

Conflict Prevention and Early Warning

Division of the AU Peace and Security Department





Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division of the AU Peace and Security Department

The promotion of peace and security is one of the objectives of the African Union as enshrined in its Constitutive Act. The Peace and Security Department (PSD) was established to promote peace, security and stability on the continent. Among the Department's five Divisions, the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division focuses on the anticipation and prevention of violent conflicts in Africa.

Mandate

The mandate of the Division is to provide timely advice on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa to the AU decision-makers.

The Division focuses on the operationalization of some aspects of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) including the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Panel of the Wise (PoW) and the AU Border Programme (AUBP).

The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)



“ Prevention is always less costly than dealing with a crisis in terms of human life, in terms of destruction, in terms of instability in the neighboring countries”.

Amb. Smail Chergui
Commissioner, Peace and Security

The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is one of the five pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Mandate


The CEWS is responsible for data collection and analysis and is mandated to collaborate with “the United Nations (UN), its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centres, academic institutions and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)” with its information to be used by the Chairperson of the Commission” to advise the Peace and Security Council (PSC), on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa and recommend the best courses of action.”

Background

Article 12 of the PSC Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) provides for the establishment of a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), in order to facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts in Africa. As stipulated in article 12 (2) of the Protocol, the CEWS consists of;

- an observation and monitoring unit, to be known as “the Situation Room”, which is located at the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division of the African Union and is responsible for data collection and analysis; and
- the observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which are to be linked directly to the Situation Room.

The Governmental Experts meeting on early warning and conflict prevention, held in South Africa in 2006,



adopted the Framework for the Operationalization of the CEWS, which was subsequently endorsed by the 10th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Addis Ababa, in January 2007. The Council requested the Commission to take all the necessary steps for the timely and full implementation of the Framework, including the mobilization of the financial and technical resources required from both AU Member States and partners, the speedy recruitment of the human resources needed and other relevant steps, within a time-frame of three (3) years, to ensure that the CEWS is fully operational by 2009.


Objectives

- To anticipate and prevent conflicts on the continent
- To provide timely information on evolving violent conflicts based on specifically developed indicators.

The Situation Room

The Situation Room is an integral part of the CEWS and its main tasks include:


- I. Information monitoring and data collection on simmering, potential, actual and post-conflict initiatives and activities in Africa, in an effort to facilitate timely and informed decision-making;
- II. Serving as a point of contact and communication room for the Peace and Security Department;
- III. Providing the AU Headquarters with a 24/7 mission-wide information gathering and dissemination capacity;
- IV. The Situation Room operates 24/7. with ten Assistants, two Communication Assistants and a Coordinator;
- V. It produces various reports, among them: Daily News Highlights, Daily Reports, Flash Reports, updates on



potential and conflict situations and Weekly updates to provide a weekly overview of the political, military, humanitarian, human rights and other developments in Africa.

CEWS tools for data collection and analysis

- **Africa Media Monitor (AMM):** is a suite of applications to automate data gathering from online sources and subscribed wires. The tool has the capacity to read more than forty thousand articles with in a day in the four official languages of the AU. The tool has three interfaces:
 - **Africa News Brief (ANB)** – a web interface to display clustered and categorized live news, updated every 10 minutes; including quote extraction, thematic (subject area) identification and named entity recognition. User can subscribe on the tool to receive breaking news alerts and regular updates via email as well as RSS feeds.
 - **News Desk:** is a collaborative editorial tool that allows Situation Room analysts work on pre-defined reporting templates for information feeds monitoring, reports generation and notification delivery (SMS and email).
 - **Live Mon:** is big screen application to provide a customized geo-located view of the news articles detected with AMM. The tool also provides news tickers in all the four AU languages scrolling top stories.
- **Africa Reporter:** is an online reporting and analytical tool that is customized to the CEWS templates and indicators to facilitate the submission of incident and situation reports. It allows data management and graphical display of events and trends over time.
- **Africa Prospects:** is a tool designed to forecast the risk




propensity or vulnerability of countries with respect to structural influences and constraints using the CEWS structural indicators.

