

Vacancies

Deadline 27 May, 2000

Senior Development Management Officer

Development Management Office
Economic Commission for Africa
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Vacancy No. 00-Y-ECA-00X061-E-AA P-5

Senior Economic Affairs Officer

Northern Africa Sub-regional
Development Centre (NA-SRDC)
Economic Commission for Africa
Tangiers, Morocco
Vacancy No. 00-Y-ECA-00X070-E-AA P-5

Deadline 10 June 2000

Chief Human Resources

Management Service (HRMS)
United Nations Office at Nairobi
Nairobi, Kenya
Vacancy No. 00-A-UNN-00X085-E-NA

Chief of Branch

Conference on Disarmament
Secretariat and Conference
Support Branch

Publications

Women's best practices in Burundi (1999)

FAS will soon release a study on its activities in Burundi, where three missions were carried out at the request of local women's NGOs focusing on the peace and reconciliation process in their country. The study should provide good insight on the best practices of the Burundian women's contribution to peace, reconciliation and reconstruction, as well as highlighting actions such as their participation in the peace negotiations in Arusha.

Report on Liberia (1997)

This report summarises monitoring activities by FAS of the electoral process in Liberia on 19 July 1997. It analyses the role of the OAU, ECOMOG and other national and international observers involved in the elections. It also details the destruction of physical, economic and social structures in Liberia during the seven-year civil war and it urges the international community to continue assistance to the Liberian people, to pursue peace initiatives and to promote reconstruction and development to enable people to begin rebuilding their lives. The report also calls on the new government to set up systems to provide education for the people, to monitor public bodies and institutions and to ensure respect for human rights in Liberia.

Women's participation in the peace process in Sierra Leone (1997)

This 100-page special report explains the role of women in the quest for peace in Sierra Leone and contains the testimonies of various women on their experiences during the civil war and in the post-conflict period. These women are now facing new challenges for the future and it is essential that their efforts be publicised.

Meetings and Events

REFAMP, Engendering the Peace Process in West Africa

Conakry, Guinea, 24-26 January 2000

IOM/ECA, Conference on Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22-24 February, 2000

UN, Commission on Human Rights

Geneva, Switzerland, 20 March- 28 April, 2000

FAS/UNAIDS, Linking AIDS into Women's Peace Initiatives

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1-7 April, 2000

FAS/ACCORD, Burundian Civil Society Meeting

Arusha, Tanzania, 10-14 April, 2000

NEDA, International Conference on Sudanese Women's Peace Efforts

The Hague, Netherlands, 11-14 April, 2000

ALF, Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation

Lomé, Togo, 17-18 April, 2000
FAS, Engendering the Peace

Process in West Africa : The Mano River Countries

Abuja, Nigeria, 26-28 April, 2000
ACHPR, 26th Session of the African

Commission on Human and People's Rights

Algiers, Algeria, 27 April- 11 May, 2000

Ford Foundation, Strengthening Women's Leadership

New York, USA, 8-9 May, 2000

How you can support FAS

I understand the importance of women's contribution to sustainable peace in Africa. I would like to support the work carried out by FAS.

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Contributions can be made by cheque to:

Femmes Africa Solidarité, 8, rue du Vieux-Billard, 1211 Geneva 11, Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 328 80 50, Fax: + 41 22 328 80 52, E-mail: info@fasngo.org
Banque Cantonale de Genève, case postale 2251, CH - 1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland, account no. S 3224.90.39

Signature: _____

Thank you for your contribution and for returning the form duly signed to the address mentioned above.

Together we can achieve more!

ADVOCACY



NEWS

FEMMES AFRICA SOLIDARITÉ IS A WOMEN'S NGO FOR PEACE IN AFRICA

FOUNDED IN 1996 BY SYNERGIES AFRICA

N° 4
MAY
2000

HIV/AIDS –
Africa's
biggest threat
to peace and
stability



Graça
Simbene
Machel –
a leading
proponent of
women's and
children's
rights

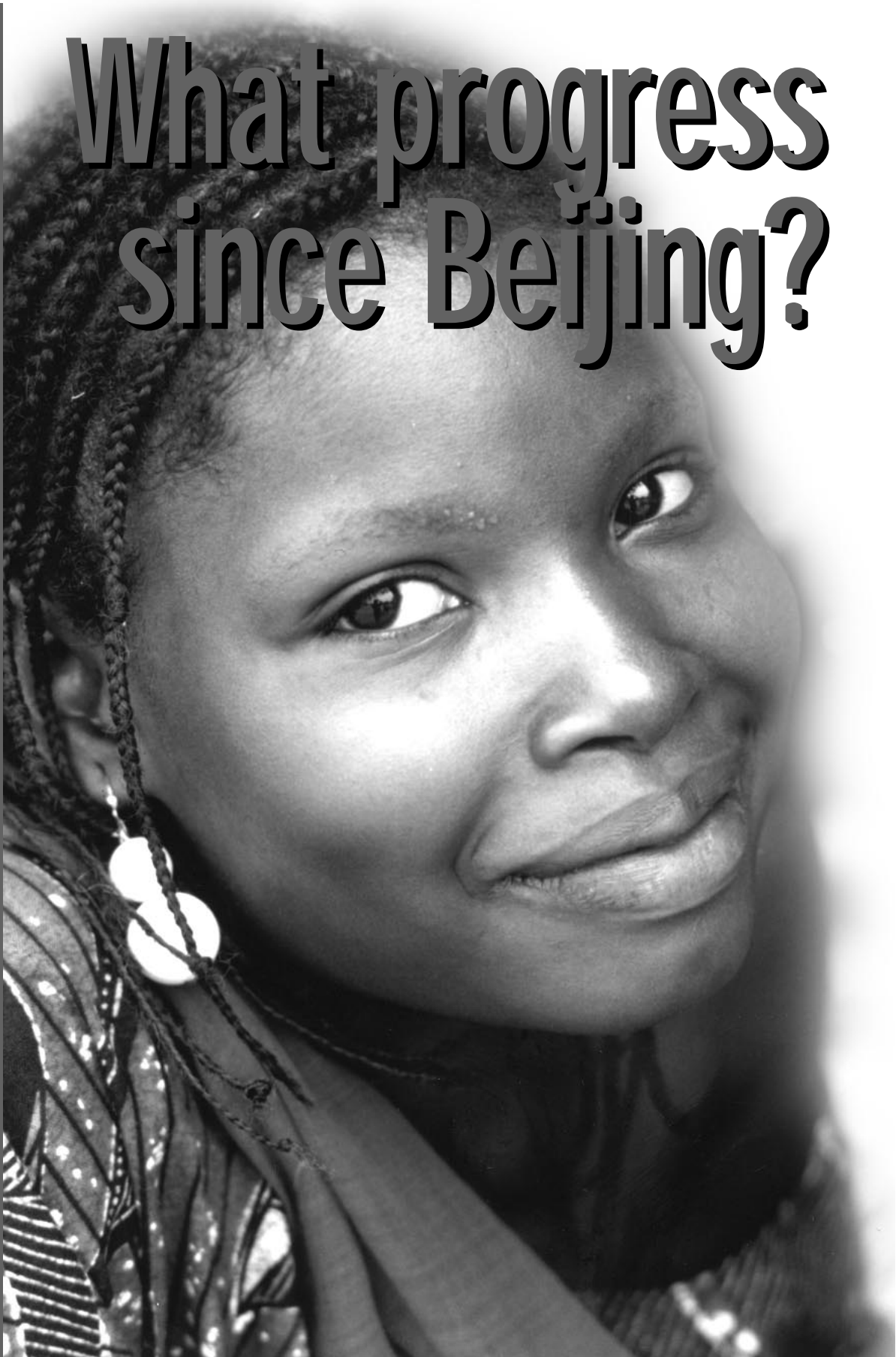


Zanzibar
meeting sets
agenda for
peace in
Africa



African
women make
their mark at
OAU Algiers
summit

What progress since Beijing?



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FAS Advocacy News is a twice-yearly newsletter published by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS). It analyses and reports on the role of women in peace initiatives and monitors progress in gender, peace, development and related issues in Africa. The publication seeks to highlight the contribution African women leaders have made and are making to peace and strives to obtain recognition of and visibility for women's initiatives in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

FAS was founded by women leaders from a number of African countries and from a variety of professions. It was established in June 1996 by Synergies Africa, a Geneva-based international NGO.

FAS aims to create, strengthen and promote the leading role of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. It advocates in many fora for the greater involvement of African women in the leadership of the peace process and promotes their important role in decision-making spheres.

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www.fasno.org
 along with other documents and information pertaining to the organisation's work.

Reproduction of material contained in this newsletter is encouraged, providing appropriate acknowledgement is made.

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What role for the military in a democratic society?

Will Africa see a real separation of powers in this new millennium? What are the appropriate ways for executive and legislative bodies, the judiciary and civil society to relate to the security forces. What mechanisms must be put in place to maintain an acceptable balance?

