African Women Mediators and Election Observers

Building Peace, Securing Women

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In October 2015, the world celebrated the 15th anniversary of United Nations Security Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) – a landmark global commitment, midwifed in Africa, to enhance the role of women in peace processes. The anniversary highlighted that Africa has made considerable progress in advancing the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, but that gains are far below levels needed to reach the continental aspirations, as articulated in "Agenda 2063 – the Africa We Want" that aims to achieve a united, peaceful and prosperous continent, centered on its prime wealth of human capital, particularly women and children.

Indeed, in spite of the existence of elaborate instruments, declarations and provisions to increase women's participation in peace, democracy and governance, the figures remain dismal. The first AU Commission Report on the, Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda states that, "with very few exceptions, the number of women participating in peace negotiations in a variety of official roles is significantly low or non-existent." Data show that out of 16 peace processes in Africa between 1992 and 2001, women only featured in 5 processes in negotiating teams, with the highest rate being in Kenya (2008) which also saw the highest participation of women as lead mediators (33%) out of only 3 of the 16 peace processes within this time frame. The 33% of women lead mediators in Kenya was essentially H.E. Graça Machel, who was one of the 3 lead mediators. Within the same period, we only witnessed the participation of women as signatories in 2 of the 16 processes, with both cases in the DRC, recording a 5% participation (2003 and 2008).

In response to this situation, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security (OSE) embarked on efforts to enhance the capacity of women in mediation to ensure that women are present when critical discussions to restore peace in Africa take place. The OSE has also conducted training for women in the observation of elections, as these have become a constant source of instability on our continent. The OSE has undertaken these efforts in partnership with African training centres that have demonstrated a solid track record on research and capacity building on women and peace issues in Africa.

In 2015 the OSE conducted a joint training with the Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana, for women on elections observation. In the same year, it conducted another joint training with the Pan-African Centre (PAC) in Senegal on women in mediation. Efforts to strengthen women's capacity in mediation in Africa have also been conducted with the AU Panel of the Wise and the Clingendael Institute in The Netherlands.

This booklet on "African Women Mediators and Election Observers" is published by the OSE with the aim to facilitate access to a pool of African women with the knowledge, skills and readiness to engage in mediation and election observation in Africa, and to promote their enhanced participation in peace processes on the continent. This is the first edition of the endeavor, and it is far from capturing the dearth of women's expertise on these critical areas of building peace.

The OSE will continue to work with various stakeholders to bring to the forefront women's capacities and encourage the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, AU Member States, the UN System and other International Organisations to identify and mobilise more women with expertise in mediation and election observation, to enrich this initial edition, and hence, contribute together to women's effective participation in building an Africa where guns are silent and peace dividends are durably enjoyed by our people.

Bineta Diop

Special Envoy

Bala Nana Firdausi
Nigeria

Mrs. Nana Bala Firdausi is the Assistant Director/Principal Instructor of the Defence Intelligence College of Nigeria. She has monitored and supervised presidential, gubernatorial and national assembly elections in Katsina State, Northern Nigeria. She holds a LLB Hons from the Nigerian Law School and has served as State Director in the Defence Headquarters (DIA) in Zamfara State, Northern Nigeria. She has trained several badges of defence personnel and has worked as desk officer for NATO in Nigeria.

Ndayishimiye Christine
Burundi

Barrister Christine Ndayishimiye is Legal Adviser at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Burundi. She is a former Minister of Human Rights and of Gender and former Vice-President of the National Independent Electoral Commission. She is also a lead facilitator with BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) and has served in elections observations missions with the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and EISA. She recently completed a training of long term elections observers organized at the AU Commission from 20 to 24 March, 2017.

Esther Ikere Eluzai
South Sudan

Ms. Esther Ikere Eluzai is currently the undersecretary of the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Republic of South Sudan. She served as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender. She has served as a Member of Parliament and also lectured at the University of Juba. Her expertise includes gender and development, child rights and protection, women's rights, women economic empowerment, women peace and security, social protection, disability and social inclusion, gender, governance and leadership, transformational leadership, peace building and conflict management.

She holds a Master of Science in Gender and Development and a degree in Sociology and Anthropology.

Diop Dieye Marième
Senegal

Mrs. Marième Diop is Chief of Staff in the City Council of Thies, Senegal. Before that, she held the same position at the Thies Division, which is at county level. She is an active member of the Board of Female Jurists Association and Acting First Vice-President of Graduate Women International Association in Senegal.

