenya (2013), Nigeria (2014) and Uganda (2016), among other countries. The operational approach of the WSR is expected to differ in individual countries, allowing for flexibility to adapt to local conditions and dynamics. As a result of its demonstrated effectiveness in preventing and mitigating election-related violence in several countries in Africa, the WSR was endorsed as best practice by the 2012 GIMAC. The UN also recognised the WSR as best practice in conflict and violence prevention.

This chapter has highlighted a few of the numerous initiatives and actions taken by individuals and collectives across the continent to address the challenges of gender inequality with regard to peace and security. There have been many more such efforts – a number of which remain undocumented – that have contributed to the positive context on which initiatives such as FemWise-Africa can build in addressing these challenges. It is important for such efforts to be recognised and celebrated.

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21 Taken from Limo, I. (2017) The women's situation room in Africa: an initiative for peaceful and inclusive elections. *Conflict Trends*, 2016 (4).

The emergence of women's networks

FemWise-Africa emerges in a context where there is increasing focus on women's networks as a means of enhancing collaboration and solidarity to advance the WPS Agenda. This trend has roots in Africa, evidenced by the growth and establishment of smaller-scale women's networks throughout the continent over the past decade. FemWise-Africa builds on and adds to this phenomenon, which has since gained traction around the world.

African Women Mediators Seminar

In 2012, ACCORD and the AU hosted an African Women Mediators Seminar, which brought together a selection of high-level practitioners, policy-makers, academics and political leaders to dialogue on the important role of African women as mediators and active participants in peace processes. The seminar, convened by Machel, provided a platform for experienced and active women mediators, such as Bigombe from Uganda and Lindiwe Zulu from South Africa, to share their experiences on mediation in Africa and deliberate on possible responses to the challenges surrounding women's inclusion as mediators in peace processes. The seminar offered an opportunity for all women engaged in peace efforts on the African continent to connect and share their experiences, with a view to strengthening collective efforts going forward. As such, it was an early embodiment of some of the central ideals underpinning FemWise-Africa. The key document to come out of this seminar was the Statement of Action, which identified ways of accelerating African women's participation in peace processes.

Southern African Women Mediators network and database

The Southern African Women Mediators Seminar was convened by UN Women in collaboration with ACCORD in 2012. This event was held as part of efforts to address a historical gap in the inclusiveness of peace processes in the southern Africa region. The seminar, which drew participants from across southern Africa, focused on promoting a regional and collaborative approach to advocate for women's inclusion in peace processes. It provided an opportunity for current and potential female mediators to share their experiences and increase their understanding of the mediation environment. Discussions made it clear that women remain marginalised from participating in mediation, and that organisations engaged in peacemaking need to strengthen their support for women's increased capacity and participation in peacemaking. The seminar also included a training component, which brought together women in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region from government, civil society, business, academia and regional organisations that have been engaged in mediation activities or mediation

support, as well as women who were likely to assume mediator or facilitator roles in peace processes, to enhance their capacity for greater influence in peace processes.

This seminar led to the development of a Southern African Women Mediators Database in 2013. The database holds the names of key individuals, and is used to identify potential participants for initiatives seeking to increase the participation of women in mediation, and to enhance the effectiveness of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. The seminar also facilitated the establishment of a Southern African Women Mediators Network, which aims to foster a culture of collaboration and solidarity among women working towards the advancement of their communities, with a view to boosting women's participation in peace processes in the region and beyond. This women's network concept has since spread and gained traction across the continent and the world, inspiring similar initiatives in the Nordic countries, the Mediterranean and other areas.

The Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum and Capacity-building Programme

In 2015 the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum, was launched to serve as a platform for women to discuss issues related to African conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Hosted annually by the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), in partnership with the Government of Norway and UN Women, the Forum brings together diverse speakers from national and international governments and CSOs to speak about the role of women in peace processes, with a focus on the southern African region. It also serves as a platform to facilitate the training and mentorship of southern African women in conflict resolution, with a view to growing a new pool of mediators for local, national and regional peacemaking interventions. This initiative facilitated the capacity enhancement of 90 young women in the southern Africa region, who completed a training programme on conflict resolution and negotiation and attended the dialogue forum that brings together policy-makers, experts and practitioners to share and reflect on examples of women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention and mediation.

A global trend

The Gertrude Shope initiative and others – such as the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM), the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) and a myriad of other community-level women's mediation networks across the world – highlight the growing trend of harnessing the power of collectives for meaningful change. It is in this context that FemWise-Africa emerges as a key platform, through which women engaged in advancing the WPS Agenda on the African continent and beyond can come together and enhance their collaboration towards realising the interlinked goals of gender inclusivity and sustainable peace.

