



femmes africa solidarité

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Dear FAS Members, Networks and Friends,

I am glad to inform you about a number of successful events in which FAS has been engaged in the last three months.

Always with the intent to raise the African women's rights, the FAS co-organization of the Liberia Colloquium represented a successful example of the work done and to do for the NAPs and the UNSCR 1325.

Furthermore, FAS has organized several events, such as the Panels during the HRC and the CSW, the presence of the Sudanese Delegation, the implementation of the 3rd Short Course in Senegal and the Salon du Livre in Geneva. They all are demonstration of our advocacy at all levels and intent to increase awareness for women and men collaboration for peacebuilding process.

Your interest and sustain are precious for us, and I hope you will enjoy reading and learning about our activities in this latest issue of FAS News.

Yours in solidarity,

Bineta Diop, Executive Director

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INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWEREMENT IN PEACE AND SECURITY

Last 07th – 08th March 2009, the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security took place in Monrovia, Liberia. Co-convened by the President of Liberia, H.E. Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, and the President of Finland, H.E. Tarja Halonen, it represented for FAS and for the international community a further commitment to enhance women's participation in peace processes and ensuring their inclusion during the peace building phase.



President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia and President Tarja Halonen of Republic of Finland.

It was the final point of a process started in 2007, with the FAS's active participation in the preparation of the Steering Committee Meetings and involvement in advocacy work through the organization of Pre-Summit Meetings.

On the 06th March, the Colloquium was preceded by two events. Firstly, a side event, organized by FAS, which was held under the Peace Tent at the SKD stadium. This event gathered women with different experiences and background, and it was an opportunity for them to share their expectations from the Colloquium and to plan on how best to have fruitful engagements. Furthermore, a Youth Event was held, in which FAS acted as facilitator of a break out group on UNSCR 1325. Focal point of the discussion was the need by the youth women to be included at all level and have a lively participation on the peace processes, and not only be spectators.

Website:
www.fasngo.org

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ADVOCACY AT THE 10TH SESSION OF THE HRC

The 10th session of the Human Rights Council took place last 02nd – 27th March 2009 and in this occasion FAS organized two parallel events at Palais de Nations, Geneva, discussing important issues related to women and their problems during and after conflicts, and organized a full day of training.

The first panel was held on 23rd of March and it titled “Working towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325: outcomes of the International Colloquium on Women’s empowerment, leadership development, peace and security”. The panel, co-sponsored by FAS and World YWCA, was facilitated by Mme Diop, FAS Executive Director, with the presence of three panelists: Ms Ndioro Ndiaye, Deputy Director General of IOM, Ms Anja Ebnother, Assistant Director – Head Special Programmes of DCAF, and Ms Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, General Secretary of World YWCA. The objective of the panel was to share the outcomes of the Liberia Colloquium and to understand how improve the work on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The panelists and the following discussion highlighted the growing complexity calls for an inclusive vision of security, a human security perspective which considers economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. The importance of the UNSCR 1325, the faced challenges and lacks were emphasized, with the need to give a central role to the youth generation. Then, the women dealt with one of the resolutions on the “Call to Action: The Monrovia Declaration” which was a unanimous appeal to the UN Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for UNSCR 1325 in Africa.

The second panel, also co-sponsored by FAS and World YWCA, was held on 24th of March and it concerned the Sudanese Women on peace agenda in Darfur: “A Step Forward on the Darfuri women’s Road to Peace”. The panel was hosted by 6 panelists, representing the Sudanese Delegation: Ms Rehab Al Fadhil (Khartoum), Ms Zeinab Abdul Karim Nahar (North Darfur), Dr Mahmoud Braima (Diaspora, USA), Ms Angela Achiro Onorio (South Sudan), and Ms Nawal Hassan Osman (West Darfur). They were joined by Mr Jibril Abdelbagi, Executive Director of the Save Darfur Coalition, Geneva. Ms Ticky Monekosso, Journalist and Founder of Afromedianet, acted as facilitator. The panel was an occasion to inform the international community on the actual situation of Darfuri women

and on the progresses made on the women’s peace agenda. Reminding the outcomes of the 2nd Meeting of the Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur of last January, the panelist called for a full integration of all community to find a solution, to develop a strategy to involve women and men to participate together to the peace process and to avoid passed mistakes.

