



Femmes Africa Solidarité

26<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council - 11 June 2014

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

Thank you Mr. President,

Femmes Africa Solidarite would like to thank the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, for her personal and steadfast commitment to this issue, and appreciates that in her report, priority has been given to ending culture of impunity and lack of accountability for violence against women.

As the largest global summit on sexual violence in conflict takes place in London, FAS expresses its concern that the challenge of addressing violence against women in conflict is made all the more difficult because impunity has become the rule and not the exception. Although there have been considerable gains, violence against women remains endemic, and commitments made by Member States do not match changes on the ground. In Africa, women suffer extensive rapes during conflicts, which persist in the post-conflict period. For instance, in Sierra Leone and Liberia only, more than 100,000 of women have been subject to sexual atrocities. Currently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, sexual and gender-based violence continues and is of growing concern.

Mr President,

We strongly recommend a holistic approach with substantive cooperation of all stakeholders in ending impunity and enhancing access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based crimes.

We call further for stronger monitoring and reporting mechanisms to pursue accountability and reinforce legal and judicial systems at all levels.

We recall the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the ICGLR Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children; and we urge African States to fulfil their obligations and implement these mechanisms to combat violence against women in Africa.

We invite the Special Rapporteur to visit conflicts and post-conflict countries in order to engage constructively with States and we call upon all States to collaborate with the Human Rights Council and its special procedures.

We would like to raise with serious concern the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by military forces and peacekeepers, which is chronically underreported, and the non-prosecution of perpetrators. The lack of real progress on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions continues to limit and compromise their effectiveness.

We recognise the efforts of the special rapporteur to fully support UNSCR 1325 and we encourage her to reiterate her commitment to strengthen women's participation in conflicts resolution and peacebuilding processes

Finally, we welcome and call for the adoption of the resolution on violence against women initiated by Canada and appreciate the support of all the co-sponsoring States.