



Aide Memoire

Expert Meeting on the Panel of the Wise Report on Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts **Dakar, Senegal, 24- 25 October 2011**

Hosted by the PanAfrican Centre for Gender, Peace and Development

1. Introduction

The African Union Peace and Security Department in partnership with Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS) and the International Peace Institute (IPI) is convening a two-day Expert Meeting on the Panel of the Wise Report on Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts. The meeting will be held in **Dakar, Senegal from 24 – 25 October, 2011**. This meeting will seek to get inputs from selected expert participants in order to strengthen the said report. The meeting will also seek to develop a plan for the publication, dissemination and promotion of the report.

2. Background

With the launch of the “2010: Year of Peace and Security in Africa”, through the Tripoli Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace, and the proclamation of 2010-2020 as the African Women’s Decade, Africa has seen a rise in high level commitments to ensuring the protection and participation of women in peace and security issues.

It should be recalled that the Panel of the Wise of the African Union initiated a thematic reflection on “Women and Children in Armed Conflicts” during its seventh Meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 2009. Through this initiative, the Panel reaffirmed its own commitment, and that of the AU as a whole, to contribute to alleviating the plight of women and children in armed conflict in Africa.

In order to implement this decision, the AU Peace and Security Department, on behalf of the Panel of the Wise, commissioned FAS and the International Peace Institute (IPI) to carry out a study and produce a report on Mitigating Vulnerabilities of women and children in Armed Conflicts in Africa. The purpose of the report is to recommend:

With the support of:



- to the Panel of the Wise, and the AU Commission, a holistic approach to consolidate the efforts of the Commission in addressing issues related to women and children in armed conflicts (i.e. sexual violence, other forms of sexual exploitation, use of child soldiers, etc);
- ways to step up the implementation of existing commitments, made by the Heads of State and Government and various stakeholders in eliminating, politically and substantially, such forms of violence against civilians, particularly women, girls and boys in armed conflict situations.

To this end, the AU, with the support of FAS and IPI, convened an Experts Workshop in Kinshasa DRC in May 2010. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- review the report of the AU Panel of the Wise prepared by a team of consultants, namely Dr. Comfort Ero, Dr Helen Scanlon and Gerard Nduwayo
- Identify quick-impact actions/projects which could enhance the implementation of all international and African commitments.

The workshop brought together experts, including the members of the AU Panel of the Wise, High Level Officials of the AU Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the United Nations, European Union and relevant African and international experts. During this workshop, it was agreed that a follow up meeting would be held to strengthen the report prepared by the above-mentioned experts. It should be noted that, whilst the report is still evolving, the Panel of the Wise presented its draft at the Second Peace and Security Council Open Session on Women and Children in Armed Conflict in Africa that was held in March 2011 in Addis Ababa.

3. Specific Objectives of the Meeting in Dakar

- Review all the contributions and recommendations with a view of strengthening the draft Report on Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts in Africa according to the Terms of Reference
- Plan for the publication of the report by June 2012
- Work out modalities of launching the report as part of the AU Heads of State Summit in June 2012
- Plan for the dissemination and sensitization campaign of the report after its launch

4. Expected Outcomes

- A strengthened draft of the report on Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts in Africa
- An agreed plan and modalities for the report publication, dissemination, sensitization and promotion campaign