The contribution of women as a powerful force for peace has long been acknowledged. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) landmark resolution 1325 not only highlighted the differentiated impact of conflict on men and women, but also emphasized the significant role of women in the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Since 2000, 8 additional UNSC resolutions have been adopted, together constituting the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

In Africa, Agenda 2063 calls for realizing the full potential of women and youth, boys and girls, with freedom from fear, disease and want. The 2005 Maputo Protocol called on States Parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure women’s participation in “the structures and processes for conflict prevention, management and resolution at local, national, regional, continental and international levels”; and “in all aspects of planning, formulation and implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.”

Institutionally, the African Union (AU) has taken major steps in advancing the implementation of the WPS agenda. It appointed a Special Envoy on WPS in 2014, mandated to “ensure that the voices of women and the vulnerable are heard much more clearly in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.” A Gender, Peace and Security Program (GPSP) (2015-2020) was adopted, with the aim of mainstreaming gender in all peace and security programs. The establishment of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) in July 2017 was another breakthrough. In 2019, the Office of the Special Envoy launched the Continental Results Framework (CRF) as a tool for monitoring efforts to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda. Moreover, a policy on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse in AU peace support operations was recently released.

On the national level, 25 African countries have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) to advance the implementation of the WPS agenda. At least three more African countries will be developing their first ever NAP before October 2020 (Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa).

Despite these advancements, the WPS agenda remains an underutilized tool for shaping effective responses to today’s conflicts in Africa. The representation of African women and their meaningful participation in peace processes remains limited. African women continue to be exposed to serious threats or actual violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. Despite its unique position within APSA, FemWise’s potential as a platform for strategic advocacy of the WPS agenda on the national and regional levels is yet to be fully realized.

1 Namely UNSCR 1820 (2008), UNSCR 1888 (2009); UNSCR 1889 (2009); UNSCR 1960 (2010); UNSCR 2106 (2013); UNSCR 2122 (2013); UNSCR 2242 (2015); and UNSCR 2467 (2019).
The Expert Workshop

Against this background, and in the lead up to the 20th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), acting in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, to take place in Aswan, Egypt in December 2019, will host an expert workshop on 4-5 September 2019, titled:

**Advancing the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa: Overcoming Challenges and Seizing Opportunities**

The workshop will provide an opportunity for all relevant stakeholders on the local, national, regional and continental levels, to take stock of the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa, identify the opportunities and challenges facing its full and meaningful implementation, and suggest concrete and action-oriented recommendations to be considered by African leaders during the Aswan Forum and in subsequent AU discussions.

Specifically, the workshop will:
- Explore operational and programmatic linkages between the WPS, Conflict Prevention, Sustaining Peace and the Sustainable Development agendas.
- Discuss lessons learned and best practices from the development and implementation of African National Action Plans (NAPs);
- Explore opportunities for enhancing the AU’s contribution to advancing the implementation of the WPS agenda across the full spectrum of peace and security interventions (whole of APSA);

**Participation**
- African countries (in the process of developing or implementing NAPs)
- AU (Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security DPSO, PCRD, EWPDP, Panel of the Wise, FemWise, etc.)
- International and Regional Organizations: UN Secretariat (UNDPPA, UNDPO, PBSO, etc.), UN Women, UNDP, etc.
- Champions of WPS: Sweden, Canada, Norway, UK, Finland, Japan, Switzerland, United States, etc.

**Strategic Partners**

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