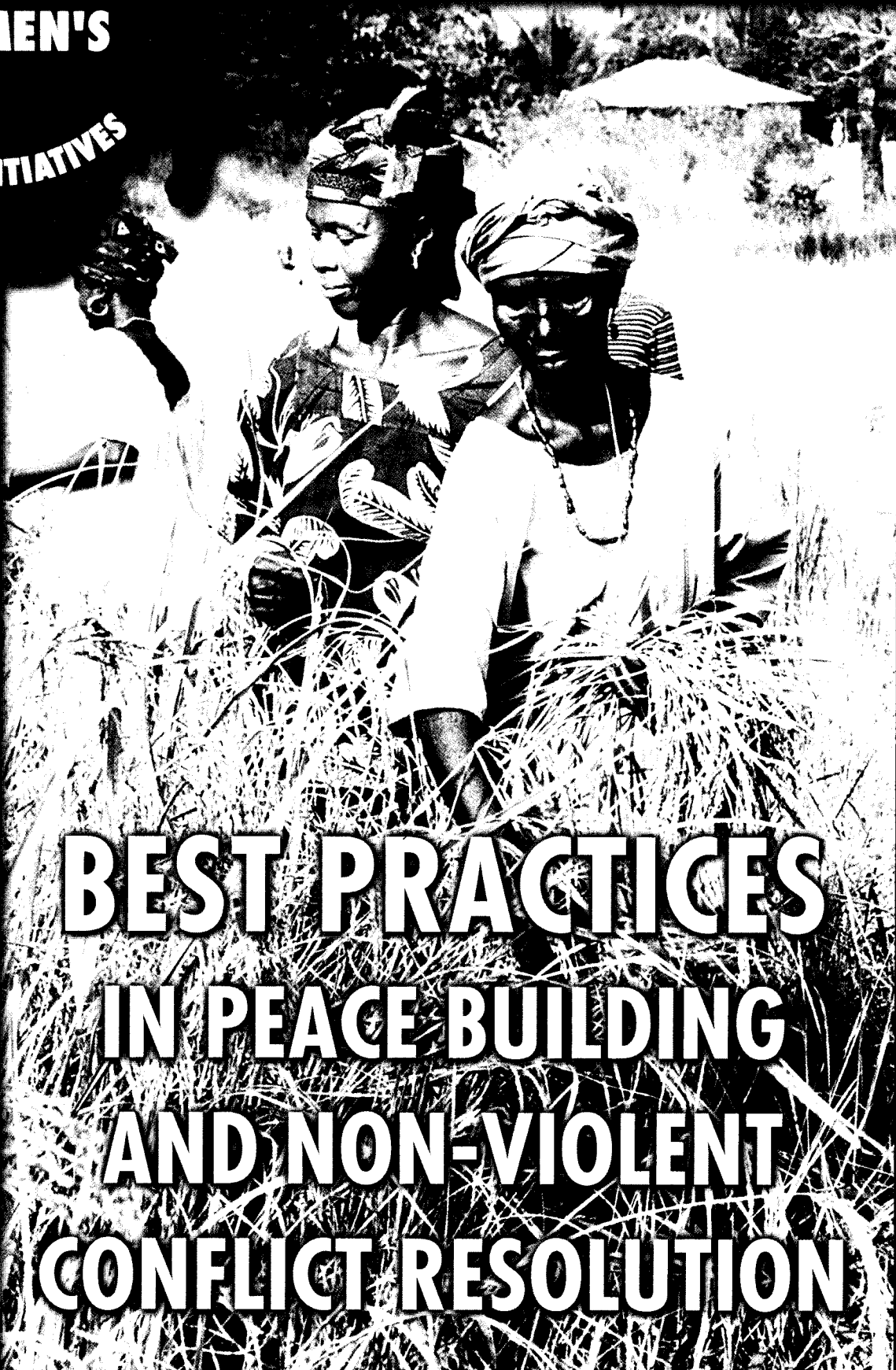


SOME DOCUMENTED

AFRICAN
WOMEN'S

PEACE INITIATIVES



**BEST PRACTICES
IN PEACE BUILDING
AND NON-VIOLENT
CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

UNHCR

UNESCO

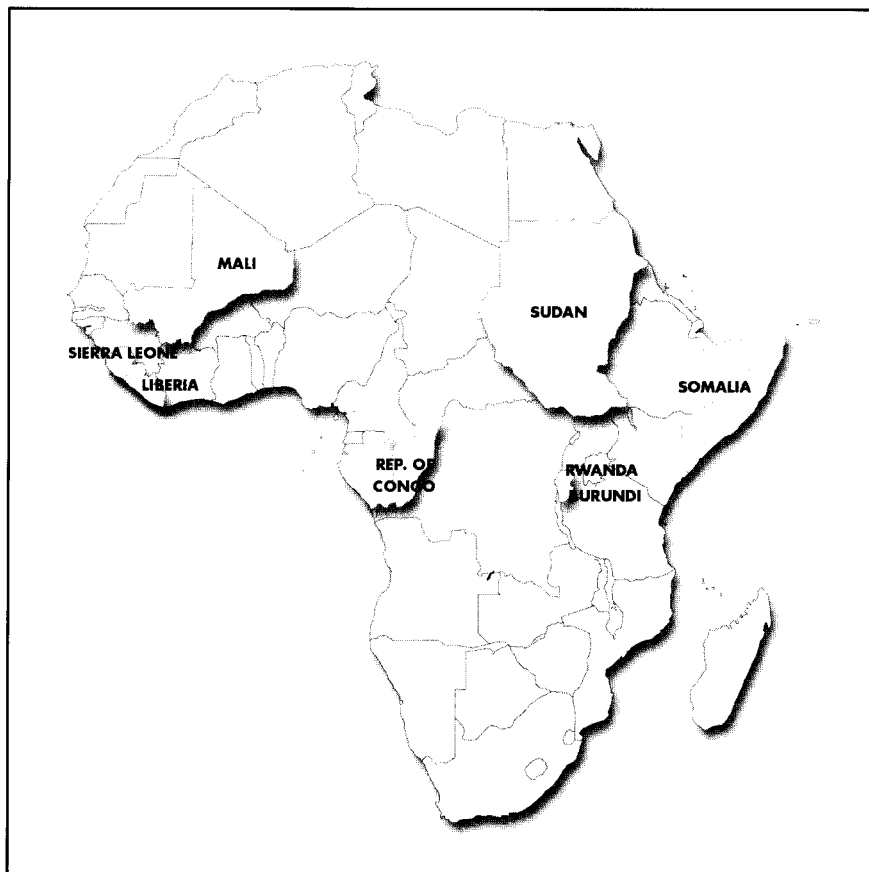
UNDP

UNFPA

UNICEF

UNIFEM

BEST PRACTICES IN PEACE BUILDING AND NON-VIOLENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Some documented African Women's Peace Initiatives

UNHCR - UNESCO - UNDP - UNFPA - UNICEF - UNIFEM

BEST PRACTICES IN PEACE-BUILDING AND NON-VIOLENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Ihis publication does not claim to capture the depth of knowledge and complexities of the conflict

situations in the countries covered. In a number of cases, it is not even possible to provide related information about the scope of violence in which the initiatives were applied. Rather, it aims to enhance good practice in conflict resolution by identifying the common denominators in the initiatives as well as their strategic elements.

Subsequently, on the basis of the impact registered and the lessons learnt, it can suggest a framework that can be the basis of strengthening women in their role as promoters of a culture of peace.

The UNHCR, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNIFEM, as the publishers of Documented Best Practices in Peace Building and Non-Violent Conflict Resolution, warmly

thank all the participants at the Addis Ababa Workshop, 1997 and *Dr. Jacqueline Adhiambo-Oduol for her analysis and suggestions for the strategy and framework.*

The publication, based on the data gathered from testimonies given by participants at the Addis Ababa Workshop, is an inter-agency strategy for strengthening the role of women as peace makers. Its purpose is to document, publish and disseminate African women's practices in order to make them visible and accessible.

It is hoped that knowledge of the methods, their strategic elements, limitations and impact will aid the development of similarly effective and appropriate programmes at the community, regional and national levels.

Edited and produced by Angela ERNEST

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PREFACE



*A letter from H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim,
Secretary General of the OAU:*

In deciding to establish an OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the African Leaders were aiming at providing our continental Organisation with an instrument which could mobilise the resources and energies available in the continent towards building peace, security and stability. Amongst the forces for peace to be mobilised were the women who constitute the majority of our people and who have a high level of motivation to promote peace in Africa.

It is for this reason that we, at the OAU, have decided to accord maximum recognition and support, within the means of our Organisation, to women's initiatives for peace in Africa. It is also for this reason that we have been exploring how best to involve women to support the work of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. This, indeed, is also in conformity with the principles articulated in the Beijing Platform for Action which among other things, called for involvement of women in peace-making and peace-building activities.