In the last decade, Africa has seen several favourable developments, including the removal of many dictatorial, autocratic and racist regimes. The functions of the military and civil society have changed during this transitional process, and there is now a need to instigate reform and to adapt to the new environment. Traditionally, in many African countries civilian-military relations have been characterised by mutual suspicion and lack of communication posing a formidable obstacle to development, security and stability in Africa.

The classic role of the armed forces in most countries is to protect their nations against external aggression in line with the rules and regulations laid down by the civilian authorities. Sadly, what we are seeing in Africa today is a military that does not defend a whole nation, but rather an ethnic group, and is more intent on supporting corruption and exclusion, exercising torture and mass killings of civilians, raping women and enrolling children as soldiers. The military regimes that seize power by coup d'état, get involved in politics and finally adopt civilian status are a far cry from the liberation armies that fought for Africa's independence.

Another growing phenomenon in Africa is the "civilian coup d'état", to which resort those leaders who want to stay in power by any means, including falsifying the democratic process, modifying the constitution and holding unfair elections. Such acts undermine the progress made towards establishing true democracy and further propagate mistrust and lack of confidence between the government, the military and civilians.

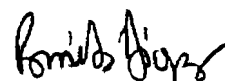
The international community has launched many initiatives to build the capacity of African armies to respond better to the challenges involved in resolving conflicts. This implies a change in the traditional role of the military in African societies. It is now becoming more widely recognised that protecting a nation's sovereignty is not just about security must include the reduction of poverty and crime, and the provision of employment, health and education for all.

To realise this, co-operation between and full exploitation of both civil and military capabilities are required.

The role of each sector should be clearly defined and respected by each party within the framework of a democratic government, ruled by law, in which human rights are upheld and representative institutions play a part. It should include a functioning judicial system and effective law enforcement by a professional civilian police force. Decentralisation of power should be promoted, participation of civil society and women in governance encouraged, resources shared equally and the people's basic needs provided for. Unless this vision is shared by all concerned and forms the basis of their relations, civilian and military coups d'état will continue to dominate African politics to the detriment of true democracy.

Bad leadership is another challenge to be addressed. There are those who claim that democracy is a Western concept, denying that traditional African systems are based on the democratic values of accountability and participation; and there are also those who assert that the pursuit of democracy will not feed the hungry or heal the sick. The failure of these arguments in past development experiences, however, has shown that postponing democracy does not promote development.

Africa needs to look seriously into security issues not only in terms of the role of the military and its weaponry, but to consider demilitarisation as a viable security option. At a recent meeting in Zanzibar organised by UNESCO, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD), African women committed themselves to transforming their nations and their continent to ones based on the values and attitudes of a culture of peace through a strong peace movement guided by a new gender contract called "African Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace in Africa". As peace promoters, women are determined to strengthen social and human security, support demilitarisation and disarmament processes and encourage investment in their peace and development programmes.



Bineta Diop
Executive Director

Graça Simbene Machel:

An outstanding humanitarian

For nearly three decades, Graça Simbene Machel has been a leading figure in the drive to empower women and children, whether in conflict or in times of peace. In a speech presenting her with the IPS Award for International Achievement, Robert Savio said of Mrs Machel, “She is an outstanding humanitarian who has dis-

tinguished herself not only at the United Nations but also globally.”

Mrs Machel’s ground-breaking work began in Mozambique in the 1970s. During that country’s armed struggle for independence from the Portuguese, Frelimo set up schools in the liberated territories and in training camps. While undergoing military training, Mrs Machel organised some of these schools. In 1974, Mrs Machel – who was by then actively involved in Frelimo – was appointed Deputy

Director of the Frelimo Secondary School in Bagmoto, Tanzania, a role in which she was hugely successful. As a result, when Frelimo formed its independent government in 1975, Mrs Machel became a member of the Central Committee and the Minister of Education and Culture. These two positions in the Mozambican government were the first of many in a distinguished career.

Her reputation, commitment and energy as an educator and children’s advocate led the UN’s then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1994 to appoint Mrs Machel to oversee the production of a revolutionary report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children. The first of its kind in the history of the UN, the report set out to demonstrate to the world community the necessity of adopting effective measures for the promotion and protection of children in conflict. Said Mrs Machel, “All of us find it hard to believe that at the end of the 20th century, children are targets, children are expendable, children are victims, children are refugees, and even perpetrators, in one conflict after another, on virtually every continent.”

Mrs Machel and her team undertook extensive field work, meeting officials, parents and children from such countries as Angola, Cambodia, Colombia, Northern Ireland, Lebanon and Rwanda and in refugee camps in Tanzania, the former Zaire, Sierra Leone and the former Yugoslavia. Of the final report, Mrs Machel said that it was a “call to action” and a “call to embrace a new morality that puts children where they belong at the heart of all agendas”.

Mrs Machel further demonstrated her commitment to women’s empowerment and peace in Africa by hosting the meeting organised by FAS for the Burundi women’s peace delegation in Cape Town, South

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Africa in September 1998. In her address to the Conference participants, Mrs Machel stressed the importance of constructing a future for Africa without the divisions or differences that are currently tearing the continent apart and overshadowing the destiny of its peoples. She considered the sharing of experiences as fundamental to securing freedom in Africa and held the South African fight against apartheid up as an example for all the people of Africa. Mrs Machel also exhorted African women not to confine themselves to the role of victims, but to become key players in the construction of peace.

Achieving world renown has not diverted her from her goal of bringing education, empowerment and prosperity to Mozambican children and women. She has also striven for peace and reconciliation in Mozambique, while actively aiding reconstruction and development efforts. ■

Biography

Graça Simbene Machel was born on 17 October 1945 in Incadine (Mandlakaze), Gaza, Mozambique, two weeks after the death of her father. Raised by her mother and siblings, she received the invaluable gift of education, which she has passed on to other underprivileged children throughout the world. Trained as a teacher, she holds a bachelor's degree in German philosophy from the University of Lisbon.

Mrs Machel fought for her country's independence from the Portuguese as a member of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo). While in exile in Tanzania, she met Samora Machel and the two were drawn to each other in the struggle for liberation. In 1975, after independence, she became Mozambique's first female minister. In September that same year, she married Samora Machel, the country's first President.

As Minister of Education until 1989, Graça Machel worked towards the goal of universal education. From 1975-85, the number of pupils enrolled in primary schools rose from about 40 per cent of all school-aged children to over 90 per cent of boys and 75 per cent of girls. When her husband was killed in a plane crash in October 1986, Mrs Machel's threw even greater energies into her country's development and intensified her work on behalf of children world-wide.

In her role as educator, Mrs Machel has been active at both the national and regional levels. She was President of UNESCO's National Commission in Mozambique and a delegate to UNICEF's conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1988. In 1990, Mrs Machel served on the international steering committee of the World Conference on Education for All. In 1994, she

"Grass Can't Grow in Human Hands"

In 1991, the Foundation for Community Development (*Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade—FDC*) was created to assist in the restructuring and restoration of civil society in post-war Mozambique. As a private, non-profit institution, the FDC awards grants to facilitate greater community access to knowledge and the tools of sustainable development. Projects selected for funding by the FDC are considered according to, among other criteria, their ability to empower women and prevent environmental damage. Some of the projects the FDC has co-financed include the construction of schools to promote girls' education and the establishment of the first micro-credit management institution to support women in business and promote the participation of women in decision-making roles.

In supporting the efforts of local community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop human potential, the FDC believes that it is putting the responsibility for the development of Mozambican society where it belongs – in the hands of local people.

For more information contact:

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was named Expert to Chair the Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children. Mrs Machel is also one of the few female board members of the African Leadership Forum (ALF) and as such helped to create its African Women's Forum with the aim of bringing women into the political process. Beyond these commitments, she remains an active member of many organizations in Africa and throughout the world.

Over her career, Graça Machel has been internationally recognised for her achievements. In 1992, she was awarded the Laureate of Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger by the Hunger Project. In 1995, she received the Nansen Medal in recognition of her contribution to the welfare of refugee children. Mrs Machel was given the Inter Press Service's (IPS) International Achievement Award for helping children throughout the world.

Graça Machel wed former South African President Nelson Mandela in 1998. She is currently President of the Foundation for Community Development and Chairperson for the National Organization of Children of Mozambique.





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From Beijing to New York: How far have we come?

unique in that representatives from governments, NGOs and international organisations, as well as independent consultants, sat together to exchange information and ideas. Participation from all sectors facilitated debate, interaction and creative problem-solving. In contrast to the European and North American reviews, at which FAS was an observer, where issues were discussed under broad categories, the African evaluation attempted a more in-depth analysis. All 12 areas of critical concern were covered, and workshops explored each issue further.

ICRC / PAUL GRABHORN

Almost five years have passed since the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing. The conference holds a special place in the hearts of African women, as its Secretary-General, Gertrude Mongella, lent an African spirit to the event and served as a role model for her African sisters. But what has been tangibly achieved so far and what still needs to be done?