Mrs Diop is also a member of the Electoral Commission for the Revision of the Electoral Code. She is an Advisor at the National Observatory on Parity (ONP), and member of the watch platform for peaceful elections in Senegal. She has been actively advocating for human rights since 1981.

Mercy Osei-Konadu
Ghana

Ms. Mercy Osei-Konadu holds an MA Degree in Development Studies and currently consults for NGOs/ CSOs and SMEs, providing capacity enhancement support in NGO programme strategy development and management. She is also an Entrepreneur and involved in the promotion of social enterprise development targeting young people, women and communities.

Mercy is an advocate for Gender, Rights and Development, Humanitarian and emergency issues, women, peace and security matters and women and girls empowerment. This also covers community mobilization, private-public, media and civil society partnership building, leadership and entrepreneurship advisory services. From 1998-2014, she worked as a Programme Analyst with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Kalala Marie-Madeleine
DRC

Mrs. Marie-Madeleine Kalala, served as Minister for Human Rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo from 2003 to 2007. Since July 2010, she has been a member of the African Union Panel of the Wise. Pope Benedict XVI appointed her as Member of the Justice and Peace Pontifical Council on September 29, 2012.

Mrs Kalala is a practising lawyer and activist for women's rights. She is the National Coordinator of Cause Commune, a women's platform, and Vice-President of the Civil Society Consultative Framework. Mrs. Kalala is member of several associations and co-author of "Congolese Legislation on Nationality". She took part in the monitoring of the presidential and legislative elections in Burundi.

Dr Priscilla Joseph Kuch
South Sudan

Dr Priscilla Joseph Kuch is Associate Professor of Community Health at the University of Juba. She served as Deputy Minister of Gender Child and Social Welfare of the Republic of South Sudan and has held other ministerial duties at the office of the President of South Sudan. She has been a member of the National Assembly and Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly (Sudan). She has also served as member of the Sudan National Constitutional Review Commission (Sudan) and has also dealt with conflict in Darfur (Sudan). She is the Chairperson of the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Committee and Chairperson of South Sudan Women's Peace Network.

Houngan-Ayemonna Claire
Benin

Mrs. Claire Houngan-Ayemonna is currently Advisor to the Supreme Court of Benin. Until 2001, she held the position of Investigating Judge, Deputy Public Prosecutor, Acting Public Prosecutor and Court Judge before being called to her country's government in which, from 2001 to 2003, she served as Minister for Family, Social Protection and Solidarity.

She obtained her BAC (General Certificate of Education) in literature at Houffon Abomey High School, before embarking on legal studies at the National University of Benin. She obtained a Master's in Business Law and Judicial Studies, followed by Cycle II degree from the National School of Administration and Magistracy of Benin.

Iliya Comfort Dauda
Nigeria

Comfort Dauda Iliya is the Secretary for the Peaceful Women Foundation and a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management. She worked for over twenty years in management and strategic planning for the banking industry before venturing into advocacy focusing on the rights of girls and women. She has participated in high-level trainings on elections observation and peace building and is a member of Charities and Community initiatives including the "Bring Back Our Girls' campaign." She is presently a Consultant on development issues.

She holds an MBA, a certificate of accomplishment with distinction from the World Bank's MOOC on Financing Development 2015, a certificate from IDS/Gender Hub/ Voices for Change and Trauma Healing by the EYN Disaster Ministry.

Hon. Wasuk Sokiri Susan
South Sudan

Hon. Susan Wasuk Sokiri is a Member of the South Sudan Parliament and Chairperson of the National Legislature Assembly of South Sudan - Women Parliamentary Caucus. She has worked in policy and procedure development and served as Secretary for External Affairs of the National Legislature - Women Parliamentary Caucus (NL-WPC). She also established the Gogrial Women Voice for Peace.

From 2006–2008, she worked with Pact Sudan as community development officer before being appointed as the managing director YAR AROL Foundation in Warrap State (2008 - 2009). After joining the Sudanese People Liberation Movement in 1985, she served as the Chairperson of the Women Association charged with the responsibility of addressing women issues in the Dima Refugee Camp in Ethiopia from 1986-1992.

Hon. Baya Lawiri Philister
South Sudan

Hon. Philister Baya Lawiri is currently the Chairperson of the South Sudan Civil Service Commission. She is also a member of the Council of the University of Juba.

