Dear FAS Members, Networks and Friends,

I would like to inform you about a number of successful events that we have had in the last three months. We organised a fruitful 12th Pre Summit on gender mainstreaming in the African Union in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, in June. At this Pre Summit, we held various panels at which issues such as human trafficking were discussed. On other panels, we were also able to inform the Gender is My Agenda network on how the preparations of the Liberia International Colloquium are going; give an update on Sudan; map a way forward on Zimbabwe as well as come up with the Solemn Declaration that was presented at the 11th African Union Heads of State and Government Summit.

Another triumph was the second mission to Sudan in April and their recommendations are the basis upon which we will forge future projects in the Horn of Africa.

Your support and interest are invaluable to us, and we hope you will enjoy reading and learning about our activities in this latest issue of FAS News.

Yours in solidarity,

Bineta Diop, Executive Director

AFRICAN WOMEN CALL FOR 2ND HEADS OF STATE GENDER SUMMIT

African women who attended the 12th Consultative meeting on gender mainstreaming in the African Union held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt from June 21-23, 2008, called upon the African Union (AU) to mandate the Chairperson of the AU Commission to initiate a process towards the convening of the Second Heads of State and Government Gender Summit in July 2009.

The women, brought together under the auspices of the Gender is My Agenda Campaign, a network of 40 members coordinated by FAS, drafted a Solemn Statement and Recommendations. This declaration was presented to Heads of State and Ministers of the African Union between June 28 and July 1. The theme of the Summit meeting was ‘Meeting the Millennium Development Goals on Water and Sanitation’.

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The twenty-one day 2nd mission to Sudan was a successful trip and the consultants returned with a number of recommendations that will be used by FAS to map a way forward on a follow-up project in Darfur, Sudan.

The mission, which was supported by Britain’s Department for International Development (DFID), comprised of the same four FAS consultants that undertook the first mission in January. The group was coordinated by Ms Monica Juma and the others were Dr Marema Touré, Ms Berewa Jommo, and Ms Monica Nkuuhe. The trip kicked off on 21st April to 11th May.

This second mission was undertaken to consolidate the momentum and achievements since the African Women's Consultation on Darfur held in Addis Ababa, in January as well as to move forward the Plan of Action, particularly regarding the need for training. This was jointly decided with the Interim Steering Committee (ISC) of the Sudanese Women Forum on Darfur.

The objective was to carry out a training needs assessment that will enable FAS to generate materials that will form the basis for training and capacity building activities for women in Sudan. In addition, they were to explore the requirements for setting up a Secretariat/and or coordinating mechanism to support the ISC and the Forum of Sudanese women on Darfur, and explore possible locations in Darfur for the next forum. Finally, they were to meet with the members of the ISC for a debriefing session.

Some of the outcomes of the trip was a recognition that there was a need for training on specific topics such as analysis and management of conflicts; national, regional and international mechanisms for peace building; understanding of the Darfur Peace Agreement and understanding gender based violence.

It was suggested that part of the training be provided in local languages including Arabic to make it easier for those being trained to understand.

On the establishment of a Secretariat, it was recommended that it be based in Khartoum and it should work closely with all the different chapters of the Forum. The Secretariat must have the following essential staff: an Executive Secretary, Administration Officer and Finance Officer. On the upcoming Forum, it was suggested that Klaimendo, in El Fasher, be the venue. As for the women’s agenda, there was need to prioritise the issues regarding the common agenda for peace negotiations and the common issues at grassroots level.

After concluding their research, the consultants made their recommendations and a follow-up project is being developed which aims to support Darfuri women’s efforts in implementing the Sudanese Women’s Peace Agenda on Darfur as it is reflected in the Sudanese Women Declaration on Darfur and the Darfur Plan of Action.

FAS WELCOMES NEW STAFF

FAS is pleased to welcome four new members to its staff in the Geneva offices. Mrs Patricia Moukalla is the new Administration and Finance Assistant. She took over from Ms Kukikila Bindanda who was with us for a year. Ms Marianna Pavan has taken over from Ms Fanny Petitbon as the Partnerships and Fundraising Intern. Ms Juliet Ochienghs takes over the Networking and Outreach position from Ms Sarah Azia. Another not so new person is Mrs Dior Dupuy-Camara who is the Webmaster. She has been with us for the past two months.
26 WOMEN RECEIVE TRAINING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Twenty-six women entrepreneurs from seven African countries attended a two-day training session aimed at mentoring them to develop their businesses.

