

**Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Democratic Governance:**  
**Strategies for Greater Participation of Women**  
**6 - 8 December 2005**  
**Arusha, Tanzania**



**United Nations**

**2005**

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## **I. Introduction**

The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa convened an Expert Group Meeting on “Democratic Governance in Africa: Strategies for Greater Participation of Women”, in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 6 to 8 December 2005. The Meeting was organized in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

The promotion of democratic governance and the empowerment of women are key priorities of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), whose implementation of programme activities is supported by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

The purpose of the Expert Group Meeting was to deepen the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders in promoting gender equality in democratic governance with a particular focus on post-conflict countries.

The main outcome of the Meeting is a set of recommendations to advance women’s participation in the political process at the national and local levels based on the evaluation and analyses of papers and country case studies presented at the Meeting. The recommendations provide a framework for the promotion of gender equality in democratic governance and the empowerment of women in Africa.

The Meeting was attended by 15 experts, including members of parliament, policy makers, representatives of political parties and non-governmental organizations, academics and representatives of the media, regional organizations and organizations of the United Nations system. Participants also included gender specialists, both male and female, representatives of women’s political movements and community activists.

The decision to convene the Expert Group Meeting was made in response to a broad-based initiative to promote gender equality in democratic governance and greater participation of women which gained momentum through a series of United Nations meetings and conferences in the 1980s and 1990s. Particularly successful was the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing China in 1995, which called for at least 30 per cent representation by women in national governments. Furthermore, in September 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York, world leaders pledged to “promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable” and adopted the goal of gender equality together with seven other goals, known collectively as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since then, the number of women in leadership positions has been rising. The most recent success in this regard was Liberia’s historic election in November 2005 of Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the first female elected president of an African country. This momentous event not only offers new hope for peace and reconciliation in Liberia but also gives fresh impetus for increasing the involvement of African women in the decision-making process and thereby enhancing their participation in democratic governance.

It is important to note that in Africa, a major response to the challenges of the MDGs has been a concerted movement towards the consolidation of democratic governance in both post-conflict and non-post-conflict countries. A consensus is emerging that the democratic path is the only institutional vehicle that can deliver the socio-economic progress being demanded by populations across the continent. As a result, many African States have embarked on the road to democracy through the development of new institutions for the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, constitutional and legislative reforms, as well as electoral reforms that open the political space for more diversified representation. In a feat of strong political leadership, NEPAD has developed and is institutionalizing processes that will help ensure that democracy and good governance become part of everyday life in the continent.

Furthermore, in responding to the MDGs, the African Union has demonstrated strong political leadership by declaring that women should be represented at the 50 per cent level in all decision-making positions. In addition, intergovernmental subregional organizations, such as the East African Community (EAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), are actively encouraging gender equality in political representation.

In view of these developments, the objective of the Expert Group Meeting in Arusha was to contribute to maintaining the momentum of national and international debate on the role of women in democratic governance and decision-making processes and to draw attention to the specific circumstances of African countries emerging from political conflict.

## **II. Opening session**

The Meeting was opened by statements by the Chair, Cheryl Larsen, Chief of the Coordination, Advocacy and Programme Development Unit (CAPDU) of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), and the Co-Chair, Wariara Mbugua, Principal Officer of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues on Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The Chair welcomed participants to the Meeting and stressed the critical role of OSAA in supporting the programme activities of NEPAD, whose key priorities included the promotion of democratic governance and the empowerment of women. She emphasized that one of the long-term objectives of NEPAD was to promote the role of women in governance and enhance their full and effective integration in political and socio-economic development. OSAA acted as the focal point for advocacy at the global level for NEPAD programmes and policies.

With regard to the development of strategies for greater participation of women in democratic governance, the Chair stressed the need for stakeholders to focus on what had proven successful in post-conflict countries. She emphasized the need to achieve a 30 per cent critical mass or 50/50 equality in the representation of women in parliaments and the urgency of enlisting the media as a partner in women's quest for greater participation.