It is also in that context that the OAU has supported women initiatives such as the African Platform for Action adopted at the Fifth Regional Conference on Women held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 1994. In fact, the Platform was endorsed by the Thirty-first Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 1995. Other initiatives that the OAU has been closely associated with and supports include the Kampala Regional Conference on Women and Peace (November 1993), the Women's Leadership Forum on Peace (March 1996) and the Kigali Conference on Peace, Gender and Development (March 1997) and, more recently, the Workshop on Documented Best Practices of Women in Peace-Building and Non-Violent Means of Conflict Resolution, Addis Ababa (November 1997).

All these efforts have contributed significantly to the process that led to the establishment of the African Women Committee for Peace and Development to serve as a network and to articulate Women's views on regional and global issues. This was clearly spelt out in the decision of the Sixty-fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and the Thirty-third Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in May 1997, requesting the OAU Secretary General

to set up an African Women Committee on Peace and Development.

Within the framework of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community and the OAU 1993 Declaration establishing a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the main objective of the Committee is to increase the effective participation and influence of African Women in the Peace and Development process in the continent.

As part of all these efforts to promote the role of women in the continent, a Workshop sponsored by the Inter-Agency Co-operation of UN Agencies, namely the UNHCR, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNIFEM with the collaboration of the OAU and the UNECA, was held in Addis Ababa in November 1997. The objective of the Workshop was predicated upon an initiative of women activists to place on public record some of the experiences related to best practices of women in peace-building and non-violent means of conflict resolution. I commend and pay tribute to the Organisers and Sponsors of the Workshop and all others who have stood up in defence of the rights of women within our societies and communities. I salute their commitment and dedication to the cause of women in Africa.

The recommendations emanating from the Workshop are in fact relevant and supportive to the mandate and work of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development. Indeed, the Workshop provided a forum for women from all sectors of life to share experiences on how best to support and promote women's initiatives during the process of peace-building, conflict prevention, management and resolution. It provided a forum for established women's peace movements, individual peace activists, promoters and women's community based organisations to share their experiences and document the best practices on women's contribution to peace-building. Indeed, African women's peace networks have committed themselves to non-violent means of conflict resolution and have taken action to promote a culture of peace and respect for humanity, sometimes in extremely challenging circumstances. Yet, as is the case with most areas of development, this enormous resource of women's talent has largely remained under-utilised.

In keeping with the decisions of the OAU Policy Organs, we should forge ahead with our individual and collective support to women's

initiatives aimed at promoting, enhancing and mainstreaming gender and women's perspective in the peace process. We need to support the participation of women in conflict resolution, peace negotiation, decision making and other political processes.

A gender responsive policy for conflict resolution must not view women as helpless victims of violence. Instead, it should recognise that women are agents of change whose potential has not been fully tapped. This is, essentially, because of prevailing institutional structures, as well as social and cultural norms in various parts of the continent. To date, most institutional and policy frameworks for conflict resolution at the community, local, national and regional levels have not, effectively taken women's participation on board. As a result, women's unique contribution to non-violent conflict resolution, their capacity to negotiate for justice and peace, to confront issues collectively and to mobilise the community to challenge violent ways of managing conflict has remained largely invisible.

Consequently, there is an urgent need for more effective information and communication linkages that can promote women's good practices and innovative approaches in non-violent methods of conflict resolution.

We hope this publication will increase knowledge about the qualitative differences that women make in maintaining social integration and peace-building. We also hope it will motivate women and men, formal and informal peace structures, governments, NGOs, the UN Agencies and other development partners to support the replication of these practices in all situations of conflict from the community to the national and regional levels.

Finally, we appreciate the commitment of the women peace activists who shared their experiences during the Workshop. It is their inspiration, courage and determination that made this publication possible.

Let us all re-commit ourselves to the goal of promoting women's empowerment and their full participation on an equal basis with men, in all peace initiatives and decision-making processes.





INTRODUCTION

Gender is a social construct that marks a fundamental power relation in societies, which structures and affects both the private and public life of men and women. In African societies, housework, supply of water, child-care and family health are considered women's gender responsibilities. The men are expected to concentrate on the material needs of their families, to take up leadership and decision-making positions particularly in the public sphere, and to arm themselves and fight to protect the family, the community or nation.

Such clear sets of message and instructions on the role of women and men lead to a situation in which a vicious cycle of sexism perpetuates the differential treatment of women, the entrenchment of rigid gender roles and the division of labour. In addition, it is a contributory factor in the inaccurate interpretations that surround the term *gender*. Often, such misinterpretation denies the existence of the prevailing hierarchy where women are subordinated.

The mainstreaming of gender in the peace process calls for the recognition that men and women do different things

and have different responsibilities in society. This recognition needs to be based on reliable data to capture the actual contribution of women and men in both formal and informal peace initiatives in the continent.

This publication seeks to raise gender awareness in peace programmes, a number of which make no mention of men and women and assume that they are gender neutral. From this perspective therefore, it is necessary to take gender equality as a primary issue in peace initiatives and examine everything through a gender lens.

Women's unique contribution to non-violent conflict resolution, their capacity to negotiate for justice and peace, to confront issues collectively, and to mobilise the community to challenge violent ways of managing conflict, have remained largely invisible in mainstream policies.

A gender responsive policy for conflict resolution does not view women as helpless victims of violence. Instead, it recognises that women are agents of change whose potential has not been fully developed because of prevailing institutional, social and cultural structures in various parts of the continent.

While traditional African women's mediating and communications techniques offer a highly effective method of promoting peace, the women no longer want to rely solely on a gender based role to participate in the peace process. They want to be empowered to hold a more public and official place at the centre of the main stream of decision making.

To date, most institutional and policy frameworks for conflict resolution at all levels have not effectively taken advantage of women's participation. Despite this drawback, women's informal conflict resolution initiatives have used methods that have created an enabling environment for peace building and non-violent conflict management.

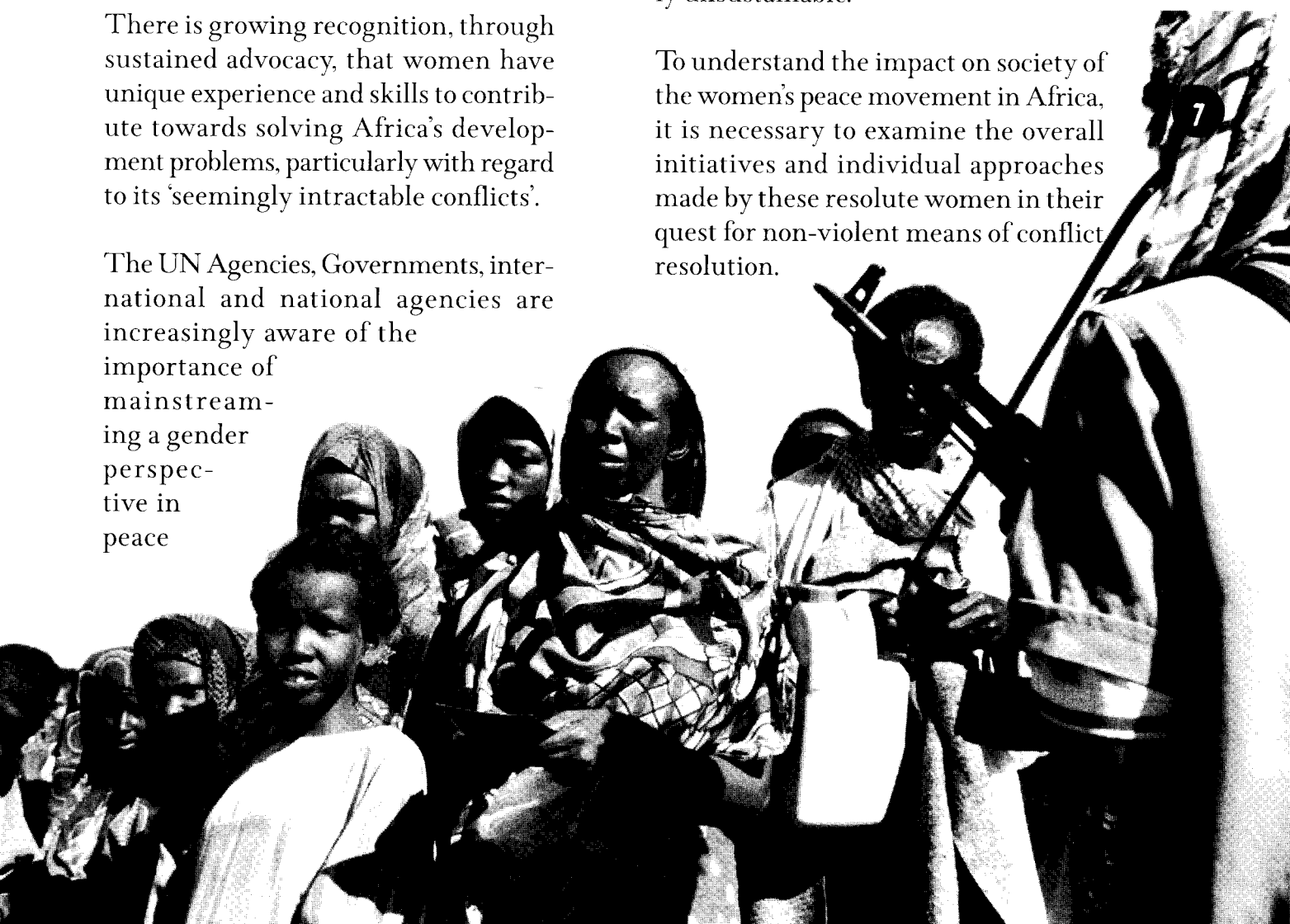
There is growing recognition, through sustained advocacy, that women have unique experience and skills to contribute towards solving Africa's development problems, particularly with regard to its 'seemingly intractable conflicts'.

