Dear FAS Members, Networks and Friends,

The past three months have been full of exciting and large-scale events for Femmes Afrique Solidarité (FAS) and its network. We made a statement at the UN during the 9th Human Rights Council. In Helsinki, the International Colloquium Steering Committee met and decided to put together all concept notes and a plan of action. FAS sent a third mission to Sudan between 15th and 30th of August, which was a great success. FAS signed a partnership with RollBack Malaria, to develop a one-year programme on gender, conflict and malaria in 6 selected countries.

The 13th Pre-summit consultative meeting on gender mainstreaming in AU is scheduled for January 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. FAS has announced the call for nomination for the African Gender Award 2009 and the call for applications for the Wanjiru Kihoro Research Fellowship is now open.

With these latest events, particularly with our activities focusing on Darfur, FAS is embarking on a new phase of work with renewed enthusiasm. Your support and interest is 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

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**STATEMENT AT THE 9th HRC**

On 16th September, 2008, FAS made a statement at the UN during the Human Rights Council on its recent mission to Sudan. In the statement we congratulated the President on his election and extended a warm and sincere welcome to the High Commissioner. FAS supported the High Commissioner in her advocacy for a human rights system that is effective and devoid of racial and gender discrimination. We concur with the High Commissioner, that not all injustices can be phased out but that we are obligated to alleviate them and prevent further occurrences as well as holding the perpetrators accountable. Following a recent mission to Sudan in particular to Darfur, FAS called on all stakeholders dealing with conflict resolution and peace building to consider women’s human security needs, by facilitating and supporting their full participation in peace negotiations.

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MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM STEERING COMMITTEE

In Helsinki, Sept. 2008, the steering committee met, and decided to put together all concept notes and a plan of action. The International Colloquium on Women’s Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security is being co-convened by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and President Tarja Halonen of Finland in Monrovia, Liberia, March 7-8, 2009. The Colloquium will empower women to be more effective leaders by linking with their peers from around the world and sharing and implementing best practices on economic empowerment, influencing climate change and sustainable development.

The Colloquium seeks to realize the aims of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security to ensure that women are protected from the worst abuses in times of conflict and to empower them to play their rightful and vital role in helping their countries prevent end and recover from conflict. The Colloquium will bring together an international group of women leaders to identify the successes and failures of measures adopted for 1325; to serve as a resource base and catalyst for activities worldwide; and to develop and support meaningful strategies and activities for increasing global security.

FAS participation at the Colloquium on Women’s Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace & Security

In light of FAS work in building the capacity of women to ensure the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 and encouraging African States to develop and implement National Action Plans for the same, FAS has been tasked to lead the theme: Support the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. FAS is working in collaboration with UN Agencies and other partners including: Liberian Ministry of Gender and Development, the Government of Iceland and the Government of Finland, Realizing Rights, UNIFEM, UNMIL, OSAGI, DPKO and MAR-WOPNET.

FAS WELCOMES NEW STAFF

FAS is pleased to welcome new interns and staff. In the Geneva offices we welcome the intern - Ms Sonal Srivastava as the Information and communication officer. In our Dakar regional office Ms. Anna Georgia-Luxton has joined as Documentation and Pre-Summit intern, Ms. Manya Gorman-Knutson as Coordinator intern, Ms. Isabel Mahillo as Pan African Centre intern and Ms. Khar Ndiaye as Administration and Finance staff. In the New York office Ms. Anais Audoux has joined as Communication Intern and Ms. Coumba Fofana as Networking Intern.
On hearing about the Dr. Wanjiru Kihoro Fellowship, she got interested in it and after meeting all the selection criteria, here she is with us. FAS’s new fellow, Beatrice Kizi Nzovu! “I feel great and privileged about this opportunity from FAS. My background in peace building and working at the community level is an added advantage because it provides me a great opportunity to deliver on the fellowship’s objectives”, says Beatrice. Beatrice hopes to utilize the new skills acquired in the fellowship, in the best possible way and to learn how to use the various UN resolutions and declarations to push for the gender agenda. She explains her plans as “I would also like to influence Government to involve women in decision-making processes and at the same time would like to guide the interested women personnel to achieve their place in Government, who are not aware of the right trail. I would like to see FAS working in Kenya, one day.” Her current project is the finalization of the last 10 years evaluation study of FAS.