The Chair concluded that there was a need for both men and women to be proactive in searching for solutions to ensure that women were included in policy decisions at all levels of government. OSAA would continue to support efforts to broaden female participation in democratic governance through advocacy, programme planning and development. In addition to the convening of this Expert Group Meeting, OSAA was undertaking various initiatives to disseminate information on women's political participation, particularly in post-conflict countries, and to highlight gender issues in its work, particularly in the reports of the Secretary-General and in its own publications and work in collaboration with relevant departments, agencies and other stakeholders.

The statement of the Co-Chair emphasized the need for experts to share their experiences of successful measures to strengthen women's participation in, and influence over, their governments and social institutions. It was important to formulate specific strategies to fill knowledge gaps in the area of governance based on lessons learned. Countries with rigid gender systems would face problems of good governance and it was therefore essential to move the women's agenda forward in partnership with men.

She stressed the pivotal role of the media in moving the democratic agenda forward in Africa and the need for all stakeholders to consolidate their partnership with the media in order to ensure that women were fully engaged in the political process.

The Co-Chair concluded that African women had been strong partners in promoting gender equality in democratic governance and had actively participated in numerous initiatives that had met with varying degrees of success as States struggled to jettison deeply embedded exclusionary political ideologies. As a result of that strong engagement, Africa had made significant progress in female representation, even though in the majority of countries women's entry into the political arena had remained relatively limited. It was therefore important to identify strategies that could be successfully adopted by many countries in the region to remove barriers and thereby improve the level of women's representation and participation in democratic governance.

### **III. Presentation of discussion papers**

The plenary meeting began with a presentation of the overview paper by Shireen Hassim, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Studies of the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, followed by the presentation of a country study on the Mano River Region by Bineta Diop, Executive Director and founder of Femmes Africa Solidarité. A country study on Rwanda was then presented by John Mutamba, Gender Specialist in the Office of the Prime Minister of Rwanda. This was followed by a country study on Namibia presented by Eunice Ipinge, Coordinator of the Gender Training and Research Programme of the University of Namibia. Finally, the conclusions of an expert panel on the role of the media in promoting gender equality in democratic governance was presented. The full texts of these papers are available on the OSAA website ([www.un.org/africa/osaa/](http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/)).

The authors of the overview paper and country studies focused on key topics, such as strategies and obstacles for increasing the participation of women in governance, special challenges to women's participation in post-conflict countries, and increasing the commitment and political will of governments. They also discussed barriers to women's participation at the local level and the role of the international community and the media as catalysts for shaping and strengthening social values and attitudes towards democratic governance and greater participation of women. The panel on the media focused on the role of the media in promoting gender equality in democratic governance and discussed obstacles and ways and means of overcoming them.

The major arguments presented in the above-mentioned papers may be summarized as follows:

#### *Overview paper*

In her presentation of the overview paper, the author, Shireen Hassim, took a critical look at the policy agenda for improving the current unsatisfactory level of women's participation in the political process in various countries in Africa and discussed strategies for increasing women's participation in decision-making.

She pointed out that in societies in transition, and particularly those in conflict, women had played a diversity of roles and, alongside men, were both agents in conflicts as well as vital participants in building, managing and sustaining peace. Unfortunately, conflict resolution agencies had often neglected the history of women's contributions to civil society and the particular attributes and interests that women could bring to political processes. The author suggested an increase in women's representation in peacekeeping operations, the introduction of a gender perspective in peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, and the integration of gender mainstreaming into all programmes.

The author discussed ways to extend the gains made in women's representation in national parliaments to the local government level. While attention had focused on the performance of national parliaments in reaching the 30 per cent and 50 per cent representation targets for women, representation at the local government level had been neglected in many countries. The author outlined various practical measures taken by women's organizations to ameliorate the current situation at the local level, such as the provision of training for women candidates and the convening of workshops to raise awareness of women's roles in decision-making.