The two panels were very successful, with a great number of participants and great involvement and interchanged discussion among panelists and audience. Interesting issues were faced with a fruitful contribution of an audience coming from international and non-governmental organizations.

Concerning the training day, it was organized on Saturday 28th March at Maison des Associations, Geneva, for the Sudanese delegation, FAS’s members, network, partners and staff. Four different sessions were held: Human Rights Council as an International instrument for women’s human rights protection, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, CEDAW and the African Union. Respectively, the four trainers were Mr Adrien-Claude Zoller, President Geneva for Human Rights - Global Training Centre, Ms Beatrice Kizi Nzovu, Research Fellow of FAS, Ms Conchita Poncini - President of NGO CSW, and Mme Bineta Diop, FAS Executive Director. They all emphasized the importance of these instruments to implement and increase the role of women during the peace process in Africa and all over the world. The evaluation of the training has been positive, with the participation of 15 persons, including the Sudanese delegations, FAS staff and representatives of SWOFOD network, WILPF and African Inspirations Afromedianet.

The three FAS events represented for the organization a further way to raise awareness on the role and involvement of women and their will to contribute to the peace processes.



Panelists during the first FAS parallel event, 23rd March, Palais des Nations, Geneva.



INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN PEACE AND SECURITY

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During the two-day of the Colloquium, FAS was designed to be vice-chair for Africa and to lead the theme on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The Colloquium aimed to create an environment for women and their champions around the world to discuss, learn, demonstrate and act on the benefits and lessons learned from women in leadership.

The event's introduction was held by Ms Ines Alberdi of UNIFEM who stressed the fact that sexual violence is still used as tactic of war and women still remain marginalized in the peace processes, nevertheless the UNSCR 1325 has been came into force eight years ago. Mme Bineta Diop, FAS Executive Director, moderated the first panel on the UNSCR 1325, in which were highlighted the need for women to learn the art of negotiation to be able to viable contribution during the peace process, the need for timely and the awareness on the contents and substance of the resolution and how women can engage at the various level.

During the second day, a panel moderated by Ms Thokozile Rudzvidzo of the UNECA emphasized the necessity for a disaggregated approach to post-conflict reconstruction processes that value the different needs of women and men, the establishment and the recognition of informal judicial structures and an appreciation of the gender mainstreaming in security sector reforms.

Furthermore a two-day post colloquium event gave the opportunity to Liberian women at any level to participate. Mme Diop stated that, in the Mano River region, women had been making a difference, hoped that the National Action Plan (NAP) would help to encourage other countries to launch and implement their own NAPs and went on that FAS is already doing projects in DRC, Rwanda and Burundi to help them develop their NAPs.

As resulted outcome documents, the Monrovia Declaration and a Call to Action on the UNSCR 1325 were signed.

The Colloquium was a way to identify the successes and the failures of measures adopted for the 1325 and, from here, to develop and support strategies and activities for increasing global security with the participation of women.



President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia at the Colloquium Opening Ceremony, with Mme Bineta Diop and H. E. Ms Elisabeth Rehn.

ADVOCACY FROM SUDANESE DELEGATION

A five-person Sudanese Delegation has been invited by FAS to attend several events and to advocacy during the 10th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, from 23rd to 28th March 2009.

The Delegation was formed of four women and one man: Ms Rehab Al Fadhil (Khartoum), Ms Zeinab Abdul Karim Nahar (North Darfur), Ms Angela Achiro Onorio (South Sudan), Ms Nawal Hassan Osman (West Darfur) and Dr Mahmoud Braima (Diapora, USA).

Two panels, advocacy meetings and training were organized for the delegation as follow-up of the 2nd Sudanese Women's Forum on Darfur (SWOFOD) that took place from 5th -7th January 2009.

During the week the delegates met with our partners to keep them informed on the updated passes and on the outcomes of the SWOFOD. The meetings also aimed to demand for their support and wellness to continue to fight for peace and to find a solution in the negotiation process. The delegation met with representatives of the EU, AU, UK, Switzerland, the Norwegian and Finnish Ambassadors, the assistant to the Special Rapporteur on Sudan and Ms Navi Pillay, the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

A full week was organized with the hope to contribute to create a better condition in Darfur and build a platform of dialogues and peace.