The UN Agencies, Governments, international and national agencies are increasingly aware of the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in peace

initiatives and promoting the concept that authentic equality between men and women in all spheres of society is vital if true democracy is to succeed, and a sustainable peace achieved.

Any formal or informal peace process in the continent that does not involve the women, half of the society, is inherently unsustainable.

To understand the impact on society of the women's peace movement in Africa, it is necessary to examine the overall initiatives and individual approaches made by these resolute women in their quest for non-violent means of conflict resolution.



I. Reasons for publishing the women peace activists' documented best practices

a) The Challenge

At the Addis Ababa Workshop, the African women's peace movements reaffirmed their message that to be truly effective they must participate in all aspects and at all levels of the design, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the process of peace building and its implementation.

Women are notably absent from the high table of African peace mechanisms. The lack of a gender responsive policy frame-

work in the formal and informal sectors needs to be addressed, as do misunderstandings about the implications of gender mainstreaming.

If women are to use their maximum potential as peacemakers, it is necessary for government officials at all levels, the UN, the OAU, development partners, NGOs and the private sectors to examine and restructure their framework to include women as equal and fully participating partners.

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For a fuller understanding of these objectives, the following questions are addressed in this publication :

- **Do women have any potential for peace building which can be drawn upon to solve intractable conflicts ?**
- **In what circumstances and with what results has this potential been demonstrated ?**
- **What is the perception of women peace activists in relations to their role and / or contribution to peace building and non violent means of conflict resolutions in their countries ?**
- **Is it possible or indeed necessary to replicate these practices at the national sub-regional and regional levels ?**
- **What strategy can be used to strengthen the role of women peace movements ?**



Several women's peace movements have contributed to positive change in violent conflict situations in certain parts of Africa through a combination of traditional and modern conflict resolution techniques. While largely ad hoc, informal and excluded from mainstream conflict resolution mechanisms, these efforts are reported as having resulted in positive impact.

b) Awareness : meeting the challenge

Women's participation in peace building and conflict management in specific African countries is examined on the basis of their Documented Best Practices as presented at the Inter-Agency Workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 24-26 November 1997.

The Inter-Agency strategy for strengthening the role of women as peace makers is to document, publish and disseminate women's best practices in order to make them visible and accessible to all and to raise awareness of the particular skills and experience women have for non-violent conflict resolution. It also offers proof that women can be the source of innovative and effective approaches to peace building.

It is hoped that knowledge of the methods, their strategic elements, limitations



and impact will lead to their replication and the development of similarly effective and appropriate programmes at the community, regional and national levels.

The following chapters will:

- Identify specific elements in each method or practice.
- Identify the limitations of each method or practice.
- Analyse the peace activities and their impacts.
- Identify the lessons learned.
- Suggest a framework that can be used to strengthen women's role in the peace building process.



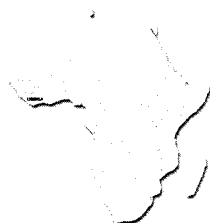
II. The best practices



The data in this country by country presentation documents the experiences and methods of women peace activists in ***Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, the Republic of Congo, Mali and Burundi.***

Liberia

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Seven years of violent conflict resulted in over 150,000 deaths, destroyed public and private infrastructure and left a traumatised population. The illiteracy rate among women is 87% and most women are not aware of their basic human rights.

Nevertheless, a number of organisations formed both during and after the conflict, which sought to unite all Liberian women for peace across ethnic and class lines. Two of these organisations were represented at the workshop :

- Liberian Women Initiative (LWI).
- Women United for Peace and Democracy (WOUPAD).

Liberian Women Initiative (LWI) started in 1994 as a response to the continuing stalemate in the peace process.

It was formed as a non-partisan pressure group to unite all Liberian women regardless of religious, tribal or political affiliation or differences.

One of its founding members, Ruth Sando Perry, was later elected first African Woman Head of State (August 1996).

Although initiated by influential urban women, LWI ensured its credibility and impact by reaching out to and including women from all sectors and areas. Women in LWI now range from farmers and traditional healers to medical doctors and journalists :

Peace Advocacy and Lobbying

- Sent friendly letters to individual warlords asking them to put aside their differences and work together for peace.
- Dispatched a second letter requesting an audience with the warlords and tenaciously pursued the matter by using contacts that were close to the warlords until the meeting materialised.
- Lobbied the international community by writing letters to : the United States government, Black Caucus, Heads of states of ECOWAS countries, The British Parliament, The European Union and all major western countries.
- Sent letters and faxes and when necessary made telephone calls to important international figures. These included : the Secretary General of the United Nations, Senators Ted Kennedy and Bob Dole of the US Senate, the First Lady of the United States, Hillary Clinton and all First Ladies of countries contributing troops to peace keeping efforts in Liberia.

Tradition

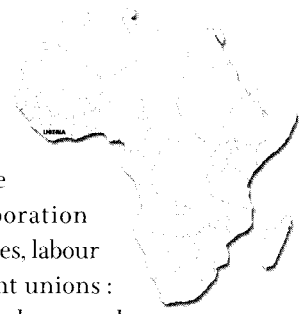
- Diffused tension and encouraged informal contact between warlords and women peace activists by using a play therapy of 'bricks and sticks'. Five warlords accepted to 'play' and only one sent a proxy. The end result was full participation in the exercise and for the first time in years the women met the warlords and brothers on opposing sides.

The relaxed atmosphere following the 'game' was ideal for conflict resolution dialogue and mediation.

Peaceful Demonstrations and Awareness

- Distributed a document stating women's refusal to co-operate or participate in the government unless their demands for peace were met.
- Threatened to boycott all state and public functions : this happened when the warlords persisted in their habit of backing out of promises they had given to the civilian population and the international community.
- Organised a peace demonstration throughout the principal streets of the capital and threatened to march without Lappas and skirts if the authorities tried to stop them.
- Picketed the American Embassy, the UN Offices, government offices and the headquarters of warring factions.

- Organised a 2-day paralysis of the capital in collaboration with political parties, labour unions and student unions : everybody stayed at home and market grounds were closed.



Social and Cultural

- Held a regular weekly prayer service for peace.

Media

- Ensured peace messages were given radio and newspaper coverage.

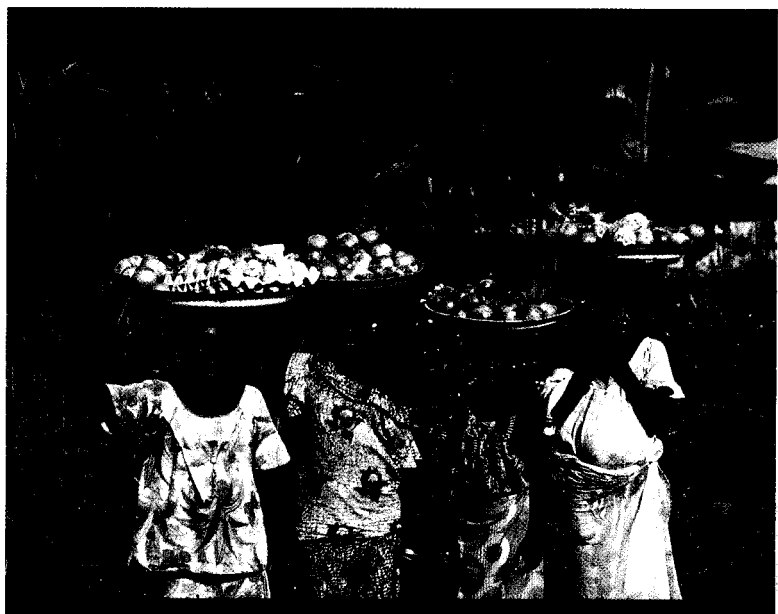
Promoting and Facilitating Women's Political Participation

- Published a list of qualified Liberian women who could take up positions in government ministries and public corporations. Warring factions had been scrambling over these positions in total disregard of the Cotonou Peace Accord. The list reflected ethnic, geographic, and gender balance in the country.

Facilitating Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations

- Organised a delegation of six women to make a forced entry at the 1994 Accra Clarifications Conference when they were denied participation on the grounds that they were not direct parties to the conflict. Their strategic presence at the conference centre and interaction with conference participants gave the women high visibility through the print and electronic Ghanaian media and the BBC.

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The Liberian Women delegation was granted official observer status by the second day of the conference.

