



## PRESS RELEASE

### **AU/UN successfully completed a joint High-Level Solidarity Mission to South Sudan, Chad and Niger**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16 July 2018:** The African Union and the United Nations, with the support of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, and with the participation of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, H.E. Bineta Diop, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, H.E. Amina J. Mohammed; the Executive Director of UN Women, H.E. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, H.E. Bience Gawanas successfully completed a joint United-Nations – African Union High-Level Solidarity Mission to South Sudan, Chad and Niger, from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, together with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E. Ms. Margot Wallström.

The joint UN-AU-Sweden visit highlighted women's participation and leadership in peace, security and development in the three countries, with an additional focus on zero tolerance for gender-based violence and climate security challenges in the Sahel. The Joint solidarity mission emphasized the importance to bridge existing gaps between policy-making and programs on the ground. In this spirit, the delegation conducted several field visits in Wau and Malakal (South Sudan); in Bol (Chad) and in Maradi (Niger), where they engaged first-hand with women, youth and populations affected by conflict.

**In South Sudan on 3-4 July,** the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop and the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, met with the President, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit and Transitional Government Ministers. The meeting shared the unified position of the United Nations and the African Union in support of the peace process and protection of human rights. The delegation further engaged with civil society organizations and women's organizations. They listened to women leaders, refugees and those affected by the conflict. The delegation continued to Wau and Malakal, where they engaged with Protection of Civilians and IDPs sites. The AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) visited Malakal in April 2018 and met with local government officials and the Ceasefire Monitoring team on the ground. The AUPSC released a statement condemning the dire conditions, and called for the Cessation of Hostilities to be observed. The joint visit helped in reinforcing the messaging for peace and for a lasting solution to the crisis.

**In Chad on 5-6 July**, the tripartite African Union, United Nations, Sweden delegation held bilateral meetings with authorities in N'Djamena, including with the President, H.E. Idriss Déby Itno, and first lady H.E. Madam Hinda Déby Itno. They also met with women leaders and civil society organizations and amplified their voices with government's representatives. On the second day, they travelled near the Lac Chad Basin in *Bol*, where they met with communities adapting to climate change and with religious, youth and women's groups preventing radicalization and violent extremism.

**In Niger on 7-8 July**, the tripartite UN-AU-Sweden delegation held bilateral meetings with authorities in Niamey, including with the President, H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou, parliamentarians and Members of Government in Niamey. They engaged with a dynamic group of AWLN (African Women Leaders Network) group and echoed women's call for leadership. Women's group called for enhanced participation of women in the political and development spheres. Under the leadership of the first Lady of Niger, H.E. Lalla Malika Issoufou who committed to raise greater attention to the dire consequences of child marriage, the joint delegation visited a health center caring for women and girls affected by fistula, in a region where the challenge is dominant.

The joint UN-AU Delegation was accompanied on different legs of the trip by senior AU and UN Officials, including H.E. Ambassador Prof. Joram Mukama Biswaro, Special Representative of the AU Chairperson to South Sudan; H.E. Madame Zaina Nyiramata, Head of the AU Liaison Office in Chad and the President of the Pan-African Parliament Women's Caucus & AWLN Member H.E. Ms. Haidara Aichata Cisse; Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the Executive Director of the UN Population Fund, Natalia Kanem; the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, Bience Gawanas and the UN Secretary-General Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten. Members of the "African Women Leaders Network" based in South Sudan, Chad and Niger also participated in the activities of the joint mission, to resonate women's voices for transformative change, adopted through the Network's "Call to Action."

The AU Special Envoy and the UN Deputy Secretary-General were back in New York on 9 July. On 10 July, they jointly briefed the Security Council together on the topic of women, peace and security in the Sahel. H.E. Ms. Bineta Diop reaffirmed the commitment and leadership of the African Union Commission and of its Chairperson, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, in bolstering the gender perspective in all peace, security and development strategies.

The Council debate was led under the presidency of HE Minister Ms. Wallström, with Sweden holding the Council's rotating presidency in July. The AU Peace and Security Council will also be briefed.

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**For further publications on the joint mission:**

‘Nexus’ of security and climate change impacts fisherwomen on Lake Chad  
<https://news.un.org/en/audio/2018/07/1014022>

Fisherwomen of Lake Chad show optimism in face of multiple challenges  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/07/1014002>

Women’s leadership 'critical' to future of Niger  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/07/1014152>

**For more information on the UN Security Council Briefing:**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13414.doc.htm>).

**For further information:**

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