



Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Margot Wallström

***AFRICAN LEADERSHIP KEY TO SUCCESS IN FIGHTING CONFLICT-RELATED
SEXUAL VIOLENCE***

(New York, 31 March 2011)

Having addressed the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council on 28 March, I welcome its session dedicated to the issue of women and children affected by armed conflict and the strong communiqué adopted by the Council. This affirms that the plight of women and children represents a fundamental peace and security concern which belongs on the agenda of the AU Peace and Security Council.

Conflict-related sexual violence is not exclusively an African problem. The scourge of sexual violence traverses all of geography and history. But without the political leadership of Africa, we will not succeed in eradicating this international crime. It is essential that the commitment expressed by the AU Peace and Security Council also translates into concrete actions.

I welcome the decision by the African Union to appoint an AU Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security. I pledge my support for such a Representative, who will serve as a natural point of contact to strengthen AU-UN partnership in this regard. Some practical areas for such cooperation include ensuring that sexual violence is reflected consistently in curricula of the major peacekeeping training institutes in Africa, and in the training programmes of all African troop-contributing countries. Another element is the deployment of advisers to AU peacekeeping and political missions to ensure that women, peace and security concerns are consistently reflected in monitoring and reporting, AU mediation efforts, and in peace processes and agreements.

I also welcome the AU Peace and Security Council's support for more women as Special Envoys/Representatives and its support for women's involvement in peace processes.

In order to ensure concerted action, I strongly encourage the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council to include conflict-related sexual violence as an item on the agenda of their annual meeting.

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