Prior to South Sudan's secession, she was one of the first two women on Sudan's National Electoral Commission. She was the Founding Chairperson of the Southern Women Solidarity for Peace and Development in 2000, and a member of Women Waging Peace Network. She was selected as one of the four women Peace Makers for 2013, at Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, University of San Diego. She is the author of "*Political Conflict in Gender Participation in the Governments of Sudan*", and one of the ten authors of, "*The Tragedy of Reality: Southern Sudanese Women Appeal for Peace, 1999.*"

Akos Dzathor Euphemia
Ghana

Ms. Euphemia Akos Dzathor is the coordinator for Women's Active Nonviolence Initiatives for Social Change (AWANICh), an Africa–wide women's peace organization committed to empowering African women peace activists to promote gender sensitivity and active nonviolence as a means of achieving sustainable peace.

Between 2007 and 2012, she mobilized women into advocacy networks to promote active nonviolence as a social change strategy for sustainable peace in thirty-six countries across four sub regions in Africa. She is also a traditional leader and the Queen Mother of Alavanyo Deme, a conflict community in the Volta Region of Ghana. Currently she serves on a committee that is working to broker peace between the almost century-old conflict between Nkonya and Alavanyo over land rights. She has ten years' experience in development NGOs, managing women's empowerment programmes and projects at the continental, national and community levels.

Dieng Cisse Mame Codou
Senegal

Mame Codou Dieng Cissé is a producer currently employed as TV production manager and Head of the Program Unit of the second national TV (RTS2) at the Radio Télévision Sénégalaise (RTS). Mame Codou enjoys eighteen years of professional experience in the audio-visual area. She is bilingual and holder of a Master's in Communication.

Founder of the panAfrican festival, Au Royaume des Enfants, since 2007, she is active in promoting a culture of excellence and the rights of children. Mrs Cissé is a committed activist advocating for women and children's rights. She is also the President and Founder of the Ladies Club Ladies (a group comprised of almost twenty-five thousand women leaders from Senegal and the Diaspora on facebook); a platform for exchange of ideas and of professional experiences, and for periodical meetings towards the forging of fruitful partnerships among women leaders.

Keita Diakité Saran
Mali

Ms. Saran Keita Diakité is a lawyer and a member of the bar of Mali since 1985; she is Co-Founder of the Keita Law Firm and former Board Member of the Law Society of Mali. She specialises in the Rights of Women, the Child and the Family. She is currently the Vice-President of WANEP – Mali, and member of the Mali Association of Women Jurists. Since 2011, she is the President of the Malian Office of the Network for Peace and Security of ECOWAS Women. In this capacity she took part in all the mediation and crisis resolution activities in Mali.

She is currently the Vice-President of the Bureau for the Conference on National Cohesion (Bureau de la Conférence d'Entente Nationale), which is part of a crucial process for the implementation of the Agreement for National Peace and Reconciliation following the Algiers Process.

Alexander Rehoboth Margaret
Ghana

Ms. Margaret Alexander Rehoboth is the Head of the Women, Peace and Security Institute (WPSI) at the Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). She has an interdisciplinary educational background with graduate studies in gender and development and communication studies as well as a certificate course in missions and cultural studies. Prior to joining the KAIPTC, she has variously served as an adjunct Professor, Research/Teaching Assistant, Team Leader and Program Coordinator among others. She has participated in a number of international development conferences and training workshops in various capacities – resource person/ facilitator, rapporteur and participant. She has served on election observation missions at the behest of the ECOWAS Commission and supported the communication team in putting the press release together during the 2012 general elections in Sierra Leone. She is an advocate for women's access, representation and participation in decision-making, including their role in peace processes.

Safietou Fall Diop
Senegal

Mrs Diop is currently Technical Advisor at the Presidency of the Republic of Senegal. She serves as Chief Inspector for Public Education, Youth and Sports and is an Officer of the National Order of the Lion. Mrs Safiétou Diop has extensive experience in the Senegalese central public administration, where she has served as Ministerial Technical Advisor, National Project Director, Director of the Minister's Cabinet, and Technical Advisor at the Prime Minister's Office.

Safiétou has a good command and long-standing practice of international instruments fostering women and human rights promotion, such as the Cairo Declaration on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration on Gender Equality, and recently the Supplementary Act on Equality of Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development within the ECOWAS Region.

She holds a Masters in Diplomacy and Strategic Studies from the Dakar Branch of the Centre d'Etudes Diplomatique et Stratégique de Paris.

Coulidiati-Kielem Justine

Burkina-Faso

Dr. Justine Coulidiati-Kiélem specialises in the sociology and economics of education, and in international comparisons of the management of education and of training systems. She has held several managerial positions in her country. Since 2007, she has been lecturing at the University of Ouagadougou. She also lectures at the National School of Administration and Magistracy.