FemWise-Africa

Background

In 2010, the PoW decided to initiate a long-term study and action plan to eradicate sexual violence against women and children in armed conflicts. One of the key recommendations in the ensuing report required the AU to take action by establishing a formal network of women in mediation, linked to the relevant AU organs, to monitor and influence decision-making. It was in this context that the AU PSD, with the support of UN Women, commissioned a study to map existing networks and associations working on women's participation in mediation. On the basis of this study, and in consultation with partners, draft modalities were developed for the network of women.

In December 2016, PanWise, in collaboration with UN Women and ACCORD, convened an African Women Mediation Workshop on the theme "Silencing the Guns by 2020: Women's Inclusion in Pre-conflict Mediation, at the Peace Table and in Social Cohesion" in Constantine, Algeria. The workshop brought together over 80 women and men from 24 African countries involved in Track 1, 2 and 3 mediation processes, conflict prevention and social cohesion activities, to share experiences, identify challenges and barriers to women's active participation, and discuss strategies to accelerate women's agency in these efforts. The women's network was identified as a key strategy in this regard, and participants discussed the focus and form of the network and developed recommendations to inform the finalisation of its modalities.

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Participants in the 2016 African Women Mediation Workshop, "Silencing the Guns by 2020: Women's Inclusion in Pre-Conflict Mediation, at the Peace table and in Social Cohesion" held in Constantine, Algeria

On 13 March 2017, the AU PSC endorsed the modalities for FemWise-Africa. Additional endorsement was given to the network by the UNSC on 27 March 2017 in New York, as part of an Arria Formula meeting. FemWise-Africa was officially established through a decision of the AU Assembly of Heads of State (AU Summit) on 4 July 2017.[22]

FemWise-Africa aims to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the context of the APSA. Its location within the APSA – as a subsidiary mechanism of the PoW, and in collaboration with various initiatives such as PanWise – places it in a strategic position for policy formulation and advocacy towards narrowing the gap between policy and implementation regarding women's inclusion in peace processes.

Structure

The structure of FemWise-Africa includes the Steering Committee, the Assembly and the Secretariat. The Steering Committee – which is co-presided by Samba-Panza, former president of the Central African Republic, and Wandira-Kazibwe, the first African woman vice president of Uganda – gives strategic guidance to the Secretariat, provides reflection on the activities of the network, provides input to the network's annual work plans, and reviews membership accreditation applications. The Steering Committee includes the women members of the AU PoW, women representatives from the RECs, 10 regional women mediators (representing civil society) and the relevant departments and directorates of the AUC. Associate members without voting privileges include UN Women country offices, ACCORD, the Africa Leadership Centre and, as necessary, thematic experts to provide regular substantive guidance and advice to the Secretariat.

The Assembly, which is made up of all members of the network and is responsible for approving annual work plans, provides a regular platform for the exchange of lessons learned and best practices. The Assembly will meet at least once a year, and at any other time as deemed necessary, to validate and adopt the annual action plan of the network.

The Secretariat of FemWise is based at the AUC headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, within the PSD. The Secretariat coordinates, harmonises and monitors the activities of the network. It also tables annual and other reports on the activities of the network through relevant structures within the PSD, and to the PoW through PanWise. The Secretariat is responsible for managing the network's relations with other pillars of APSA; the African Governance Architecture (AGA); the AU Gender Architecture; institutions for training,

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22 African Union. (2017) Peace and Security. *African Union to Convene the Steering Committee of "FemWise-Africa" ahead of Imminent Deployments of Women Mediators (#FemWise)* [Internet]. Available: <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20171002/african-union-convene-steering-committee-%E2%80%9Cfemwise-africa%E2%80%9D-ahead-imminent> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

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Participants in the first FemWise-Africa Steering Committee meeting, hosted by the AU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 5–6 October 2017.

research and policy; and other relevant stakeholders, as determined by the network. The Secretariat also implements the network's communication and outreach strategy, and performs any other duties articulated by the AU Chairperson, the PSC, network members or other appropriate stakeholders.

Accredited members

Membership in FemWise-Africa is open to individual women who have served and aspire to serve in conflict preventative actions and mediation activities, drawn from a variety of different backgrounds. Creating an all-inclusive network means tapping into the influence and visibility of high-level or leading women mediators, as well as the wealth of expertise embedded in women mediators from Track 2 and 3 peace processes. FemWise-Africa already includes approximately 80 aspiring members.