- **CEWS Portal:** is a web portal developed for information sharing with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs') early warning mechanisms.
- **Event Detection, Extraction and Moderation system:** is a tool developed to automatically detect and extract incidents of interest to CEWS from media reports with a provision of human moderation for qualifying the event. The tool supplements the incident data collection with Africa Reporter.
- **The Indicators and Profiles Module:** is a web based tool to facilitate the storage and processing of quantitative structural data as well as qualitative profiles data.
- **Conflict Alerting and Analysis System (under development):** is an envisioned tool for CEWS analysts by serving as an integrated dash board to assist analysis by bringing in to board all the outcomes of the other tools as well as other reports. The tool is expected to facilitate the collaborative work on reporting and the creation of charts and maps to supplement the reports.
- Additional commercial software used by CEWS to facilitate the work include **Tableau, Stata** and **SENTURION**.

Engagement with Decision-Makers

The CEWS is geared to respond to the requirements and specific needs of its end-users, and decision-makers, in particular the Chairperson of the Commission and the PSC, as well as other organs and structures such as the Panel of the Wise, the Pan-African Parliament and the African




Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. As part of efforts to strengthen the linkages between early warning and early response in the AU conflict prevention efforts, CEWS conduct periodic briefings to the PSC on the state of peace and security on the continent through Horizon Scanning methods. Since February 2016, CEWS provides regular horizon scanning briefings to the PSC bi-annually.

Coordination and Collaboration with the RECs

The early warning systems of the RECs are important components of CEWS. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the AU and the RECs on cooperation in the area of peace and security in 2008, to enhance coordination and collaboration with the RECs. A meeting was held from 28 February to 1 March 2008 between CEWS and the early warning systems of the RECs, whose objective was to review the steps taken at continental and regional levels to operationalize the CEWS as well as the early warning systems of the RECs, and to share information on progress made regarding data collection, data analysis and other relevant aspects.

The meeting agreed on a number of steps to be taken, including, the convening of technical meetings between CEWS and the RECs to harmonize data collection instruments and methodologies, as well as facilitating the linking of the AU and the early warning units of the RECs through the AU VSAT connection. To date, nineteen (19) technical meetings were held hosted by the AU and all the RECs.

In order to enhance the data gathering and analysis capacity of CEWS and the early warning systems of the RECs, a licensing agreement has been elaborated to facilitate the sharing of data collection tools and software developed and acquired by the AU. Efforts are underway to facilitate



the connectivity of the early warning mechanisms of the RECs and the CEWS through the AU VSAT. There is an ongoing technical support and staff exchange program to harmonize the development of data collection tools and conflict early warning methodologies. Capacity building programs are also held to enhance the human resource capacity of CEWS and the RECs.

Way Forward

Since its adoption in December 2006, significant progress has been made to the operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System and the system provides reliable and up-to-date information and analysis on potential, actual, post-conflict situations.


The PSC also urged the Commission to finalize the development of the Country Structural Vulnerability Assessment (CSVA) tool, with a view to facilitating the identification, at an early stage, of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict, and the development of a Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy (CSVMS).

The CEWS will continue working towards ensuring timely, accurate, and reliable collection and analysis of information, to fulfil the requirements entrusted upon it by the PSC Protocol and the Framework for the Operationalization of Continental Early Warning System. It will also continue to enhance and strengthen its collaboration with stakeholders, mainly the Early Warning Systems of the Regional Economic Communities, which are an integral part of the Continental Early Warning System.

The African Union Border Programme (AUBP)

Uniting and integrating Africa through peaceful, open and prosperous borders





When it comes to peace and security, borders are a priority!

Introduction

When it comes to peace and security, borders are a priority. Since African countries gained independence, the borders – which were drawn during the colonial period in a context of rivalries between European countries and their scramble for territories in Africa, have been a recurrent source of conflicts and disputes on the continent. Most of the borders are poorly defined. The location of strategic natural resources in cross-border areas poses additional challenges. This challenge was taken up early enough by African leaders, who were inspired by the conviction that the achievement of greater unity and solidarity among African States and peoples requires the reduction of the burden that is imposed upon them by borders. Indeed, by transcending the borders as barriers and promoting them as bridges linking one State to another, Africa can boost the ongoing efforts to integrate the continent, strengthen its unity and promote peace, security and stability, through the structural prevention of conflicts.

