



Oral Statement African Union Livingstone Formula

Thank you Chairperson,

Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS) welcomes the African Union (AU) declaration of the year 2010 as the year of peace in Africa with a special focus on the theme “Women, Youth and Peace”. FAS is honored to be part of the Livingstone Formula meeting to deliberate on the important issue of women and children in armed conflict in Africa. This meeting is a milestone for the African Civil Society Organizations as it provides them the opportunity to use experience in the field in order to contribute to the debate which will feed into the recommendations to be taken into consideration by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in order to make the issue of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts in Africa a reality.

FAS appreciates the structural changes taken on by the AU to place gender as a prominent element of its agenda. We commend the AU commitment to promote gender parity, equality and enhancing women’s participation through the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa; the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework, the African Union Gender Policy and the African Women’s Fund.

We commend the Panel of the Wise’s objective of contributing to alleviating the plight of women and children in armed conflicts and to actively contribute to the attainment of the goals of the 2010: Year of Peace and Security in Africa. This is in line with FAS’s mission of engendering the peace process in Africa and supporting African women network to lobby and advocate at the highest level for their voices to be heard at the peace negotiating tables.

FAS remains concerned about the discrimination and violence against women and children during war and conflict in Africa. The September 2009 raping of women in Guinea in broad day light is proof that sexual violence against women is still rampant in conflict affected countries in Africa.

We are also concerned that despite the active role women play during armed conflict, they are often marginalized and not included at the peace negotiation tables. Women are still lobbying and advocating for participation and inclusion at the peace negotiating tables. In Sudan, women have been struggling to push for effective inclusion at the peace negotiating table in Doha but they have not succeeded yet. We call up on the AU to urge member states to develop National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions pertaining to the participation and protection of women in armed conflict as well as the prevention of gendered-based human rights violations as upheld by UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889;

We call on the AU to implement AU instruments pertaining to the participation of women as well as the protection and promotion of women and children’s rights and prevention of gendered-based human rights violations;



We call on the AU to create Gender Units and Mediation Teams in order to guarantee the participation of women in mediation but also to provide women with a role as mediators themselves;

We call on the AU to nominate women head of mediation and special envoys for peacebuilding missions;

We call on the AU to undertake capacity building measures to strengthen the law enforcement agencies so that they can take the lead a gendered approach to politics in order to set the foundations for good governance;

We call on the AU to develop peace-keeping operations which adopt a gender-sensitive approach in how the peacekeepers are trained but also through the inclusion of female peacekeepers as well as introducing a code of conduct in an attempt to protect civilians present in areas of peacekeeping operations;

We call on the AU to engage in policy dialogues in order to carry out meaningful reforms in the Justice and Security Sectors where necessary to promote women and children, to protect the provide and access to justice;

We call on the AU to emphasize on comprehensive sensitization campaigns and civil education efforts focused on improving the participation of women and children in leadership, political activities and decision making at all levels;

We call on the AU to engender post-conflict processes including peace negotiations, conflict resolution and peacebuilding at all levels during formal and informal peace talks;

We call on the AU to ensure local ownership of programmes targeting the five pillars (participation, promotion, protection, prevention, and persecution) in order to secure the sustainability and widespread implementation of the programmes at the local, national and continental level; and

We call on the AU to set up post-conflict assistance units to provide psychological, medical, legal, and financial support to women and children in armed conflicts in order to develop thorough and concrete post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes.

In this regard, FAS affirms that during the year of Peace and Security in Africa, the AU has opportunities for making positive changes to restore the dignity of women and children in armed conflicts, promotion of their rights, enhance their meaningful participation in decision making even at the highest level, ensure their protection under the law, prevent crimes and violation against them and persecute perpetrators of atrocities.

Thank you once again Chairperson.