The training ran from 16th-18th June, in Dakar, Senegal and the participants came from South Africa, DR Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and one from the Diaspora. It was organised by the Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace and Development of FAS and the Centre for Diversity in Global Management at the Instituto de Empresa (IE) of Spain.

The workshop, which was supported by the Spanish government, aimed to train these small and medium entrepreneurs in organizational development, capacity building in management of enterprises, business competitiveness and feasibility of projects.

FAS Executive Director, Mrs Bineta Diop, when opening the training said that there was need to create an environment conducive to business in Africa in order to create strong leadership. She explained that participants in the workshop were selected after a study by consultants. The women were involved in the processing of local products, livestock and services.

According to Mrs Diop, these women would also receive a second workshop in Madrid, Spain and the cycle will be completed by distance learning.

"The Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace and Development of FAS aims to become a centre of excellence, providing training on issues of peace and development with particular emphasis on gender," she concluded. For his part, Chief of Staff of the Senegalese Minister of Family, Women's Entrepreneurship and Micro-finance, Boubacar Traore, considered it "difficult" to develop a country without women.

"Africa will never develop without a real integration and integration could never be achieved without women on the continent, who constitute more than half the population," he said.

Two weeks later, July 17, 26 African women arrived in Madrid to continue their training. The women would be mentored by the International MBA students from IE Business School, in Madrid, as part of a scheme to promote entrepreneurship on the continent.

The women would receive management training on the IE campus in Spain and then over the summer the selected MBA students will visit them for two to four weeks in their respective countries to assist them personally with their businesses and help them develop a business plan.

Once the students have returned to Spain they will continue the consulting process by email.

FAS UPDATES NETWORK ON LIBERIA COLLOQUIUM

On the margins of 12th African Union (AU) Pre-Summit on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU in Sharm el Sheikh, FAS organised a panel discussion to provide information to its networks involved in the Gender is My Agenda Campaign and partners on the importance of the Liberia International Colloquium and how they could contribute to its success.

The discussion held on June 22 was chaired by Hon Justice Sanji, Mmasenono Monageng, from the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR). The panellists were Ms. Patricia Kamara, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Gender and Development, Liberia; and Hon. Mary Leigh-Parker, Member of the National Steering Committee, of the Colloquium. FAS provided the financial support for these two members of the Steering Committee to participate at the 12th Pre Summit.

The International Colloquium on Women’s Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security, is expected to be held in Liberia, Monrovia from 7-8 March, 2009. Its theme will be the UNSCR 1325. This resolution specifically focuses on the effects of armed conflicts on women and girls and underlines the importance of women in peace processes.

At the meeting in Sharm el Sheikh, the panellists briefed the more than fifty people, who attended the discussion, on the progress made in preparing for the Colloquium and its importance. It was emphasised that the main objective of the Colloquium was to empower women at various levels. FAS, with the support of the Government of Finland, has held a number of training workshops on the importance of UNSCR 1325 and how the women can use it to fight for their rights.

In another development, the Colloquium Secretariat in Liberia will be reinforced by a bilingual resource person from September this year to March 2009. This person, who will be recommended by FAS from its networks, will be responsible for the translation of documents into French and provide administrative support.
AFRICAN WOMEN CALL FOR 2ND GENDER SUMMIT

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The Gender Summit is meant to review and further strengthen African commitments to gender equality as provided for in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and other related instruments.

The women also commended members of the AU that submitted their reports on SDGEA and urged other member States that have not, to do so ahead of this summit.

On the issue of Zimbabwe, the women agreed to send a Women’s Solidarity Mission to support their counterparts after the Presidential Run-off election on June 27.

The women also called on the Zimbabwean government to facilitate women’s access to humanitarian resources such as food, shelter and medical services by lifting the ban against humanitarian organizations operating within the country and ensure the safety and protection of all its citizens.

FAS and the Gender is my Agenda Campaign hold bi-annual Pre Summits in order to review the progress made by the AU in gender mainstreaming with specific emphasis given to the implementation of SDGEA. The meetings serve as a means to monitor, evaluate and make recommendations to the African leaders.