Significantly, the Accra Clarifications Conference introduced the idea of including a woman in the five-man council.

- Sent a delegation which identified disarmament as the prerequisite to achieving peace at the 1995 Abuja Conference.
- Made sure they were invited to the August 1996 Abuja Conference. The invitation was achieved when the women threatened to hold a demonstration in Nigeria.

Their efforts were rewarded when the warlords selected Mme. Ruth Sando Perry as the Head of the Council of State (August 1996).

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Women United for Peace and Democracy (WOUPAD) was founded by women from 35 different movements. Their target is 15,000 severely underprivileged women and children:

Counselling

- Women endured mental and physical atrocities during the war. There is an on-going urgent need for de-traumatisation. By expressing pain and anxiety in therapy, a healing process is taking place, leading to reconciliation and forgiveness.

Empowerment of women

- WOUPAD advocates for government to prioritise women gender awareness in its development planning especially within the agricultural, health, education and business sectors.
- Sustainable economic micro projects are needed for very poor women with no resources.

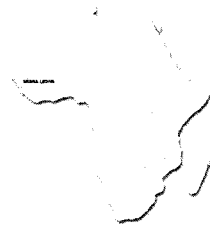
WOUPAD lobbies local and international governmental and non-governmental organisations for credit facilities for women because women

who have knowledge of micro-project formulation and implementation are empowered to take fuller part in the community as peace builders.

Promoting political Participation

- WOUPAD conducted voters education workshops.
- During elections WOUPAD members served as observers in 13 counties of Liberia.
- Many women encouraged to register and vote.
- Women networked among family and community to encourage others to vote.

Sierra Leone



Following the overthrow of President Monoh's government by the military in 1992, the civil strife in Sierra Leone intensified and spread rapidly. As a consequence, many people were displaced and fled to Guinea as refugees.

In early 1995, the 'Women's Movements for Peace' was formed to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict and called for general elections as a means of ending the conflict.

Elections were held in 1996 and a short period of peace followed.

On 25 May 1997, there was another coup d'état which once again plunged the country into civil strife.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Sierra Leone) WILPF(SL) was created after women peace activists participated in various networking activities of WILPF International.

The organisation brings together women of different tribal, religious and political backgrounds. They are united in their determination to help combat the political, social, economic and psychological causes of war and to work for constructive peace :

Networking

WILPF identifies networking as its most effective practice for keeping issues of war and peace alive throughout the country.

- Prior to the launching of the organisation, consultations were held with other women's organisations, particularly Women's Forum, a nationwide network of over 50 women's groups. They also liaised with development organisations, youth groups, community leaders and chiefs to ensure full participation and to build consensus on the objective of political pluralism, the importance of civil society's involvement in decision making and achieving a peaceful resolution to the Sierra Leone conflict.
- Events were organised all over the country to emphasise the national nature of the peace activities.
- WILPF implemented its activities through cooperation with organisations who already had programmes in the community. These organisations were encouraged to adopt women's positions on peace.
- International collaboration with other African women's groups in contact resolution skills, trauma healing and organisational development. The training was then localised and replicated e.g. by IMSA/Femmes Africa Solidarité.

Communication

- The movement adopted Creole as the language of all women's activities and events. This was to favour grassroots women and to avoid accusations of elitism.
- Arrangements were made for translation into English and some indigenous languages for those who did not understand Creole.
- By its humanitarian actions and strict neutrality, the movement was able to sustain constant contact with all parties : the army, the rebel movement, the international community and the government.

- Through regular meetings all the participants learned what the other side was doing and asked questions to better understand the reasons for their action. This maintained a sense of urgency for working towards the goal of peace.

Media and Community Networking

- Regular peace messages, press releases and open letters promoting the women's ideas for conflict resolution to the elusive heads of rebel movements were published nationally and internationally.
- Print and electronic media were used to take the peace message to the population at large.
- Debates were encouraged between academics, students, trade unions, professional organisations and women's groups on the affect of the war on the country and always emphasised negotiated settlements as the way forward. These forums gave freedom of expression and a wider participation.
- Close contact was kept with women journalists with the aim of enlisting their support through news coverage and gender sensitive reporting.
- Grassroots women were always given priority to address meetings and conferences : their front-line experience was valuable for raising awareness and planning peace activities.

Social and Cultural

- As Sierra Leonian society is highly religious, prayer meetings were organised to build a partnership with people who were reluctant to attend demonstration or rallies.

Supporting war-affected persons

- Women in non-violent areas took in homeless sisters and where possible assisted them to register as displaced persons.



- Monitored conditions at the camps to ensure provisions reached the intended beneficiaries.
- Organised reunification projects between lost children and parents. This was to prevent children becoming rebels because of neglect and to bring hope to parents.

Education

- Set up schools for displaced children from war affected areas.
- Regularly organised peace songs, poetry and drawing competitions at all levels of educational institutions to get young people involved. Their art work was publicly displayed and the songs played on radio.

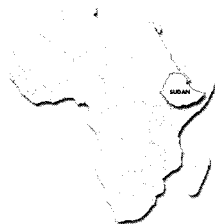
Promoting Political Participation

- Government was given a list of women candidates who could be appointed to hold executive positions in the diplomatic service and public institutions.
- Women later presented the first draft of the women's manifesto to the Government.

'In order to sustain the influence of all women in this process and the participation of civil society generally in conflict resolution, women in the peace movement had to guard against the accusation that the movement was elitist, provincial or party political. It therefore discussed amongst itself, and publicly, the contribution of each class of women or each group of women to the cause of peace.'

WILPF, ADDIS ABABA 1997

Sudan



Concerned Sudanese women who wanted to see the long Sudanese war brought to an end through non-violent

means formed the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace (SWVP) in March 1994.

The SWVP encourages women from the war areas to become active participants in their civil society. In this way, they are able to assist their communities to implement peace projects and honour specific commitments. The SWVP actively works with grassroots people in Upper Mali, the Nuba Mountains, Ingessane Hills, Bahr-El-Ghazal and Equatoria Region of the Sudan.

At the inaugural workshop held in Kisumu in August 1994, the SWVP pledged that women are for peace in the Sudan and for reconciliation among Southerners:

Awareness Raising and Networking

- The most employed means of interaction include workshops, seminars and meetings for grassroots level people.
- SWVP puts emphasis on involving all community leaders so that the peace message is endorsed by respected people such as elders, church leaders, farmers, teachers, social workers and NGOs.
- Posters and Tee-shirts carrying peace messages are distributed in communities to re-inforce the work of local SWVP workers.
- Videos are shown to teach participants how to successfully cope with traumatic situations.
- Dramatic re-enactment of traumatic experiences during role-playing and story-telling acts as a form of group therapy.
- SWVP produces a quarterly newsletter 'New Voice' to continue its advocacy of dialogue between warring parties.

Education

- Major workshop in Lokichoggio, Kenya, March 1995, brought together grass roots leaders from Southern and marginalised areas of Sudan. The workshop :
 - * Explored : role of leaders of ethnic and factional groups, within context of traditional and 'modern' conflict resolutions.



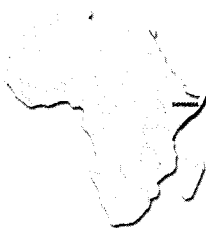
- * Identified : root causes of inter-ethnic, factional and North-South conflicts in country.
- * Recommended : that peace activities shift from external to internal initiatives to involve Sudanese themselves.
- * Decided : 'Training the Trainers' was a priority to meet demands of sensitisation and mobilisation, and increase number of monitors and peace activists in all areas. Sponsors : Life and Peace Institution, Sweden.
- Training of Trainers Workshop in Lokichoggio, Kenya in 1997. This equipped 20 women from the Upper Nile with skills to effectively promote peace message within their communities. (Sponsors : NOVIB and UN Operation Lifeline-Sudan).
Training sessions included :
 - * Understanding the concept of peace and its determinants
 - * Conflict management resolution
 - * Traditional conflict resolution
 - * Mediation
 - * Peace building activities at national and community levels capacity-building for women as good leaders and peace-builders

'Due to the lack of formal education, women in Sudan have generally been poorly represented at the policy-making and the implementation levels of previous initiatives. The involvement of women in decision-making and meaningful participation can only be developed if training is made a key focus.'

'The SWVP also plans to bring together leaders from inter-ethnic and factional groups who are in conflict. We believe this get-together to discuss common issues will help create the kind of understanding that will lead to conflict resolution so that the traumatised Sudanese may one day find the peace they need to rebuild their communities. We particularly would like to remove those traditional barriers which are obstacles to women's participation in peace-building and peace-keeping.'

**MS. ANISIA K.A. OLWORO
LOKICHOGGIO, KENYA. 1997**

Somalia and North West Somalia



Long and violent conflict left the country devastated and lacking basic infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands of people fled to refugee camps in Ethiopia. Chaos and anarchy reigned and at least a million people were displaced in the countryside.

The organisations presenting their best practices at the workshop were :

A. DULMAR (DDAP), a non-profit making NGO based in Hargesia, North West Somalia. It advocates for peace, gender equality and the rights of women. It also assists women heads of families acquire income generating skills.

