



Newsletter

femmes africa solidarité

November 2009

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear FAS Members, Networks and Friends,

Since its birth in 1996, FAS has accumulated a wealth of expertise from its contribution to African women's initiatives in conflict and post-conflict situations. We are proud to share our activities with you in this latest issue of FAS' Newsletter.

Since being elected to the position of Chair of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) Sectorial group on Women and Gender on 27th May, FAS continues to work in collaboration with African women's organizations across all levels to empower African women to bring their unique perspective in politics and peace issues.

With the intent to promote women's rights, FAS and GIMAC members co-organized the 14th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU, held in Tripoli, Libya, from 27th-28th June 2009, on the margins of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the AU.

Furthermore, large-scale events were organized by FAS, such as the training for military personnel on "gender and peace building" that took place in Senegal, and Great Lakes Regional Consultation on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. They all represented our hard work and commitment in integrating on the issues of gender in all spheres.

We particularly look forward to cementing our network, which will allow us to implement vital projects and further promotion of African women's initiatives in peace process.

Yours in solidarity,

Bineta Diop, Executive Director

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In this issue:

Training On Gender For Military Personnel.....	1
Making A Difference For Security 11 th Session Of the Human Rights Council.....	2
14 th Pre-summit Meeting On Gender Mainstreaming.....	3
Great Lakes Regional Consultation On The Implementation Of UNSCR 1325.....	4
Human Rights Council Held Its 12 th Session.....	5
National Consultation On UNSCR 1325 In Sierra Leone Preparing The UNSCR 1325 10 th Anniversary.....	6
FAS Saldly Announces Loss Of A Friend African Gender Award Comitee Visited Mozambique Upcoming Events.....	7

TRAINING ON GENDER FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

FAS' Pan African Centre delivered a training on "gender and peace building" that took place at ENOA (Ecole Nationale des Officiers d'Active de Thiès), Senegal, on 11th of June 2009.

The training was attended by 54 military participants coming from 11 African countries who had already taken a lecture series on the International Humanitarian Law issued by International Committee of the Red Cross. **The main objective of this training was to increase Officers' knowledge on gender, peace and security in areas of military conflict.**



Ms. Adama Diop and Director of ENOA on Training panel, 11th June, Senegal.

Conducted by Dr. Colonel Coulibaly Kani Diabaté, Expert-Consultant and Gender Specialist. facilitated by Mr Moussa Diop, FAS Communications Officer and Ms Adama Diop, Head of Liaison Office of FAS New York. The course provided theoretical and practical methods on gender, media and conflict to the participants, which **helped them to understand the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820.**

The training achieved a number of outcomes. All the 54 participants expressed great interest in the course. It stressed the importance of the participation of women in peace processes as well as the priorities in post-conflict periods. The evaluation of this course showed the importance of continuity of this kind of trainings and partnership.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR SECURITY

The conference on “**Making a difference: Strengthening capacities to respond to crises and security threats**” took place on the 3rd-4th of June 2009, in Brussels, Belgium.

It was organized by the European Commission, a partner of FAS, and it generated ideas on how to strengthen the EU’s capacity to respond to short term crises and long term threats.

The programme was set up into four parallel tracks for each session. These tracks focused on different themes, including Security and Development, Strengthening Cooperation among practitioners, Lessons learned (Geographic cases), and Lessons learned (Thematic Cases).

The focus of this 2009 conference was to explore what works best and “what makes the difference”, with a view to identify effective approaches to the strengthening of crisis response capacities. This is an area of focus for FAS and thus, the Executive Director of FAS, Ms Bineta Diop was invited to speak in the panel on security and development: Reinforcing the role of women in peace and security. The panel was chaired by Ms Veronique Arnault, Director for Multilateral Relations and Human Rights, European Commission, and the Rapporteur for this panel was Ms Karen Barnes, from International Alert. International Alert (IA) is prioritizing Resolution 1325 within EU member States. Ms. Diop analyzed challenges that women continue to face, and shared information from Somalia where women formed the 6th clan in order to sit at the peace table. Ms Wenny Kusuma, from UNIFEM (UN Development Fund for Women) and Ms Catherine Mabobori, Member of Parliament of Burundi also made speeches during this panel.