The author noted that political parties in Africa had generally not been hospitable environments for women's participation and that women often remained subject to the goodwill and patronage of male elites. Women needed to play a genuine role in setting the agenda within political parties and not merely be token symbols of the 'progressive' character of political parties.

The author argued further that no democracy could survive for long without a vibrant and viable civil society that both monitored and challenged States and governments. Most societies emerging from war or authoritarianism faced significant problems of exclusion, inequality and underdevelopment. Without both human and infrastructural resources from outside, societies could not rebuild their social fabric and social capital. The role of national and international civil society was therefore vital in the reconstruction and transformation of unstable and vulnerable

States in which civil wars had depleted resources, destroyed the infrastructure and caused harm to the psychological state of the population.

She urged that much greater weight be given to bringing together civil society at the local, national and international levels in developing strategies to promote women's participation in peacebuilding. Those efforts should include assistance in sustaining networks of women political activists and promoting grassroots women's organizations that lobbied for gender equality. The author concluded that women's participation in setting priorities for policy and thus for national and local government spending was a key requirement for good governance.

### *Mano River Union paper*

Bineta Diop, the author of the Mano River Union paper, stated that her paper reviewed the major challenges to women's participation in the three West African countries of the Mano River Basin, namely Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and outlined solutions in the form of key policy options which were particularly useful for national policy makers and other stakeholders.

In her view, all stakeholders in society needed to be empowered and included in the political decision-making process in order to ensure the sustainability of the still fragile peace in the region. Women in the Mano River countries, particularly the women of Sierra Leone, had had an enormous impact on bringing the conflicts to an end, by pressuring the parties to make peace and move towards democratic cooperation. Their efforts had been critical in shaping both the formal and informal peace processes. She pointed out that the mobilization of a female political force during the peacemaking process had not automatically translated into greater participation of women in the post-conflict political bodies.

The author identified several major obstacles that prevented women from making their voices heard. Poverty was widespread throughout the Mano River region, and as long as women were mainly preoccupied with struggling to feed their families they would not be able to fully participate in political life. The central government could act as an advocate for the advancement of women by, for example, urging local leaders to let women have a say in political decision-making. That would be especially important in Sierra Leone, where participation of women in local government was not yet well developed.

The traditional role of women in caring for their families hampered their access to education and limited their opportunity to start small businesses or income-generating projects. It was important to ensure that women's needs were taken into account when building post-conflict societies and capacity-building activities were needed to empower women to become influential actors in new democracies. The author emphasized further that providing capacity-building activities to women's organizations was easier if those organizations belonged to a larger network, since that would facilitate the use of external expertise and support. An example of the benefits of a network was the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), which had played a significant role in capacity-building activities in all three Mano River countries.

The author concluded that governments, the international community, subregional networks and women's organizations of the Mano River region, must work towards the implementation of all

significant international instruments, particularly Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, which reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding and stressed the importance of their full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

### *Rwanda paper*

In the presentation of his paper on Rwanda, the author, John Mutamba, addressed the challenges, lessons learned and strategies for sustainability in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. While women in Rwanda had made substantial progress in increasing their political representation in parliament and other decision-making bodies of the government, obstacles to gender equality still remained. The author argued that Rwanda's policy on gender parity was well articulated, but had not been adequately translated into programmes and action.

He outlined some of the key challenges to greater women's participation, such as gender-based violence against women and young girls and the high illiteracy rates and low levels of general education among women. In various areas of governance it was therefore difficult to find women candidates with the appropriate academic qualifications. Negative gender stereotypes and a historically entrenched patriarchal structure also persisted. Rwandese men, particularly in rural areas, were often biased against the concept of women being capable of assuming positions of power. That patriarchal structure undermined the self-esteem and self-confidence of women and limited their potential to assume leadership positions.