B. National Organisation for Women and Children Development (NOW). This NGO was formed in 1997. It is non-tribal and non-profit making. NOW is an umbrella organisation promoting social, political and economic development for women in Somalia.



C. Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC). SSWC was formed in 1994 by a group of educated Somali women as a non-profit making NGO. Its objective is to promote peace by empowering women through awareness programmes, education and unity.

D. Women's Development Organisation (IIDA). IIDA is committed to conflict resolution. It provides civic education and skill and literacy training for women:

Education

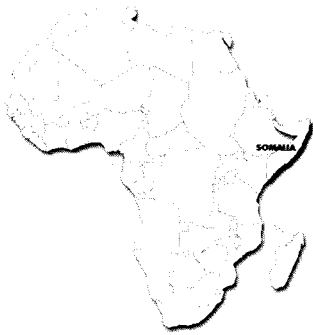
- SSWC organised six workshops on peace conflict resolution and confidence building between 1996 and 1997. Participants return to their communities with better capacity to train others in peace-building techniques.

Tradition

- Women have crossed the 'Green Line' that divides them, thus fulfilling their traditional role of diffusing tension and acting as peace makers in time of war. They have established contacts which they use to bridge the gap that separates warring parties.
- SSWC organised a three day workshop at which songs, poems and drama helped develop strategies for peace building.

Awareness

- SSDA raised awareness of the futility of war by using slogans, plays and songs with a peace message.
- Many women acknowledged feelings of guilt and promised to work for peace after identifying with characters in a role-play. This depicted women encouraging men to fight and later holding them entirely responsible for the destruction and misery.
- DDAP launched Advocacy campaign comparing the evils of conflict and chaos with benefits of peace and stability.



Networking

- DDAP contacted personally every group involved directly or indirectly in the conflict. This included traditional elders, women's groups, religious leaders and combatants.

This shuttle policy took tolerance, will, time, patience and determination. It resulted in bringing together traditional leaders and warring parties.

- Women were mobilised for peace by every means available. This resulted in a new sense of empowerment as they realised that their wisdom and position as mothers, sisters and wives could be used to positively influence warring men.

Social and Cultural

Poetry, drama and religious teaching were used on a regular basis to inspire people towards peace and stability and to lay the groundwork for reconciliation and dialogue

'Peace building is a whole process of restructuring what has been destroyed : harmony, trust and working for a common agenda. At the moment, the easy access of guns creates the biggest problem to the above process.'

'Presently, IIDA in collaboration with COSV, an Italian NGO, is implementing a pilot project on demobilisation of 150 militia in Merka, Lower Shabelle Region funded by the European Union. The difficulties are many but the objectives are for a skilled group with a hope for a future life, integrated within society.'

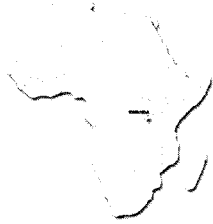
'The 150 students with different backgrounds will go back to their people and inform them of their lives at the demobilisation centre ; their future expectations ; behaviour and feelings ; how they have changed in their outlook towards life, so different from their previous lives of planned fighting. Thus, the students will create awareness among those they meet, those near them and those they have ties with.'

NASRI A. ADAM

**IIDA WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION
ADDIS ABABA 1997**



Rwanda



The genocide took place in Rwanda between April and July 1994.

The Rwandese National Assembly came to being on November 24, 1994 which was four months after the government of national unity came to power. There were 12 women parliamentarians out of 70 MPs. The main objective was to channel women's problems to the responsible parties in parliament and to look for solutions.

Rwandese women focused on sensitising the whole Parliament to perceive gender problems as political problems that must be addressed, and pressured for political and humanitarian action based on concerted reflection and advocacy.

After the genocide in Rwanda, 32 women's organisations joined forces in order to rehabilitate the Rwandese society and to launch a national, regional and global call for social peace and justice.

This organisation is known as Pro-Femme/Twese Hamwe.

This women's peace initiative demonstrates women's ability to position themselves at the forefront of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building.



It is no secret that women were among the extremists who contributed to the murder of their neighbours, colleagues, friends and even relatives. This situation left many people filled with bitter hatred and a strong desire for revenge. Yet Pro-Femme/Twese Hamwe women's organisation was able to pool women's efforts together with the following aims:

- A.** to reinforce the power and role of women in the Rwandese society.
- B.** to promote a culture of peace in the national, regional and international community.
- C.** to re-activate national values and/or create new values.
- D.** to mobilise national and local populations, mainly women, to fight against the ideology of division and exclusion, the culture of violence and to promote social justice.
- E.** to increase the capacity of Rwandese women in providing sustainable solutions to national problems. These included problems of refugees, repatriated peo-



ple and fugitives so that they could regain their dignity and rights in a peaceful environment.

These women demonstrated relentless ability to listen and learn, and to take Rwandese communities through a process of appropriate restitution, forgiveness and healing:

Peace and Capacity Building

In March 1997 at Kigali, the organisation convened with partners the Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and Development to:

- Identify the major causes of conflict.
- Make increased use of the woman's perspective in formulating strategies to address such causes.

Supporting war-affected persons

As part of their 'actions for peace' the organisation built "Peace Villages" as homes for widows and orphans from all ethnic groups.

Capacity Building

- Create micro-actions to ensure food and generate income, especially for women and children.
- Work to analyse and publicise the history of Rwanda and the causes of conflict.

Networking

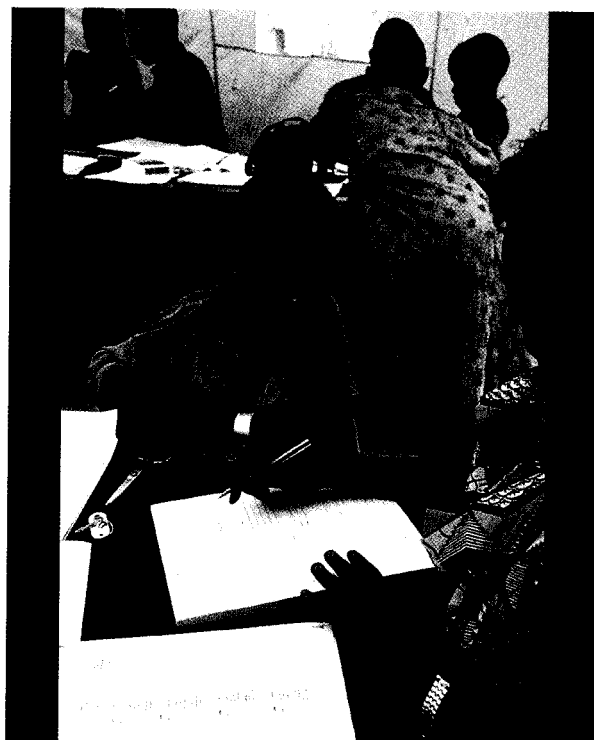
- Involve the government, churches, NGOs and media in their peace programmes.

PRO-FEMME TWESE HAMWE received the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Prize for the promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence in 1996 and continues to promote peace by strengthening the power and the role of women in a country where they constitute 60 to 70 percent of the population.

On receiving the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh prize, Mrs. Nzambazamariya of PRO-FEMME TWESE HAMWE said, "Like Martin Luther King, the women of Rwanda had a dream: that the nightmare will never happen again, in Rwanda or elsewhere".

About 1000 children are imprisoned in Rwanda charged with genocide. "Aren't they victims too?" "By condemning them, we are condemning ourselves. To all the mothers of the earth, together and with one voice, enough!"

PRO-FEMME TWESE HAMWE



The Republic of Congo

1993-1994



This period witnessed the first socio-political conflict in which

heavy conventional weapons were used. It was between two political groups, the Mouvance Présidentielle and the Union for Democratic Renewal-United Democratic Forces. About 3,000 lives were lost in this conflict. The escalation of the conflict was caused by the results of the legislative elections that followed the dissolution of the National Assembly by President Lissouba.

As a response to this situation, during the “National Forum on Women”, the women decided to organise a regional

conference in Dakar before the Beijing Conference. They also organised a Peace March on November 23, 1994.

In recognition of the awareness that only through collective action could peace be realised, other peace-inspired movements came into being. These included:

- the Women’s National Committee for Peace;
- a Parliamentary Ad- Hoc Peace Committee;
- «Generation Without Frontiers» (created by the youth);
- National Interposition Force (created by the army)

In 1994, women fully participated in the National Forum for a Culture of Peace, organised by UNESCO and the Congolese government to sustain the peace process.

The meeting resulted in the signing of a «peace pact» by government representatives, religious leaders and members of the civil society.

1997

Unfortunately, this pact was not honoured because of the socio-political tensions that continued in the country. Conflicts continued even after another «peace pact» was signed on May 30, 1997. These conflicts between «Mouvance Présidentielle» and the militia forces of a former president, Sassou Nguesso, resulted in the deaths of 15,000 people.