In June 2000, the world's nations will meet at the UN headquarters in New York to evaluate the progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). In preparation for this global review, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organised the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, held from 22 to 26 November 1999 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. FAS, which has been following developments closely since Beijing, took part in the conference.

The format of the meeting in Addis Ababa was

part in the proceedings. At the pre-conference NGO workshop, it submitted a summary and evaluation of the work carried out by FAS and its partners in the years since the Dakar and Beijing PFAs were established. It brought along women from the various African countries in which it is working to participate in the conference and held meetings with women involved in peace efforts in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In his keynote address to the conference, the



ECA's Executive Secretary, K.Y. Amoako, outlined how the Dakar and Beijing PFAs have helped strengthen the network of African women leaders. Serving as guidelines, the PFAs have indicated areas where there is potential for women to make advancements and have increased general awareness among women of the choices before them.

Acknowledging the ECA's commitment to implementing the PFAs, Mr Amoako pointed to the creation of the ECA's Committee on Women and Development and mentioned that through positive action half of the executive members of the ECA are now women. Other similar initiatives include the creation of the AWCPD, of which FAS is a member.

Room for improvement

While it is clear that progress has been made, much remains to be done. As Mr Amoako said, "The paper barriers are coming down, but the behavioural barriers are still largely up." The priority areas for improvement noted by most countries were women and poverty, education and training, women and health and the human rights of women. African women still lack access to resources and education, especially in rural communities. Another major impediment to women's advancement is that land ownership and inheritance are still denied to them in many countries. The spread of HIV/AIDS also

came out as an important health issue over which women need to have more control. In order to accelerate the implementation of Dakar and Beijing, it was generally agreed that affirmative action plans are necessary and that there is a need for better monitoring and accountability.

What was disappointing and alarming is that the issue of women in armed conflict was not seen as a critical area of concern for most countries. In fact, it rated as a priority area in only 15 out of 43 country reports. This deficiency was

noted at the ECA meeting, however, where an additional three critical areas were defined. The first of these was the need for more women to assume positions of power and decision-making. Women still have only token representation in parliaments. The average representation of women in national legislative assemblies stands at a mere 11 per cent, well below the set target of 30 per cent. This leads to the second area for improvement identified: the creation of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Women must be ensured access to decision-making positions. Affirmative action programmes are a means to this end.

The last critical area discussed, and the most relevant to FAS, was the involvement of women in conflict prevention and resolution. Women are the ones most adversely affected in conflict areas. In the past, women have been giving the early warnings of conflict, and a strong new activism is now flourishing among African women to press for peace, of which FAS is proud to be a part. Cited at the conference were the efforts of women in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi.

"Women are the ones most adversely affected in conflict areas"

Peace forum

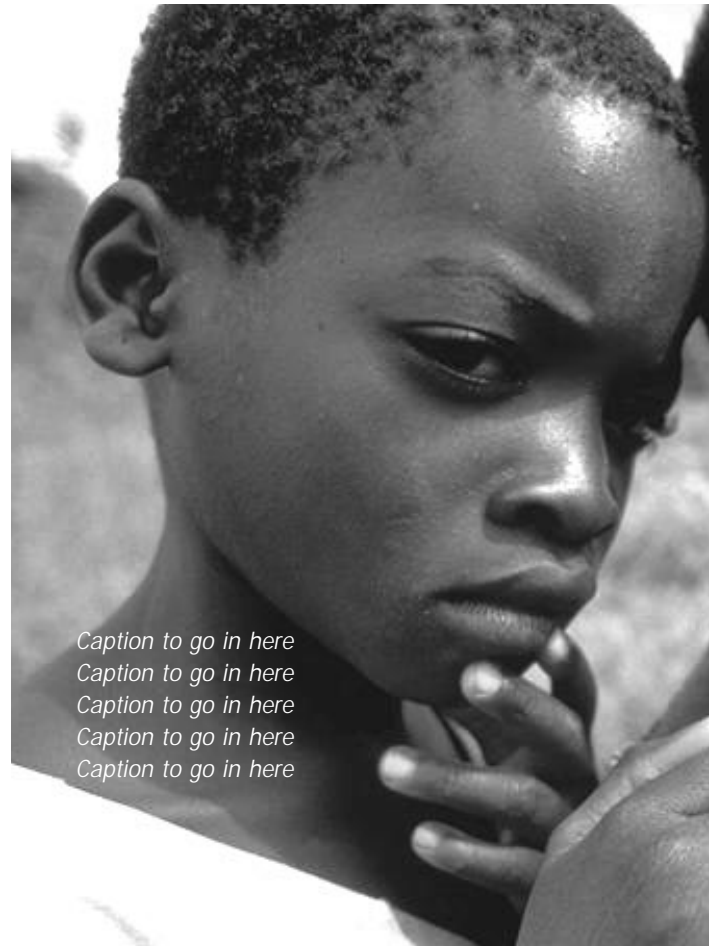
As a member of the AWCPD, FAS helped to organise the Peace Forum at the conference. A peace tent was set up where women were able to discuss issues and share experiences related to conflict prevention and resolution. Dakar and Beijing both call for women's involvement in peace processes. The Beijing PFA states that "Equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflict are essential to the maintenance of peace and security". The creation of the AWCPD was an important step towards achieving this goal, but there is still a long road ahead. Some of the recommendations that emerged from the peace forum discussions include: promoting traditional methods of conflict resolution; appealing to women from the North to lobby for the curtail-



ment of the manufacture and sale of arms; and encouraging solidarity among high-level African women in carrying out awareness-raising in countries at war. A workshop on women and peace also took place at the conference, during which issues such as violence against women during war and women and child soldiers were tackled. The role women need to play in making decisions relating to conflict resolution was also reinforced.

“It must not be forgotten that progress towards peace can only be made when all women are taken into account and involved in the process”

A group of women who are perhaps the most marginalised in Africa made a touching plea to the conference. Speaking on behalf of disabled women, Kenyan Josephine Sinyo, who was one of only three women with disabilities invited to the conference, pointed out that although peace was on the agenda, the women most devastated by conflict in Africa were neglected. “They never talked of the more than 40,000 women who have been disabled by war and conflict,” said Sinyo. “They never asked them to come and give their testimonies. The ones talking of war experiences are not disabled, giving the impression that war does not render many women, children and men disabled.” It must not be forgotten that progress towards peace can only be made when *all* women are taken into account and involved in the process.



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War on AIDS

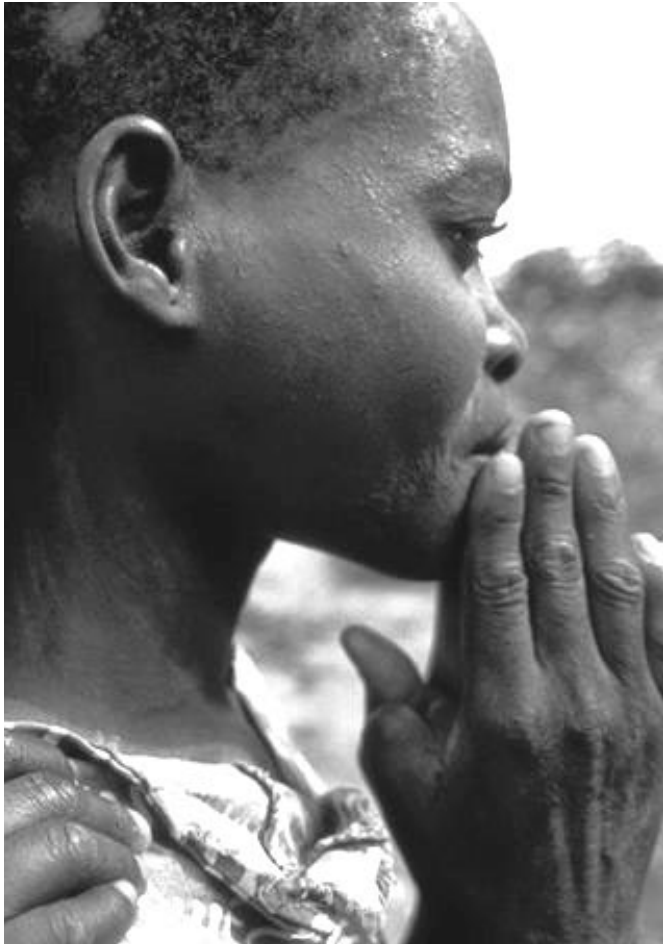
More than 2 million Africans died of AIDS-related illnesses in 1999, ten times the death toll from war, even though more countries in Africa are afflicted by armed conflict than on any other continent. Furthermore, because of AIDS, in many countries the 20 years of life expectancy that have been gained in the last 40 years, will be lost by 2010. HIV/AIDS is jeopardising not only Africa’s current achievements, but also its future.

Conflict and AIDS

UN Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan pointed out that “In already unstable societies, this cocktail of disasters is a sure recipe for more conflict. And conflict, in turn, provides fertile ground for further infection.”

