



CONCEPT NOTE

Commemorative Book on UNSCR 1325

“African Women in Peace and Security”

Background

The year 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council’s landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The resolution recognized that conflict affects women differently and that addressing the needs, views and participation of half of humanity would provide a positive peace dividend. It emphasized the protection of women, their meaningful participation in peace and security processes, and the need for an increased role of women in preventing and resolving conflict.

Resolution 1325 was followed by seven other resolutions (UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242), establishing a broad spectrum of norms which came to form the women, peace and security agenda. Its transformative potential lies in the creation of inclusive and democratic peace processes as well as in addressing gender inequality as one of the root causes of violent conflict.

Implementing the women, peace and security agenda is imperative to achieving the goals set in ‘Agenda 2063’ and the ‘2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’, as well as the ‘Silencing the Guns by 2020’ initiative. The United Nations and African Union have thus cooperated on various aspects of the women, peace and security agenda and are looking to further strengthen their partnership in this area.

The commemorative book provides a unique opportunity for engagement between the two organizations as part of their partnership in peace, security and development, while re-emphasizing the need to fully implement the women, peace and security agenda and paying tribute to the extraordinary contributions women have made to peace and security in Africa.

Objective

The commemorative book aims to create a space for women who have been involved in the processes necessary for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security on the continent to have their voices heard and their stories told.

It will portray women from all walks of life, of different ages, across different sectors and representing the different regions of the continent. It will shed light on the various contributions to peace and security women have made both before and after the adoption of UNSCR 1325.

While recognizing women that have taken up leadership roles in the political arena, the book will put particular emphasis on the work being done at the grassroots level. It will tell the stories of women in traditional and religious leadership, of peacemakers in communities, of women promoting restorative justice and facilitating post-conflict reconstruction, of mediators, activists, feminists and human rights champions.



It is the objective of the project to commemorate a milestone of the women, peace and security agenda by honoring what Africa's women have thus far achieved, by having them tell their stories and share their experiences, and by promoting their aspirations for the future. It is further meant to send a message of encouragement to the next generation of African women to claim their rightful place in history and creating the 'Africa they want'.

Project Description and Strategy

In commemorating 20 years of the women, peace and security agenda, the book will consist of at least 20 chapters, each featuring one woman of a particular country or community setting, ensuring equal representation of all five regions of the African continent.

The book will feature stories ranging from dismantling apartheid in South Africa, post-Genocide reconciliation and reconstruction in Rwanda, peacebuilding in Mozambique and Angola as well as addressing post-conflict situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It will further take into account ongoing peace processes in Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Mali, Darfur and Somalia, looking at how the participation of women has influenced processes of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction since UNSCR 1325 was adopted.

In order to identify women to be featured in the book, the AU-UN joint task team will reach out to partners, including the African Union, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms, United Nations entities such as Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions, Agencies, Funds and Programs, Member States, academia and civil society, youth and women's groups in particular. The task team will further consider initiating an open call, to be popularized through various channels of communication, to facilitate an inclusive application and nomination process.

Whenever possible, the women featured in the book will write their own chapters, using various storytelling techniques. In other cases, the AU-UN task team will assist the women in telling their stories, by conducting interviews with them or portraying them through short reports and stories.

It is further envisaged to involve African women artists in the creation of the book, by featuring contributions in form of photography and illustrations. This will further emphasize that contributions to peace and security can be made through various means, including art.

In addition, the book can feature short messages of encouragement, provided by prominent women leaders and champions of the women, peace and security agenda.

Apart from printed hard cover and soft cover versions, the publication will be made available in e-book format to enable reaching a wider audience.



Timeline

It is envisaged to launch the book as part of a side event to the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of State and Government of the African Union (AU Summit), scheduled for January 2020.