Despite the insecurity of the situation, the women of the Congo continued to search for solutions to the conflict and formed the “National Women’s Committee for Peace”:

Communications

- Using radio, they successfully assembled the concerned residents of Brazzaville at the Baongo Stadium to hear their appeal for peace. Political, religious and civil society leaders attended the meeting.



Peace Advocacy

- They issued a declaration of alternative solutions to the conflict. It was addressed to the *National Committee for Mediation* and copied to the following: President Omar Bongo; the OAU and the UN Representative, Ambassador Sahnoun.
- Specific appeals were also sent to Presidents Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Konan Bedie (Côte d'Ivoire) and Abdou Diouf (Sénégal).
- Through this initiative, the National Women's Committee for Peace was able to prepare and



relay their message of peace to critical target groups within and outside Congo. The National Committee for Peace held discussions with President Lissouba and demanded that the President, as the father of the nation, should sign the cease-fire accord to safeguard the peace and security of all citizens.

- The President signed the accord in September 1997 after meeting with the women.

Political Participation

- Women accepted to participate in the government of Prime Minister Bernard Kolela whose major task was to restore peace.
- He appointed a woman to be the Minister for Culture and Human Rights.

Post Conflict Actions

- Women's reconciliation and reconstruction efforts include involvement in activities through the *National Forum for Reconciliation and Reconstruction of Congo*.

Peace-building through women's initiatives is a process and not an event that just happens.

- There are three women ministers in the transition government and ten women in the National Council of Transition (National Assembly).
- The women celebrated the International Women's Day on March 8, 1998 by dedicating three days to reflection on the situation in the Congo ; this led to renewed recommendations for peace and reconstruction.
- As part of the events to mark March 8, the Congolese women welcomed the African Federation of Women Networks (FERAP) who came to express their solidarity with the Congolese women.

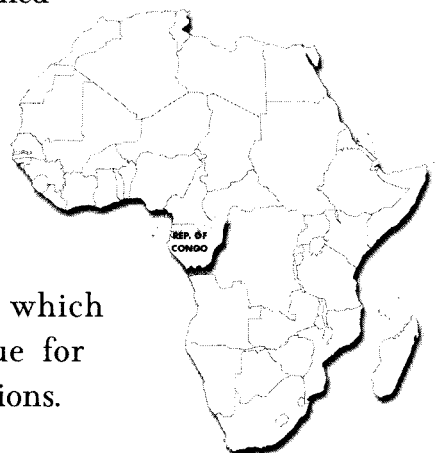
Although the armed conflicts continued, these women's peace initiatives are recognised as victories, given their impact and the circumstances in which the women had to operate.

It is noteworthy that the weak representation of women in the peace process at national, regional and international levels and poor communication constrained their efforts.

Thus, to some extent their voices for peace remained

limited. As an example, their peace message could not be relayed

to Libreville which was the venue for peace negotiations.



Mali



The Women's National Movement for Peace Keeping and National Unity (MNFPU) was

formed on 25th October, 1995 in response to the 1990 outbreak of internal conflict in Northern Mali. This conflict is commonly known as the Tuareg War.

The aim was to contribute effectively to the restoration of peace and social cohesion, encourage the return of displaced populations, fight rumours and subversive ideas and support women's groups in their development initiatives. The MNFPUN engaged in the activities shown below:

Awareness

- Organised a reconciliation seminar in January 1994 at which women could share their pain at the destruction of society and plan for peaceful reconciliation.

Community Networking

- Conducted a workshop on consolidation of a peace culture and effective communication for peace.
As a result, women peace activists visited leaders of different communities to convey their message.
Women encouraged to help each other and share in laughter and tears.

Tradition

- Used traditional mediating techniques : oral narratives, music, family ties.

Music and the message it carries is very important in Malian culture as it combines the poetry and musical knowledge of different areas and tribal groups and has a unifying influence.

Marriage : traditionally, Malian women marry men from outside their own communities. This forms strong family ties across a large area. Women were encouraged to continue this practice on the basis that it is harder for cousins and brothers to make war against one another.

- Developed their capacity to listen with compassion : the women adopted the attitude of a mother, sister or wife when talking to others. This resulted in their gaining the respect of the women of northern Mali and finally that of the influential traditional chiefs.

Supporting war affected population

- Visited war zones and provided humanitarian aid to the victims.

This included women, children, soldiers and the wounded. They also visited prisoners and refugees in Mauritania and Burkina Faso.

The women adopted an attitude of neutrality and impartiality in helping the victims.

Peaceful Demonstrations

- Organised peaceful marches.
- Conducted prayers in mosques.
- Prepared actively for the disarmament process and the Flame of Peace (Burning weapons on 23.3.1996).

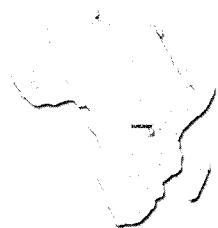
The mobilisation for peace by women in Mali has played an important role in reconciliation and the restoration of trust between the communities. Their individual and collective efforts have contributed to the preservation of social values.

Their strength was tested when the MNFPUN was itself a target for violence. The movement was seriously shaken but succeeded in overcoming the attacks.

Their neutrality and willingness to work for peace under all circumstances reinforced their power as a movement and gained them the respect of fighters, the community and politicians.



Burundi



Burundi plunged into a crisis in 1993 that was characterised by massacres, a high level of assassinations, the destruction of the social infrastructure and massive displacement of the population. Since then, the national political authorities and other concerned partners at both national and international levels have taken initiatives to reinstate and consolidate lasting peace in Burundi.

In 1994, UNESCO, in collaboration with the Government of Burundi set up the UNESCO Centre for a Culture of Peace to help the country mobilise all its sons and daughters for peace, reconciliation and conflict prevention.

A woman is a very important partner in conflict resolution in the traditional Burundi society.

She is expected to avoid conflicts by adopting a positive attitude towards members of her family, the immediate environment and everybody with whom she comes into contact. The modern Burundi woman is called upon to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the context of the prevailing crisis and the collapse of values.

She is expected by society to be the element of **unity** in the family and neighbourhood:

The UNESCO case-study on Burundese women's traditional mediating and peace-building practices in a useful tool for discussing the values and the priorities of society today.

Organisation for Peace and Equality

The Women's Federated Associations and NGOs of Burundi (W.F.A) succeeded the Women's Committee of all Associations (W.C.A) and started its activities in March 1994 after receiving financial assistance from the Canadian Centre for Studies and International Cooperation (C.S.I.C).

It aims to promote women's awareness of the country's civil and political life in order to reinforce their role in peace and national reconciliation processes. It also focuses on establishing links with other local and international NGOs to promote women's movements in Burundi.

The W.F.A program attempts to make the Burundi women from every income category aware of their vital role in national reconciliation. They are encouraged to ask :

- What is the best method of returning to peace,
- How to go about the reconstruction of the country.

They have to date liaised and networked with other women's organisations to share experiences and ideas.

The Burundi women's organisations distributed a letter, «CONCERN: SOS ADDRESSED TO OUR SISTERS ALL OVER THE WORLD» to solicit assistance in lifting the economic embargo on the country.



Ms. Ruth Sando Perry

In 1996 Ms. Ruth Sando Perry was appointed head of a six member male-dominated council of state which included the leaders of three major warring factions. Under the Mandate of the Revised Abuja Peace Accord and Schedule of Implementation, it was required that peace be restored in nine calendar months.

Under the leadership of Ms. Perry the following six-point framework was used in the analysis of the conflict and development of strategies for solutions :

1. Self-evaluation
2. Reflections on the causes of the Liberian conflict
3. Identification of the impacting factors
4. Building of a constituency for peace
5. Mobilisation and communication
6. Post-conflict peace building

Ms. Perry exemplified the traditional values of African women when, with humility and determination, she approached the awesome task of restoring peace in Liberia.

In her address to the Inter-Agency Workshop in Addis Ababa, Ms. Perry said :

“Firstly, I felt obliged to search my own spirit with regards to my strength and weakness. I objectively queried myself: What specifically was required of me under the Abuja Accord? Was I physically, mentally and emotionally prepared to handle the situation at hand?



Was I patriotic and nationalistic enough to consider the future of Liberia above all else? Have I earned the trust and integrity for this position? Was I neutral enough to serve as peace broker and stabiliser? Did I understand the issues and factors responsible for the conflict? These questions served as my guide in performing the task I had at hand.”

“To a large extent, I succeeded because I had a well defined goal and objectives



in mind. I remained very focused on the mandate given me and did not lobby to become any more influential than being an advocate for peace. My position was clear : I wanted unconditional peace for Liberia, and I declared that disarmament was the key element in the peace process and insisted that there must be total disarmament before elections. I projected myself as a true mother and a stabiliser, using faith, discipline, courage, patience and tolerance. Prior

to becoming Head of State, I was deeply involved in encouraging and motivating women and all patriotic Liberians to take an active part in the peace process.”