Mandate

The African Union Border Programme aims for structural prevention of conflicts. The objectives of the AUBP are to promote peace and stability through its four pillars: demarcation of borders, cross-border cooperation, capacity building and the mobilization of resources and partnerships.

Justification for the Establishment of the AUBP

- To address the problems posed by the lack of delimitation and demarcation, which gives rise to ‘undefined zones’, within which the application of national sovereignty poses problems, and constitutes a real obstacle to the deepening of the integration process;

“The AU border program is about three pillars. Delimitation and demarcations of all African borders, cross border cooperation and capacity building. We have demarcated so far at least 50% of African borders”.

Amb. Frederic Gateretse-Ngoga, Head, CPEWD

- To address cross-border criminal activities through pragmatic border management;
- To consolidate the gains made in the regional integration process, as demonstrated by the existence of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and of numerous large-scale cooperation initiatives; and
- To facilitate the development of cross-border integration dynamics, which are sustained by local stakeholders

Vision


A united and integrated Africa with peaceful, open and prosperous borders

Mission

The prevention and resolution of border-related disputes and the promotion of regional and continental integration, which constitutes a tool in the structural prevention of conflicts in Africa

Strategic Objectives


- Facilitating and supporting the delimitation and demarcation of African boundaries where such exercise has not yet taken place;
- Reinforcing the integration process, within the framework of the RECs and other large-scale cooperation initiatives;
- Developing, within the framework of the RECs and other regional integration initiatives, local cross-border cooperation;
- Building the capacities of Member States in border management, as well as in border studies and research; and

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- Advising the Commission and other organs of the African Union on border-related matters.

Implementation Modalities

The AUBP is being implemented at national, regional and continental levels on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity and respect of the sovereignty of States.

- The delimitation, demarcation and management of boundaries depend primarily on the sovereign decision of the States. The AUBP is closely working with States to undertake and pursue bilateral negotiations on all issues relating to the delimitation, demarcation and management of their borders, while aiming to protect and promote the interests and rights of border populations. The AUBP is assisting the States in mobilizing the necessary resources and expertise needed to delimit, demarcate and manage their boundaries.
- Local stakeholders are the primary drivers and key players of cross-border cooperation. The AUBP is working closely with RECs to facilitate local initiatives that promote cross-border cooperation. The AUBP, in partnership with the RECs, is planning to establish regional funds to finance cross-border cooperation projects, and has prepared a convention on cross-border cooperation that is under consideration by the relevant AU organs. The AUBP is also taking the necessary steps to ensure that cross-border cooperation is included in the major international initiatives launched in favour of the continent, as well as play a coordination role and facilitate the exchange of information and good practices between the RECs.
- The AUBP is assisting African countries to develop their capacities in the areas of border delimitation, demarcation and management. It is doing this by



carrying out an inventory of African institutions that offer training in these domains, exploring avenues for collaboration with relevant training centres outside Africa, and designing a capacity building programme.

- Since boundary making and maintenance are cooperative undertakings that require various stakeholders to work together, the AUBP is forging partnerships of locals, states and international partners particularly the United Nations, as well as the former colonial powers that have records on African boundaries. The AUBP is also building networks and establishing partnerships with research and training institutes to build the capacities of States to delimit, demarcate and manage their boundaries.
- In view of the fact that the exercises of delimiting, demarcating and managing boundaries are very expensive and highly technical, the AUBP is working closely with States and RECs to mobilize the required resources and any other necessary support needed to delimit, demarcate and manage African boundaries.

As stated by Boileau Strassoldo, an expert on European borders: “Spatial boundaries have ambiguous features: they divide and unite, bind the interior and link it with the exterior, are barriers and junctions, walls and doors, organs of defence and attack and so on. Frontier areas/borderlands can be managed so as to maximize any of these functions. They can be militarized, as bulwarks against neighbors, or be made into areas of peaceful interchange”. By adopting the AUBP, African leaders have clearly expressed their commitment to maximize the junction and bridge aspects of the African borders and ensure that they are managed in such a manner to contribute to the achievement of two key objectives of the AU, namely the structural prevention of conflicts and the deepening of the ongoing integration processes.