She is an activist in several associations and is the founding President of Groupe d'Actions pour la Promotion, l'Éducation et la Formation de la femme et de la jeune fille (GAPEF), established in 2005. Elected President of the Coalition Nationale Femme-Paix et Sécurité of Burkina Faso (2016), she is also the Regional Coordinator of the Women's Platform of the G5-Sahel of the UN (2017).

Dr Coulidiati-Kiélem is equally an advocate for equity and gender, especially for women's equitable access to different resources, to ensure the socio-economic and political empowerment of women and consequently sustainable peace.

Mabobori Catherine

Burundi

Ms. Mabobori served as Member of Parliament in Burundi from 2001 to 2010. From 2006 she led the Solidarité des Femmes Parlementaires (SOFEPA), an organization of female parliamentarians, which focuses on the promotion of gender-sensitive laws and the political mobilization of women, especially during election periods.

Catherine Mabobori is an activist who advocates for peace and security in Burundi. She has contributed to the creation of several organizations working for peace, including the Coalition of Women Associations and NGOs of Burundi, which she led when the protagonists in the Burundian conflict engaged in a peace process. In such capacity, she coordinated the participation of women in the process that led to the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi in August 2000. The latter takes into account gender mainstreaming and has paved the way for quota systems in post transition institutions as well as the adoption of the National Gender Policy.

She is also a member of the Steering Committee for the implementation of the Resolution 1325 in the Great Lakes Region.

Seck Diouf Penda
Senegal

Mrs Penda Seck Diouf is an Educational Animation Inspector and Consultant/Trainer in gender, leadership, advocacy, lobbying, and communication. She has also carried out studies and research on women victims of violence in conflict and post-conflict areas, women victims of landmines in Casamance, and women and drugs.

Mrs Diouf is currently the Chair of the National Committee to combat violence against women and children; the President of NENUPHAR, a Senegalese association combating substance abuse in women; the National Coordinator of the Women's Initiatives Panel on Public Policies; the Vice-President of FONSELUD, the National Federation of NGOs combating drugs; member of Espace Dialogue Vérité Réconciliation (EDVR) for peace in Casamance; member of the Women's watch platform for peaceful elections in Senegal; and member of the Gender Is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC).

She holds post-graduate degrees in Social and Educational Communication and in Organization Management and Local Development, as well as a Master's Degree in Education and Development Animation.

Col. Mosima Masisi Patience
South Africa

Colonel Patience Mosima Masisi is South Africa's Defence Advisor to Ghana. A senior ranking officer, she has worked extensively in the military with a background in the health sector. She successfully completed trainings in peacebuilding and is a recipient of several military awards, including the Unitas Medal, General Service Medal, the Silver and Bronze Good Service Medal and the Nelson Mandela Medal.

She is the first black female South African Officer to successfully complete the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme in French in France from 2005 to 2007 and the only female in a group of 78 male foreign students who obtained a Degree in Military Science.

Currently she is the only female among the male Defence Attaches/Advisors in Ghana, appointed the Dean/Doyenne for the Defence Attaches/Advisors in October 2017. Busy with the Executive Master of Arts in Conflict, Peace and Security at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping and Training Centre to be finalised in September 2017.

Vib-Sanziri Zakpaa Beatrice
Ghana

Mrs. Beatrice Zakpaa Vib-Sanziri is a Commissioner of Police serving the Ghana Police Service (GPS) as the Director-General Human Resource Development. She is a trained professional on issues concerning negotiation, strategic leadership and executive election observation, election dispute resolution, juvenile justice, and international commandership.

She holds a Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Leicester. She has served with the United Nations Peace Keeping Mission (IPTF) in Bosnia Herzegovina, as Duty Officer and Operations Officer, and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) as the Civilian Police NGO/DDRR Liaison Officer and Elections Liaison Officer. She has served as the Police Liaison Officer in the Ghana High Commission in London, UK for four years. She was the Coordinating Director for the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit of the GPS (DOVVSU) and a member of the Ghana Government Delegation for the Consideration of Periodic Reports of Ghana on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Kemealo M. Agathe Telou
Togo

Agathe Kéméalo M. Telou is a Gender Advisor at the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in Dakar, since 2012. She coordinates the working group on women, peace and security, a regional platform for West Africa.

Trained in management, she held management positions with the Government of Togo from 1997 to 2001, mainly as Head of Unit on the Promotion of Economic Activities in the Ministry of Women's Empowerment.

From 2002 to 2010 she was in charge of the development and follow-up of programmes and projects on gender, women's empowerment and entrepreneurship and the promotion of women's associations and initiatives in Central Africa and the Great lakes region, in Geneva and in Francophone Africa at the International Labour Organisation. She also worked at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Mauritania from November 2010 to June 2011, supporting the government in the implementation of the, "Institutionalization of Gender Programme in Mauritania".