This is particularly true of refugee situations — the result of conflict or other emergency. Refugees are highly vulnerable to HIV; the disease spreads rapidly in refugee camps, partly because education and methods of prevention such as condoms are

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The HIV/AIDS epidemic is cutting a swathe of devastation across Africa. The OAU has dubbed it “the silent war”. Infection rates worldwide are staggering: nearly 10,000 women and men are infected daily, according to UNAIDS. Equally alarming, of the more than 33 million people across the globe currently infected with HIV/AIDS, 70 per cent are African. Health and peace go hand in hand. If the HIV/AIDS issue is not tackled alongside other initiatives, efforts to achieve sustainable peace in Africa will be in vain.

unavailable. In emergencies, the HIV threat is stronger because blood supplies are not always tested before they are administered. Also, consensual sexual contact increases as do rape and prostitution. These conditions can be aided or further worsened by the host community. Whatever problems the host community has, become the problems of the refugee population, and vice versa. However, the positive aspects of a community, such as condom distribution and adequate health services, can help to curb the spread of the disease in both the host and refugee populations. Often a host population will blame a increasing rate of infection on refugees, when fault cannot actually be found there. The rising tensions, in a situation that is often already tenuous, can only further negative the effects on both populations.

Even in areas without a present refugee population, AIDS is causing social and economic havoc. It is estimated that industrial production in the worst-affected African cities has already fallen by 20 per cent. In areas where as many as one in four people are infected, economic stagnation is caused by absences owing to illness and its complications, days off to attend funerals and time taken to train new people to replace the ones who have died. The 21 countries in the world with the highest HIV infection rates are all in Africa. They are also among the world's poorest nations. Politically and economically, the devastation of the AIDS epidemic is clear.

At the meeting on the International Partnership against HIV/AIDS in Africa, on 6 December 1999, Kofi Annan stated that AIDS is “taking away both breadwinners and those who look after the young, the old and the infirm. It is destroying the very fabric of society.” Less than one month later, the UN Security Council declared AIDS in Africa to be a threat to the continent's political stability and for the first time in the Security Council's history began to address a health issue.

Women and AIDS

Both men and women are affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. However, the risk for women is rising globally and is especially acute in Africa. While 42 per cent of all adults with HIV are women, 80 per cent of all infected women are African. In sub-Saharan Africa, there are six women living with HIV for every five infected men. For younger women, the statistics are even more grim. In some areas, girls (aged 15-19 years) have infection rates eight times higher than those of boys in the same age group. In African countries, where young people (aged 15-25 years) account for 60 per cent of all new infections, the rates among young women are twice as high as among their male peers. These statistics show that women, and particularly

“Politically and economically, the devastation of the AIDS epidemic is clear”

young women, are especially vulnerable to HIV infection. There are several reasons for this. Biologically, women have a greater surface area of mucosa exposed to their partners' sexual secretions during intercourse. At the same time, HIV-infected semen usually contains a higher concentration of the virus than women's sexual secretions. Research reported by UNAIDS has shown that the risk of becoming infected with HIV during unprotected intercourse is as much as two to four times higher for women than for men.

“One of the greatest barriers to the control of HIV/AIDS is the stigma associated with the disease”

Young girls, whose sexual organs are still immature, have an even lower resistance to the virus.

Beyond women's biological susceptibility to HIV infection, other factors play a key role in putting women at greater risk than men. According to a UNDP administrator, “Social norms and gender inequality make it difficult for women and girls to deny men sex.” As women are often not in a position to control their exposure to the virus, their biological susceptibility only makes matters worse. According to UNAIDS, studies have shown that marriage increases the risk factor for women, who are often infected by their husbands. In many cases, women are unable to insist on the use of condoms or have any control over their partners' fidelity. In this respect, AIDS campaigns can fail women by

encouraging prevention methods that women have little or no ability to apply, such as mutual fidelity, abstinence or condom use. Often, open talk about sexual intercourse and the use of condoms, as well as general education concerning HIV transmission, are thought to encourage promiscuity and moral decay.

Society and AIDS

Many African communities have strong traditional, cultural and religious beliefs that are opposed to the measures most widely used in combating the AIDS epidemic. It is important to acknowledge that the promotion of moral ideals such as abstinence and mutual fidelity in a relationship are important means of preventing the spread of HIV. Unfortunately, factors such as poverty, gender inequality and certain traditional practices make it difficult – sometimes impossible – to uphold such values. Religious institutions must not be excluded in the battle against HIV/AIDS, as these groups are often the most effective means of educating rural communities. Governments, religious leaders, NGOs and CBOs need to join forces in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, using all of the means at their disposal for the common good of their communities.

Breaking the silence

One of the greatest barriers to the control of HIV/AIDS is the stigma associated with the disease. This barrier often prevents the dissemination of accurate information and discourages AIDS education and the promotion of safe sex. In many communities, individuals with HIV or AIDS are ostracised. This leads to denial and obstructs efforts to manage and track the spread of the disease. Mr Annan has acknowledged that “the first battle to be won in the war against AIDS is the battle to smash the wall of silence and stigma surrounding it.”

National governments are beginning to recognise the threat posed by AIDS to the peace, security and development of their countries. Now, they must go a step further and devote all the resources possible (SPACE) to combating AIDS in Africa. Secrecy about HIV and AIDS needs to be abandoned, so as to create a climate of openness and awareness. Examples of effective approaches can be found among the African nations that are taking the initiative to fight AIDS. Uganda, one of the first countries in Africa to implement an AIDS prevention campaign, has been successful in stabilising its levels of infection (see graph). It sponsored military programmes and educational campaigns (SPACE) using songs, billboards and radio and television



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spots to spread information about AIDS. As a result, most Ugandans are now aware of AIDS and of the various methods of prevention.

African women have also been active in this battle. The Society of Women Against AIDS (SWAA), an African women's organisation present in 28 African countries, is working to educate and involve African women in AIDS awareness and prevention. SWAA believes that "women who are educated, informed, free to decide what to do with their lives constitute an efficient weapon in the fight against health problems such as HIV/AIDS". At the grass-roots level, the Women and AIDS Support Network in Zimbabwe is educating, counselling and organising women to take control of their own health. They have been successful in persuading the Zimbabwean government to make female condoms

available throughout the country. While these and other groups have attempted to provide information on AIDS, there is still a lot to be done.

FAS is organising a workshop later this year to equip its members with the tools to address the interconnected issues of conflict resolution, gender and AIDS. FAS aims to integrate HIV/AIDS issues into its work to promote peace in Africa. By developing a training module for HIV/AIDS and related issues, its members will be further empowered to disseminate information in their activities and within their respective organisations and countries. By bridging the issues of conflict and HIV/AIDS prevention, FAS will be assisted in advocating the inclusion of gender issues in the peace and HIV/AIDS discussions in sub-regional and regional work.

As US Vice-President Al Gore said in a Security Council meeting, "Today, inside all the world, we are putting the AIDS crisis at the top of the world's security agenda. We must talk about AIDS, not in whispers, not in private meetings alone, nor in tones of secrecy and shame." This is how the battle against AIDS in Africa must be approached. Africa is being overwhelmed by AIDS, and cannot afford to sit back quietly. This is one war that must be waged in order to ensure future stability, peace and development for the women and men of Africa.

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Peace and health in Burundi

The extent and severity of the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa was on the agenda of the Burundian women's peace tour meeting on the Leadership of Women in the Burundian Peace Process held in Cape Town in September 1998. The participants realised that awareness-raising and education were essential to counteract the conspiracy of silence that is impeding the drive to lower HIV infection rates in Africa. As high numbers of health workers, teachers and other members of the elite die as a result of AIDS during what would be their most productive years, the disease is effectively causing economic and social crises — crises

that could lead to further political destabilisation.

With this in mind, the group invited Ms Noreine Kaleeba, a community mobilisation advisor with UNAIDS, to the meeting to discuss the provision of social services in times of conflict. Because peace is meaningless if people have nothing to eat, no clean water to drink and no way to immunise their children against infectious disease, Ms Kaleeba stressed that the provision of social services is a vital component of the peace-building process. In addition to activities such as lobbying politicians or staging marches, women can assist in conflict resolution by offering social wel-

fare services, since "those who are offered kindness are very receptive to talking peace". Ms Joyce Nima reinforced this point by describing the efforts of Ugandan women to provide reproductive health services to refugee girls, to assist children orphaned as a result of war or AIDS, and to educate villagers on how to care for AIDS patients at home.

In Burundi, as in Uganda, providing such services both to Tutsis and Hutus is fundamental to establishing true peace and ensuring that all Burundians have access to the basic services necessary to participate fully in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process.

Many decisions that directly affect African women are taken at the regional and global levels. Therefore, they wish to contribute more and are determined to obtain greater international recognition and representation.

FAS's international advocacy efforts transport women's national peace efforts and concerns into the regional and international arenas. As a result, a fundamental aspect of the organisation's work is to take part in international activities focusing on women's rights so as to defend the interests of African women.

Their presence at these events provides national NGOs with the opportunity to network, share experiences and establish global partnerships through which African women can make themselves heard and be involved in international decisions. In addition, they are made aware of regional and international mechanisms that can help to strengthen their efforts to achieve reconciliation and sustainable peace and development.

