



African Union Peace and Security Council 463th meeting on Structural Prevention of conflict: reinvigorating states in fragile situations

Addis Ababa, 27th October 2014

Mme Chair, Director, esteemed ambassadors, your Excellencies, all protocols observed,

Femmes Africa Solidarité - FAS, which is an international NGO working to ensure that African women play a meaningful role in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding welcomes this opportunity to participate in the deliberations on this pertinent topic and to present our perspective on the issue.

To structurally prevent conflict, our sustainable solutions need to look at and address the root causes of conflict with clear indicators measuring governance, leadership, issues of democracy and rule of law and respect of human rights. Equally, the elimination of social injustice must be a top priority on the agenda, as is inclusion and participation in governance mechanisms. We should address “...Exclusion in its broadest context: exclusion from resources, from power, from education and information, from the opportunity to better one's life”.

To make this a reality, inclusive institutions that can restore peace and, most notably, promote accountability in a consistent and transparent manner are critical.

For our institutions to be inclusive, we need to ensure full implementation of the normative frameworks, already existing in the African Union and in Member States, which protect the rights of women and promote gender equality. To reduce structural vulnerability, structural gender biases that limit women's role in conflict prevention and the reinvigoration of their communities should be eliminated.

Among other things, we need to ensure increased women political participation and in decision-making structures, women's participation in negotiation and mediation processes, women's access and ownership of land and women's access to justice.

FAS believes in the enhanced co-ordination and co-operation of CSOs and RECs with and within the AU system with regard to early warning. The cooperation can improve early warning capacities of the AU and the RECs. FAS urges the AU to maximize its engagement with women networks in establishing conflict early warning systems. Women can be a great source of information for early warning mechanisms if equipped with the technological and networking tools, as seen with the success of Women Situations Rooms to prevent election-related conflict. Early warning data should be gender disaggregated.

Madame Chair, changing mindsets through awareness raising and education, in collaboration with civil society, particularly women, to build a culture of peace coupled with institutional transformation that incorporates human rights, inclusiveness, good governance, democratic values and demilitarization are critical elements to enable the structural prevention of conflicts.

Thank you.