Panelists underlined **the positive impact women’s inclusion** has had on peace negotiations and how they have successfully fought for a place at the table in countries such as Burundi and Somalia. In identifying what would make a difference, support and reinforce the role of women in peace and security, a common thread ran through the panel discussion: **accountability for UNSCR 1325 mechanisms.**

This includes accountability to women and their communities, accountability to policy commitments and accountability of the global political leadership in taking decisive action. The panel showed that people have the tools and the know-how to make this happen and to ensure that women, peace and security issues are addressed. The EU now also has an opportunity in the form of the Comprehensive approach to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820 to focus on accountability for ensuring that the framework is implemented, towards making the difference.

This conference generated outcomes as concrete policy recommendations and practical proposals to promote greater involvement of women in peace negotiations and decision-making processes.

It was emphasized that the international community, including the EU and its Member States, are serious about building peace and they must be held accountable to build peace and create security that applies to both women and men and girls and boys.

Underlining the key priorities, the European Commission took note of the recommendations.



Panelists during European Commission Conference, 3rd June, Brussels, Belgium. Ms Diop (2nd from the right side)



Ms Veronique Arnault, Director, European Commission, Ms Bineta Diop, Executive Director of FAS, and Ms Wenny Kusuma, Afghanistan Country Director of UNIFEM.

11TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The 11th session of the Human Rights Council, that took place on the 3rd of June in Geneva, highlighted the valuable work of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Mrs. Yakin Ertürk. Her mandate and support for women in conflict worldwide has had a significant impact on women’s human rights.

On this occasion, FAS did an oral statement calling on the UN **Security General to appoint a Special Representative for Women and Armed conflict**, accompanied by adequate resources that will further raise awareness on the differential impact of violent conflict on women and men, and the key roles women play in conflict prevention and resolution, peace building and decision making.

FAS also called for the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women as FAS is convinced that the two mandates will fulfill the gender architecture.

Finally, FAS strongly recalled upon the UN Security Council to incorporate both UNSCR 1325 and 1820 provisions in all peacekeeping mandates. It should strengthen measures to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. The UNSC should also require all troop contributing countries to increase the number of female civilian and military personnel in peacekeeping missions.

14TH PRE-SUMMIT MEETING ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The 14th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union took place on the 27th-28th of June 2009 in Tripoli, Libya.



Ms Bineta Diop, Ms Soyata Maïga and Ms Mariam Alsadiq at the closing ceremony of

Held on the margins of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) in Sirte, Libya, the meeting was co-organized by **Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and GIMAC** network, who works in partnership with the African Union (AU), AU Gender Directorate (AUGD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), Department For International Development (DFID), African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland., among other partners.

The theme of the 14th pre-summit meeting was in tandem with the theme of the AU summit – “Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security”. The specific goal of the meeting was to discuss the changing environment at the regional and international level and elaborate a new paradigm in the work of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) advocating for effective gender parity policies and practices.

Over the years, the pre-summit consultative meetings have been held in different parts of the continent and have contributed significantly in the gender parity enjoyed presently. Key documents emanating from these consultations include the “Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union”; the “Dakar Strategy”; the “Maputo Declaration”; the “Abuja Recommendations for Civil Society Monitoring and Evaluation of the Solemn Declaration”; and the “Sudanese Women's Declaration on Darfur”. The adoption of the Solemn Declaration for Gender Equality Africa (SDGEA) and related accomplishments in the African women's movement have been greatly facilitated by the advocacy and networking that takes place during the meetings.