African initiatives

Special attention to women's rights

Over the last year, Africa has seen several developments which have brought human rights and women's human rights in particular into the mainstream of national and regional policies. FAS has always had a strong commitment to improving the status of women's human rights, participating in sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and working closely with the recently appointed Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Earlier this year, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, created five years ago to try perpetrators of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, convicted Alfred Musema-Uwimana of rape as a tool for genocide, the first such conviction in the tribunal's history. The Musema judgment acknowledged, "Like torture, rape is used for such purposes as intimidation, degradation, humiliation, discrimination, punishment, control or destruction of a person. Like torture, rape is a violation of personal dignity." During the Rwandan genocide, thousands of women were subjected to sexual violence. The landmark ruling represented a small victory for African women who have suffered a gross violation of their rights and dignity in the midst of violent conflict.

Grand Baie Declaration

The OUA's First Ministerial Conference on Human

Rights in Africa was held from 12 to 16 April 1999 in Mauritius. The conference issued the Grand Baie Declaration and a Plan of Action which formalised the importance of human rights protection in the promotion of security and sustainable peace and development on the continent. The declaration considers respect for human rights as "indispensable to the maintenance of peace, international security and the elimination of conflicts" and that it "constitutes the only base on which development efforts can rest".

Grand Baie reaffirms the OAU's support for the ACHPR and several international human rights-based conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A special note was

Help Africa of blindfolded leaders women of Africa!
 Help Africa appreciate the significant role of women
 Remove artificial boundaries and language barriers
 Educate Africa!
 Shape the minds of children of Africa, your very own
 Teach the girls to train the sons of Africa to know love
 End the conflicts!
 End the violence!
 End the senseless wars oh women of Africa!
 Build true democracy for PEACE, a lasting culture of PEACE

"Mama Africa", by Mrs Anne-Therese Ndong-Jatta, Minister of Education, Gambia





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made supporting the need for an Additional Protocol to the ACHPR on the protection of women's rights, and African nations were called upon to work towards ending discrimination against women and abolishing harmful cultural practices that are degrading to women. The Grand Baie Declaration represents a step forward for human rights advocacy at the regional level, and FAS has been following up on actions taken to implement the Plan of Action.

finalisation of the draft Additional Protocol on Women's Rights to allow contributions from these groups. FAS was requested to co-operate and assist in this process by intensifying its work to strengthen women's leadership in peace and conflict resolution. A consensus reached among the women's groups was that focusing on common goals and consolidating their efforts would strengthen their position, as well as allow smaller, local NGOs to have a say.

Burundi meeting

Shortly after the OAU conference, the ACHPR held its 25th Session in Bujumbura, Burundi, from 26 April to 5 May 1999, during which work on drafting an Additional Protocol to the ACHPR on the rights of women. The Burundi meeting was particularly meaningful for FAS as it has been heavily involved in the Burundian women's peace movement and their struggle to realise their political rights. The Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights, Mrs Julienne Ondziel, whose role it is to monitor the status of women's human rights in Africa and co-operate with NGOs, UN agencies and governmental and inter-governmental organisations in protecting these rights, submitted her report at the session. She mentioned financial constraints as a barrier to pursuing and implementing projects aimed at mainstreaming women's rights. Outlining the direction of future activities, the Special Rapporteur explained how she plans to expand on a report on the present situation of women's rights and rights abuses in Africa and implement awareness programmes throughout Africa.

Outside the formal sessions, the Special Rapporteur held meetings with women's associations working in Burundi. She stated her intention to work closely with women's NGOs before the

Draft protocol finalised

It was at the 26th Session of the ACHPR in Kigali, Rwanda, from 1 to 15 November 1999 that the draft Additional Protocol was finalised as the Kigali Draft Protocol on Women's Rights. The protocol outlines the basic rights of women that transcend cultural boundaries, dealing with all aspects of societal function, including equal rights to representation in the political and decision-making spheres. While the African Charter already states women's rights to promote and maintain peace, the Kigali Protocol specifies women's right to peace. It further calls upon States' commitment to involve women in programmes of education for peace and a culture of peace and in structures for conflict prevention, management and resolution at all levels. With regard to specific actions, the Kigali Protocol calls for reductions in military spending and the redirection of these resources to social programmes, while guaranteeing women's participation in the distribution of these resources.

The Kigali Draft Protocol on Women's Rights has since been submitted to the OAU. Women will now have to concentrate on developing strategies and encouraging its quick ratification, paving the way for its implementation at all levels.

Giving life, preserving life

The Pan-African Women's Conference for a Culture of Peace, organised by UNESCO, the OAU, the AWCPD and the Tanzanian government took place from 17 to 20 May 1999 in Zanzibar. FAS participated in the conference, which was attended by 300 participants from 50 African countries along with UN representatives. The conference enabled African women from all corners of the continent to gather and set an agenda for a culture of peace in Africa.

The Zanzibar conference was opened by Fredrico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, Vice-President of Uganda and Chairperson of the AWCPD, Salim A. Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU, and President Salim Amour of Zanzibar. Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania chaired the Conference Bureau. In his opening speech, Fredrico Mayor said, "Women and life are synonymous terms. A woman gives life, she is the most apt at preserving it." This set the tone for a conference that celebrated unity among African women in protecting their families, their lands and future generations from the devastation of war.

In her opening address, Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe pointed out what women must strive for to promote peace effectively in their countries. "In the making of war and peace we should be involved in making those weighty decisions. We should get into those cabinets and parliaments where such decisions are made. We must be involved in conflict resolution and in pacification."

The conference attempted to address the root causes of violence, including poverty, exclusion, economic, social and political injustices, violation of human rights and the absence of rule of the law. The women's agenda was thus to outline possibilities for overcoming obstacles to peace and to increase efforts towards reconciliation and post-war reconstruction and resettlement. African

women leaders, politicians, experts in peace-building, gender and peace researchers, educators and national and community-based peace activists all voiced their concerns and compared and shared experiences over the four days.

Zanzibar declaration

The conference culminated in the Zanzibar Declaration, which details the negative effects of conflict the people of Africa have suffered since colonialism and the atrocities Africans have witnessed in the post-independence years. Women in particular have been marginalised in the democratisation process and they must use their talents and skills to redress the situation in Africa in order to sustain development and peace. The Declaration therefore calls upon national and international organisations to enforce equitable representation of women in decision-making processes.

The women at the Zanzibar conference also recognised that demilitarisation and disarmament are vital to lasting peace. The Declaration condemned the proliferation of arms on the continent and the use of child soldiers in conflict. African governments were called upon to reduce and control the arms trade, and women were asked to commit themselves to protecting and rehabilitating former child soldiers through education. As Dr Kazibwe noted, "Women have the advantage of moulding children at a very young age. We must begin by loving our children and teaching them to love everyone irrespective of ethnicity, religion, race, gender, class."

Communication and networking among African women and building links between governments, the private sector, civil society and the international community are essential to the women's peace movement. To strengthen solidarity among African women, it was decided to create a pan-African radio programme on gender and peace to educate and communicate to people on these issues and to give greater visibility to the African women's peace movement. For such programmes to be established, however, sufficient resources must be made available. The support and commitment of organisations such as the OAU, the UN and its agencies, NGOs, as well as national governments and the private sector are needed to effect real change and make progress.

The Women's Agenda finalised in Zanzibar is to be presented by UNESCO to the UN agencies and other intergovernmental organisations and NGOs in the hopes of gaining political and financial backing. The Zanzibar Declaration has already been adopted by the OAU Council of Ministers. At the conference, Salim A. Salim promised, "The OAU

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will continue to support women's initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of peace and non-violence."

The Zanzibar Declaration expresses the needs, experiences, concerns and commitment of African women. Zanzibar must be viewed as a foundation upon which women can build efforts towards a lasting peace. As Dr Kazibwe concluded, "Wherever we go let us take peace with us, let us talk peace, let peace flow and saturate Africa."

Reaching for the summit

Slowly but surely African women are achieving the recognition for which they are striving among Africa's highest institutions. At two OAU meetings in 1999, significant headway was made in bringing to the fore the role of women in shaping Africa's future.

The OAU held its annual summit in the Algerian capital, Algiers, from 12 to 14 July 1999. Attendance was good, with 43 of the 53 Member States represented by their heads of State or government. The summit's primary focus was to examine modes of facilitating "home-grown" solutions to conflict in Africa. Specifically, the participants discussed issues concerning resolution of conflicts in the Horn of Africa, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Their priority concerns and commitments were presented in the form of the Algiers Declaration.

The Algiers summit represented a triumph for the women dedicated to advocating peace. For the first time, the AWCPD was invited to participate in the forum, and after years of struggling to have their voices heard, women saw their efforts acknowledged in the final declaration adopted by the summit. The declaration recognises that "the commitment and participation of youth and women can contribute towards creating an enabling environment which conduces towards a culture of peace and tolerance." Furthermore, a commitment to the African and global Platforms of Action for the advancement of women was reiterated as a step towards creating a more egalitarian society.