Ms Telou has participated in and coordinated elections observation missions in Togo, Guinea (2013 and 2015) and in guinea Bissau (2014).

Baffoe-Bonnie Patience
Ghana

Ms. Patience Baffoe-Bonnie is Deputy Director of Prisons and Chief Legal Advisor for the Ghana Prisons Service. She is a gender, human rights and juvenile rights advocate. She is also a consultant and trainer on gender mainstreaming and advancing the role of women in the security agencies. She has worked as a professional advisor and mentor in post-conflict settings and as a planner in the UN Mission in Liberia. She assisted in developing a strategic plan for the Ministry of Justice in Liberia, and developed a structure for the effective function for the Bureau of Corrections in Liberia. Her skills range from Prisons Management to security sector policy evaluation and preparation with over 28 years of experience as a prison officer. So far, she has taken part in interventions made to enhance justice administration and rule of law in the Ghanaian security sector.

She is also a humanitarian, promoting successful family life with responsible parenting for responsible upbringing and peaceful co-existence. And she assists in developing standard operation procedures for managing juvenile as well as adult offenders.

O. Ali Khadija
Somalia

Ms. Khadija O. Ali, PhD, is currently a member of Somalia's National Independent Electoral Commission. From January to June 2015 she was a Senior Adviser to Somalia's Prime Minister in State Building and Reconciliation. From 2011 to 2012, Khadija served as a senior presidential advisor for reconciliation and political outreach for the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia on issues related to reconciliation and political outreach. She has held other senior state positions as a member of parliament and Minister of State at the Prime Minister's office for the Transitional National Government of Somalia and was in charge of reconciliation and peace building issues.

She is also a mediator on community and political conflicts and frequently contributes to the Foreign Policy In Focus. She holds Masters and PhD from Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, USA; and the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University USA, in Conflict Transformation, Conflict Resolution and Peace Building respectively. Both her Masters and Phd are in Conflict Resolution. She is also a founding member of civil society organizations and networks in Somalia.

Niang Rama Hélène
Senegal

Mrs Hélène Rama Niang Diagne is a Management Specialist and a Trainer in various fields, including advocacy and lobbying, diagnosis/evaluation and organizational development, gender and leadership and coaching.

Specialized in management and strategy, international relations and development studies, she also holds professional degrees in participative development, peace and conflict transformation, and active and educational communication. She is the author and co-author of various books, communications and research in the above-mentioned fields.

Mrs Niang Diagne has served in some UN research institutes and development agencies and led national, pan-African and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for several years.

She is currently the President of FECSDA (Femmes Education Culture Santé et Développement en Afrique). In addition to being a committed activist for women's rights and leadership and gender equality as well as education and training, she is a member of various networks and platforms at national, African and international levels, including the COSYDEP, FAWE, WANEP, the Women's watch platform for peaceful elections in Senegal, the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) and the Women's International and Cross-Cultural Network. She furthermore participates in African social movements through the African Social Forum Council.

Diedhou Thiam Ndeye Marie
Senegal

Mrs Ndèye Marie Diedhiou Thiam is a teacher by profession and a peace activist who is currently the Coordinator of the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC) organization. She has held senior positions, including Coordinator of the Cadre de concertation des organisations féminines, General Secretary of the Committee Combating Violence against Women (CLVF), President of the Mothers' Educators Association of the Forum of African Women Educationalists (MEA/FAWE), among others.

She leads the PFPC, which is an organization reflecting the outstanding mobilization of women to end the separatist conflict affecting Casamance. Under her leadership, this organization, which brings together 210 member-associations, became a key player in the Casamance peace process with significant and bold actions resulting in national and international recognition.

She provided immense impetus for CSO crossborder cooperation, which resulted in the creation of Senegal-Gambia-Guinea Bissau Women's Forum for peace and security at sub regional level that brings together the African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), Women's Political Platform of Guinea Bissau (PPM-GB) and Women's Platform for Peace in Casamance (WPPC). This Forum played a major role in the political crisis in Gambia in December 2016.

Akpan-Ita Naomi
Nigeria

Naomi Akpan-Ita is the Executive Director of Impact for Change and Development (IMPACT) and the immediate past Board Chair of African Women's Active Non-violence Initiatives for social Change (AWANICh). A foundation member of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), she is a member of the Institute of Chattered Mediators and Conciliators of Nigeria (ICMC).