Panel of the Wise





Inaugural meeting of the current members of the Panel of the Wise (PoW) for the tenure 2017 – 2019, with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission – October 2017, AUC, Addis Ababa:

From L – R: Mrs Honorine Nzet Bitéghé (Central Africa); Mr. Amr Moussa (North Africa); Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe (East Africa); Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission; Mr. Edem Kodjo, Friend of the Panel of the Wise, standing in for H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (West Africa) – at the time outgoing President of Liberia and expected to fully join the PoW in January 2018; Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba (Southern Africa) and Chair of the PoW; H.E. Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security.

The Panel of the Wise (PoW), is one of the critical pillars of the Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union (APSA). Article 11 of the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC), sets up a five-person panel of “highly respected African personalities from various segments of society who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of peace, security and development on the continent” with a task “to support the efforts of the PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention.”

Background


The current five members of the Panel appointed during the 29th Ordinary Summit of the AU Assembly held in Addis Ababa on 3 - 4 July 2017, are: Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe from Uganda (representing East Africa), Mr. Amr Moussa from Egypt (representing North Africa), Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from Liberia (representing West Africa), Mrs. Honorine Nzet Biteghe from Gabon (representing Central Africa) and Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba from Namibia (representing Southern Africa).



Inaugural meeting of the current members of the Panel of the Wise (PoW) for the tenure 2017 – 2019: From L – R: Dr. Specioza Wandira Kazibwe (East Africa); Mrs Honorine Nzet Bitéghé (Central Africa); Mr. Amr Moussa (North Africa); Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba (Southern Africa) and Chair of the PoW. NB: Mrs Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (West Africa) was outgoing President of Liberia and expected to fully join the PoW in January 2018 upon handover of power.

The first Panel was appointed in December 2007 and composed of Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria (representing North Africa), who served as chair, Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania (Representing East Africa), Elisabeth K. Pognon of Benin (representing West Africa), Miguel Trovoada of Sao Tome and Principe (representing Central Africa), and Brigalia Bam of South Africa (representing Southern Africa). At the July 2010 Summit in Kampala, Ahmed Ben Bella and Salim Ahmed Salim were reappointed for another term ending in December 2013 and three new members were appointed: Mary Chinery-Hesse of Ghana; Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia; and Marie-Madeleine Kalala- Ngoy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The five members of the Panel appointed during the 23rd Ordinary Summit of the AU Assembly held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 26 and 27 June 2014, are: Dr Lakhdar Brahimi from Algeria (representing North Africa), Mr Edem Kodjo from Togo (representing West Africa), Dr Albina faria de Assis Pereira Africano from Angola (representing Central Africa), Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe from Uganda (representing East Africa) and Madame Luisa Diogo from Mozambique (representing Southern Africa).

The Panel has produced some thematic reports on issues relevant to peace and security such as preventing electoral disputes; eliminating sexual violence against women in children




in armed conflicts; and non-impunity, justice and peace. The PoW reports to the PSC and through it, to the Assembly. Members are selected by the Chairperson of the AU Commission and appointed through a decision of the Assembly for three years renewable once. The Protocol states that the Panel, at the request of the PSC or its own initiative “shall undertake such action deemed appropriate to support the efforts of the PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission for the prevention of conflicts”.

The Panel meets at least three times annually to deliberate on the peace and security situation, its work program and to identify regions or countries to undertake prevention and good offices engagements; it furthermore organizes annual workshops on issues related to conflict prevention and management to inform its conflict prevention actions as well as to strengthen to production of its thematic reports to the Assembly of African Heads of State and Governments for endorsement. In order to strengthen the capacity and efficiency of the Panel of the Wise, the AU Assembly of Heads of States decided to establish a group of Friends of the Panel of the Wise (in 2010) made up of outgoing members of the Panel of the Wise; as well as a Pan African Network of the Wise (in May 2013), as a Pan-African umbrella network that brings together mediation mechanisms and actors across the continent to build synergies across Regional (through the RECs), National and Local Response Levels (through the peace infrastructures).

Mandate of the Panel of the Wise

1. Support and advise the effort of the Chairperson of the Commission and the AU PSC, in the area of conflict prevention;
2. Advise both the Commission and the Council on issues that are necessarily considered by the policy organs of the AU such as the issues of impunity, justice and reconciliation as well as, women and children in armed conflict and its impact on the most vulnerable ones;
3. Use its good offices to carry out conflict mediation and broker peace agreements between warring parties; and


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4. Help the AU Commission in mapping out threats to peace and security by providing regular advice and analysis and requesting the Commission to deploy fact-finding or mediation teams to specific countries.