Women's organizations also lacked funding, logistical support, technical capacity and personnel to function more effectively and many ministries, commissions and local government entities lacked sufficient expertise and authority in the promotion of gender parity.

The Government needed to demonstrate strong political will in promoting the participation of women in the political process and in improving gender advocacy, gender sensitization and training programmes. Rwanda should integrate gender training in national human resource development, strengthen affirmative actions for the economic empowerment and education of women, and train women in skills that would enable them to play their new roles more effectively.

### *Namibia paper*

Eunice Ipinge presented a country study on Namibia, which had emerged from a war of liberation against South Africa's apartheid regime. During the war, women were trained as soldiers and held senior management positions, especially in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and the military wing of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and its Women's Council, which was very influential in mobilizing women to play an active role in the liberation struggle. After the war, however, most women who participated in the struggle were not considered for employment, and few of them participated in the peace process and in the drafting of the national constitution.

The author pointed out that, although some women had become members of parliament and government and women headed some important departments in government and parastatal agencies, the total number was quite limited. Despite many impediments, however, including the lack of human and financial resources, the national 'gender machinery' consisting of the government structure, non-governmental organizations and women's wings in the mainstream political parties had progressed well.

Namibia had a combination of quota and proportional representation electoral systems, which had increased women's representation at the local level but not at the regional and national levels. Furthermore, despite the higher levels of participation of women at local levels, only a few women were mayors. The author suggested that women should launch campaigns to increase their representation at all levels of governance and support women's organizations in order to strengthen the gender equality lobby in civil society, promote gender awareness and launch gender sensitization campaigns.

Democratic governance was not possible when women's organizations were relatively weak and incapable of articulating and influencing national policies and processes. It was therefore necessary to revitalize and reactivate the national women's movement by supporting women's organizations and their role in political parties.

#### *Paper on the role of the media*

The media panel focused on the role of the media in promoting democracy and greater participation of women in decision-making. The panel emphasized that African countries needed to recognize the value of the media and its important role in analyzing conflict situations and assisting in peace processes. Reporting on conflicts should be neither partisan nor a simplistic record of events. It needed to take into account the role of women as both actors and victims in conflicts. That had been recognized by many internal and external agencies, and specific programmes had been developed, including training programmes for journalists working in war zones.

The panel stressed that the media should act as a responsible institution taking a positive and proactive role in supporting women in the democratic process and being responsive to women's issues. The media needed to re-evaluate its current programming, promote better programme content in its support of women and recruit more women for key positions.

A major challenge for the media was the lack of funding for effective programmes for women and the dearth of women staff, due to the lack of training of women in journalism and other relevant professions. Governments and civil society therefore needed to increase funding for the education and training of women journalists and to introduce effective programmes on women's issues.

#### **IV. Plenary discussion and adoption of recommendations**

The Chair thanked the presenters for their illuminating analyses and action-oriented policy recommendations and opened the floor for discussion.

The discussion focused on analyzing the progress achieved and challenges encountered in achieving gender equality in post-conflict countries in Africa. A number of action-oriented recommendations were made to the major stakeholders, namely governments, donors and the international community, civil society and the media.

From the review and discussion of the papers presented at the Expert Group Meeting, a number of critical issues emerged. Firstly, participants explored the fundamental issue of whether governance could be democratic if women were not fairly represented in the decision-making process. It was recognized further that African governments and the international community had begun to value the vital role played by women in post-conflict peacebuilding. While it was acknowledged that there had been a striking increase in the number of women in public decision-making roles in Africa at regional, subregional and local levels in recent years, there was a need to go beyond the mere number of women in public decision-making positions and evaluate their actual influence in policy-making.

Many participants acknowledged that women's involvement in democratic governance had made a significant contribution to building peace and promoting development. That highlighted the importance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which mandated the participation of women in peace processes and acknowledged that awareness of the importance of including women in peace and reconstruction processes had grown substantially since the adoption of the resolution. Participants appreciated that United Nations peacekeeping operations had begun to integrate a gender perspective in their work programmes and hoped that the newly established Peacebuilding Commission would explicitly include core gender issues in its mandate, in particular the promotion of gender equality in decision-making and governance.