Naomi is a seasoned trainer who has been involved in trainings at different levels internationally for more than 15 years. In advancing her work in building capacity for the military within and outside Nigeria, she has in the last five years been a member of a core team of instructors building capacity of civilian and military personnel in 12 West African and Sahel countries on peace and security.

Having attended the Gender and Elections Course organised by Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) in February 2015, and later attended the Executive Election Observation and Elections Dispute Resolution Training Workshop for Senior African Women, organisaed by the African Union and KAIPTC (WPSI) in October, 2015, Naomi has strong capacity for election observation particularly from a gender perspective.

Naomi holds a doctorate degree in Peace and Strategic Studies with focus on Gender, Peace and Security.

Ba Diye

Mauritania

Mrs Diye Ba served as Mauritania's Minister for Health and Social Affairs from 1997 to 1999 and as Minister for Health, Social and Humanitarian Affairs from 1999 to 2001.

Mrs Ba has a strong national and international parliamentary experience acquired between 2001 and 2007, successively as elected Senator of Mauritania, member of the Pan African Parliament, member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie and Member of Parliament of the NEPAD Forum.

Prior to that, Ms. Ba was Special Advisor to the Head of State of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in charge of international organizations from 1988 to 1997 and had a successful career as senior official at the Ministry of Culture between 1977 and 1988.

As International Senior Consultant in mediation, pre-election assessment and governance, Ms. Ba led and participated in several missions to conflict and post-conflict countries. She was member of the Negotiating Committee Mauritania / Senegal following the events of 1989, member of the commission on Mediation between the government and the opposition following the coup of 2009, and Vice President of the National Elections Observatory of Mauritania.

She is the Founding President of the Alliance Citoyenne pour la Démocratie et le Développement dans les pays Riverains du Fleuve Sénégal.

Forster Hannah

Gambia

Hannah Forster is the Executive Director of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), a pan-African human rights NGO based in Banjul.

Mrs Forster is a trained election observer from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre in Accra, Ghana (2005); a trained mediator as well as a beneficiary of training for Women in Electoral Mediation in Africa (2015). She has observed elections in many African countries including The Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

Hannah is a human rights, governance and gender expert and has engaged with the African and International Human Rights System and Mechanisms for over two and half decades. She also serves on the Working Group on Women and Democracy of the Community of Democracies, involved in promoting women's participation and representation in Africa as well as the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa coordinated by UNOWAS. Prior to her human rights activism, she had worked for the Ministry of Education in Gambia for over a decade.

She graduated from the University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana; Loughborough Technical College and Loughborough University in the Leicestershire, United Kingdom, as well as from the Scuola Superieur Sant'Anna in Pisa, Italy. She holds a MA in Human Rights and Conflict Management and has published extensively.

Fall Tall Khady

Mauritania

Mrs Khady Fall Tall is the Vice-President of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSSOC) of the African Union. She is also Chairperson of WACSOF/FOSCAO since August 2016. Mrs Tall is the Regional President of the West African Women's Association (AFAO-WAWA) since 2005. She is also the Vice-President of the Senegalese National Office of the NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and Commissioner-in-Charge of Economic and Social Development, Coordinator of the Gender Group of ECOWAPP+10/ CEDEAO.

Mrs Fall Tall is a member of several institutions, networks and initiatives at regional and continental levels, including the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA), the AGIR Agriculture Platform under the umbrella of the WAEMU and the CILSS, the ECOWAS taskforce (2003) on land-use, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union/ ECOSOCC (2014).

She coordinates numerous projects in the areas of farming product processing, women's awareness raising, and capacity building jointly with regional organizations and various bilateral and multilateral development partners.

She is a graduate from the Senegalese National School of Administration (PIM4), and postgraduate in International Relations at the Centre d'Études Diplomatiques et Stratégiques of Paris. She was rewarded twice with the International Prize of the World Bank for "Food and Nutrition Security" (Jeddah, June 2014) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO's) Medal during the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the FAO (November 2015).

Coulibaly Mariame

Senegal

Ms. Mariame Coulibaly, a lawyer by training, holds a Master's in Decentralization and Local Governance, a Certificate of the African Academy of Legal Theory and a Master's in Business Law.

She has worked for more than twelve years at the African Network for Integrated Development (ANID), where she held several positions, including: Coordinator of the Legal Information Centre in Dakar, Head of the Defense Support Management for Women, the branch networks and civil society and Communication. She has also worked in the Office of Studies SONED-Afrique, as Director of Administration and External Relations on behalf of ANID.