Background information on the Current Panel Members (2017 – 2019)

Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe from Uganda (for the Eastern Africa Region) best known for being the first female African Vice-President (1994-2003), and serving as a distinguished UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, she was also Minister of Gender and Community Development and the Deputy Minister of Industry. She has extensively worked with the AU and the UN to promote women's participation in peace and development processes, also through the African Women Committee on Peace and Development that she founded in 1998. She served as a member of the third Panel of the Wise (2014-2017).

Mr. Amr Moussa from Egypt (for the Northern Africa Region), who was the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (2001-2011) and the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs (1991 to 2001). In his illustrious diplomatic career, he has held several positions including the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations. In 2003, he became a member of the United Nations High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for International Peace and Security. He led mediation efforts in 2006 between conflicting Lebanese factions, the anti-Syrian ruling coalition and the Hezbollah led pro-Syrian opposition.

Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from Liberia (for the Eastern Africa Region), was elected as the President of Liberia in 2006 becoming the first democratically elected woman head of state in Africa. She has worked extensively to promote peace, reconciliation and social and economic development in Liberia, also establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2006. She won the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize with Leymah



Gbowee of Liberia and Tawakkol Karman of Yemen “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work”. In 2016, she led the mediation in Gambia between the ex-President Yahya Jammeh and the then president-elect Adama Barrow and brought about a quick resolution to the crisis.

Mrs. Honorine Nzet Bitéghé from Gabon (for the Central Africa Region), is the former Minister for Social Affairs and currently in charge of national’s efforts for gender parity. The former magistrate has served in a number of positions within the Gabon legal system including as the Chamber President and Counsellor of the Court of Appeal. She has worked extensively on family issues in Gabon. She is a member of the African Union Women’s Committee and an electoral expert advising Gabon’s Permanent National Electoral Commission.

Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba from Namibia (for the Southern Africa Region) is the former President of the Republic of Namibia from 2005 to 2015. Since Namibia’s independence in 1990, he has also served as the Minister of Home Affairs, Fisheries, and Lands, Resettlement, and Rehabilitation. In these capacities, he has promoted gender equality in politics, increased spending on education and housing, and initiated land re- redistribution efforts. In 2014, he led a mediation effort in a crisis between conflicting political parties in Lesotho. He won the Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership in 2015 which hailed his efforts in forging national cohesion and reconciliation to consolidate Namibia’s democracy. He was appointed Chair of the Panel of the Wise for the year 2018.

Their commitment to Africa and to the African Union, their readiness to support the AU on our quest for peace, stability and development for all peoples of the Continent, their experience and knowledge will undoubtedly strengthen the AU’s efforts in the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflicts. In anticipation of their upcoming inaugural ceremony, we can glance through the decade’s long chronology of actions and operations undertaken by their successive predecessors.


The Pan African Network of the Wise



Group photo: 3rd Retreat of the Members of the Pan-African Network of the Wise – November 2015, AUC, Addis Ababa

The tenure of the Panel of the Wise from 2010 to 2013 demonstrated the importance, in fact the centrality of this mechanism as part of APSA. Indeed, its tenure is characterised by an expanding portfolio of activities, the development of closer relations with other institutions within the Union, and critically, the diffusion of the Panel through the creation of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise), which was established through a Decision of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in May 2013, and which brings together mediation actors and mechanisms, such as the AU Panel of the Wise, COMESA Committee of Elders, ECOWAS Panel of the Elders, SADC Panel of the Wise, future RECs mechanisms, Insiders' Mediators, African and international mediators working in Africa, with complementary responsibilities.

For recollection, the AU Panel of the Wise was created in 2002, and became operational in 2008; ECOWAS' Council of the Wise was created in 1999; COMESA's Committee of Elders was put in place in 2008; SADC's Mediation Reference Group and Panel of Elders was established in August 2010; and IGAD is in the process of putting in place



a Mediation Contact Group, whose responsibilities will be similar to those of the AU Panel of the Wise.