Finally, participants discussed the critical need to find innovative approaches to removing the practical constraints to the participation of women in political life. Many participants pointed out that sufficient funding for training of women leaders, legislators and journalists was urgently required to enable women to move away from traditional female roles or to combine such roles with participation at the decision-making levels within their governments. Participants also examined security and safety issues, including mobility constraints faced by women, and proposed practical measures for overcoming some of the obstacles to their participation in politics.

The discussion of papers in the plenary session was followed by the presentation and discussion of the draft recommendations. After a lively debate, consensus was reached and the following set of recommendations adopted:

## **Main recommendations for national stakeholders and the international community**

### **1. Governments and local authorities at the national and local levels should:**

- Ensure gender balance in all bodies created as part of the design or implementation of the constitutional, political, legislative and electoral laws and regulations; to that end, special measures, including affirmative action to advance the rights of women, should be explored;
- Clearly articulate a robust women's agenda which should include literacy, health, income-generating activities for women, micro-credit, education for children, prevention of violence, security, gender justice and human rights;
- Facilitate the establishment of action-oriented women's caucus groups on specific issues;
- Support women in their campaigns and improve their capabilities through training in skills related to political participation, such as communication, negotiation and legislation;
- Demonstrate a political will to promote gender equality by playing a catalytic role in gender mainstreaming across all sectors of government, in collaboration with civil society, community-based organizations and development partners;
- Develop effective accountability mechanisms at all levels of government, particularly through the introduction of relevant gender indicators in budgetary processes;
- Develop activities and build partnerships with regional bodies and the international community to promote greater participation by women in democratic governance;
- Adopt culturally relevant gender sensitization programmes that establish a link between equity, development and good governance through available best practices.

### **2. Non-governmental organizations should:**

- Document the experiences of women ex-combatants and identify practical measures to reintegrate them into society and to help them overcome their trauma;
- Organize public consultations and lobby for women to participate and hold decision-making positions in all committees and commissions, including drafting committees, during the drafting of the constitution and the process of legal reform;
- Promote gender-awareness campaigns to develop an understanding among both women and men that women's participation is a key component of good governance;

- Identify, train and support qualified women to participate in the political process and adopt strategies to expand educational outreach campaigns;
- Encourage women leaders to play a key role in mobilizing rural women for mainstream political activities, for example by facilitating the participation of women from different political backgrounds in elections and encouraging them to contribute to policies and legislation;
- Launch campaigns to increase women's representation and support grassroots women's organizations with a view to strengthening the gender equality lobby in civil society;
- Develop partnerships by actively mobilizing progressive men as partners for the promotion of gender equality and encouraging traditional and religious leaders to become agents of change in society.

### **3. The International community/international organizations should:**

- Establish an international funding mechanism with the participation of the European Union and the Group of Eight (G8) to promote the participation of women in democratic governance, particularly in post-conflict situations;
- Fund studies by women's movements and civil society on experiences in post-conflict countries and lessons learned; they should also share their knowledge through a network, such as the OSAA, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) or Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) websites;
- Begin efforts as early as possible in the peace process, including during the peace negotiations, to support political participation by women in post-conflict reconstruction;
- Employ female mediators and facilitators who recognize, *inter alia*, the unique concerns and issues of women in peace processes in order to ensure that gender issues are integrated into the mediating process;
- Support capacity-building to enable women to engage in political processes more effectively, by helping them, for example, to create a vision and an agenda, identify critical campaign issues, and develop resource mobilization skills;
- Examine the relative merits of affirmative action programmes, proportional representation and/or quota systems as tools for promoting the participation of women in political structures;
- Identify gaps in programming and areas for future activity, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for women and children and gender-sensitive accountability systems in new governance arrangements;

