



Silencing the guns

Women in Democratization and Peace Building in Africa

Recommendations from the
Gender Pre-Forum to the High Level Dialogue

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Conclusion

41. In conclusion, participants expressed satisfaction at the quality of discussions and called on the African Union Commission to prioritize the implementation of the various recommendations from the meeting. The AU Commission, through the AGA Secretariat was tasked with ensuring that the recommendations are widely shared and disseminated and a follow process to support and ensure effective implementation in a participatory and inclusive manner.

42. Participants expressed their immense gratitude to the African Union Commission, the Government of Rwanda, the Rwanda Governance Board, the United Nations Development Programme, the GIZ and INFONET for convening and hosting the meeting as well as for the warm hospitality accorded to all delegates during the stay in Rwanda.

Guns

29. The Africa Union Organs and Institutions with human rights protection and promotion mandate should be strengthened to effectively and efficiently monitor member state compliance of agreed norms and standards.

30. The African Union should strengthen accountability mechanisms at the regional level especially at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights to ensure Member states live up and implement legal commitments on the rights and welfare of women and girls.

31. The African Union, in line with its dedication of the 2015 Summit to Women's Rights, should advocate for the universal ratification and strengthening of administrative and financial measures as well as structures for the domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol by Member States.

32. Member States and Civil Society should cooperate and coordinate efforts to attain credible and legitimate transitional justice processes and initiatives which promote innovative home grown solutions to post conflict reconciliation and social cohesion in post conflict situations on the Continent.

33. Member States should provide adequate legislative and judicial mechanisms to address impunity and crimes committed against women and girls during conflict situations as deterrent for future occurrences.

34. Development Partners should support measures and initiatives aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of state and non-state actors in the advocacy, monitoring, reporting and documenting best practices on the promotion and protection of women's rights.

D. Enhancing the Role of Women in Humanitarian Assistance in Silencing the Guns by 2020

35. Member States should ensure national disaster policies and response initiatives involve and include women including building the capacity of national disaster preparedness institutions and first responders on the vulnerabilities of women and girls during conflict and post conflict situations.

36. Member States should adopt policies and mechanisms aimed at strengthening structures for Early Warning and Early Action at national levels to stem the outbreak of conflicts on the Continent.

37. Member states and Development partners should collaborate on measures aimed at enhancing social security for citizens to ensure durable solutions to peacebuilding on the Continent.

38. Civil society organisations should develop structures aimed at providing complementary psycho-social support in post conflict situations in Africa. This should focus on partnering with Member states in the rehabilitation, reintegration and resettlement of victims of conflict.

39. African Union Member States should put an arms embargo on countries emerging from conflict to stem the tide of arms proliferation on the continent.

40. The Africa Governance Architecture through its Humanitarian Assistance Cluster should develop a humanitarian assistance coordination model to ensure effective and efficient deployment of humanitarian assistance in conflict and post conflict situations.

Introduction

1. From 6 - 7 October 2014, two hundred men and women, drawn from Gender Experts from African Union (AU) Member States, AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Development Partners, Civil society Organisations, academia, media, private sector and think tanks across Africa met in Kigali, Rwanda to foster a deeper understanding of the trends, challenges and opportunities for women in strengthening democratic governance towards silencing guns in Africa by 2020. It was also aimed at identifying practical initiatives and strategies that can be explored to enhance women's inclusion and engagement in peacebuilding and democratization processes in Africa.

2. The principal aim of the Pre-Forum was to examine trends, challenges and opportunities for enhancing the role of women in contributing to ending conflict and attaining sustainable development in Africa

3. Organised by the African Union Commission within the African Governance Architecture Annual Dialogue Series on Democratic Governance (DGTrends) the Gender Forum was convened as part of the build up to the High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance that will be held from 30 -31 October 2014 in Dakar, Senegal. The Forum was co-hosted and supported by the Government of Rwanda, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the United Nations Development Programme, Rwanda Governance Board, GIZ and UN Women.

4. Following deliberations on the current trends, challenges, prospects and opportunities for women in democratic governance and peacebuilding, participants noted the following issues and recommendations.

Emerging Issues

5. Acknowledged that women and girls suffer disproportionately from the effects of armed conflicts in Africa which has been exacerbated by democratic governance deficits which continue to trigger violent conflicts on the Continent.

6. Further acknowledged the pivotal role women have and continue to play in conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction and recovery as well as development of strategic interventions that address violent conflicts on the Continent. Such interventions are pivotal in silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 and should be strengthened and sustained through investment in strong, resilient, participatory, efficient, effective and inclusive democratic governance institutions and processes.