Since their inception, the above institutions have taken concrete steps to strengthening their relations and enhancing their capacity to collectively address the scourge of conflicts on the continent. These efforts took a concrete shape at the Retreat of the AU Panel of the Wise held from 4-5 June 2012 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, where the institutions agreed to establish a Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise) – an umbrella network bringing together these various mechanisms, the Union’s High-Level Representatives and Special Envoys, the Friends of the Panel, and individual mediators and institutions engaged in mediation activities at various levels with the aim of enabling them to work on joint activities and cement their partnership, on one hand, and between the AU and RECs at large.

FemWise-Africa: Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation


Strengthening African Women's Participation in
Conflict Prevention, Mediation Processes and
Peace Stabilisation Efforts



Group photo: Inaugural meeting of the Steering Committee of the Pan-African Network of Women Mediators (Femwise-Africa) and Partners – October 2017, AUC, Addis Ababa

Background

The role of women and the gender dimensions of conflict remain marginal in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction processes, despite several resolutions, such as United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, and commitments made to increase women's participation in mediation and peace processes. At the continental level, while Africa has made significant progress towards gender equality and protection of women's rights at the policy level - with the adoption of various legal instruments, as well as their realization at the national, regional and continental level, implementation is largely lacking.



The absence of and lack of African women's participation in formal mediation processes and at the peace table, in particular, is an important area of the 1325 agenda that remains poorly implemented. In addition, women's significant contribution to and strong role in sub-national and local mediation and conflict prevention initiatives continues to be largely unrecognized and weakly supported.

There is no doubt that women should take an integral part in decision-making during peace processes. In order to contribute to an increase in women's access to and participation in peace mediation and negotiation in Africa, women's capacity in mediation and negotiation skills needs to be improved and extended to all areas of work including security sector reform, financing and power-sharing; the impact of conflict on women and their role in peace processes need to be better exposed and reflected on; and the implementation of various policies related to Women, Peace and Security needs to be accelerated and monitored. A comprehensive response from all stakeholders is necessary to ensure gains made are not reversed.

Against this backdrop, the African Union (AU) has taken three landmark decisions, ultimately leading to the establishment of the FemWise-Africa (Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation). FemWise-Africa aims to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The Network provides a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity building and networking aimed at enhancing the implementation of the commitments for women's inclusion in peacemaking in Africa.



Overview


In 2010, the Panel of the Wise of the AU decided to initiate a long-term study and action plan to eradicate sexual violence against women and children in armed conflicts. One of the key recommendations in the ensuing report required the AU to take action by establishing a formal network of women in mediation pegged to relevant AU organs to monitor and influence decision making. It was against this backdrop that the AU Peace and Security Department with the support of UN Women commissioned a study to map existing networks and associations working on women's participation in mediation. In the basis of this study, draft modalities were developed for the Network.¹

In December 2016, the AU convened the African Women Mediation Workshop on the theme "Silencing the Guns by 2020: Women's Inclusion in Pre-Conflict Mediation, at the Peace table and in Social Cohesion" in Constantine, Algeria. The workshop brought together over 80 women (and men) from 24 African countries involved in track 1, 2 and 3 mediation processes and conflict prevention and social cohesion activities in Africa to share experiences, identify challenges and barriers to women's active participation and discuss strategies to accelerate women's agency in these efforts.

The focus and form of the network were discussed and recommendations developed to inform the finalization of the modalities for the network.

On 13 March 2017, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) endorsed the modalities for the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, officially referred to as FemWise-Africa. Additional endorsement was given to FemWise-Africa by the UN Security Council on 27 March 2017, in New York, as part of an Arria Formula meeting.

¹ The 2010 Decision of the Peace and Security Council asking the Panel of the Wise to undertake a study on Women in armed conflicts; the 2014 Decision of Ministers of Gender calling for the creation of an association of women in mediation; the 13 March 2017 Decision of the PSC to create FemWise.



Lastly, FemWise-Africa was officially established through a decision of the AU Assembly of Heads of State (AU Summit) on 4 July 2017 (Assembly/AU/Draft/Dec.21(XXIX)).