- Ensure that women's issues are effectively mainstreamed into the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission and the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office; establish a gender focus office within the Department of Political Affairs; encourage and upgrade the Office of the Gender Adviser within DPKO;
- Monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); create a template based on best practices in the three Ps (peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding) to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

**4. International civil society organizations should:**

- Develop innovative approaches to address some of the obstacles to political participation by women, such as security, mobility and communications constraints;
- Support activities designed to promote women's voice in society and to heighten their political engagement as voters, media commentators and civil society actors;
- Promote greater participation by women in peace negotiations in post-conflict situations and help increase the number of women in politics by providing advice on gender-sensitive constitutional drafts, training and capacity-building for women's associations and women political candidates, and training for politicians in accountability tools such as gender budgets;
- Establish a code of conduct for all participants, including women involved in peace negotiations, to encourage them to be accountable to their constituencies;
- Provide women with the physical space and an appropriate forum within which to address their differences, arrive at a common agenda, and build a constituency to support their demands for political participation throughout the peace processes and transition periods;
- Support and foster domestic civil society organizations with a view to strengthening their involvement in the consolidation of women's political rights;
- Provide training for members of electoral commissions on international laws and standards on gender equality issues.

**5. Regional and subregional bodies should:**

- Continue to strengthen regional structures that promote gender equality and the exchange of information and that share good practices and capacity-building methodologies;

- Broker peace processes to encourage women's participation by creating an environment that is receptive to women's concerns and by encouraging peace process facilitators and delegations to welcome women's participation;
- Promote transnational collaboration and networking on matters of gender, peace, democracy and economic empowerment for women;
- Convene regular meetings of national machineries to promote networking and the sharing of experiences and good practices on gender issues; help establish national machineries where they do not currently exist.

**6. The national and international media should:**

- Openly discuss the commitment of governments to standards, such as affirmative action plans and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the General Assembly in December 1979; they should hold governments accountable when they fail to meet their commitments;
- Combat the violation of women's rights in popular culture, such as violence against women, the lack of rights for widows, and genital mutilation, by exposing and dispelling false and unfavourable attitudes and practices;
- Create awareness within the larger society of the vital role of women in nation-building;
- Recruit and train more gender-sensitive journalists in order to give prominence to women's issues.

**ANNEXES**

Annex I : Aide-mémoire

Annex II : List of participants

Annex III : Programme of work

## ANNEX I

**Aide-mémoire**  
**Expert Group Meeting on Democratic Governance in Africa:**  
**Strategies for Greater Participation of Women**  
**6 - 8 December 2005**  
**Arusha, Tanzania**

The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa is convening an Expert Group Meeting on “Democratic Governance in Africa: Strategies for Greater Participation of Women”, to be held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 6 to 8 December 2005.

The promotion of democratic governance and the empowerment of women are key priorities of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), whose implementation of programme activities is supported by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

The purpose of the Expert Group Meeting will be to deepen the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders to promoting gender equality in democratic governance with a particular focus on post-conflict countries. The main outcome of the Meeting will be a set of recommendations to advance women’s participation in the political process at the national and local levels on the basis of the evaluation and analyses of country case studies presented to participants for discussion at the Meeting.

### **1. Background**

Throughout the world women face obstacles to their participation in politics. These barriers are found in the prevailing social and economic regimes, as well as in existing political structures. Women’s increased involvement in the democratic process is essential to broadening and deepening the commitment of the societies to democratic governance. The appointment of women to decision-making positions in the executive branch and the election of more female representatives to parliaments would result in a more balanced gender perspective in the national decision-making processes.

Despite the increase in recent years in the proportion of women parliamentarians, the marginalization of women in most African countries remains real. This is particularly evident in countries emerging from conflict, where political negotiations leading to transitional governments are largely confined to the military sectors without sufficient input from women. In view of the limited involvement of women in the decision-making process in most countries emerging from protracted conflicts, both the national authorities and the international community need to make major efforts to support the strengthening of women’s participation and influence in their governments and social institutions.