The Sudanese Delegation during the 2nd FAS Panel "A Step Forward on the Darfuri women's Road to Peace".



WOMEN AND MEN SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

The 53rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York from 2nd to 13th March 2009 and it was organized by UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW). This year, the priority theme of the UNCSW was: “The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS”.

To discuss the issue of the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women, FAS invited guests from Sudan and the Sudanese Diaspora and organized training and panels from March 1st - 7th. The panels were organized around HIV/AIDS, the effect of violence against women in conflict and post-conflict zones and the role of men to address this issue and fight against.

The main objectives of the activities were to discuss the scope of the challenges posed by discrimination, violence against women and HIV/AIDS and to participate in the production of means to implement the initiatives set forth by the commission. The panels and training represented also a way to network with other women’s NGOs in the perspective of the SWOFOD, to identify new and potential strategic partnerships, and to make visible the post-war zones in Sudan on an international scale and in the United Nations.

A great role was assumed by the delegation to bring advocacy message to and strengthen existing partnerships. The Sudan and the Sudanese Diaspora were represented by Ms Mona Elshareif Tazourah (West Darfur), Mrs Samira Hassan Mahdi (Kahrطوم) and Ms Niemat Ahmadi (USA), all members of the Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur (SWOFOD).

On 4th March, at the Church Centre in New York, the delegation held a panel titled “HIV/AIDS, women and war, special vulnerability for Darfuri women, what role can men play?” and they all highlighted the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and children in conflict areas, stressing the fact that gender equality is not a women’s issue, but a human rights issue.

Furthermore, the Sudanese delegation held several advocacy meetings with different partners to update them on the outcomes of the 2nd SWOFOD Forum and create and strength partnerships. Meetings were held with the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Department of Public Affairs (DPA)-Southern and Eastern Africa Division, the Mission of France, the United Kingdom and UNIFEM.

The FAS’ activities focused on the role men should take, as an integral part of the fight for gender equality. Men play a strong role in mobilization, leadership and influence both in the private and public spheres. They mostly hold the power, authority, control and privileges that are at stake to achieve the goals of gender equality, women’s empowerment, development and peace. For the mere reason that the construction of gender equality implies precisely fighting violence against women, men are crucial to elaborate effective strategies and approaches. The combination and cooperation between men and women strengthen the fight against inequality, injustice and oppression.

ECOSOCC: A FURTHER WAY TO WORK FOR AFRICAN WOMEN

On 27 May FAS was elected to the position of Chair of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) Sectorial Group on Women and Gender. The Women and Gender Sectorial Group advises the ECOSOCC President on gender and women's issues.

FAS has been delighted to accepted the position on behalf of all members of the 'Gender is My Agenda Campaign' and would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the GIMAC network, which has enabled this success.

This election is an important victory for FAS and its network. Participating in the ECOSOCC will ensure that the voices of women, particularly those from the conflict zones in which FAS works, will be brought to the AU level. Women can thus access the AU and contribute their input to continental-level policymaking.

On behalf of the network, FAS will use this opportunity to work in collaboration with African women's organisations across all levels to promote and integrate the issues of gender within the AU.



TRAINING TO DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Following the success of the two previous short courses, FAS' Pan African Centre and the University for Peace (UPEACE) co-organized a 3rd Short Course on "Gender, Media and Conflict" that took place in Mbodiène, Senegal, from 1st to 5th April 2009.

The main objective of this short course was to reinforce the skills of the professional grassroots level women and men working in peace and Media, and to allow them to improve their approach to issues of Media coverage during and after conflict. Furthermore, the role of Media in conflict prevention and conflict transformation, Media coverage of women in conflict and feminist media were examined.

The short course was attended by thirty women and men coming from all African continent and it was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the African Women's Development Fund, Norwegian Embassy, CESTI (Centre d'Etudes des Sciences at Techniques de l'Information), and the Italian Government.

All the participants presented a great knowledge and professionalism in the field of media, gender and conflict. Therefore the course was a dynamic and lively hub of exchange of experiences, backgrounds and relevant information concerning their own country.