The Network is located within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as a subsidiary mechanism of the Panel of the Wise and the PANWISE. Its location within the APSA places it in a strategic position for policy formulation and advocacy for narrowing the gap between the commitments for women's inclusion and the implementation. Membership of FemWise is open to both institutions and individual women.

Structure of FemWise-Africa

The structure of FemWise-Africa includes the FemWise-Africa Steering Committee, the FemWise-Africa Assembly,

and the FemWise-Africa Secretariat. The Steering Committee, which is co-chaired by Her Excellency Catherine Samba Panza, former President of the Central African Republic and Her Excellency Dr. Speciosa Wandira, the First African Woman Vice-President (Uganda), gives strategic guidance to the Secretariat and provides reflection on the activities of the Network, reviews and approves membership accreditation applications. The Steering Committee provides inputs to the annual work plans of the Network. The Committee includes as core members: the Panel of the Wise, counter parts from the RECs, the Peace and Security Department and ten pre-selected women mediation advisors with proven mediation skills (2 per region).

The Assembly is made up of all members of the Network; responsible for approving annual work plans and a regular platform for the exchange of lessons learned and best practices), which will meet at least once a year and at any other time as may be deemed necessary to validate and adopt the annual Action Plan of the Network. It should be recalled that Members of the FemWise-Africa may include



women and girls who have served and aspire to serve in preventive actions and mediation activities, drawn from a variety of different backgrounds.


The Secretariat, which is integral to the Secretariat of the Panel of the Wise, is responsible for managing the Network's relations with other pillars of APSA, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the AU Gender Architecture, training, research and policy institutions and any other categories of relevant stakeholders as shall be determined by the Network.

The Secretariat shall furthermore implement the Network's communication and outreach strategy. The Secretariat shall perform any other duties as may be articulated by the AU Chairperson, the PSC, Network members or any other appropriate stakeholders.

Accredited Members of FemWise-Africa

Creating all-inclusive networks means tapping into the clout and visibility of high-level or leading women mediators and the wealth of expertise embedded in women mediation experts. The richness in integrated teams is unmatched, taking advantage of various competencies that are unique to each category. FemWise-Africa already includes approximately eighty (80) members, which feature some of the following distinguished personalities, experts and youth:

Graca Machel (Mozambique), Mme Brigalia Bam (South Africa), Marie-Madeline Kalala-Ngoy (DRC), Mary Chinery-Hesse (Ghana), Mme Hortense Nzet Biteghé (Gabon), Louisa Diogo (Mozambique), Elisabeth Pognon (Benin), Salimata Porquet (Cote d'Ivoire), Betty Bigombe (Uganda), Florence Mpaayei (Kenya), Bishop Mary Nkosi (Malawi), Liberata MulaMula (Tanzania), Ambassador Hawa Ahmed Youssouf (Djibouti), Amb. Josephine Mayuma Kala (DRC), Louise Baricako (Burundi), Stella Sabiitii (Uganda), Amb. Sahle-Work




Zewde (Ethiopia), Mrs. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie (Ethiopia), Amb Soad Shalaby (Egypt), Dr. Nana Pratt (Sierra Leone), Hon. Ms. Martha Karua (Kenya), etc.

Youth leaders already accredited include: Fatima Askira (Nigeria), Ms. Emily Amony (Uganda), Ms. Shuvai Busuman Nyoni (Kenya), Mireille Tushiminina(DRC), Irene Limo (Kenya) etc.

Synergies-building and cooperation are a must for the networks to succeed. As long as these networks are seen as platforms and collaborative initiatives for women's regular encounter and for co-learning, any challenges will be overcome.

And these synergies must be maintained not only internally within the network, but also across to embrace other networks. It is the intention of FemWise-Africa to actively promote and nurture close North-South such as with the Network of Nordic Women Mediators, and we look forward to rich collaboration with the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network as well as the Women Mediation Network for the Commonwealth Countries, once established. We also seek South-South collaborative partnerships and relationships with the networks of the women platforms of Colombia who played a key role in the peace process, and we look to intensify our collaboration with the Asia regional women's networks.