In this regard, NEPAD plays an important role. One of its long-term objectives is to promote the role of women in all activities. Currently, as a programme of the African Union, NEPAD

promotes the full and effective integration of women in political and socio-economic development. Through its Democracy and Governance Initiative, NEPAD aims to strengthen the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights and the rule of law in participating countries. NEPAD recognizes the central role played by women in promoting democracy, good governance and economic reconstruction and acknowledges that women should contribute on an equal basis to the political and socio-economic development of African countries.

Other specific reforms under NEPAD target administrative and civil services, parliamentary oversight, judicial systems, participatory decision-making and combating corruption. The Partnership's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was established to monitor the progress of African countries towards these goals. Since it was established in March 2003, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has acted as the focal point for advocacy at the global level for NEPAD programmes and policies. ([www.un.org/africa/osaa](http://www.un.org/africa/osaa))

The priorities of NEPAD are consistent with the targets and indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. NEPAD and the MDGs thus constitute an analytical framework for improving and implementing gender-inclusive programmes and policies by African governments.

The Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 reaffirmed that the persistent exclusion of women from formal politics raises a number of specific questions regarding the achievement of broad-based democratic transformation. The absence of women from political decision-making has a negative impact on the entire process of democratization. It undermines the fundamental concept of a democratic form of governance, which assumes that the right to vote and to be elected will be equally available to women and men. Many of the countries emerging from conflict in Africa have an opportunity to redress this imbalance from inception, and thus to rapidly reap the benefits of the social and economic potential of women to achieve the goals of democracy and development.

Increasing the level of female representation and participation in decision-making bodies in post conflict countries in Africa requires well-developed strategies as well as reliable data on which methodologies have worked successfully in different countries with different political systems. Many governments, organizations and groups, including political parties, have recognized the need to actively address the participation of women in political decision-making.

## **II. Objectives**

The key objectives of the Expert Group Meeting are to analyze the progress achieved and the impediments to gender equality in the political process in selected African countries, including post-conflict countries and, based on lessons learned, to develop a set of action-oriented recommendations presented by participants. In addition, the meeting aims to promote dialogue between government authorities, academics, media and other experts to address systemic problems, in particular the need to increase the representation of women at all levels of governance.

The following are some of the specific issues to be addressed by the participants at the Meeting, at which a number of resource persons will make presentations :

- Review of case studies on strategies for increasing women’s participation in governance;
- Evaluation of specific factors that facilitate the participation of women in transitional and new governments and identification of measures to involve women in the political process, with particular emphasis on the peacebuilding and reconstruction phases (i.e. coalition-building, constitution drafting, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and war-affected communities);
- Identification of practical measures to be undertaken by governments, donors, the international community, civil society and other stakeholders (awareness-raising, funding for capacity-building and training of women leaders, monitoring of the implementation of international agreements, public debate on discriminatory policies and practices against women) to support and generate the political will and a firm commitment to promote the advancement of women and the goals of gender equality;
- Assessment of women’s participation in political decision-making at the local level (i.e. implementation of pro-active gender parity policies, such as quotas for women in local governments) as a springboard to greater participation by women at the national level; and
- Encouragement of grassroots involvement and growth of independent women’s organizations (i.e. lobbying for constitutional and legislative reforms).
- Role of the media in fostering unity and inclusiveness and in promoting greater participation by women in the democratic process.

### **III. Profile of participants**

The Meeting will be attended by 15 experts, including members of parliament, policy makers, representatives of political parties and non-governmental organizations, academics, members of the media, representatives of regional organizations and staff members of United Nations organizations. The participants include gender specialists, both male and female, representatives of women’s political movements and community activists.

### **IV. Documentation**

The documentation for the Meeting will include:

- An overview paper commissioned by OSAA outlining the major issues to be discussed;
- Case studies prepared by experts (Rwanda, Mano River Region and Namibia); and

- Papers prepared by participants.