Priorities

Drawing on deliberations that took place at the Constantine meeting in 2016, and the briefing to the PSC, the UNSC and the Assembly, the priorities of FemWise-Africa are formulated as:

- professionalising the role of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation at Tracks 1, 2 and 3 levels;
- ensuring a platform for women's meaningful and effective participation in peace processes, including as heads of official high-level mediation missions;

- initiating women's action that will catalyse and mainstream the engagement of women in mediation in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- bridging the gap between Track 1, 2 and 3 diplomacy and synergising efforts towards inclusive peace processes with sustainable outcomes; and
- strengthening the mediation interventions of FemWise-Africa through the facilitation of quick impact projects (QIPs) and the establishment of local and national peace infrastructures as foundations and launch pads for medium-term and longer-term initiatives, which will ensure that stability and development take root.

These noble aims require collaboration and the efforts of multiple actors working in complementarity across the continent to realise the vision of a peaceful, equitable and united Africa.

The Power of Collectives

There has been a global trend in the establishment of women's networks, such as FemWise-Africa, to extend efforts to realise the aims of UNSC Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242), which have come to represent the normative frameworks on WPS. These networks have been established at regional, national and local level, including the emergence of grassroots networks at community level in countries such as Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan. The rise and establishment of women's networks is an important step in adding impetus to the WPS Agenda, as it harnesses the power of collectives to effect meaningful change. These networks can play an important role in achieving Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 – of "An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children" – as well as working towards achieving SDG 5: Gender Equality.

Women's networks have numerous comparative advantages in achieving the goals of the WPS Agenda, in that they:

- help to strengthen and coordinate women's voices in mediating peace efforts at all levels, and in advocacy for women's increased participation in peace efforts;
- provide a resource pool in the form of rosters for appointments of women as lead mediators and special envoys;
- offer a platform for sharing good practice and skills;
- reflect the diversity of women peace actors and build peace platforms beyond political affiliations;
- enable smaller, and especially grassroots organisations, to leverage the influence of more powerful individuals and organisation in the network;
- establish a pool of shared resources, in terms of knowledge and documented experiences, for women engaged in similar efforts across the globe;
- urge implementation through sustained advocacy and monitoring;
- create transnational links for future collaboration and wider reach in efforts to realise the WPS Agenda; and
- enable effective engagement with CSOs and grassroots organisations, especially women's peace coalitions.

Given these and other benefits of women's networks, it is not surprising that they are being established on an ongoing basis across the world, and are increasingly looking to build transnational and transcontinental links to strengthen their collective voices.

Women's networks around the world

The NWM, inspired by the Southern African Women Mediators Network and the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum, 23 was launched in November 2015 and is a network of women from the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) with professional expertise on a variety of issues relevant to all phases of peace processes. These issues include mediation, ceasefire arrangements, constitutional reform, civil–military relations, international humanitarian law, human rights, communications and inclusive strategies. They share a commitment to sustaining peace through the inclusive and meaningful participation of women in all phases of peace processes. The membership of the network comprises women with diverse professional experiences, ranging from foreign affairs and international law to multilateral or regional organisation affiliation such as the UN, the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as well as civil society. Promoting women in negotiations, mediation and all phases of peacemaking is at the heart of the NWM's work.

The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network was launched in Rome, Italy, on 25–26 October 2017. The main partner for this Network is the Italian antenna of Women in International Security (WIIS), an organisation dedicated to advancing the leadership and professional development of women in international peace and security. This Network aims to increase the number of women involved in peacemaking efforts, and facilitate the appointment of women mediators at local and international level, thus reducing the networking capacity gap in the Mediterranean area. Given the complex sociocultural context of the Mediterranean, the Network believes that women mediators can bring strategic knowledge to contribute towards conflict resolution and sustainable peace. The Network, which is promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and implemented by Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and WIIS Italy, desires to be a catalyst for mediation efforts in ongoing and potential crises, and in post-conflict stabilisation processes. It also looks forward to fostering synergy and coordination among similar initiatives.[24]

The Commonwealth network of female mediators is an initiative that will form part of the United Kingdom government's upcoming campaign on women in mediation, building on its National Action Plan on WPS. In the run-up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (The Commonwealth Summit) 2018, the campaign – which will complement existing networks –

23 Lund, K. (2017) Preventing crisis and conflict: women's role in ongoing peace processes. *UN Chronicle*, LIV (3) [Internet], October. Available from: <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/preventing-crisis-and-conflict-women-s-role-ongoing-peace-processes> [Accessed 13 November 2017].

24 Istituto Affari Internazionali. (2017) Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN). *Istituto Affari Internazionali* [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.iai.it/en/ricerche/mediterranean-women-mediators-network--mwmn> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

will be underpinned by a programme of capacity building to develop a talent pool of qualified women across the Commonwealth working in government, business and civil society towards building sustainable peace.[25]

Building and strengthening collective power

Solidarity and collaboration are imperative for the success of these networks. As long as such networks are regarded as essential platforms and interdependent initiatives for women's regular coordination and for co-learning, many challenges facing both Africa and the greater global community can be comprehensively addressed.

