



FAS NEWS

FAS IN NEW YORK FOR THE 50th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN(CSW)

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council on 21 June 1946 to prepare recommendations and reports to the Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. Since 1996, FAS has attended CSW annual sessions. FAS was particularly active in the CSW's 44th session in 2000 where a comprehensive review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was undertaken to mark the fifth anniversary since its adoption and later, in 2005 where that Beijing Platform of Action was reviewed after 10 years.

The sessions investigate and discuss ways to enhance the rights of women, to foster their empowerment and increase their status in various critical areas of concern, including: violence against women; women and armed conflict; women's human rights; the girl child.

The 50th session focused particularly on two issues; **Enhance participation of women in development**: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and for the advancement of women;

Equal participation of women and men in decision making processes at all levels



Delegates at the CSW meeting in New York (from left) Blandine, Amy Sirlin, Hon. Weatherspoon, Rosalie and Mme Diop.



FAS Panel, (from left front row) Ms. Cabrera Bellaza, Ms Tagashira and Ms C Handschin



Roundtable discussion March 1st 2006, (from left) Mme Diop, Jessica Nkuhue, Ms C. Larsen and Ms Weatherspoon

FAS IN NEW YORK FOR THE 50th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (contd. from page 1)

Mrs. Cheryl Larzen from the Office of Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA) gave an insight of the discussion between the different UN agencies on the settings of the PBC; in particular the PBC's support of office and the integration of a gender perspective in this process.

She volunteered to convey any recommendation the panel would put forward to the UN.

Mme Diop urged the women's organization to combine their efforts and adopt a common strategy to mainstream gender in peace building.

Mrs. Makiko Tagashira, UN ECOSOC Social and Economic Affairs, who used to work for division of the advancement of women. She gave a detailed presentation of the vision, the mandate, the composition and the authority of the future Peace Building Commission.

Mrs Carolyn Handschin, Women Federation for World Peace International, UN liaison in Geneva, Switzerland expressed her vision of the role women should be given inside the PBC according to her different experiences of supporting women in conflict in Bosnia. After the presentations, fruitful discussions occurred between the audience and the panelists. Were present Ms Leymah from WIPNET Liberia and Mrs Jessica Nkuuhe from Isis WICE Uganda as well as the Coordinator of the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Ms Gina Torry.

Mrs Nkuuhe insisted on the fact that women at the grass-root level were in great need of information to be able to influence the UN Reform and the setting of the Peace Building Commission. She urged the NGO Working Group on Peace, Women and Security to pass as much information as possible on those issues.

Mme Diop reminded that the issue of the Gender perspective in the Peace Building Commission was to make peace people centered, to put people's issues at the heart of peace-building. She then suggested that the recommendations and ideas ex-

pressed during the panel were gathered by FAS and sent to the Peace Building Commission Support Office as well as to the UN SG.

The next Panel discussion focused on "Empowering African Women in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building".

Ms Joana Foster, (Senior Gender Advisor, United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

gave a very good presentation of the transition in Liberia from peace keeping to democratic transition.

She particularly explained the different steps in obstacles in involving women in the democratization process, in particular in the electoral process. She told about the different strategies adopted to bring women to vote with the success of a great voting rate and the election of the First Woman African Head of State, Mrs Ellen Sirleaf Johnson.

After this inspiring presentation, Mr Papa Aly (Liaison Officer of FAS in New York) moderated a session of questions and answers.

Then Mrs Rosalie Lo (Program Officer, FAS Regional Office, Dakar) presented the situation of women in conflict and post conflict situation and the different strategies to increase their participation in the peace processes and in the reconstruction process.

She presented FAS Center for Gender, Peace and Development for the empowerment and the building of women capacities. She presented a film on the Center and answered the questions from the audience.

There was a Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and Femmes Africa Solidarité Day at the UN Secretariat Building in New York. Speakers at this function included, Ndioro Ndiaye, Deputy Director IOM, Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser of the Secretary General on Gender Issues, Bineta Diop, Founder and Executive Director, Femmes Africa Solidarite, Louise A. Rice, Ph.D, National President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

They discussed Strategies to Facilitate Enhanced Participation of Women in Development (Health) and Leadership and Decision-making in Education.



FAS Panel March 1st (front row, from left) Ms. Cabrera Bellaza, Ms. Tagashira and Ms. C. Handschin



FAS Panel March 7th (from left) Ms Joana Foster, Ms Joana Rosalie and Papa Aly Ndaw

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ABOUT FAS

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) is a women's non-governmental organization (NGO) that seeks to foster, strengthen and promote the leadership role of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution on the African continent. FAS's work in this regard is set in the context of a wider campaign to protect and promote women's rights in Africa.

FAS was created in 1996 in response to the explosion of violent conflicts tearing apart the fabric of society in Africa. In contrast to many other organizations working in the field of peace building for sustainable development at the grassroots level, FAS is an interface organization that enables grassroots women campaigners to have a greater impact at the level of decision-making. FAS's strategy is to provide networks between women's peace groups, training, advocacy, gender mainstreaming and effective participation at peace negotiation tables. Its activities are implemented in light of UN Resolution 1325 (2000) as well as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

Since its creation, FAS has been working especially in the Great Lakes region, the Mano River region and the Horn of Africa, hand-in-hand with local women's peace groups in order to harmonize their work and to bring their voices to peace negotiation tables. The case of the Mano River Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET), a FAS initiative established in 2000, provides a good example of FAS's work to enable grass roots women to get involved into peace negotiations at a high level.

Further, FAS works to realize the implementation of decisions on the African continent. These decisions include the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform of Action, the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and UN Security Council resolution 1325, the monitoring of which, FAS contributes to through its position as chair of the NGO-CSW Working Group on Peace in Geneva and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

In addition, FAS has been advocating for and obtained institutional changes in international, regional and national bodies. It managed in particular to ensure women's participation in the activities of the AU's central organ, especially through the Mechanism for Conflict, Prevention, Management. FAS also successfully campaigned for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for women's rights at the ACHPR and facilitated the adoption of the Gender Parity principle among the different organs of the AU.

FAS has also sent solidarity missions, via high-level delegations, to Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Moreover, FAS has organized training workshops and fostered exchanges of experience and information among women and their associations in numerous parts of Africa. In that regard, FAS has established in Dakar, Senegal, a Pan-African Centre on Gender, peace and Development which will serve as a hub for training, exchange, and documentation for the development of a sustainable peace with a focus on gender issues.