The Expert Group Meeting will be conducted in English. The documentation will be in English.

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## ANNEX II

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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## ANNEX III

### DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: STRATEGIES FOR GREATER PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN Arusha, Tanzania 6 – 8 December 2005

#### PROGRAMME OF WORK

Tuesday, 6 December 2005

#### Opening Session

- 9:00 – 9:10 Introduction by moderator: *Ms. Cheryl Larsen*
- 9:10 – 9:30 Opening remarks by Co-Chairs: *Ms. Cheryl Larsen, Ms. Wariara Mbugua*
- 9:30 – 9:45 Presentation of overview paper  
**Presenter:** *Dr. Shireen Hassim*
- 9:45 – 10:45 Discussion: *What are the key strategies for and obstacles to increasing the participation of women in governance?*  
**Chair:** *Ms. Cheryl Larsen*
- 10:45 – 11:00 Tea/coffee break
- 11:00 – 11:15 Rwanda case study  
**Presenter:** *Mr. John Mutamba*
- 11:15 – 12:30 Discussion: *What are the special challenges to women's participation in post-conflict countries?*  
**Chair:** *Dr. Judith May-Parker*
- 12:30 – 2:00 Lunch
- 2:00 – 2:15 Namibia case study  
**Presenter:** *Ms. Eunice Ipinge*
- 2:15 – 3:45 Discussion: *Increasing government commitment and political will*  
**Chair:** *Mr. Felix Masha*
- 3:45 – 4:00 Tea/coffee break
- 4:00 – 5:30 Discussion of key questions and summing-up  
**Chair:** *Ms. Wariara Mbugua*
- 6:00 – 7:00 Cocktail reception

### **Wednesday, 7 December 2005**

- 9:00 – 9:15 Mano River Region case study  
**Presenter:** *Ms. Bineta Diop*
- 9:15–10:45 Discussion: *Barriers to women’s participation at the local level*  
**Chair:** *Ms. Janet Narh*
- 10:45 – 11:00 Tea/coffee break
- 11:00 – 12:30 Media Panel: *The media as a positive force*  
**Chair:** *Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh.*
- 12:30 – 2:00 Lunch break
- 2:00 – 3:00 UN agency perspectives  
**Presenters :** *Ms. Anne-Marie Goetz, Ms. Margaret Vogt, Ms. Fernanda Tavares*
- 2:45 – 4:00 Discussion: *Country perspectives on what the international community can and should do*  
**Chair:** *Ambassador Ahmed Hagag*
- 4:00 – 4:15 Tea/coffee break
- 4:15 – 5:30 Discussion of key questions and summing-up  
**Chair:** *Ms. Margaret Vogt*

### **Thursday, 8 December 2005**

- 9:00 – 12:30 Discussion of draft report  
**Chair:** *Ms. Wariara Mbugua*
- 12:30 – 2:30 Lunch break
- 2:30-3:30 Adoption of conclusions and recommendations for final report
- 4:00 – 5:00 Closure of meeting: *Ms. Cheryl Larsen*

### **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>APRM</b>	African Peer Review Mechanism
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CAPDU</b>	Coordination, Advocacy and Programme Development Unit of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>DAW</b>	Division for the Advancement of Women
<b>DESA</b>	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>DPKO</b>	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EDF</b>	European Development Fund
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FAS</b>	Femmes Africa Solidarité
<b>FID</b>	Financial Investment Decision
<b>G8</b>	Group of Eight
<b>HIPC</b>	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
<b>HSGIC</b>	Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee
<b>MARWOPNET</b>	Mano River Women's Peace Network
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>NEPAD</b>	New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations

<b>OSAA</b>	Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
<b>OSAGI</b>	The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues on Advancement of Women
<b>PLAN</b>	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SWAPO</b>	South West Africa People's Organization
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNECA</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children Fund