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BUREAU DE L'ENVOYEE SPECIALE  
DU PRESIDENT DE LA COMMISSION DE L'UNION AFRICAINE  
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STATEMENT BY THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION ON  
WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY, H.E. MME BINETA DIOP

**United Nations Security Council Open Debate on Women,  
Peace and Security, Presided by the delegation of the  
Russian Federation  
New York, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2020**

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**Mr. President,**

The African Union Commission commend the distinguished delegation of the Russian Federation to the United Nations for convening this open debate as we commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of landmark Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

We also commend the United Nations Secretary-General for his report on the issue, which captures the progress made on the role of women in securing peace and security, while outspokenly calling

on Member States to step up efforts on **financing and on the implementation of the agenda.**

The African Union stands on the profound conviction that the WPS framework, through UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and subsequent resolutions, remains a strong framework, which guides our global efforts to build more peaceful and sustainable societies.

Earlier this month, the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) held its annual Open session on Women, Peace and Security, reaffirming its commitment to the advancement of the WPS Agenda. The session serves as the platform to analyze the annual report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the implementation of the WPS Agenda, based on the Continental Results Framework (CRF) for monitoring and reporting adopted by PSC 2018.

Africa has now 30 countries, representing 54.5% of AU Member States that have adopted NAPs. Member States are at different stages in the adoption of National Action Plans. There are 19 countries that have First Generation NAPs, 8 with Second generation and 3 with Third Generation NAPs.

The Continent has also Six (6) Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms that have adopted Regional Action Plans.

However, despite the existence of advanced instruments, implementation continues to lag behind: Only 22% of parliamentarians are women while only 23% of African ministers are women.

Another major challenge that continues to constrain the implementation is the allocation of limited resources to gender

machineries. Only two Member States provided data on the proportion of their budget allocated to WPS in 2019.

The persistence of these challenges calls for a reinvigorated approach, coalescing our efforts to accelerate the delivery on our commitments. AUC is scaling up actions to promote women's participation in conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution. It is in this context, that the Commission launched the Network of Women in Mediation and Preventive Diplomacy "Femwise-Africa" to enhance the role of women in mediation. In the same vein, the AUC and the United Nations, through UN Women and the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, have joined efforts to support women's leadership in the transformation of Africa, building on the nexus between peace, security and development with the establishment of "African Women Leaders Network". These initiatives were recognized in UN Security Council Resolution 2457.

Under the AWLN umbrella, the UN and AUC women leaders have carried out Joint Solidarity Missions to raise the voices of women in conflict affected countries or in transition and bring to the forefront their actions. The outcomes of our joint solidarity missions were submitted to PSC and UNSC and have clearly shown that violence against women continue unabated, including the use of women and girls as suicide bombers, as seen in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin. Furthermore, female peacekeepers have called for gender sensitive strategies to create conducive conditions for enhanced participation in peace support operations and effective deployment in active services, and not support roles.

### **Mr. President**

Despite our strong and continued engagements to ensure women's meaningful participation, the global COVID-19 pandemic has tested governments, women and other peacebuilders. It has added yet another layer of risk and complexity to conflicts. It has also further widened gendered inequalities and threatens to undermine

human rights. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbates poverty, inequalities and gender-based violence, while increasing vulnerability by impeding on people's access to employment, food and other critical resources with effects on women and girls, threatening all efforts led on the peacebuilding front.

Faced with the many challenges brought by the pandemic, Women in Peace and Security in Africa and across the world have shown resilience in their undertakings and determination **to ensure that this invisible enemy does not erode the gains made over the last two decades.**

**Mr. President,**

I wish to end my remarks with few recommendations:

**Firstly,** Member States need to allocate higher proportions of national budget to WPS Agenda and integrate it in National Development Plans to enhance accountability and scale up delivery on their commitments.

**Secondly,** COVID-19 has demonstrated once more that women are at the forefront of responding to essential needs of communities and peoples in the face of crisis and disruptions. Women organizations must be part and parcel of all undertakings to accelerate the implementation of WPS Agenda

**Thirdly,** building on the synergies between the Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) and Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (UNSCR 2250), our actions need to be anchored on strong intergenerational partnerships for inclusive and sustainable peace.

As I conclude, I wish take this opportunity to reiterate our utmost commitment to strengthen collaboration with Member States and the United Nations and scale up our actions to accelerate the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

I thank you for your kind attention.