7. Noted that despite the fact that women and girls are often the most affected during violent conflicts, they are relegated from conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives, rendering them victims rather than actors in these processes.

8. Further noted that despite efforts to provide affirmative action aimed at enhancing their participation in public spheres, there still exist gaps in effective participation of women democratic governance systems.

9. Reaffirmed that women's participation in peace efforts is a matter of gender equality and universal human rights which is crucial to achieving sustainable peace, economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy.

10. Reiterated the need for enhanced women's leadership and participation in effective management of diversity, natural resource governance and socio-economic development of the Continent.

11. Acknowledged the progress made in the adoption of African Shared Values norms, institutions and strategies especially the Constitutive Act, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; the Protocol to the African Charter for Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the AU Gender Policy (2009).

12. Recalled that there are also various regional and international instruments that bestow obligations and commitments on members to address women empowerment, inclusion in democratic governance and socio-economic policy making as well as implementation processes, although many have either not been ratified or implemented

13. Commend the African Union for the appointment of a Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security and reiterated the need to provide necessary support for the execution of her mandate.

14. Inspired by the progress made by Rwanda through adoption and implementation of effective transitional justice that include innovative and locally owned solutions to accountability, national unity and reconciliation as well post conflict reconstruction and development, participants commended Rwanda as an exemplar of what is possible on the continent with visionary leadership and participatory democratic governance to silence the guns in Africa by 2020. They further called on AU Member States emerging from conflicts to seek comparable lessons from Rwanda on peace building and post conflict reconstruction and development.

Recommendations

A. Women's Participation, Access and Leadership on Democratic Governance Towards Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020

14. 15. The African Union should work more closely with Member States in the implementation of African Shared Values Instruments particularly the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa aimed at enhancing inclusive participation of women in democratic governance processes on the continent. Such engagement should go beyond elections observation to also include devolved and local governance, public service and socio-economic empowerment.

16. The African Union should provide political and technical support to Member States in the implementation of regional commitments to addressing governance deficit on the continent especially on unconstitutional changes of Government. In that regard, the African Union Commission through the AGA Platform should scale up advocacy ratification, domestication and implementation of regional, continental and international instruments that guarantee the rights of women to effectively participate in socio-economic and political development processes of the Continent.

17. The Africa Union Commission through the Inter-Departmental Taskforce on Conflict Prevention should develop an action plan and implementation Strategy aimed at engendering the conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction and development programmes of the Union.

18. AU Member States should strengthen democratic governance structures at the national, and local levels that facilitate dialogue, engagement and inclusion of African citizens particularly women and youth in order to ensure inclusive development interventions on the continent.

19. The Africa Governance Architecture should develop and build strategic partnerships and initiatives with regional and national civil society networks, women formations, media, faith based organisations and development partners to enhance the capacity and involvement of grassroots women in democratic governance and peacebuilding initiatives.

20. Member States in closer collaboration with civil society should strengthen and implement civic education policies that are aimed at enhancing civic awareness and duty among citizens at the national and sub national levels on governance challenges and opportunities to improve democracy.

21. The African Union should intensify efforts aimed at providing the opportunity for women to play more pivotal roles in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts of the AU Panel of the Wise, mediation, preventive diplomacy as well as post conflict reconstruction and development.

22. The African Union should proactively discourage confrontational politics in democratization processes on the Continent and encourage and support consensus building among all stakeholders in seeking to silence the guns in Africa by 2020.

23. The AGA through its citizen, youth and civil society engagement strategies should partner with civil society organisation, media and various Member States national structures in share and implementation of comparable practices on the continent including success stories of armed conflict resolutions and peacebuilding initiatives, which can be used to guide current efforts of silencing guns and restoration of sustainable peace and reconciliation in post conflict countries.

24. The AGA should institutionalize the Gender Forum to the Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa.

B. Respect for the Rule of Law and Upholding Constitutionalism in Silencing the Guns by 2020

25. The African Union should strengthen structures for Member States reporting on the administrative and legislative measures undertaken to implementation of various AU Shared Values Instruments.

26. The African Union through the Pan African Parliament should partner closely with Member States Parliaments in the oversight of compliance to various national, regional and continental commitments and obligations

27. Member states should institutionalize the quota systems in their respective countries to enhance affirmative action on women's participation in elective positions.

28. Civil Society Organisations should strengthen their interventions around advocacy on the various normative frameworks that engender popular participation of African citizens.

C. Promotion and Protection of Human and Peoples Rights in Silencing the