



Femmes Africa Solidarité



A Study on Ten Years of Practice in Peace and Security-Building

A Study of Femmes Africa Solidarité began last week with a briefing at Dakar Senegal. Present at the Briefing included independent Consultants who will be looking into Impact Assessment, Case Studies ,Research, Leadership Bank and Coordination. This study examines FAS's unique approach to peace-building in Africa.

The consultants, African experts in gender have already visited Liberia (H.E . Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf) and will be visiting Burundi, Rwanda,DRC and Kenya.

As FAS approaches the tenth anniversary of its existence in 2006, it has accumulated a wealth of success stories from its work with African women in conflict and post-conflict situations. It is therefore important for FAS to record, assess and develop its approach to peace-building in the light of the recent relevant instrument such as the UN Resolution 1325 and, in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Moreover, it has also just passed Beijing + 10 and finds itself at the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

The study will involve working together with FAS partners in the field, the Mano River Women Peace Network,CAFOB in Burundi, Pro femme in Rwanda, Le Cadre de Concertation Permanent des Femmes Congolaise in the Democratic Republic of Congo to focus on the key advocacy issues that link African women peace-builders. These include refu-

gees and internally displaced persons, violence against women, HIV/AIDS, truth and reconciliation processes, and the use of child soldiers.

By focusing on FAS's priority areas, the Mano River and Great Lakes regions, and relating FAS's work with women peace-builders in those areas to the national, regional and international human rights framework. It will focus on two principal methodological tools, FAS's gender lens and its human rights-based approach.



Mme Bineta Diop(2nd from left) discussing an issue with some of the staff.

The impact of these will be examined within the context of the '3Ps' – conflict **prevention**, the **participation** of women in peace and security, and the **protection** of civilians with consideration of the specific needs of women and men, girls and boys. This will involve a consideration of international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as transitional justice issues and will lead to an investigation of the complete conflict cycle.

The study will result in the publication of an outcome document, a research study theorising

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African women's peace activism in conflict and post-conflict areas.

The document will enable FAS to share its methodology with grassroots women peace activists in Africa and elsewhere, academic and research groups, and the international community (including the UN).

The document will be presented in draft form at the Bamako Conference in April 2006. The conference will also bring African women together for them to review and measure the 10 years of work towards peace and security building, to identify lessons learnt and to disseminate best practices among partners organizations and networks in Africa and internationally. Ultimately, the findings of the study will provide a substance for the courses of the Pan-African Centre in Dakar.

FAS IN LIBERIA FOR THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF





RESEAU DES FEMMES DU FLEUVE MANO POUR LA PAIX
MANO RIVER WOMEN'S PEACE NETWORK

THE MANO RIVER PEACE NETWORK

The Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) was formed in May 2000 as a result of a meeting organized in Abuja, Nigeria, by various women's groups within the Mano River countries facilitated by FAS and supported by the West African Women's Association (WAWA), the African Women's Committee for Peace and Development (OAU/ECA) and the AU, ECOWAS and several UN agencies. The meeting brought together women leaders and representatives of local NGOs from the three countries to discuss the issues at hand and build a common platform. It was charged with the mandate of engendering the peace processes in the sub-region and striving to bring a lasting and sustainable peace to the Mano River Union.

Since its creation, MARWOPNET's members have met with rebels, distributed peace flags during ceremonies aimed at destroying small arms, organised peace marches, joined a

walk for the eradication of polio, and taught conflict resolution and negotiation techniques to media, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and representatives of civil society. They have also met with NGOs to build partnerships, and visited refugee camps to distribute provisions and advocate that the special needs of refugees be addressed. Throughout their work, MARWOPNET's members stress the importance of integrating a gender perspective in all aspects of nation building. MARWOPNET has also lobbied government officials, ambassadors, the OAU Secretary General and the United Nations Security Council for their support in peace processes in the Mano River Basin, and called on them to strengthen the capacity of women engaged in peace building and conflict management. One activity to be highlighted is MARWOPNET's tour to the leaders of the three countries of the Mano River Union in 2001. At the height of the crisis between Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, and at a time when the international community was pulling out of the region, the women of MARWOPNET took the lead. The leaders of the three Mano River countries met with members of MARWOPNET during a three-day summit in early March 2002 in Rabat, Morocco. There, they agreed to jumpstart peace

talks, to initiate dialogue between their Ministers for Defence, to re-open borders, to rebuild diplomatic relations, to decrease the proliferation of small arms, and to increase economic co-operation.

MARWOPNET received the UN Human Rights Prize in 2003.



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ABOUT FAS

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) is a women's non-governmental organization (NGO) that seeks to foster, strengthen and promote the leadership role of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution on the African continent. FAS's work in this regard is set in the context of a wider campaign to protect and promote women's rights in Africa.

FAS was created in 1996 in response to the explosion of violent conflicts tearing apart the fabric of society in Africa. In contrast to many other organizations working in the field of peace building for sustainable development at the grassroots level, FAS is an interface organization that enables grassroots women campaigners to have a greater impact at the level of decision-making. FAS's strategy is to provide networks between women's peace groups, training, advocacy, gender mainstreaming and effective participation at peace negotiation tables. Its activities are implemented in light of UN Resolution 1325 (2000) as well as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

Since its creation, FAS has been working especially in the Great Lakes region, the Mano River region and the Horn of Africa, hand-in-hand with local women's peace groups in order to harmonize their work and to bring their voices to peace negotiation tables. The case of the Mano River Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET), a FAS initiative established in 2000, provides a good example of FAS's work to enable grass roots women to get involved into peace negotiations at a high level.

Further, FAS works to realize the implementation of decisions on the African continent. These decisions include the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform of Action, the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and UN Security Council resolution 1325, the monitoring of which, FAS contributes to through its position as chair of the NGO-CSW Working Group on Peace in Geneva and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

In addition, FAS has been advocating for and obtained institutional changes in international, regional and national bodies. It managed in particular to ensure women's participation in the activities of the AU's central organ, especially through the Mechanism for Conflict, Prevention, Management. FAS also successfully campaigned for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for women's rights at the ACHPR and facilitated the adoption of the Gender Parity principle among the different organs of the AU.

FAS has also sent solidarity missions, via high-level delegations, to Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Moreover, FAS has organized training workshops and fostered exchanges of experience and information among women and their associations in numerous parts of Africa. In that regard, FAS has established in Dakar, Senegal, a Pan-African Centre on Gender, peace and Development which will serve as a hub for training, exchange, and documentation for the development of a sustainable peace with a focus on gender issues.

