



Joint Statement on the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325

The African Peer Review Mechanism and the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa call for greater inclusion of women in peace and security processes

(New York/Pretoria): 26 October 2020 – The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) have called for greater inclusion of women in peace and security processes if Africa is to meet its development aspirations and enjoy meaningful stability.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, OSAA and the APRM, are advocating for the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Africa, with women's full, equal and meaningful participation in sustainable development goals (SDGs) planning and domestication at the local, national and regional levels through the effective monitoring and evaluation of SDG 16 within the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs (2020-2030).

The heads of the two entities, Ms. Cristina Duarte from OSAA and Prof. Eddy Maloka from the APRM, acknowledged progress made towards women's inclusion to date, but emphasized that more still needs to be done. UNSCR 1325 was adopted in October 2000 and exclusively recognizes women's right to have a leading role in achieving international peace and security.

Among the milestones achieved by African countries in the last 20 years, women's representation in national parliaments has increased, especially with the African Union (AU) 50:50 parity campaign and the AU gender policy in 2010. Rwanda has exceeded this target, with 64% of parliamentary seats occupied by women, followed by the Seychelles, Senegal, South Africa and Namibia¹ (from 40-44%). However, the share of parliamentary seats at the regional average remains low at only 22.4% for women and 77.6% for men, with a slightly lower average for ministerial positions occupied by women.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, governance, gender, peace and development have become more interlinked than ever before. The pandemic has scaled back gains, with women and girls being disproportionately affected by its socio-economic impact. A recent report by the APRM Secretariat on Africa's response to COVID-19, sets women's inclusivity in governance, and the fight against gender-based violence (GBV), as some of the urgent prerequisites to curb the pandemic. Further, providing skills, resources and funds for women, especially in fragile and conflict areas, is likely to help avoid further human catastrophes and accelerate recovery and building back better.

“One of the significant lessons learned from the novel coronavirus is that societies led by women in leadership display a sense of transparency and accountability, essential to mitigate disasters,” Ms. Duarte said, while commending the leadership of the 13 African female health ministers who are leading the continent's efforts to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic at national level.

¹ AU Commission, the African Gender Scorecard, available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/31260-doc-2015_auc_african_gender_scorecard_en.pdf.

Despite the notable achievements by African women, their contribution to the four pillars of UNSCR 1325, namely conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding, still needs to be strengthened. For instance, in 16 African peace mediation processes between 1992 to 2011, only two had 5% female signatories, and only three of 16 processes had female led mediators, according to the AU Special Envoy on women, peace, and security. In addition, African countries are lagging behind in developing or adapting National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325. The APRM study on "Governance, Gender and Peacebuilding" reveals that in some African regions, only a quarter of countries have NAPs on UNSCR 1325.

"The conflicts in Africa necessitate women's involvement in the mentioned four pillars, especially conflict prevention. Strengthening the role of women is crucial for the delivery of the SDGs, in line with the goals and aspirations of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," Prof. Maloka said.

Although the state-based conflicts slightly declined, the rise of non-state armed conflicts during the last decade imposes severe implications for the African regional security. By 2018, Africa had 14 of the top 20 most fragile states worldwide. Adding to poverty, inequality, and social challenges in many African countries, mobilising youth – including females – to extremist and terrorist groups became a phenomenal trend.

APRM and OSAA applauded UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's Appeal for a Global Ceasefire and implored AU, UN organs and related bodies to assist African countries with necessary funds to raise women's skills, resources, and infrastructure in fragile and conflict states in Africa. This is in line with OSAA's mandate on global advocacy on Africa's strategic priorities.

The two entities urged AU Members States, Civil Society Organizations, the private sector, academia and multilateral organisations to strengthen their collaboration towards fostering the adoption of gender-governance standards; Strengthening capacity and women's resilience; Disseminating best practices, and Monitoring implementation of governance targets through the effective implementation of [SDG 5](#) and [SDG 16](#).

For more information, please contact:

Liziwe Selana, Head of Communications APRM on Liziwe.Masilela@aprm-au.org

Matilda Moyo, Public Information Officer, OSAA on moyo1@un.org

Francois Charlier, Public Information Officer, OSAA on charlier@un.org

Note to Editors:

2020 is historical as it commemorates the 75th Anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, and the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. It is also the African Union's year of Silencing the Guns, the year of maturity for the African Women Decade (2010-2020) and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing 25+).

Therefore, 2020 is, without a doubt, a year for the celebration of women and peace. This year gives prominence to key instruments and SDGs entailing goals such as: SDG 5 on Gender Equality, SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions. SDG 16 meets Aspirations three and four of Agenda 2063, which aim to promote "good governance and the rule of law in Africa" and achieve "A Peaceful and Secure Africa". In the same manner, it is worth noting that the Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 calls for "An Africa Whose Development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, especially its Women and Youth, and caring for Children."

Over the past two decades, African Women achieved various milestones of empowerment at political and economic levels. These achievements are alluded to by the African Union Constitutive Act (2000), the Maputo Protocol (2003), and the Kampala Protocol (2009). The framework also comprises of The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEOA) (2004), which led to the appointment of Women Special Envoys and The Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance (2002). The latter established the APRM as a tool for peer-review and sharing best experiences to promote good governance among AU countries.

As an early warning tool, the APRM as Africa's home-grown organisation for promoting good governance was designated at the 30th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in January 2018, in Addis Ababa. In March 2020, inspired by the AU theme of Silencing the Guns, the 914th meeting of the Peace and Security Council reiterated the role of the APRM towards the Peace and Security Agenda. The APRM coordinates with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the Africa Governance Architecture (AGA) towards promoting the Governance, Peace and Security Agenda while encouraging a greater women's participation in the process.