

## Solidarity Mission to Casamance, 10<sup>th</sup> to 13th December 2013



Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) led a solidarity mission in Casamance, Senegal, from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of December to promote dialogue among women leaders and encourage civil society and community based women organizations in their mobilization efforts for peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Casamance is a region that has been devastated by an ongoing conflict since 1982. Opposing the rebel group MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance) to the Senegalese national army, the violence has had a significant impact on the security of the region.

In an attempt to express their solidarity, FAS together with women from different civil society groups in Casamance, joined forces under the umbrella of the “Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance” (PFPC). The Solidarity Mission brought together women leaders from Senegal, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Burundi, supported by FAS partners such as the European Union and the World Bank, to consult and engage with the various women’s groups to dialogue around the issues of women’s leadership and participation in conflict resolution mechanisms.

The mission called on national and local authorities such as the Governor of Zinguichor, the head of the Regional Council, religious and cultural leaders, the Senegalese Army and members of MFDC.

*“My country has experienced a fratricidal war”, said Ambassador Domitille Barancira, Advisor of the Minister of Justice in Burundi. “The conflict is not inevitable”. We have moved out although the situation was desperate sometimes. I am here to address a message of encouragement to my sister to tell them they will overcome. I am not*

*Burundian. I am African, I am Senegalese. When Senegalese women suffer, I'm suffering too", she added.*

Ms Marie France Goffri, a lawyer and member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Ivory Coast explained: *"We will go everywhere in our continent with women to promote peace with our pilgrim stick. This is the reason why we are in Casamance today"*.