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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security on the Status of Women (CSW60) at the UN Headquarters**

**New York, 17 March 2016:** The African Union (AU) Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Mme Bineta Diop, co-organized a High-Level Panel discussion on, “Africa’s Year of Human Rights with a particular focus on the Rights of Women: Opportunities and Challenges”, during the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which runs from March 14 to March 24, 2016. The High Level Panel was co-organized with the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human rights (OHCHR).

In her speech, Mme Diop stated that, “The prevention of violence, in all its forms, against women, their protection and their participation in decision-making at all levels are rights, not privileges.” She added that, “Africa has sufficient and progressive normative instruments such as the ‘Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa’. She reiterated that what Africa needs now is “implementation”.

The landmark event, which took place on Thursday, 17 March, 2016, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, sought to ‘engage decision-makers in an open and frank discussion on the opportunities and challenges related to human rights implementation in Africa and in particular women’s rights’. It also aimed at identifying strategies for implementation.

It was attended by The First Lady of Zambia, ministers, government officials, senior officials of the United Nations system entities, civil society, academia, and representatives of the Diaspora. The AU was represented by the Office of the Special Envoy WPS, the Women, Gender and Development Directorate, the Gender, Peace and Security Programme at the Peace and Security Department and the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations.

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