The best practices of Ruth Sando Perry can be considered as a useful guideline to peace-builders in Africa and beyond. ■

III. Strategic elements in best practices

Organisational Approaches

- self-evaluation : strength and weaknesses ; motivation ; physical and emotional limits ; ability to remain neutral enough to remain effective peace broker
- unity : clarify goals and expected results
- contact and co-ordinate with other women's peace organisations at early stage of formation

Peace Advocacy and Long Term Peace Building Initiatives

- launching peace crusades and taking the peace campaign to all factions, including the strongholds of warring parties
- encouraging frequent contact between major players in the conflict
- building alliances between warring factions, politicians and political parties at the local and international levels
- lobbying and advocacy by sending letters to the international community, influential individuals and the media

- active involvement in decisive peace conferences and negotiations
- picketing key offices and institutions
- Training of Trainers workshops to enable women to return to community with mediation and reconciliation skills they can teach to others

Awareness Raising

- presenting papers on peace at seminars and conferences
- staging peace marches
- conducting peace workshops, organising peace debates and prayer meetings
- printing posters and producing Tee-shirts with strategic messages
- giving equal importance to participation of women from all levels of society, including grassroots

Conflict Resolution and Problem Solving with groups:

- seek solution to conflicts from within and among the opposing parties themselves



In Sierra Leone , Mali, Somalia and Liberia, women consulted schools and youth groups, religious movements, community groups, elders, traditional leaders and the wives and families of warring parties from the early stages of the peace movement.



In Sierra Leone and Mali, the peace movements effectively used the media, open letters and communication with the international community. In Somalia and Burundi, dance, drama and plays conveyed the message. In other countries, radio programmes and poster campaigns have been successful. In Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone, women's peace movements organised rallies and demonstrations to convey the message of peace to the people and to demonstrate to their leaders their united commitment to cessation of hostilities and the development of democracy.

Congolese women observed that they might have had greater impact in averting the crisis in their country had they not ignored the early warning signs of the impending conflict. They contributed to the strengthening of the democratic process in the country.

In Liberia and Mali, retaining neutrality and honesty without compromising a commitment to justice was the key.

- gain the confidence of warring parties by maintaining neutrality

with individuals:

- role play through dramatic re-enactment of traumatic experiences (also form of therapy)
- story telling which enables people to recognise and take responsibility for their own contribution to violence and war-mongering

Involving the Community

- build a constituency for peace by creating synergy between different categories of society
- appeal to specific target audiences through traditional mediating techniques and religious activities
- sensitising the community on the need for forgiveness, reconciliation and re-integration of former comba-

tants, refugees and the displaced

- networking to spread the peace message throughout all of society

Supporting Conflict-affected Persons and Communities

- visiting the displaced and refugees and providing relief assistance
- visiting combatants and former combatants and victims of war in homes and hospitals
- listening with compassion

When women of African nations presented their best and most effective peace-making practices at the workshop, details of their strategies and practices differed but the benchmark of their success remains fixed:

- Unity.
- A clear sense of purpose.
- Effective networking.
- Making reasonable demands.

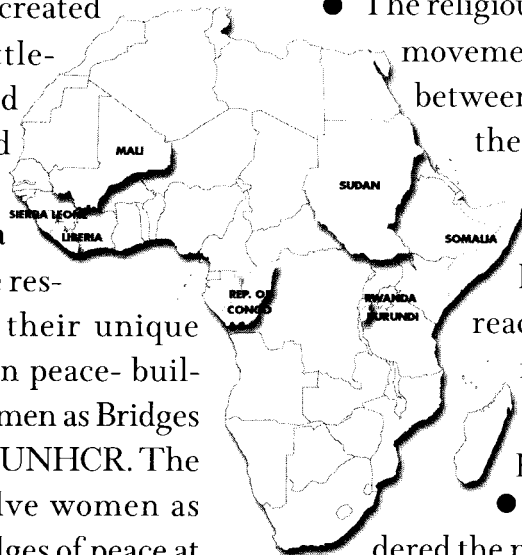
IV. Impact of women's best practices

LIBERIA

- 85% of combatants voluntarily disarmed.
- All armed factions were dissolved.
- Realisation by all Liberians that there were no winners in the conflict. All were losers on a trail of self-destruction.
- End of the war through peaceful, free, fair and credible elections on July 19, 1997.
- All former leaders of warring factions who contested elected positions resigned from the Council of State.
- Secure environment created for return and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons.
- The women of Liberia have also taken up the responsibility of using their unique experience and role in peace-building through the «Women as Bridges Project» sponsored by UNHCR. The project aims to involve women as reconciliators and bridges of peace at the community level where Liberians are still divided along ethnic and political lines after years of political crises.

SIERRA LEONE

- Women's participation and influence was ensured at all levels of the peace process even though women did not form part of the official mediating team.
- Open letters to the head of the rebel movement also reached the women on the rebel side. This changed the way rebels treated prisoners of war and those who had been abducted.
- The formation of new peace groups as a result of promotional activities and debates.
- The religious dimension of the peace movement created a strong bond between people who believed in the process and in reconciliation.
- Networking and collaboration successful for reaching youth groups, market women, micro-enterprise development projects.
- Networking was considered the most effective method for building consensus for peace throughout the country.



SUDAN

- Formation of peace groups and networks
- Awareness raised for necessity of: capacity building of women in conflict management ; the need for peace ; mediation and traditional skills.
- Building and empowerment of women as leaders

SOMALIA AND NORTH WEST SOMALIA

- Women's groups, women religious leaders and other women's organisations united in the peace activities.
- Peace activities that started in Hargesia spread to other parts resulting in stable institutions.

RWANDA

- PRO-FEMME/TWESE HAMWE received the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Prize for the promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence in 1996 and continues to promote peace by strengthening the power and the role of women in a country where they constitute 60 to 70 percent of the population.

MALI

- Contributed to the return of peace in Mali by bridge building and stressing traditional methods of demonstrating compassion.
- Created awareness of the importance of sustaining and continuing development of peace initiatives.

BURUNDI

- Important networking among women at all levels of society leading to greater awareness of their role in national reconciliation.

It is important to note that this impact analysis is based on the information shared by the women peace activists at the Inter-agency Workshop in November 1997.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

- The women contributed to the strengthening of democratic processes in the country.
- Cease fire accord signed by President Lissouba after discussions with National Women's Committee for Peace.
- Post-conflict government appointed two women ministers and ten women on the National Council of Transition.
- Women's groups continue to give recommendations for peace and reconstruction.



"Only together, women and men in parity and partnership, can we overcome obstacles and inertia, silence and frustration and ensure the insight, political will, creative thinking and concrete actions needed for a global transition from the culture of violence to a culture to peace".

UNESCO Statement on Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace

V. Lessons learned

The presentations, commentaries and participant discussions taught the following lessons :

- *Women, with their multiple responsibilities in the community, particularly in the management of natural resources such as water and food, are well positioned to feel and see early warning signs of conflict. Women need support to develop this capacity and to use it for early action for prevention of conflict.*
 - *All internal and external elements of conflict must be identified and the issues understood.*
 - *Women must participate in all aspects and all levels of the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the processes of peace building and peace maintenance.*
 - *Extensive consultation and outreach should be made with women at all levels in society. The participation of women representing all political and social groups is at the core of successful peace initiatives. Broad consultation will enable peace movements to harness different skills and experiences.*
 - *Recruitment into the peace movement must be from the broadest base possible, with particular emphasis on*
- including women from the grassroots organisations. Participation of rural and urban women, women representing all religions, linguistic, social and political groups will promote nation wide ownership of the peace process.*
- *Women should promote a common agenda on peace. In some countries, this was based on agreement on national identity ; in others, the common desire for peace and the end of suffering.*
 - *Women's peace movements must communicate their message to the whole population by whatever means at their disposal,*
 - *As peace brokers, women must command respect among conflicting parties : be firm on decisions ; tolerant ; patient and as neutral as possible,*
 - *Women in peace movements should nurture the trust of all parties in order to enhance their role as mediators,*
 - *Women have been shown to have the particular ability to listen to all sides with compassion and understanding, thus contributing to a non-threatening environment for dialogue.*
 - *Post-conflict reconstruction must include the empowerment of women through education, income genera-*

ting activities, the teaching of leadership skills, mediation and negotiation skills, fund raising, designing project proposals, lobbying and advocacy. All participants called on the international community to fund and support this type of capacity building and training of women groups.

- Programmes to sustain peace through peace education in schools and the community, must be initiated and strengthened.
- After hostilities have ceased, women's continuing role in sustaining peace must be acknowledged and maintained, they should not be relegated to the domestic area.
- Women must advocate for social change to set aside patriarchal values and structures that oppress women and inhibit their participation in social, economic and political spheres. Ideally, these principles of equality should be constitutionally protected as was the case in post-war Ethiopia. The women's movement should then meet the challenge of informing and educating women to take full advantage of these rights.
- The women at the Addis Ababa Workshop stated that justice and accountability for crimes committed during war and conflict is a central

aspect of the reconciliation and healing process. Crimes specifically directed towards women, such as sexual violence and rape, must be addressed by legal mechanisms. Architects and perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity must be subject to the rule of law and justice in a timely and effective manner.