The concrete themes discussed in the meeting included:

- The elaboration and implementation of the recently declared AU Decade of Women 2010-2020;
- The four-year strategic program for the ECOSOCC Sectorial Group Women and Gender to determine how to capitalize on this recent opportunity;
- Outcomes of the GIMAC strategic meeting in June 2008 and future communications campaigns for the network;
- Review of the outcomes of the 13th Pre-Summit; Practices and ideas shared with Gender is my Agenda Network;
- The awareness among women's grassroots organizations at the national, sub regional and regional level on gender mainstreaming issues;
- Reinforcement of the commitment of civil society member of the Campaign to participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGEA;
- The partnership between different stakeholders and strengthened the commitment to move forward the effective implementation of the SDGEA and gender mainstreaming in the AU.



Members of the GIMAC with Jean Ping, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union

With regard to civil society organizations, the 14th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting continued to focus on accelerating the implementation of the SDGEA. Four years after the adoption of this instrument, it is indispensable to carry out an assessment of the tools and methodologies dedicated to the monitoring/evaluation of the SDGEA and their efficiency to address new emerging issues.

The recent election of FAS to position of Chair for the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) Sectorial group on Women and Gender has provided an opportunity to come together and discuss the GIMAC contribution to Women and Gender sectorial group strategic plan. Therefore, after the opening, Mr. Moussa Diop, Communication Officer of FAS was invited to present the Review of GIMAC Strategic Meeting in June 2008.

The key document of the meeting welcomed the decision of the **Heads of States of African Union** to devote their 12th ordinary session to the issue of investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security which has prodigious implication for the well being and advancement for African women, and specifically recommended the domestication of the Regional instruments that address the issue of Women's access to land which include the recently concluded **Land Policy in Africa aimed at strengthening Land Rights and enhancing agricultural productivity and food security**. Other recommendations were on the Implementation of SDGEA, which called on necessary resources supporting the implementation of the Second Heads of States and Government Gender Summit in 2010, and on Peace and Security in Africa, to nominate women's special representatives in peace negotiations.

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON UNSCR 1325

A regional Consultation was held in Bujumbura (Burundi) from 13th to 14th August 2009, on strengthening the National Action Plans on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. This consultation brought together representatives of governments, members of Parliaments, representatives of UN agencies, international organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) of the Great Lakes region (Rwanda, DRC, and Burundi), African women networks and leaders.

The consultation was organized by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Ministries in charge of gender, and women Members of Parliament, in collaboration with women's networks of civil society of the three countries, with the support from FAS and the Finnish Government.



Opening Ceremony of the Regional Consultation of the Great Lakes Region

With the presence of H.E. Mr. Sahinguvu, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Ms. Elisabeth Rehn, and Ms. Diop

The opening ceremony was graced with the presence of His Excellency the First Vice President of the Republic, **Mr. Yves Sahinguvu** and with members of the Government of Burundi, who highlighted the commitment of African Heads of State and Government in the sub-region and in Burundi in particular.

The presence of **Ms. Rachel Mayanja**, Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and **Ms. Elisabeth Rehn**, Finnish Minister of State, highly valued the ceremony. They insisted on the need to make UNSCR 1325 widely known throughout local and national institutions, especially on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the Resolution and the Beijing + 15. They also reminded the importance of a follow up mechanism to implement UNSCR 1325.

Ms. Diop, Executive Director of FAS paid tribute to the work done by the national Steering Committees, composed of civil society organizations, Representatives of Parliament, and women organizations, on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The leadership of Ministers in charge of gender and the civil society organizations such as CAFOB, CAFCO, and PRO-FEMMES were also highlighted.