Building synergies also extends to agencies such as the UN who have played supportive roles during the process of building FemWise-Africa. UN Women has been a constant partner in this and other initiatives, providing accompanying expertise and in the design of initiatives as well as in capacity-enhancement. FemWise-Africa looks to a rich collaboration with the UNDP, the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) specifically, in the form of sharing important databank resources and rosters and with UN Environment (UNEP) to look at the causes and impact of natural resource based conflicts on local communities especially in border



areas, which are known to be geographically vulnerable.

Priorities of FemWise-Africa


Drawing on deliberations that took place in the Constantine meeting, the briefing to the PSC, the UNSC, and the Assembly, FemWise-Africa priorities were formulated as:

1. Professionalizing the role of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation at Tracks 1, 2 and 3 levels;
2. Ensuring a channel for women's meaningful and effective participation in peace processes, including as heads of official high-level mediation missions;
3. Initiating women's action that will catalyse and mainstream the engagement of women in mediation in line with the African Union's "Agenda 2063" and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
4. Bridging the gap between Track 1, 2 and 3 mediation and synergizing efforts towards inclusive peace processes with sustainable outcomes;
5. Strengthening the mediation interventions of FemWise-Africa with the facilitation of Quick Impact Projects and the establishment of local and national peace infrastructures as foundations and Launchpad for medium and longer term initiatives that will ensure that stability and development take root.

Expected Outcomes

Overall Goal: Peace processes in Africa are shaped by women's leadership and participation

Outcome 1: The women's movement in Africa is mobilized and brought together to foster women's participation and contribution to conflict prevention, mediation and peace stabilization



Outcome 2: Conducive environment for women's leadership and participation in peace processes created at different levels in Africa

Outcome 3: Enhanced capacity of African women engaged in conflict prevention and mediation to ensure their engagement and influence in conflict prevention, mediation and peace stabilization efforts

Outcome 4: Enhanced synergy between women leading and active in conflict prevention and mediation efforts at sub-national and community levels and political processes at Tracks 1 and 2;

Outcome 5: Enriched political solutions at tracks 1 through the Involvement of women's social options approach

Outcome 6: Women leadership is systematically mobilized to facilitate quick impact projects and resource mobilization efforts to lead social cohesion activities at the community levels, healing, reconciliation and quick recovery projects



Operationalization of FemWise-Africa: Expected Results

During the inception phase, it is envisaged that a series of good offices/missions of the members of FemWise-Africa will be undertaken in countries in crisis while teams of women will undertake preventive diplomacy engagements in vulnerable countries. Arrangements will be made to ensure that the private sector is involved to support FemWise-Africa's long-term and quick impact initiatives (social and economic projects) on the ground in all these countries.

The expected results for three (3) years are as follows:

- The Secretariat of the FemWise-Africa is established and man-powered in order to coordinate the initiatives of the Network at continental level with RECs focal points;
- FemWise is fully operational and established Steering Committee and relevant work plans adhered to;
- FemWise is indeed institutionalised, with the production and submission of quarterly briefings each year to the PSC to influence mainstreaming of women in mediation processes;
- The African policy on the role of women in prevention and mediation processes is adopted by the PSC and the Assembly with clear benchmarks;
- In line with the ongoing PanWise process, 30 countries have developed relevant national legislation to operationalize FemWise-Africa at national and local levels;
- Pool of 100 women annually throughout the Continent are trained in mediation and accredited to FemWise-Africa at track 1,2 and 3;
- Centres of Excellence to support FemWise-Africa are in place to work on mentorship programme for the youth, among others;

- FemWise-Africa accredited members are trained as mediators and rostered to operate at tracks 1,2 and 3 levels, and ready to be deployed;
- Knowledge Management Framework is adapted and Mediation tools (research and training materials) are developed and focused on the special conditions and unique experiences of women;
- Women mediators' experience are captured and documented (including visual stories);
- On-going conversations of progress made through annual dialogue forums with women mediators;
- Involvement of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts addresses the needs of the members of the community (social option) which enriches political solutions at tracks 1 and 2; and
- Peace stability projects and quick impact projects are operational in vulnerable countries, leading to improved social cohesion conditions operational in all countries. Quick impact projects are seen as the foundations and Launchpad for medium and longer term initiatives that will ensure that stability and development take root.



Group photo: Launchpad Meeting of the Pan-African Network of Women Mediators (Femwise-Africa) – December 2016, Constantine, Algeria





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