Ms. Coulibaly has a proven track record in trainings (audit, gender analysis, gender mainstreaming in public policies, planning and gender-sensitive programming) in the development and management of programs and projects; training in human rights, advocacy/ lobbying, political dialogue, negotiation, mediation and networking; she strongly contributed to the process of adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the Rights of Women in Africa, and recently the adoption of the Supplementary Act on Gender Equality for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS region.

Since 2009, she works for the Canadian Centre for Studies and International Cooperation, where she manages a regional component on gender equality, the Uniterra (CECI-EUMC) program governance sector. Ms. Coulibaly is an activist on human rights in general and women's rights in particular. She is a member of several networks and coalitions in Senegal, Africa and at the international level. These include; FOSCAO, the EFH network of the OIF, the Platform of Intelligence for Free, Transparent and Democratic Elections, the Consortium on Lands Reform, the Initiative Women Group, the National Committee on the Fight Against Violence on Women and Girls. She is also Advisor to the National Observatory on Parity.

She chairs the Senegal WiLDAF network. She has contributed significantly to make the laws accessible to populations particularly the vulnerable and contributed to the political dialogue for the adoption of several legal instruments at all levels. She participated in several processes of institutional and legislative reforms; she coordinated the seminar on imminent institutional reforms in Senegal, one on the role of civil society in the implementation of NEPAD, the study on the financing of political parties in Senegal and has to her credit several awards, communications and publications.

Ojiambo Ochieng Ruth

Uganda

Ms. Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng is a self-driven and motivated human rights defender. An independent consultant in the area of women, peace and human security. Her strength lies in peace building, and spearheading alliances to form collaborative agendas between the marginalized, the elite and policymakers, so as to challenge injustices, prejudice, taboos and stigma related to women survivors of violence, and in particular, those in situation of armed conflicts.

She holds a Masters in Communications Policy Studies from City University London, 1992; and a B.Sc. in Applied Social Sciences (Information and Communications), from the then Polytechnic of North London,1991. She has also undertaken several short courses in Gender Analysis, Human Rights, Advocacy, and Peace Building and Conflict Resolution. In 2015 she trained in Women in Mediation and Electoral Processes, at the Pan African Centre for Gender, Peace and Development, Dakar, Senegal.

During her 15 year tenure of her leadership at Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), a feminist organisation; she caused strategic networks and allies, and innovatively built a people centred human security approach to peace building that particularly responded to the strategic needs of survivors of sexual violence and torture. One of such initiatives was the pillar on gender equality and women's participation in peace building and conflict resolution, in Uganda. In partnership with UNIFEM then, and Women Peace Activists in Uganda, Ruth Ochieng spearheaded the campaign for Government of Uganda to include Uganda women in the Juba peace process; between Rebel Joseph Kony and the government of Uganda; after which she initiated a dialogue between Uganda women peace activists, and the office of the Prime minister in Uganda for the development of a Gender Responsive Peace and Recovery Programme (PRDP). She further facilitated the establishment of a Women Task Force from 21 national and community based women organisations in Uganda, to follow up and monitor the implementation of the PRDP; a team that has until today successfully contributed to the three reviews of the programme, that has responded to some of the gender responsive needs of survivors of armed conflict in Uganda. Since 1998 her strategic networking with health workers in Uganda and Liberia, through instituting a unique model of health camps was a successful initiation of one of the core aspects of peace building and recovery.

Ruth has over the past two decades used her communication expertise to author a ray of video documentaries and research studies on Women, Conflict, Peacebuilding and Human Security, to amplify survivor's voices; as well as contribute to feminist knowledge that has successfully informed national, regional and international policies and frameworks. She continues to build skills of women peace activists in alternative approach to peace building and mediation, by encouraging grassroots women peace activists to institute women led peace table in their affected communities. The numerous contributions in the area of peacebuilding have earned Ruth Ochieng a wide range of leadership positions in many institutions at the national, regional and international levels. In 2013 Ruth was appointed by UNWOMEN on the 17 team of High Level Advisory Board members for the global study, to review the implementation of the UNSCR1325; and in 2016 she was appointed as a Civil Society Advisory Governor to the Commonwealth Foundation.

Ruth has authored many papers and articles, some of which have been published in books as well as online. She is currently writing a book on her leadership experience.

Ogwaro Achan Betty
South Sudan

Betty Achan Ogwaro, a South Sudanese national, is a prominent women's rights and civil society activist and a trained Mediator and Negotiator. Currently she is a member of the South Sudan National Dialogue Secretariat (2017) which is set to carry out dialogue among the South Sudanese across sectors, grassroots and parties to bring peace and stability in the country.