Ms. Diop, Executive Director of FAS paid tribute to the work done by the national Steering Committees, composed of civil society

The national baseline studies of each country were outlined. The presentation for Burundi was made by Mr. Gerard Nduwayo, consultant, who focused on UNSCR 1325 and on ongoing programs related to post conflict reconstruction, including the reforms in justice and security sector, DDR, transitional justice, rehabilitation of victims, and peace building. In the baseline study for Rwanda, the emphasis was put on the implementation to focus on dealing with the issues linked to the genocide, on the fight against gender based violence, and on strengthening women's capacity in peace building and conflict resolution. In DRC, the weak participation of Congolese women in the process of decision making and the need for a revision of discriminatory laws, the persistence of gender based violence, and the issue of impunity for the perpetrators were noted.

In presenting the three NAPs and the identified areas of intervention, the issue of avoiding problems of coordination and harmonization was raised.

A Regional Action Plan has been drafted based on the findings of a regional study undertaken in the Great Lakes Region. The regional approach of this project has definitely benefited the relationship among the 3 governments and CSOs from these countries and will further contribute to peace, security and development in the region.

Finally, recommendations were established and a Declaration was read (**Declaration of Bujumbura**), which **mentions the importance to identify common actions and appropriate ways to achieve them, with the help of CEPGL on the regional level and CIRGL on the sub-regional level.**



Representative of Finnish Government, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Ms. Diop, and Mr. Youssef Mahmoud, at the closing ceremony, 14th August 2009, Bujumbura, Burundi.

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL HELD ITS 12TH SESSION

The 12th session of the Human Rights Council took place on 14th September– 2nd October 2009.

This Council stated the responsibility of governments to address the **accountability** gaps by giving full effect to both long-standing and newly established human rights standards. It aimed to promote and protect all human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The session included panels on eliminating discrimination and outright violence against women, which are focus areas for FAS.

Mr Jeremy Sarkin, member of the Working Group on enforced and involuntary disappearances, expressed concern about a lack of gender-relevant data provided by States, and urged that States under review should provide a detailed report on the situation of women in the country, and to introduce a follow-up mechanism to track changes over time.



12th Session of Human Right Council, 14th September 2009, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

There were two sessions of the Council closely connected to FAS's concerns. Therefore, FAS attended them to follow up on the debate of the global crisis at the international level, to prepare the African Gender Forum and Award 2009, and to support the NGOs statements for the adoption of the resolution against women discrimination. The first session was organized on the 18th of September, for the working Group on the right to development, world food and financial crisis. Mr. Olivier de Schutter (Special Rapporteur on Food) recommended to reinvest in agriculture, to strengthen social protection, to shield States from price volatility and to improve global governance. The NGO Nord-Sud XXI underlined the link between food and financial crisis. They stated it was essential to respond adequately to the global crisis. As outcomes, some member States briefly illustrated their efforts and new mechanisms to be developed to tackle the global crisis.

Another session was held by the Human Rights Council on the 28th of September on the integration of a gender perspective into the work of the Council, with a focus on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This session followed the Council Resolution 5/1, which recognizes the importance of gender integration and specifies that the UPR must 'fully include a gender perspective' in all aspects of the review, as well as Council Resolution 6/30,1 in which the Council decided to hold an annual evaluation of progress achieved on integrating a gender perspective into its work and its mechanisms.

In this session, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and 21 supporting NGO's made a statement to the Human Rights Council to integrate a stronger gender perspective into the Council's work. WILPF recommended that the Council should act and support this major development by strengthening the Women's Rights and Gender Unit within the OHCHR and facilitate information sharing with a new UN agency for women. In addition, WILPF stressed that the Council should reiterate the Concluding Observations of CEDAW. **As a partner, FAS supported WILPF statement. The Executive Director of FAS joined the Women's Rights Organization 'Equality Now' advocating at high level for the adoption of the Resolution on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.**

The Human Rights Council considered the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights of indigenous peoples and also considered the statements of the civil society. On the 16th of October, the Human Rights Council adopted a Resolution endorsing the "**Goldstone report**" following its 12th special session on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories.