Beatrice would like to recommend the fellowship to all suitable candidates “because the fellowship is an immense learning opportunity, with international exposure, that complements gender agenda principles, which is my guiding ideology and it is the best platform to enter into fully working gender intervention frameworks especially in Africa”. Some of her expectations at the end of the fellowship are to

• Gain knowledge on how to ensure that women are more aware of their role during conflict but more importantly in conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation.
• To reinforce the leadership capacities of grassroots women in conflict resolution, peace building and decision-making.
• Influence women on political processes and work for women and also work with women
• To emphasize women’s initiatives, capacities and right to participate equally to restore and maintain peace in their countries.
• To help women seek a new social recognition that guarantees women equal opportunity to participate in decision-making process.

Beatrice is a peace worker from Kenya, a young dynamic African woman and holds a degree of Master of Arts in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in Sociology. She is a trained and certified Peer Counselor and a Facilitator on Gender mainstreaming and gender frameworks. Her major skills are in Proposal and Report Writing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Research and Marketing and initiation of community based projects. Previously, She was working as a training and capacity building Programme Officer at the Peace and Development Network in Kenya. She was also in-charge of the gender programme in the organization, from where she has taken leave for 1 year to do this prestigious fellowship. “This Fellowship is just a beginning for me and my dreams, for all that I want to accomplish for my country and my continent” says Beatrice in her interview.

She is thankful to FAS for selecting her for this brilliant opportunity and also for giving her a warm welcome in Geneva.
3rd MISSION TO SUDAN

FAS sent a third mission to Sudan between 15th and 30th August. After the successful implementation of phase 1 of FAS Darfur Project, FAS has now entered in phase 2 “consolidation phase” with the aim of extending continuous support to the women in Sudan through engendering the peace process. The main objectives of the missions were to consolidate the women’s peace agenda through a full consultative process, and to implement technical facilities and administrative mechanisms for convening the Second Meeting of the Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur, scheduled to take place in El Fasher, Darfur, in January 2009, including establishing a Forum Secretariat in Khartoum.

In addition, the mission was aimed at showing solidarity to the women of the country in the name of the larger African women’s peace movement. For this mission FAS relied once again on a team of experienced consultants. The consultants had participated in the two previous missions to Sudan and in the majority of the activities of the project. The mission worked with the Interim Steering Committees of the Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur in organizing state-level, all inclusive preparatory meetings to be held in the capitals of the 3 Darfur states (El Fasher, El Geneina and Nyala). Similar preparatory meetings will also be held in Khartoum and Juba. These meetings are intended to provide an opportunity for the women of Darfur to review the status of the peace process and to craft new approaches for integrating women’s visions and for addressing their interests and needs. Recommendations from these meetings will be forwarded to the 2nd Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur, to be held in January 2009.

The first phase of the project has brought positive results in a short period of time –thanks to the mobilization of the Sudanese women coupled with the facilitation by FAS and the support of our partners. FAS’ second mission to Sudan took place between 21st April and 16th May 2008 and covered Khartoum and Darfur (Nyala, El Fasher and El Geneina). The main goal was to undertake a training needs assessment to enable FAS to generate materials that will form the basis for training and capacity building activities for women in Sudan. In addition, FAS explored the requirements for setting up a Secretariat to support the Interim Steering Committee and for organizing the 2nd Forum.
In order to maintain their peace agenda into the process, we encouraged African Governments to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and also to implement the United Nations SCRs 1325 and 1820 at all levels. Further, we thanked the Women of Sudan for their willingness to contribute to the process and appealed to the International Community to support the various ongoing consultation processes, and the upcoming ‘Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur’ which resulted from the 1st Africa Women’s Consultation on Darfur held in Addis Ababa, January, 2008. FAS believes that as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), assessing the achievements and challenges, the plight of the Sudanese women should not be forgotten. We also value the findings of Ms. Sima Samar, Special Rapporteur to Sudan which explicitly demonstrates the need for collaboration and partnership among the various stakeholders and we support the recommendations, particularly calling for the ratification of the remaining international instruments for the protection of Human Rights, including the CEDAW.