Through lectures and workshops, the participants had the possibility to increase and test their understanding with theoretical and practical methods. The Trainers for the course were: Mr Alvaro Sierra, Professor at UPEACE Costa Rica; Ms Sophie Ly, Journalist and former OSIWA Media Program Officer; Ms Eugenie R. Aw, CESTI Director; and Mr Emmanuel Caulier, Professor at CEDS Paris.

They drove the course stressing and clarifying the concepts, terms and definitions of Gender, Media and Conflict. They also focused on the role of Media professionals and people working in communication and how to strengthen their capacity in the areas of Media coverage before, during and after conflict with a focus on Gender.

Furthermore, to better understand how peacekeepers are trained with regards to the protection of women and girls and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, a field visit to Thies at the Ecole Nationale des Officiers d'Active was organized.

The opening and closing ceremonies hosted important and key personalities who actively participate at the engender process of peace in Africa and the raise of the role of women. Firstly, the representatives of FAS and UPEACE, Ms Bineta Diop and Mr Jean-Bosco Butera and then, there were the Minister of Families, National Solidarity, the Empowerment of Women and Micro-finance of Senegal, Ms Awa Ndiaye; Ms Thelma Awori, President of Isis-Wicce and Member of FAS Board; Mr Said Djinnit, SRSG for West Africa; Ms Dina Rodriguez, Head of the Department for Gender and Peace Education at UPEACE; and Mr Mamadou M. Seck, Director of NEPAD, Government of Senegal. They all stressed the effort and results reached, such as the Maputo Protocol and the UNSCR 1325, without forget the future challenges the African women need to face.

The training went to support the theme of Gender, Media and Conflict and recognized the critical and central role the media coverage has during conflict situations. A significant outcome of the course has been the implementation and creation of a network among participants, trainers and organizers to share experiences, information and facts, a network built to try to prevent a bad condition for women in conflict situations and to multiple the efforts made in fighting violence and in promoting the role of women.



Opening Ceremony.



Family Photo at the Closing Ceremony.



EXPANDING THE KNOWLEDGE OF AFRICA

For the second time, FAS participated at the “Salon Africain du Livre” at the Geneva African Book Fair, who took place last 22nd – 26th April 2009. Through it stand, FAS had the possibility to give more visibility and knowledge to its vocation and effort in the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and all the project the NGO worked and is working on. Furthermore, FAS was invited to hold a two-hour panel on “Female Migration”. The panel presented various experiences of African Diaspora women in Switzerland. The reasons of migration are different but the difficulties in the integration and the problems faced, by the migrants in the host countries are similar and challenging.

The panel discussion was run by Hon. Colette Samoya, Former Burundi Ambassador to Switzerland and Founder of “Bangwe et Dialogue; Ms Chantal-Nina Kouoh, Translator, passionate about African art and founder of African Inspiration; and Ms Ticky Monekosso, Journalist and Founder of Afromedianet. It was also facilitated by the author Mr Aggée Célestin Lomo Myazhiom, Director of “Collection Lattitudes noires et univers des possibles chez Homnispheres”.

The female migration has the same scheme and furthermore the African women in Switzerland, as elsewhere in Europe, are commonly exposed to stereotypes, as hard working, strong, dominant and sexually promiscuous. Many times, racial stereotypes have destroyed the brightest futures by limiting the possibilities of African people. Racial definitions continue to guide, or more appropriately, misguide. The educational system should represent the avenue to provide equity and equality to all, and to move beyond the limits of racial context to a social context that embraces humanity without barriers and fears.

A key role is the involvement and the integration of migrant women, to introduce them into the new host society. In both sides of migration, host country and origin country, the governments should work to guarantee an easier involvement, to implement policies to facilitate the moving and its involvement in the social life.

Finally, a point stressed at the panel was the dialogue among African women and the Diaspora. Although African women and female migrants assume responsibility and leadership in various areas, they remain neglected in our knowledge about the African Diaspora. It is important to build a partnership to give action and visibility, to operate as agents of social and economic development.