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON UNSCR1325 IN SIERRA LEONE

From September 1st to the 4th, the National Consultative Conference in Sierra Leone was organized by WANEP-SL* and MARWOPNET**, on the development of the Sierra Leone National Action Plan (NAP) and the commitment from Civil Society groups, women's groups for the full implementation, down-streaming and awareness raising on the NAP. FAS assisted in facilitating the process of the adoption of the NAP, and advocacy at the governmental level to encourage its implementation.

WANMAR*** 1325 project was initiated by West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-SL) and Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET-SL) in full partnership with the Sierra Leone Government through the MSWGCA with the support from CORDAID, Netherlands.

FAS recognized the efforts of Networks such as Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), Women Peace and Security Network (WIPSEN) and the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET). Their peacebuilding initiatives which advocate for the full implementation of all UN resolutions and declarations in particular, are key to empower women and protect their fundamental rights.



Group Working session for Drafting National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 in Sierra

In this well attended meeting by Ministers of different portfolios **the outcome was the adoption for the NAP to be launched in 2010**. A Steering Committee composed by civil society, Government and Parliamentarian representatives was formed. FAS held important meetings with Government Officials and a special meeting was hosted by the Second Lady of Sierra Leone to the delegates. Furthermore, a film was shared with all attending on the initiatives on Reproductive Health issues. The First Lady of Sierra Leone, Ms. Sia Nyama Koroma, was spear heading.

Ms Diop, Executive Director of FAS has had an important role in facilitating the process that brought to the successful adoption of the NAP. She advocated at the highest level in the government for the adoption and launch of the NAP. In this conference, Ms Diop shared her experiences in the establishment of Sierra Leone National Action Plan deeply rooted in the peace and security needs of the people with a gender perspective, committing to the draft work of NAP 1325. She stressed the fact that women of Sierra Leone have paid their own contribution to peace, not just as victims of violence but as active agents for change. For this reason, a full implementation of all tree main pillars of the UNSCR 1325 (Participation, Prevention and Protection) is crucial. Ms Diop also underlined the fact that the main challenge concerns on the way UNSCR 1325 must be brought down to the people, for social transformation and social change.

*WANEP: West Africa Network for Peace Building

**MARWOPNET: Mano River Women's Peace Network

*** WANMAR: Link between both previously mentioned networks

PREPARING THE UNSCR 1325 10TH ANNIVERSARY

On the 23rd of September, a High-Level meeting was organized in New York by the United Nations, the African Union Commission and the European Commission under the title "Towards the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325: joining forces for bringing real progress in the area of women, peace and security".

This meeting was attended by Ministers, Heads of UN Agencies, Heads of Regional Organizations and Representatives of the civil society. It was opened by UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro, followed by interventions of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Amb. Lamamra, and the European Commissioner for external Relations and Neighborhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner. During the discussion, interventions were made by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, Austria, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Minister for Int. Development Cooperation of Sweden, and former High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson.

FAS participated in the meeting, as it discussed the main focus issues of FAS. The meeting took place during the opening of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly to discuss how countries and international organizations can join forces to bring real progress in the area of women, peace and security in the run-up of the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. Participants highlighted the preparation of the 2010 review conference of UNSCR 1325 to identify mechanisms to sustain the political momentum to empower and protect women affected by conflict situations.

Ambassador Lamamra acknowledged that the AU was committed to mainstream a gender perspective in all its activities through the implementation of its Gender Policy. The importance of national action plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325 was underscored, with several participants informing about progress in that regard. As a participant in the national action plans development in the Great Lakes area, FAS focused on the progress in advocacy and implementation of UNSCR 1325. FAS will continue advocating the implementation of Resolution 1325 through greater political representation of women in key positions at all levels.

The crucial importance of the work of civil society organizations, at the grass root level, was underlined by several speakers. The Special Adviser of the Secretary General on Gender Issues, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, concluded with the clear call to the United Nations to continue strengthening its support to Member States on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325.