This interconnectedness must therefore be maintained – not only internally within FemWise-Africa, but also across continental borders to embrace other such networks. It is the intention of FemWise-Africa to actively promote and nurture close North–South relations, such as with the NWM, and it looks forward to collaboration with the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network as well as the Women Mediation Network for the Commonwealth Countries, once established. FemWise-Africa also seeks South–South collaborative partnerships and relationships with the various women's platforms of Colombia, which played a key role in the 2012–2016 peace process, and looks to intensify collaboration with regional women's networks in Asia.

Strengthening collaboration also extends to agencies such as the UN, which have played supportive roles during the process of building FemWise-Africa. UN Women has been a partner in this and other initiatives, providing expertise as well as capacity enhancement. FemWise-Africa looks forward to meaningful collaboration with the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA); the Mediation Support Unit (MSU), in the form of sharing important databank resources and rosters; and UN Environment (UNEP), to investigate the causes and impact of natural resource-based conflicts on local communities, especially in border areas, which are known to be geographically vulnerable.

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25   Wilton Park. (2017) Event: Women in mediation: promoting participation (WP1570). *Wilton Park* [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/event/wp1570/> [Accessed 5 December 2017].

Conclusion

FemWise-Africa emerges at a pivotal point in Africa's history, as the continent is experiencing a convergence of complex challenges – as well as innovative and collaborative solutions to such challenges – in pursuit of Agenda 2063's vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in international arena".[26] The individuals and groups driving the FemWise-Africa initiative have a rich history of work in the field of WPS, particularly regarding women's participation in conflict prevention and mediation on the African continent. Their work builds on and complements the many efforts of individuals, institutions and networks across the continent for the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Africa. The aims of FemWise-Africa highlight a noble vision towards which the network will work, and point to the need for ongoing collaboration among actors to realise these aims. These aims also articulate a coherent understanding of the actions that need to work in synergy, specifically with regard to increasing women's participation and influence in conflict prevention and mediation on the continent.

In a global context of increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, there is growing evidence to suggest that multiple collaborative efforts across language, culture, national affiliation and even continental boundaries are perhaps the most comprehensive way of addressing such challenges and envisioning a collective future. FemWise-Africa and many other networks like it, then, present an exciting opportunity to explore this potential in the pressing and urgent context of violent conflicts throughout the world. As an embodiment of "the power of collectives", these networks and the links between them rekindle the possibility of a more just, inclusive and peaceful future for women and men in Africa and beyond.

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26 African Union. (2015) *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (Popular Version)*. African Union Commission, p. 1.

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Strengthening African Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention, Mediation Processes and Peace Stabilisation Efforts

OPERATIONALISATION OF *"FEMWISE-AFRICA"*

Implementation Period: 2018–2020

Femwise Logo

This logo represents the diversity and collaboration of African women involved in peace efforts. It shows the collective strength of women at the negotiating table in track 1 peace processes, holding hands to represent a unified voice for the more vulnerable groups in society.

It also highlights the importance of track 2 and 3 peace efforts, represented by the group of women engaged in dialogue in the circle. The logo is an open circle to represent the necessary interaction and interdependence of all these tracks, as well as the openness to bringing new voices to the negotiating table.

The aim in creating this logo was to capture the vision and goals of FemWise-Africa, which include advocating for more women to play a meaningful role in track 1 peace processes in Africa, and enhancing collaboration between women engaged in peace efforts at all tracks. FemWise-Africa harnesses the strength, resilience, and commitment to peace of a diverse group of women from across the continent. The design of the logo foregrounds and celebrates these women, and highlights the integral role that they play – whether through formal or informal peace efforts – in securing peace in Africa.

The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) was established in December 2016 at the 4th Pan-African Network of the Wise High-Level Workshop in Constantine, Algeria, and was officially endorsed by the African Union at the 29th Assembly of the African Union on 4 July 2017. This continental network of women was formed with the aim of enhancing collaboration and strengthening advocacy towards increasing women's meaningful participation in peace efforts across Africa, as well as growing synergies between Track 1, 2 and 3 peace processes on the continent, particularly with regard to conflict prevention and mediation.

This booklet chronicles the history and vision of FemWise-Africa, and maps out the wider continental and international context in which it has emerged as a key role-player for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, specifically in the areas of conflict prevention and mediation in Africa. The booklet outlines some of the work being done on the African continent and beyond to develop, implement and monitor frameworks such as the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, through the creation of various mechanisms and collectives. The booklet places FemWise-Africa in the wider context of these initiatives and highlights the unique contribution this network can make in the dynamic and evolving landscape of Women, Peace and Security. It also celebrates and commemorates the contributions made by individuals, networks and institutions towards the ongoing implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa and internationally, specifically with regard to issues of conflict prevention and mediation.