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PRESS RELEASE

Gender and Conflict in Africa: Reinforcing Mechanisms of Early Warning for Early Responses

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) through its PanAfrican Centre for Gender, Peace and Development (PAC), in cooperation with University for Peace (UPEACE), will hold its 4th Short Course on Gender and Conflict, with the theme “Early Warning for Early Response Mechanisms”, from 28 November to 2 December 2011 in Dakar, Senegal. The course will bring together participants from 30 countries - experts, university professors and researchers specializing in the fields of gender and peace as well as actors working within conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The course coincides with the *16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence* that began on 25 November, uniting numerous United Nations agencies, civil society organisations, and governments around the UN “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women” campaign.

The course aims to enable young Africans to enhance their knowledge on issues such as gender biases and discrimination leading up to conflicts, and how to consequently identify and address them. In facilitating the exchange of ideas, best practices and experiences, the objective is to provide a framework of trained African professionals who will in turn apply their newfound skills in their own countries and regions.

The specific aims of the workshop are:

- To clarify concepts, terms and definitions of gender, conflict, early warning, early response;
- To strengthen participants’ skills in the areas of conflict prevention, early warning and early response;
- To empower women in the conflict prevention process;
- To create mechanisms to detect early signals of gender discrimination and gender-based violence;
- To mobilize a group of professionals to monitor an online platform on gender and conflicts: Early Warning for Early Response Mechanisms.

The training will serve as a reinforcement of the African Union’s efforts to look at early warning systems from a gender perspective and include women in the conflict prevention process. As such, the course will help to provide further information and work as a monitoring tool that could harmonize with regional networks, including the African Union's Continental Early Warning system, ECOWAS’ Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), and the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa.

The curricula from this and previous short courses is currently being developed into a Master Programme in Gender and Peacebuilding offered jointly by PAC, UPEACE, and the University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, scheduled to be launched in 2012.

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