Redirecting resources

The OAU Council of Ministers took a promising decision with respect to the concerns of women and gender issues in the peace and sustainable development processes by urging Member States in relatively peaceful situations to "set an example by re-channelling their internal resources towards humanitarian endeavours and development issues".

The resulting decision acknowledges that human, financial and other resources must be directed towards mainstreaming gender issues and that women should be actively involved in identifying the areas where the redirection of resources can most beneficially be applied. The decision goes on to insist on the involvement of a greater proportion of women in political decision-making, as required by the Beijing Platform for Action, while "integrating women's concerns at all levels of planning and action in relation to conflict prevention and preventative diplomacy".

The decision expresses a strong commitment to women in Africa, and encourages the recent initiatives by African women for peace on the continent. Support is given for the Women's Agenda on a Culture of Peace encapsulated in the Zanzibar Declaration, which was formalised a few months earlier at the Pan-African Conference on a Culture of Peace in Africa. The important role of the AWCPD is also recognised and an appeal is made for the provision of any necessary support to the AWCPD to carry out its mandate effectively.

As a follow-up to Algiers, the OAU heads of State and government met in an Extraordinary Session in Sirte, Libya, from 8 to 9 September 1999. The purpose of the meeting was to deliberate on ways and means of strengthening African unity. One of the major decisions reached was to move forward on the establishment of the institutions outlined in the Abuja Treaty, namely the African Central Bank, African Monetary Union and the African Court of Justice. Particular attention was paid to the Pan-African Parliament, which is also of great interest to women's groups as it aims to "provide a platform for the people of the continent and their grassroots organisations to involve them in decision-making on the major issues facing the continent".

Ensuring a place for women

Questions must now be posed as to what actions need to be taken to implement mechanisms to facilitate women's participation in decision-making structures and processes and to ensure they have equal access to them. The issues of how to ensure the inclusion of women in the new institutions and how to incorporate the necessary actions identified into the Regional Plan of Action for the next five years were raised at the 6th Regional Conference on Women in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 1999. These are the tasks the AWCPD and women's groups such as FAS will have to undertake in the years to come.

While the decisions made in Algiers and Sirte are a promising start for African women, as was stated

in Algiers, “much remains to be done to bring these developments to the level of our expectations and the legitimate aspirations of our people”. African women must demonstrate that they are up to the challenge. Now that they have succeeded in achieving the recognition of their fellow leaders at the regional level, they must not be silent partners. They must build on their role in organisations such as the OAU and its mandated institutions to ensure their place in Africa’s future. Let us hope that Africa and its leaders will not fail to take into account the vision of African women in reshaping the future of the continent.

Measuring success for women

Since the idea first germinated at the 1st African Women’s Forum three years ago, work has been progressing on the Index on the Status of Women, a mechanism designed to measure women’s participation in decision-making spheres and to monitor progress towards women’s empowerment. FAS has played a significant part in this important process and will continue to support implementation of the Index.

At the 1st African Women’s Forum, Mrs Graça Machel said on the topic of empowering women in the 21st century: “Women’s movement in Africa never set short-, medium- or long-term goals. Its motion aims at the ultimate goal, which is ideal. But without a proper planning process,

we can hardly establish adequate strategies and methodologies; we will not know how to evaluate progress and failure; we lack indicators of

where to strengthen, where to improve, where to correct, where the gaps are.”

By this she meant that a mechanism must be established to identify better those areas in which great strides have been made and those in which only small steps have been taken. This is to be the function of the Index on the Status of Women, which FAS, along with the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF) and other women’s groups, has been working on drafting. The need for such an Index is apparent in that, sadly, many African governments have not yet made as much progress as hoped towards meeting their commitments to

implementing the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action. Using the Index to monitor measurable outcomes of programmes aimed at empowering women will allow women to celebrate successes and continue efforts where progress is lagging, putting pressure on the relevant agencies to take action.

Empowerment and self-reliance

The 2nd African Women’s Forum, organised by the ALF, took place in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, from 23 to 24 August 1999. Hosted by the Africa Development Bank (ADB), the conference was attended by over 70 African women leaders, activists and representatives of UN agencies and NGOs, including FAS’s representative from Sierra Leone, Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff. The theme of the meeting was “Improving the Status of Women in Africa”. One of the main items presented and discussed over the two days was the draft Index on the Status of Women’s Leadership in Africa.

The Index is composed of two parts, a Women’s Empowerment Index and a Self-Reliance Index. The Empowerment Index measures gender gaps in women’s representation in parliaments and administrative/managerial positions, while the Self-Reliance Index concentrates on education and general employment statistics. Combining these two sub-indexes results in an overall evaluation of gender gaps within leadership positions.

During the conference, working groups were formed to refine the draft Index. In setting out guidelines for the Index, participants agreed that the final product should focus on women’s positions in leadership roles, provide a comparison between the position of men and women and use standard units and scales for comparability. The Index sets out to be an effective analytical tool, but at the same time it must remain easily accessible so that it may be targeted to audiences at all levels.

The ALF is now to set up a working group to finalise and disseminate the Index, which will be translated into the continent’s four major languages. Together with the ALF, FAS will be developing strategies on the use of the Index to monitor the work of African governments, intergovernmental agencies and NGOs in implementing the commitments made in Dakar and Beijing. This will involve establishing mechanisms for data collection and analysis and demonstrating to women’s groups how to use the Index. It is hoped that, in addition, this process will provide a clearer picture of how far women have progressed and will strengthen the network of groups committed to women’s empowerment.

Let us hope that Africa and its leaders will not fail to take into account the vision of African women in reshaping the future of the continent.



On the international scene

Good governance, a prerequisite of peace

The prevalence of violent conflict in Africa reflects the failure of existing governing bodies in their institutional capacity to resolve internal conflict without resorting to violence. Governance based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and the principles of transparency and accountability is fundamental to creating a cohesive society.

The Africa Governance Forum (AGF), a series of conferences organised by the UNDP and the ECA, aims to promote the shaping of policy among African governments to build capacities, mechanisms and institutions geared towards sound governance. The third in the series, AGF III, was held from 28 to 30 June 1999 in Bamako, Mali, on the theme of "Good governance and conflict management for durable peace". Supported by the governments of Japan, Norway and Switzerland, AGF III was attended by representatives of 11 African countries and 18 NGOs and civil society organisations. Speaking at the conference, Japanese Ambassador Mr Yoshitaka Kawamura stressed the need for international co-operation, saying: "Global stability and prosperity could not be ensured without development of Africa."

As a women's NGO working for peace and conflict resolution, FAS contributed to the preparation of the conference documents. The history of conflicts in a number of African countries and the role of governance were analysed in a background paper entitled "Good Governance and Conflict Management for Durable Peace and Sustainable Development". This document formed the basis of discussions during the conference.

Causes and cures

Participants at the conference faced the challenge of trying to understand internal conflict and sought means of restoring the political and social order and of establishing and strengthening government structures and processes for conflict management within regions afflicted by conflict. A partnership must exist between government and civil society based on open dialogue. While good governance cannot completely eliminate conflict, it should provide the necessary mechanisms to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Having these mechanisms in place, however, is only part of the solution. For them to be effective, adequate human and financial resources must be devoted to their enforcement and development. During a civil society forum which preceded AGF III, emphasis was placed on the role of CSOs in mobilising social capital, especially elders, women and young people, to undertake peace initiatives at the community and national levels. For their part, CSOs must not fail to voice the concerns of those at the grassroots level.

The main causes of conflict were found to be loss of legitimacy of governments owing to poor governance practices and to governments being founded on divisions between groups and thus failing to build a society based on the shared vision of all its

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**THIRD AFRICA GOVERNANCE FORUM (AGF III)
GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
FOR DURABLE PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
28-30 JUNE 1999 BAMAKO-MALI**



members. It was also noted that the exclusion of certain groups from participation in decision-making and the absence of effective empowerment policies weakened governance and degraded social capital. Among the strategies and recommendations put forward, it was conceded that governance structures in Africa need to be reinforced and capacity-building within them focused on conflict analysis and management. In recognition that peace-building is a long-term endeavour, education was stressed as a key element in establishing a culture of peace.

Women and children in crisis

An important aspect of good governance discussed during the conference concerned meeting the special needs of women and children in crisis situations. This is best achieved through early warning systems and observatories founded in civil society. To this end, it was advocated that “civil society organisations such as women’s organisations, religious bodies and traditional institutions and private sector entities must play substantial roles in building confidence and enhancing communication amongst parties to the conflict and serve as mediators and facilitators, while ensuring that the rights and interests of the society are protected and the basis for society’s democratic development preserved”.

Equal participation of women, who account for half of Africa’s population, in all decision-making spheres is essential to good governance and a balanced, democratic society. Capacity-building to strengthen women’s organisations such as the AWCPD was seen as a means to this end. As stated in the AGF III’s final report, “The valuable and innovative approaches pioneered by women’s organisations in conflict management [is] accorded great appreciation and the full and early involvement of such organisations [is] called for to be reinforced at all levels through specific institutional linkages.”

