Strengthening the role of women in silencing the guns in Africa:
Women, Peace and Security forum gives emphasis to sustainable peace and development

Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, 29 May 2019; A historic consultative meeting aimed at enhancing women leadership in peace processes and advancing the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, to meaningfully contribute to silencing the guns in the continent for sustainable peace and development, has concluded.

Held under the theme, “Enhancing the role of Regional Women, Peace and Security Forums to silence the guns in Africa through implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa”, the meeting identified innovative approaches to leapfrog the establishment of WPS networks in the Continent, including utilization of modern communication tools, physical and online platform with a WPS App. The forum was also an opportunity to reiterate the call to member states that have not adopted WPS National Action Plans (NAPs) to do so with optimism of increasing the actions plans from the current 25, to a possible two-thirds of the continent, by October 2020.
AU Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security, H.E. Mme Bineta Diop noted that the meeting was crucial as part of the series of activities launched this year, to fast track and strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution for the impactful realization of Agenda 2063 flagship project on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. Also of significance, was the hosting of the meeting in Burkina Faso, in what the Special Envoy described as a reflection of AU’s support to the country, following recent terror attacks. “We are here for a reason. Despite its traditionally peaceful environment Burkina Faso is, lately, not spared of extremists’ attacks. This is the time to be here, to show solidarity with our sisters, people and Government of Burkina Faso towards silencing the guns,” she stated.

Similarly, Burkina Faso’s Minister of Women Affairs, National Solidarity and the Family, H.E. Hélène Marie Laurence Ilboudo Marchal, emphasized the need for synergy among stakeholders’ efforts towards preventive measures, and tackling the root causes of poverty, youth unemployment and violation of human rights and justice. She noted, “I would like to assert the connection that, with the help of all, and driven by the spirit of solidarity and sharing, we will strengthen the role of women as a real bridge for the promotion of peace, security and social justice.”

On her part, Amb. Hadiza Mustafa, Peace, Security and Governance Advisor to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki, reiterated the African Union’s commitment towards the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment and advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. “The contribution of women on the peace tables and the overall implementation of the objectives linked to WPS, should not only be considered a role of women, but a duty,” she added.

On behalf of the development partners, Mr. Audun Fostvedt-Mills, Deputy Head of Mission of the Permanent Representative of Norway to the African Union, highlighted the need for inclusive and evidence based approach, in evaluating achievements and action plans towards the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa, and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

The meeting brought together, Regional Women, Peace and Security Forums, the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, Regional Mechanisms, civil society organizations, centres of excellence on Women, Peace and Security, experts and partners working to enhance the role and leadership of women in peace processes in Africa.

Organized by the African Union Commission, through the office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and
Security, in collaboration with the Government of Burkina Faso, the meeting follows the launching of the Continental Result Framework (CRF) earlier this year. The framework is an evaluation and monitoring tool on the implementation of the WPS agenda in the Continent. The meeting was also held in the backdrop of the upcoming 20th Anniversary of the United Nation’s Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women Peace and Security.

For further information, please contact

Samrawit Tassew Mekuria, Communication and Advocacy Officer, AUC Office of the Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security, samrawittm@africa-union.org, Tel +251937937664

Robert O. K’odingo, Communications Officer – Silencing the Guns in Africa, kodingor@africa-union.org, Tel +25472012194

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission I E-mail: DIC@african-union.org I Web Site: www.au.int I Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

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