The 12th Pre Summit was held at Pyramisa Hotel in Sharm El Sheikh and attended by about 70 participants. Amongst the attendees were African ministers in charge of gender, legal experts within Africa and the Diaspora and regional institutions involved in the campaign that deal with women’s welfare. It was officially opened by the First Lady of Egypt, H.E. Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, who is a strong advocate of the empowerment of women, respect for their freedom and dignity. Mrs. Mubarak who is also the founder of the Suzanne Mubarak Women’s International Peace Movement was cognisant of the effects of violence against women during conflicts and said there was need to establish effective social protection mechanisms.

On the situation in Darfur, the women asked the African Union to intervene in the dispute between Sudan and Chad, and ensure that the peace accord signed between the two governments in Dakar, Senegal, in March 2008 was fully implemented. The women felt it was important for the African Union to demonstrate leadership in supporting the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as well as ensuring that women were included in the Darfur peace process as equal partners in line with the principle of parity in SDGEA and the UNSCR 1325.

On the theme of war in Africa, the Meeting welcomed the initiatives of resolving African conflicts, particularly the appointment of a distinguished African woman, Her Excellency Graca Machel within the Mediation Team to Kenya. To this end, the women encouraged the African Union to nominate women to positions of mediators and / or special envoys to participate in peace negotiations in Darfur, Somalia, and Zimbabwe.

The women also enthusiastically welcomed the initiative of H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia, and her counterpart, H.E. Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, to jointly organise an International Colloquium on Women Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security in March 2009, in Monrovia, Liberia.

Other topics such as land were also addressed at the 12th Pre Summit with the women demanding that mandate be given to the AUC, in cooperation with the women’s movement, to convene a continental round table on women’s access, control and ownership of land/natural resources and productive in Africa in 2008, to discuss and develop indicators and benchmarks for the AU Land Framework and Guidelines before their adoption by the AU Summit in 2009.

This 12th Pre Summit was organised by the "Gender is My Agenda” network, composed of 40 members and coordinated by FAS, with the support of the African Union Commission (AUC), AU Gender Directorate (AUGD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Suzanne Mubarak Women’s International Peace Movement (SMWIPM), Egyptian Women Business Association (EBWA), Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), ActionAid International, Department For International Development (DFID), African Development Bank (ADB), African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.
A delegation of twenty people from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), composed of parliamentarians, members of Congolese civil society and traditional chiefs recently attended a three day training workshop on 'Gender, Human Rights and Governance' in Dakar, Senegal.

The workshop was organised by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), with the support of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Fund for Democracy (UNDEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Senegalese Ministry of Family, Women’s Entrepreneurship and Micro finance. It ran from 07 to 10 July.

The group was led by Ms. Jacqueline Lofulo, Secretary General of the Minister of Gender, Family and Children in the DRC.

A working session, led by Mr Kansoubaly Ndiaye, 1st Vice-President of the Senate, was organised in the Senate of Senegal, where Senegalese and Congolese parliamentarians had fruitful discussions on the question of involving gender in decision-making processes and also the necessity for reviewing of national budgets by deputies and senators.

For his part, Mr. Macky Sall, President of the National Assembly of Senegal said he was satisfied with the workshop. He then sent word to his Congolese counterpart, through the delegation, saying that “visits can be arranged and avenues for cooperation were emerging between the two institutions to benefit women.”

During the opening ceremony, Ms. Awa Ndiaye, Senegalese Minister of Family Affairs, National Solidarity, Women’s Entrepreneurship and Micro finance, emphasised the need to “develop exchanges of experiences between parliamentarians of both countries to help develop good practices.”

The workshop was aimed at strengthening the capacity of the DRC policy makers at all levels in terms of Gender and gender budgeting, respect for human rights and particularly human rights of women and their effective participation in political governance, democratic institutions and economic empowerment.

It should be noted that this training session falls within the framework of the implementation of a draft post-conflict reconstruction and gender equality in the establishment of democratic institutions in the DRC, a country victim to unrest.

Several experts on gender took part in this training which has enabled the Congolese parliamentarians’ to better prepare themselves in terms of budget analysis and mainstreaming gender in projects submitted to Parliament.

FAS has been working in the DRC since the negotiations in Sun City, South Africa in 2002 and pledged to bring the Congolese women from different diaspora around a common agenda for their effective participation in the peace process and transition to a democratic, transparent and equitable partnership with the United Nations.