Women for peace

In an effort to raise awareness of African women’s peace initiatives within the international community and to co-operate with organisations around the world also working with women in peace-building, FAS has participated in some of the recent international forums and campaigns on women and peace.

The main international gathering of women for peace took place from May 11 to 15 1999, during the Hague Appeal for Peace (HAP) in The

Hague, Netherlands. The objective of the conference was to launch the Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century. The event opened in grand style, with the Peace Flame being brought into the Prince William Alexander Hall by a team of African women led by Inonge Mbukisita Lawnika, President of the Federation of African Women’s Peace Networks.

During the five-day conference, FAS participated in several workshops on various themes, including women against war and women in peace processes. In addition a Pan-Africa Peoples’ Forum was held bringing together all the African delegates to the HAP to discuss the absence of Africans and the lack of visibility of the African agenda. FAS representatives were involved in the preparation of a Declaration, which was adopted by the African participants to the HAP for presentation to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the conference’s closing plenary session.

A key issue debated at the conference was the need to take the control of peace-building away from those who make war and redirect resources from war activities to peace initiatives.

From village council to negotiating table

Following up on the HAP, FAS took part in a hearing hosted by the Finnish Parliament and organised by International Alert in Helsinki in November on the theme of “The New Paradigm for Peace, Security and Development: the Gender Perspective”. Specific issues discussed in Helsinki included the exclusion of women from leadership positions at all levels, particularly within peace processes, and the effects of globalisation with respect to gender and poverty.

The meeting in Helsinki concluded with the launching of a major campaign headed by International Alert entitled “From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table: Women Building Peace”. As the name suggests, the campaign highlights the importance of women’s experiences of and perspectives on peace and strives to make their contributions central to peace-building processes.

International Alert is well known for its work in Europe for mainstreaming gender into European Union (EU) instruments and in particular pushing for the “EU Resolution on Women and Peace-Building”. The aim of the new campaign is to eradicate the prevailing global perception of women as victims during violent conflict and see them emerge as peace-makers. The campaign focuses on five main themes: women’s participation in peace processes; gender considera-



tions in post-conflict rehabilitation; the special needs of refugee and displaced women and girls; justice for women in reconciliation and peace-building processes; and women's increased leadership and governance.

"Women Building Peace" is based on co-operation between women's organisations around the world in working towards their common goals. FAS is one of the 81 international NGOs comprising the campaign's International Consultative Committee. As such, FAS was invited to the launching of the campaign at the Economic Council of Europe meeting on Beijing + 5 in Geneva in early 2000, at which it was asked to share African women's experiences in peace negotiations. Most recently, FAS participated in a meeting in Guinea organised by the Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (REFAMP) on "Engendering the Peace Process in West Africa" held from 24 to 26 January 2000, at which the campaign was introduced to the region.

Rights for all

The tragic deaths of 14-year-old Tounkara Fode and 15-year-old Koita Yaguine, while hiding in the landing gear of a Sabena plane on 2 August 1999 hit international headlines and highlighted the sentiment among young people in Africa that their continent can offer them no future. The boys' despair at the lack of opportunities for education, work and even to meet their basic needs prompted them to flee their homes to plead for international assistance for themselves and their African brothers and sisters.

While Tounkara and Koita never had the chance to realise their hopes and dreams for the future, their plea did not go unheard. At the 51st Session of the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights, FAS, together with the Task Force for African NGOs, made an intervention on the situation regarding the promotion, full realisation and protection of the rights of children and young people.

Focus on children

The statement underlined the fact that the health and educational needs of children are subordinated to the quest for military expansion and arms purchases. Children suffer the most from this misuse of domestic capital, which has resulted in poverty, oppression and the violation of their basic human rights. The use of child soldiers is an additional

affront to children in war-torn countries. Such children suffer not only the physical injuries inflicted in war, but also from deeper and more permanent emotional scars.

At the Sub-Commission, FAS called upon African States to ratify the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in addition to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which most of them have already ratified, and to ensure the implementation of these treaties by setting the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces at 18 years. FAS also asked for the support of international organisations and their co-operation with regional bodies in demobilising and reintegrating into society former child soldiers and victims of war.

Abuse of women's rights

Along with the Task Force for African NGOs, FAS also delivered a speech on the implementation of women's human rights, focusing on three instances of abuses of women's rights. Describing the situation of women refugees, FAS made specific mention of the plight of the women of Sierra Leone. Women suffered rape and other gross violations of their rights during the brutal war in that country, and the perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice.

In South Africa, the rapes of and assaults on two girls, a six-year-old and a fifteen-year-old, were used to illustrate the neglect in legally addressing the issue and to draw attention to the high incidence of rapes in the country. The case of a 14-year-old Ethiopian girl who was kidnapped and raped and who subsequently shot her attacker whom village elders wanted to arrange for her to marry was also given as an illustration of the traditions of violence and violence against women prevalent in many African States. In this case, the girl was arrested and tried for murder.

Bearing these examples in mind, FAS and the Task Force for African NGOs called upon the assembly to: set up an enquiry into human rights violations in Sierra Leone and bring to justice major human rights offenders; arrange a visit to Sierra Leone by both the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Africa's Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights; conduct capacity-building activities to empower grassroots women in Africa and provide them with the skills necessary to mainstream gender issues, lobby national leaders and participate in decision-making spheres; and conduct a campaign to educate African men on the need to end violence against women.

NGO News

ABANTU

Founded in 1991 by African women, Abantu is a development-focused NGO. "Abantu" means "people" in several African languages and reflects the organisation's people-centred philosophy. Approaching development issues from both a gender and an African perspective, Abantu promotes sustainable development that will benefit all members of society.

Abantu consists of a core of men and women qualified and experienced in a broad range of development-related topics. Their expertise covers the areas of the environment, media, health care, economics, finance, gender, housing, refugee issues and community development. Combining North-South experience, the organisation seeks to train and develop these skills among Africans, particularly women, and mobilise resources towards sustainable development that meets the needs of African people.

One of Abantu's strengths is its strong ties with the North (Europe and North America) and the South (Africa). It builds on these links through advocacy, public awareness and networking programmes. It believes that development education should flow both ways and tries to promote ideas from the South.

Abantu's current focus is on two themes: gender and conflict and gender and governance. Its core objectives are to "ensure a gender perspective in all aspects of conflict, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction" and to "highlight the gender implications of governance and increase the effective and gender-sensitive participation of African women in the political process". In pursuit of these goals, Abantu has organised various workshops and seminars across the continent on such themes as Gender and Policy and Violence against Women to help build the capacity of concerned women's organisations and individuals.

A new but important area in which Abantu has done significant work is Information and Communication Technology (ICT). In 1996-7, Abantu started a project on "Strengthening the Electronic Communication Capacities of Women's Organisations in Africa". The project aims to enable African women to acquire and develop information and communication systems in their organisations.

Abantu publishes materials on development issues as well as a quarterly magazine, GAP Matters



(GAP stands for Gender and Policy), to raise awareness of the gaps between what has been promised and what has been achieved in this field. The publication also reports on policy and development issues and supports women and their organisations.

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Eritrean women: strength in numbers

The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) was created in 1979 to encourage the participation of Eritrean women in the liberation struggle. Since the country's independence in 1991, the NUEW has continued its work to raise awareness of political issues among women in the region and to help women to become more involved through literacy campaigns, credit programmes, English lessons and computer training.

For over 20 years, the NUEW has been working to improve the status of women in Eritrea. Its mission is "to improve the political, social and economic status of Eritrean women by vocalising their needs nationally and internationally". Consisting of over 200,000 members, the NUEW has been campaigning strongly to raise the political consciousness of Eritrean women. Its objective is to increase women's participation in national referendums, constitution-making processes and ratifications, and in the council of local government elections. The NUEW also strives to remove obstacles to women's political, economic and social empowerment, such as poverty, high illiteracy rates and harmful traditional practices.

The NUEW's projects are aimed at women from all sectors of Eritrean society. They include educational campaigns on women's reproductive health and the provision of credit facilities to encourage women to engage in income-generating activities. To build women's capacity, NUEW has organised various adult education programmes providing vocational training and has set up childcare centres for working women. NUEW projects have also provided flour mills and donkeys with water containers to remote villages to assist rural women in their daily



Leadership Bank

Zoe Tembo

A dynamic and versatile leader, Zoe M. Tembo has managed to balance personal and professional goals. Her work has been devoted to her own religious community as well as to the global community in her advocacy for the human rights of the African people.



Mrs Tembo was born on 6 February 1958 in Kabew, Zambia. She is married with three children. She speaks Zambian languages fluently, as well as Swahili and English. In 1981, she graduated from the University of Zambia with a bachelor's degree in public administration. She continued her studies at the University of Ghana, earning a diploma in demography and has

since gained certificates for courses on topics such as social justice and human rights.