Addressing the need to build capacities and create opportunities to involve women in peace building, the United Nations was called upon to continue strengthening its support to Member States on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325, as it is coming towards the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). As an outcome, the announced Security Council resolution, scheduled to be adopted on 30th September, aimed to strengthen UN Security Council Resolution 1820 in the fight against sexual violence in armed conflicts.

FAS SADLY ANNOUNCE LOSS OF FRIEND

FAS expresses the deep sympathies and condolences on the loss of Ms. Janet Buerki Narh, whose life was dedicated to legal and gender advocacy, and who was a unifying figure for inspiring love and affection in all she met. FAS faced the shock of losing our close friend and partner, Ms. Narh on 20th June 2009, someone who can not be replaced, and will be missed in all the different ways.

Ms. Narh worked in the legal sector for over ten years, specializing in Immigration, Employment and Family Law. She also contributed to the broadcasting and gender advocacy, as a member of the committee that monitored the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. She produced Woman's Hour on Ben TV Sky Channel 184, addressing issues affecting African migrant women.

Ms. Narh has worked extensively with FAS for Gender and Development Issues in Africa. Some of the programs produced together were Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) and African Gender Award (AGA). Ms. Narh's work achieved wonderful passion, greatness and impact across a multitude of cultures, races, geographic locations. May her contribution be memorized until eternity. We give our thanks and praise.



AFRICAN GENDER AWARD COMMITTEE VISITED MOZAMBIQUE

From August 26th-29th, the Selection committee of African Gender Award 2009 visited Mozambique, organized by FAS' Pan African Centre (PAC) in partnership with FDC, to present the African Gender Award and the programme of the 2009 African Gender Award to the Mozambican President, the private Sector and the Civil Society.

The African Gender Award is a celebration to recognize and reward African Leaders who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in gender mainstreaming guided by specific criteria and indicators design to monitor the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. Guided by specific criteria and indicators in line with the Maputo Protocol, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the UNSCR 1325, the Committee decided to confer the 2009 African Gender Award to the political will of the Mozambique leadership.



Selection Committee meeting with the CSO and PS members

The Selection Committee's Delegation members participating in this visit included Mr. Ayodele Aderinwale, Deputy Director of the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), Ms Bineta Diop, Executive Director of FAS, Dr. Codou Diaw, Executive Director, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Mr. Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). The Delegation met HE President Armando Guebuza who committed himself to advocate Gender mainstreaming within African Union and the Southern African Development Community.

The outcomes of this visit included the establishment of a partnership with the Government, the CSO and the PS, as well as the recognitions of the selection criteria by the civil society, and clarification of the agenda and activities to set for the preparation of the 2009 African Gender Award ceremony. The ceremony will take place in Dakar in the beginning of 2010. FAS looks forward to celebrating its achievement on gender promotion.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CEDAW45TH SESSION

From 18th January to 5th February, 2010, the 45th session Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women (CEDAW) will take place at Palais des Nations, Geneva. The Committee will examine the reports of the following eight States parties: Botswana, Egypt, Malawi, Netherlands, Panama, Uzbekistan, United Arab Emirates and Ukraine. The government reports have been already submitted and the CEDAW experts have formulated their questions. NGO have also presented their statements.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. The committee will critically review and question the eight countries reports in the 45th session.

AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT AND GIMAC PRE-SUMMIT MEETING

The next Summit of the African Union will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 25th January to 2nd February 2010. The theme will be "Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development".

The meeting will be scheduled as follows: Permanent Representative Committee of Ambassadors (PRC): 25th-26th January 2010; 16th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council: 28th-29th January 2010; 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments: 31st January to 2nd February 2010. Accreditation for the Summit is open to both local and international NGOs, with preference given to relevant grassroots organizations.

On the margins of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), the 15th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union will be held by "Gender is my Agenda Campaign" (GIMAC) network and coordinated by FAS in Addis Ababa, 21st-22nd January.