Through this partnership, women in the DRC have been able to develop platforms at the national level to support their participation in peace negotiations and the transitional mechanisms of governance, and establish the framework ‘Women Congolese Dialogue’, a group of women’s associations.

12TH PRE SUMMIT SOLEMN DECLARATION IN BRIEF

On 23 June, members of the Gender is My Agenda Campaign drafted the Solemn Statement and Recommendations of the 12th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union. The five-page document includes recommendations on a variety of thematic areas relating to women, with a special emphasis on the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) as well as a call for a 2nd Heads of State and Government Gender Summit next year to review commitments to gender equality by the AU member states. Other issues are: the Campaign recommending that the AU nominates women mediators and special envoys on-going peace negotiation teams and conflict situations in Darfur, Somalia and Zimbabwe. And on the question of land rights, the Campaign recommends that the AU mandates the gender directorate to mainstream women’s rights in the draft AU Land Framework Guidelines.

To read the complete Solemn Statement, visit the FAS website, www.fasngo.org.
OTHER NEWS

YWCA, FAS CO-SPONSOR PANEL ON ZIMBABWE

FAS co-sponsored a panel with the World YWCA to discuss the human rights situation in Zimbabwe and finding a way forward in the post election violence.

The theme of the round table discussion was: 'The Role of Women and Young People in Building a Culture of Human Rights in Post-Election Situations' and it was held at the Human Rights Council in Geneva on June 12.

FAS co-sponsored this panel because it was interested in hearing the latest developments in Zimbabwe and also learning what role women and young people can play in the post-election violence in that country. Panellists came from the YWCA of Zimbabwe, The Girl Child Network (GCN), and Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe (SCMZ) as well as Mr. Michael Wardlow, CEO of Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and member of the World Alliance of YMCAs.

The panellists shared the reality of the current situation in rural Zimbabwe where many women and children have left their homes to hide with relatives or in the bushes for fear of being tortured to disclose the whereabouts of their husbands, brothers or sons. People have been beaten, some killed and houses burnt. There has been massive displacements with women and children left homeless, no food, or anything to wear. The discussion aimed to address the violence situation in Zimbabwe and explored concrete ways to engage women and young people to end violence and ensure free participation of people in the run off elections on June 27.

Mr Wardlow shared his personal experience of living with conflict in Northern Ireland and expressed the need for individuals and communities to learn from events of the past to guard against recurrences in the future. He reiterated the importance of civil, youth and faith based organisations to actively participate in peace building processes and reconciliation.

The meeting was unanimous on the importance of keep showing solidarity towards the people of Zimbabwe. It was also agreed that there was a need to use UN mechanisms to raise awareness and garner support for the Zimbabwean people.

Others partners of World YWCA in organising this event were the World Students Christian Federation (WSCF), Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe, Girl Child Network (GCN), World Alliance of YMCA's, Women International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), International Commission of Jurists and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOMINATIONS FOR AFRICAN GENDER AWARD 2009

A call for nominations for the recipient of the third African Gender Award will go out in September and will remain open until November 2008.

The nominees may be Heads of State or Heads of Government, who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in implementing gender mainstreaming and promoting women’s participation on the African continent, with particular reference to the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

Individuals or civil society organisations can send a nomination according to the Award nomination criteria, designed by the Award Selection Committee. All nominations should be addressed to the Focal Point of the Pan African Centre for Gender, Peace and Development in Geneva, Switzerland.

The award is accompanied by two recognitions from either the private sector or civil society from the recipient country.

For further information, please visit our website found on www.africangenderawards.org.

2ND DARFURI WOMEN FORUM

The 2nd Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur is due to take place sometime in October.

The aim of this 2nd Forum is to strengthen the consensus among the Sudanese women on their Agenda for Peace, with the support of the African women’s peace movement and the global women’s movement.

The first African Women’s Consultation on Darfur took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January at which the Sudanese women adopted a Sudanese Women’s Declaration on Darfur, designed an Action Plan for Peace, elaborated a set of recommendations, constituted a Forum of Sudanese Women, and designed an Interim Steering Committee (ISC).

The 2nd Forum intends to review the activities undertaken since the Consultation, visit IDP Camps in El Fashner and provide an opportunity for networking amongst the civil society organisations.