Mrs Tembo has devoted considerable time and effort working for the religious community. She assisted the Educational Secretary at the Catholic Secretariat in her native Zambia in co-ordinating the Diocese of Lusaka's educational activities. Mrs Tembo then worked as Programmes Co-ordinator for the International Movement of Catholic Students between 1986 and 1990, where she was involved in organising development projects in southern Africa. She continued her involvement with the religious movement overseas, working for Religious Youth Services in Poland.

Mrs Tembo's experience in human rights work began at the International Service for Human Rights in Geneva, where she participated in the 1992 session of the Commission on Human Rights and the preparatory committee for the World Conference on Human Rights. She was inspired to pursue further studies in international human rights and began working for the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACHDRS) in the Gambia. In 1995, Mrs Tembo was appointed Executive Director of the Centre. She has sought to restructure and reorganise the Centre for maximum efficiency, while initiating a network of African human rights NGOs. Most recently, under Mrs Tembo's leadership, the Centre has organised training programmes on the theme of Women in Conflict Situations in Africa and has been working

on the Additional Protocol to the ACHPR concerning women's rights (see p. xx).

Mrs Tembo is currently an Advisory Council Member of the Goree Institute. She is a board member of the Foundation for Women on Health and Reproduction. She is also an advisory board member of the International Service of Human Rights and a member/advisor for the Justice and Peace Commission in Gambia. She was the representative for Africa at the delegates assembly at the World Organisation against Torture.

Pauline Biyong

One of Africa's distinguished daughters, Pauline Biyong is a woman of many talents. For over 16 years, Ms Biyong's work and studies have involved such diverse issues as economics, governance, poverty, gender, the environment and community development.

In her native Cameroon, Ms Biyong is a leader of the women's movement. She is founder and former President of the Federation of Women's Associations of Cameroon (FAFCAM), which consists of 80 associations from all ten provinces of Cameroon. While serving as President of the League for the Education of Woman and Child (LEWCE), she was involved in the creation of the Cameroon Women's Caucus, a body that aims to contribute to the advancement of Cameroonian women through education and participation in establishing a social contract for "Women and Democracy".

On the international front, Ms Biyong participated in the preparatory workshops for both the Dakar and Beijing Conferences on Women. As a successful female entrepreneur herself, she has worked for the advancement of women in the male-dominated field of economics, serving as Secretary-General of the Council for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa (CEEWA). She has also worked closely with the World Bank on issues of gender and economic growth and development and is Vice-President of the African Poverty Reduction Network (APRN).

Ms Biyong has a strong interest in journalism. She is currently publication director of the newspaper *La Cité*, the press organ for the LEWCE, and treasurer of the Association of Female Editors of Cameroon. She is also a correspondent for the Canadian-based newspaper *Afrique Tribune*. As a consultant to various UN agencies, she has had several papers published, including a study on the role of women in Cameroon.



Women's best practices

African answers to Africa's problems

When we talk of building peace within a region plagued by ongoing conflict, we sometimes overlook the traditional and indigenous approaches to conflict resolution that already exist within the local communities. Sustainable peace is dependent on local capacities to maintain trust, co-operation and collaboration among otherwise conflicting groups. Solutions based on local principles and techniques of mediation are therefore more likely to result in lasting peace.

The All Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation was held between 8 and 12 November 1999, the first ever continent-wide articulation of African principles, values and processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation. The conference was organised by the OAU in conjunction with Alliances for Africa, the African Renaissance Institute, FAS, the Federation of African Women's Peace Networks (FERFAP) and the Department for International Development (DFID) and supported by the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the UNDP. Academics and experts in conflict resolution, traditional chiefs, representatives of African and international NGOs, the OAU and UN agencies attended the conference.

The underlying principle identified was "to pre-

Somaliland: traditional ambassadors of peace

In a paper presented at the conference entitled "Roots of reconciliation: local level peace processes in Somaliland", Dr Ahmed Yusuf Farah described the traditional role of Somali women as ambassadors of peace. When women are married into a neighbouring tribe, they keep ties with their paternal group, which allows them to be in the unique position of having dual kinship. As this causes them even greater suffering when conflicts occur, it provides an incentive for the women to act as peace-makers. Able to cross clan boundaries, Somali women have traditionally mediated between rival groups to which they have either birth or marriage ties, in order to resolve any conflicts.

vent conflict escalating into violence, through open dialogue and consensus decision-making and, where required, to reconcile all parties and to establish non-exploitative relations or to re-incorporate offenders into the community and to maintain social harmony". The conference highlighted the importance of African principles of conflict resolution, local conflict-resolution capacities, integrating indigenous approaches into national and international mechanisms, and the role of women in traditional approaches to peace.

The potential for women to contribute to building peace was demonstrated in several presentations and papers giving examples of some best practices. On the theme of conflict prevention, presentations provided some insight into the role women can play in detecting the early warning signs of conflict before it develops into violence. In such instances, women's groups working locally at grassroots level are in an ideal position to voice concerns and use traditional mechanisms as immediate first responses.

The final day of the conference was spent compiling a Summary of Principles from across Africa and a final resolution was drafted building on the common values identified by participants as respect for life, forgiveness, tolerance and co-existence, consensus leadership and participation by all, men and women.

Chagga Tribe – warriors for peace

A case study presented by Aimtonga Amani on the Chagga ethnic group in Tanzania illustrated how women of the tribe have traditionally been the members of society to advocate peace, both within the home and in the community. At home, women will pray for peace before a meal, and in situations of conflict they will actively attempt to restore peace. When fighting occurs, women and girls will run onto the battlefield calling "uwi". The men will stop fighting for fear of hurting the girls, while male family members will be distracted from fighting to retrieve their womenfolk, lest they be kidnapped by their opponents. Wives of warriors in some cases go so far as to run away from their husbands' home, refusing to return until fighting ceases and peace is restored.



Recognising that peace agreements working with the social order in conflict areas are more likely to achieve lasting results and that in the past treaties have often ignored members of civil society and failed to address the root causes of a conflict and the need for reconciliation among all affected parties, the final resolution recommends first that “all peace processes in Africa shall include representatives of civil society and in particular women as full participants and signatories”.

Recommendations were also made on the inclusion of decisions on amnesties for human rights abuses, and African principles regarding accountability, compensation and public reconciliation in peace processes. Lastly, strategies to be adopted include the enhancement of local capacities for peace-making, the integration of traditional African approaches into national and international mechanisms for conflict resolution and the promotion of the role of women in these traditional approaches to peace-making.

Women paramount chiefs

In times of peace, paramount chiefs were traditionally leaders of the various kingdoms into which Sierra Leone was divided and were responsible for their communities. Of the 149 kingdoms, many had women paramount chiefs, a potent symbol of women’s empowerment in decision-making and governance within the country.

Paramount chiefs had the authority and autonomy to manage affairs within their chiefdoms. Their duties covered a broad range of social, economic and policy matters, and as respected leaders, women paramount chiefs were in a position to influence other leaders. One female paramount chief gave the example of being the only female parliamentarian out of 97 members when she first took on the role.

The loss of the tradition of paramount chiefs in Sierra Leone is one of the casualties of the conflict that continues to beset the country. Yet when looking at building peace and post-war reconstruction it will be important to revive such traditions. As paramount chiefs, women were given a stronger voice within the community, nationally and internationally – a voice that could speak of peace.

Project Bangwe: Stop the fighting

The Bangwe Project was born of a practice traditionally used by women in the Great Lakes region to arbitrate domestic conflict. In Burundi, if two men ever get into a fight, women place themselves between the opponents and shout “bangwe”, which means “stop fighting” in Kirundi. The Bangwe Project sets out to facilitate the participation of women in settling disputes through dialogue rather than violence.

The project was initiated in March 1998 by the Working Group on Refugee Women, under the aegis of the Geneva Committee on the Status of Women. The overall aim of the project is to search for lasting, peaceful solutions to current conflict situations in Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo by drawing on women’s traditional social role as mediator. The project tries to provide opportunities for discussion between the women of these countries and unite them in contributing to peace and reconciliation in the region.

The need to include women in the peace process in the Great Lakes is evident. During the heaviest periods of fighting in the region, women and children were the silent victims and accounted for the majority of displaced persons. Rarely guilty of atrocities themselves, women have a greater interest in

ending the conflicts that plague their countries than in prolonging them. For this reason, the women of the region must be given the opportunity to express their desire for peace and become principal actors in the construction of lasting peace. Bangwe seeks to give the women of the region a stronger voice and provide a forum for dialogue.

Still in its infancy, the project has already been successful in bringing the plight of women in the Great Lakes region to the attention of the international community. Bangwe facilitated the participation of six women from each of the three countries at the 55th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, at which a round table discussion was held on the situation of women in the region.

In the field, Bangwe promotes peace education and reconciliation activities among youth groups and clubs. The project uses essays, poems and compositions by girls and young women on the themes of peace and non-violence. The participation of older community members is also encouraged through oral accounts of history by rural women. In this way, women from all walks of life can contribute to establishing a culture of peace in the Great Lakes.

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