FAS AND ROLLBACK MALARIA PARTNERSHIP

FAS and RollBack Malaria have signed an agreement to develop a one-year programme on gender, conflict and malaria in 6 selected countries. The programme includes high-level advocacy mission, training and strengthening of the gender-malaria network as a database. “Gender, conflict and Malaria advocacy and network building”. The project will also ensure the promotion of gender and conflict mainstreaming in the global Malaria response. To facilitate the integration of Malaria into agendas of gender networks in Africa and to increase the malaria and gender awareness in high level forums and among key decision makers. Target beneficiaries are the global gender and malaria network, Governments, internal agencies and grassroots women and girls. This network was developed by the framework of the 1st partnership with FAS and RBM in 2006 “Raising women’s voices on Malaria” where we already took a first step to reach the overall goal to spread information about Malaria as a gender issue, among the political agendas.

FAS AND ECOSOCC

FAS was elected since October 2007 as an ECOSOCC member. The General Assembly of ECOSOCC was launched in September 2008 in Dar Es Salam with the Tanzanian President Kikwete, also the AU President. An orientation meeting was held in Nairobi in October 2008 and ECOSOCC is preparing the next meeting in Abuja, Nigeria. Mr. Moussa Diop attended these meetings.

*ECOSOCC: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION
The second meeting of the Sudanese Women’s Forum on Darfur, which will be organized by FAS and Realizing Rights, in partnership with the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Government of Norway and the Gender is My Agenda Campaign Network, is scheduled to take place between 5th-8th January 2009 in Darfur, Sudan. It is an outcome of the Plan of Action from the first Forum. The main objective of the meeting 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. It intends to review the activities undertaken since the first forum, visit IDP Camps in El Fasher and provide an opportunity for networking amongst the civil society organizations.

FAS MISSION ON 1325

FAS and its partners will continue the project activities, implementation of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security in the Great Lakes. Following the visit of Madame Bineta Diop to Rwanda, Mrs. Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, our consultant for the project, will visit the three countries (Rwanda, Burundi and DRC) to work with partners on the preparation of National Action Plans and the preparation of the Regional Meeting. We are also in the process of recruiting an international consultant to the “Baseline Study”, in addition to local consultants recruited in each country. The following dates have been advanced by the partners: -Burundi: 18-20 December 2008 -Rwanda: 15-16 December 2008 -DRC: 20-24 December 2008. After the National steering committee meetings in December 2008, we are going to have the regional meeting in collaboration with the UN and AU great lakes office based in Bujumbura.

AFRICAN GENDER AWARD 2009

FAS and its PanAfrican Centre for Gender, Peace and Development (PAC) have called for nomination for the country recipient of the African Gender Award 2009, to celebrate its Leadership. The African Gender Award (AGA) has been instituted in order to observe the initiatives and advancement of gender mainstreaming made by African Heads of States, who adopted the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). In 2005 the award was presented to H.E Abdoulaye Wade, the President of Senegal and H.E Thabo Mbeki, the President of South Africa and in 2007 to H.E President Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda. Themes guided by the SDGEA and GIMAC are Gender mainstreaming, the systematic prohibition of the recruitment of child soldiers; the implementation of gender-specific economic, social, and legal measures on HIV/AIDS, among others.

13th PRE-SUMMIT

The 13th pre-summit Consultative Meeting on gender mainstreaming in the African Union has been planned in January 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting will be coordinated by FAS and the Gender is My Agenda Campaign network, with the support of its partners and will bring together the participating organizations, women’s rights advocates and the media, to discuss the changing environment at the regional and international level regarding effective gender parity policies and practice. New issues have recently emerged such as the transformation of the AU into the Union Government. This process should not bypass women but rather pave the full citizenship and empowerment. FAS and GIMAC have planned to launch the Best Practice booklet during the summit.

SHORT COURSE OF MEDIA AND CONFLICT

FAS is happy to announce Short course on Gender, media and conflict at Mbodiène, Sénégal in February 2009 in collaboration with University of Peace. The main focus of the course is to develop the role of Media in conflict prevention and conflict transformation. The course will provide a dynamic and open space for academic and intellectual enrichment. Special attention will be paid to contemporary case studies on Media and Conflict and the role of Media in peace processes. The project will recruit 30 participants working in the field of peace and Media, including Media and communications professionals (in civil society organisations, women’s grassroots organisations, and other institutions), to reinforce their skills and allow them to refine their approach to issues of Media coverage during and after conflict.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2nd MEETING OF SUDANESE WOMEN

13TH PRE-SUMMIT