On the national and local levels, Ms Ogwaro has been instrumental in conflict resolutions between and among communities especially in Eastern Equatoria State. Ms Ogwaro has trained many women in mediation and negotiation, especially at the grassroots levels. She provides technical support to women Members of Parliament and chiefs to foster peace among their communities. She plays an active role in campaigning for women's representation at the Decision Making Table especially at negotiation tables. She is a Trainer in Transformational Women Leadership at the University of Juba (2015-to date). She was one of the five members of the mediation team which negotiated a peace settlement between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda, known as the "Juba Peace Talks" (2006 – 2008).

Ms Ogwaro was appointed to the South Sudan Legislative Assembly, Juba (2005-August 2007) representing the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). In 2007, Ms. Ogwaro was appointed Eastern Equatoria's State Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Cooperatives and Hotels (September 2007-April 2010). In May 2010, she was successfully elected to the National Legislative Assembly. After the Independence of South Sudan in July 2011, she was appointed the first National Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Cooperatives and served until 2013. Ms Ogwaro also lectures on part-time basis at the University of Juba, College of Animal Production.

Ms Ogwaro is the Founder of the South Sudanese Women Parliamentary Caucus (2006). She is also a core founding member of South Sudanese Women Leaders for Peace (December 2013) and South Sudanese Women Peace Network (2014). These networks and the Women's Caucus successfully negotiated an inclusion of women to the South Sudan Peace Process (2014). Ms Ogwaro is the Chair of the Women Forum on Darfur-Southern Sudan Sector which is affiliated to Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS). These Peace Networks campaign for Women, Peace and Security and for inclusive peace negotiations in the Sudan and South Sudan. Furthermore, she is also the Director of Windows for Sudan, a UK based charitable organization which supports Sudanese refugees in the UK and women in Agriculture in South Sudan. Ms Ogwaro is also a member of the Regional Women Think Tank on Governance and Decision Making. She was instrumental in compiling and presenting Final Women's Priorities and recommendations to the Donors' Conference 2005 and 2008; She led the compilation of the South Sudanese Women's Priorities for Peace and Development (2013) and the South Sudan National Women's Strategy (2016). She has presented many papers at conferences on Peace and Security. Her publication on Peace and Security includes; Initiatives to end violence in Northern Uganda. She is known in international fora for her campaign for Women, Peace and Security and equal participation in decision making.

Ms Ogwaro is a holder of a BSc. (Hons) in Animal Science from the University of Juba; MSc. in Veterinary Science (University of Edinburgh). She is a qualified Microbiologist from the University of Wolverhampton, UK with a MSc and MPhil in Microbiology. She has undergone many other trainings on mediation and facilitation, (South Birmingham College, UK 2002), Leadership, Advice and Guidance (South Birmingham College UK 2003); She obtained a 2 years certificate in a City and Guilds Certificate in Teaching from South Birmingham College (2002-2004).

Tiemoko Sidikou Fatoumata

Niger

Mrs Fatoumata Sidikou Tiemoko is Vice-President of the National Commission on Human Rights in Niger. She is a Knight of the National Order of Merit. She was also a member of the National Independent Electoral Commission on the Referendum. She supported both the legislative and presidential elections of 1999, and served in the Consultative Council on Transition in 1999.

From 2011 to 2013, she served as President of the Administrative Council for the Coordination of Women's NGOs and Associations of Niger (CONGAFEN), an umbrella organisation comprising 56 NGOs and associations. She is member of many NGOs including the Association of Women Jurists of Niger (AFJN), Association of Muslim Women (Jamiya Nassirat Din), the Red Cross in Niger, the Network on Gender and Creativity, and the Network of Women in Business.

Between 1981 and 1994, she served in the UN system in Senegal, before returning to Niger where she worked as a consultant on gender and development. She then served as Technical Adviser to the Prime Minister and was part of the taskforce for the development and implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy from 2001 to 2010. From 2011 to 2013 she was Technical Adviser to the Minister for Women Empowerment and Child Protection.

Mrs Tiemoko has done extensive research and outreach on Human Rights. She has also trained Judicial Police Officers and Magistrates on violence against women, women jurists at the AFJN and members of NGOs on Human Rights and international instruments.

What we stand for

To close the gap between **policy and implementation:**

- **Protection** and advancement of the rights of women, in particular those affected by violent conflicts in Africa
- **Ensuring** that the voices of women and the vulnerable are heard much more clearly in conflict prevention and peace building
- **Participation** of women at all levels of decision-making in peace processes and governance

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