DURBAN PROCESS: AFRICAN WOMEN’S VOICES

Since the Preparatory Process to the Durban World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in September 2001, FAS and the CONGO President, today with CIVICUS, Ms Renate Bloem, engaged and forced for a stronger African women’s voice. And in the occasion of the Durban Review Conference, the partnership between FAS and CIVICUS, in cooperation with the Norwegian Government, conveyed in a site event held on Thursday 23rd April 2009 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva.

The event entitled “African Women’s Voices in the Durban Process: Lessons learnt” traced the Durban process and examined in which way it has been a channel for African women’s human rights. The event pointed out how the Process created new legal and social avenues for greater empowerment and higher institutional representation. It also looked at the barriers for women’s full participation and tried to make some forward looking recommendations.

Invited panellists were represented by Mme Bineta Diop, Executive Director of FAS; Ms Venetia Sebudandi, Ambassador of Rwanda; Ms Marta Cumbi, Board member of CIVICUS; Ms Anna Lassen, Reg. Coordinator for AfroLatinAmerica; Ms Adebisi Adebayo, Inter African Committee; and Mr Abdelbagi Jibril, Exec. Director of Darfur Relief & Doc Centre. The panel was moderated by Ms Renate Bloem, Main Representative CIVICUS.

They all spoke from their personal perspective and experience and stressed that a legal instrument is still need to protect women, as they are victims of multiple discrimination and in need of special protection. The Women’s Protocol marks a target in the protection and promotion of women’s rights in Africa, creating new rights for women, but it needs to be ratified and come in action. The struggle of the women of Africa for empowerment, equality racial discrimination, and related intolerance is part of the global women agenda for gender equality and non-discrimination. In this context the Durban Conference represented an opportunity and a follow-up challenge to see more rights recognized.



OTHER NEWS

FAS MEMBER



FAS congratulates with its Member, Mme M.T. Avemeka, for the new achievement as Ambassador of Congo in Namibia.

She presented her Letter of Credit last 19th April 2009 at the State House, Windhoek, Namibia, at the presence of Mr H. L. Pohamba, President of Namibia; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ambassadors of New Zealand and Australia in Namibia; and the Head of State.

WANJIRU KIHORO FELLOWSHIP

The Wanjiru Kihoro Fellowship continues to follow its main aim to contribute to the development of a new generation of African women leaders, who are dedicated to utilizing their voices and experience to further women's central role in peace building and development work in their country, region and continent.

The present Fellow, Ms Beatrice Kizi Nzovu, ended her period of nine months at the FAS Secretariat in Geneva and she has just moved to Addis Ababa to put her skills into action through an additional three-month placement with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

During the FAS Geneva period she worked as Research fellow and carried out research and written papers on pertinent gender and security issues. She was also focal point at FAS in the preparation and implementation of the UNSCR 1325 theme at the International Colloquium in Liberia, held in March 2009.

She started her internship at UNECA last 26th May 2009 with the purpose to contribute to the realization of sustainable positive, holistic and inclusive peace in Africa and globally. This experience will also improve her knowledge and skills on Gender and Peace within the UN system, particularly how this is translated into realities at the national and grassroots levels.

All FAS staff congratulates with Beatrice and wish her all the best for her future.

UPCOMING EVENTS

11TH SESSION OF HRC

The 11th session of Human Rights Council will take place next month, 2nd – 18th June 2009 at the Palais of Nations, Geneva.

The agenda foresees a full day's discussion on women's human rights on Thursday 04th June, at which issues of violence and trafficking of women will be considered. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women will give her report. In the UPR, African countries expected to make their reports are Senegal, Nigeria, Cameroon and Djibouti. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur on Sudan will take place on Thursday 16th June.

FAS will hold two statements, the first one represents a recall upon the UNSCR 1325 and 1820. The second statement will focus on Sudan, a call for peace process and security.

13TH AU SUMMIT

The next Ordinary Session of the decision-making organs of the African Union will take place next 1st – 3rd July 2009 in Sirte, Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The theme of the 13th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government is: "Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security".

The Session will be preceded by two days of the 18th Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (24th -26th June) and two days of the 15th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (28th – 30th June).

FAS will participate at the Pre-Summit event with the aims to give its contribution to the theme of Agriculture and Food Security in this particular moment of the economic world.