- People must share responsibility for the causes of violence as a first step to understanding the causes of conflict.
- Women's organisations must establish local, national, regional and international networks in order to strengthen and sustain their work. At the regional level, the networks of women's peace movements should be strengthened and communication enhanced in order to provide early warning and pre-emptive peace missions where possible. Linkages and networks between UN, NGOs and government agencies should be strengthened.
- Total disarmament is a necessary component of lasting peace.
- Women's peace movements should promote peace amongst neighbouring countries. Regional peace and stability will enhance the likelihood of continued national peace.

VI. Limitations of women's peace initiatives



Despite the continuing commitment of women's peace activists as documented here, their voice is still not given adequate attention in the peace process.

Clearly, if women's peace initiatives are to produce results and influence warring parties, their unique perspective must be amplified with formal authority in decision-making.

In spite of their proven effectiveness, African women's peace movements are seriously limited by :

- Failure of existing structures to identify women's best practices and support their implementation
- Absence of policies that can transform the framework of the peace process to include women at all stages
- Failure to match expressed intentions about women's equal participation in peace mechanisms with a concrete action plan and the necessary budgetary allocations
- Lack of an institutional framework that gives women's peace initiatives clear mandates and responsibilities and that ensures all actors in the peace process are committed and accountable to women's participation

- Growing lack of respect for traditional values and mediating techniques due to the influence of world-views, stereotyped gender roles and decay of social fabric

The international community, UN agencies, regional bodies, sub-regional structures, governments, NGOs and African women leaders have all called for the full involvement of women in peace activities. They have emphasised the need to «promote equal opportunities for women to participate in all forums and peace activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making levels» (par. 142a Beijing Platform for Action). They have further resolved to «strengthen the role of women and to ensure representation of women at all decision-making levels in national and international institutions which may make or influence policy with regard to matters related to peace-keeping, preventive diplomacy, and related activities in all stages of peace mediation and negotiations» (par 142a).

VI a. Institutional capacity

The Secretary general of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), said in his closing address of the workshop, that the OAU is exerting maximum efforts to enhance women's role and contribution in peace making efforts in the continent.

- He recommitted the Secretariat to the establishment of the African Women's Committees for Peace, called for in the 1993 Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace. (The African Women's Committee for Peace and Development was established in 1998. This autonomous committee has joint secretariat in OAU/ECA).
- Confirmed his intentions to appoint a high level advisor on women.

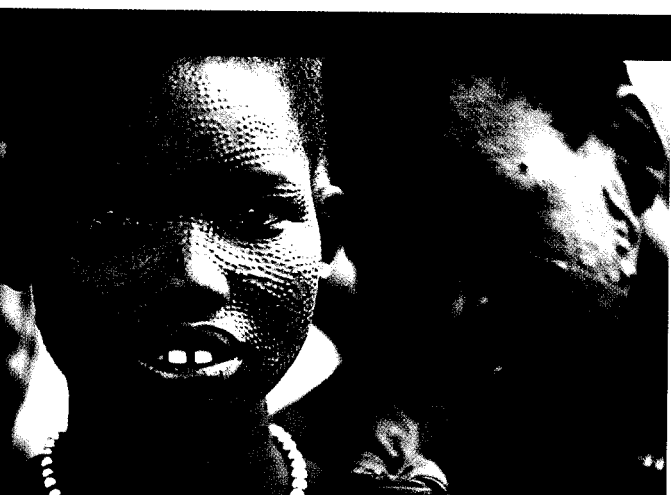
A gender responsive policy in the formal and informal sectors would:

- **Overcome fears and doubts about the legitimacy of gender responsive planning.**
- **Eliminate misunderstandings between groups due to inadequate knowledge about gender mainstreaming.**
- **Address gender inequalities in formal and informal decision making.**
- **Promote greater gender awareness among government officials, development partners, NGOs and CBOs.**



- **Recommitted the OAU to the establishment of an institutional framework for the participation of women in the conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms.**

The establishment of a Women's Desk at the OAU with the mandate and responsibility for strengthening the OAU peace process, and providing a basis for continuity and moral support for women's peace networks in the continent, was seen by the workshop as a prerequisite for the empowerment of women.



'I am personally committed to the objectives of the enhancement of the role and co-ordination of women in socio-economic and political endeavours in our continent'.

**H.E. DR. SALIM A. SALIM
ADDIS ABABA 1997**

VII. Strategy for strengthening women's peace initiatives

- Identifying the best practices of women in peace promotion is not an end in itself. A framework is needed to strengthen their application. Two critical issues addressed by such a framework are :
 - the demonstration of the efficacy of these practices in formal settings,
 - expanding their operational scope beyond the community level.
- It is vital to ensure that the different actors in peace negotiations understand the core elements of women's best practices as a basis for peace building and reconciliation policies.
- Women's peace movements have to mobilise to :
 - develop leverage in peace negotiations,
 - ensure an increased awareness of women's political role,
 - understand their potential as a group to influence the peace process,
 - educate women and reduce their traditionally negative attitude towards politics.
- Both gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women can be used as a two pronged approach to enhance and replicate women's best practices for non-violent conflict resolution. This mainstreaming/advancement framework must also address the inequality in participant roles in peace negotiation, and of the number of women in leadership positions in political, social and economic spheres.
- The important lesson of programmes that have examined gender inequality is that ultimately, a multi-faceted approach with elements of tact, leverage, liaison, respect and example is the basis for developing replicable programmes and processes. Questions which should be addressed include:
 - what are current peace programmes already doing,
 - what are women's positions in relation to men in these programmes,
 - what are women as an organised group capable of doing and
 - how do the needs and perceptions of women differ in comparison to those of men.
- Women's peace movements, from the village, to the national, sub-regional and regional levels, should establish a committee of mediators who have the stature and moral weight to operate as peacemakers. Such a body should co-opt women with credibility and leverage and include women from all strata of society. In this way, women would transform the existing peace agenda by virtue of their participation as decision-makers in all existing peace networks and mechanisms of civil society, the media, the private sector, governments and international organisations.

VII a. Developing a gender analysis tool kit for effective peace building

This framework for developing an analysis tool kit identifies analytical tools which can be developed for use by policy makers, governments, development partners, international agencies and project managers working in conflict management, to effectively address peace issues from a gender perspective.

It draws from the testimonies and experiences of women practitioners who attended the workshop on Documented Best Practices for peace-building, Addis Ababa, November 1997.

Issues	Analytical tools to achieve task
1 Gender Equality Strategy for Peace Promotion	Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Peace Structures and Mechanisms
2 Policy Analysis	Anticipating Differential Impacts of Conflicts on Women and Men
3 Women's Peace Movement Profiles	Identifying Capacity Building Implications Using Institutional Review of Women's Peace Networks
4 Gender and Conflict Management Dynamics	Analysing the Quality and Extent of the Involvement of Women and Men in Violent Conflict
5 Sex and Gender	Examining the Socio-cultural Context of Gender Differences in Conflict Resolution
6 Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for effective Non-violent Conflict Resolution and Sustainable Peace	Strengthening Modern Peace Initiatives through Traditional Mediating Techniques
7 Gender and Participatory Analysis through Monitoring and Evaluation	Developing Peace Building, Monitoring and Evaluation Plans
8 Documenting Resources Analysis	Reporting on the Differential Resources that Impact on Women's Peace Initiatives
9 Gender Responsive Indicators in Conflict Management	Assessing Attitudes and Behavioural Changes
10 Gender Research Guide for Conflict Resolution	Selecting Methods through Case Studies



VIII. Some common characteristics of conflict resolution and problem solving

The African women's practices as documented are good examples of the effective win-win method.

The *African Platform for Action* (Dakar 1994) underlined the significance of the traditional conflict resolution strategy where there was no winner or loser in achieving sustainable peace. Lasting peace was secured through techniques which ensured that all parties involved employed consensus building and integrative decision-making methods.

a. Effective Practice

The traditional strategy in conflict resolution method can be called a win-win strategy as opposed to a win-lose or lose-lose strategy.

The win-win strategy in conflict resolution is the best practice because there is no winner and no loser.

Each party must abandon preconceived solutions and join the opposing party in search of new solutions which are acceptable to everybody.

Participants should :

- Focus on defeating the problem rather than on defeating each other.
- Seek facts to resolve dilemmas.

- Avoid self-oriented behaviour when it portends the exclusion of others needs or positions.
- Seek solutions, which are acceptable to all parties involved in the conflict.
- Recognise their collective responsibility to be open and honest about facts, opinions and feelings.
- Work to control the process by which to arrive at an agreement but do not dictate the content of the agreement (Adapted from Filley 1975).

b. Ineffective Practice

The common characteristics of win-lose and lose-lose methods are:

- A clear we-they distinction between conflicting parties rather than a we-versus-the problem orientation.
- Energies are directed towards the adversary in an atmosphere of total victory or defeat.
- Each party sees the issue only from its own point of view instead of defining the problem in terms of mutual needs and common concerns.
- The emphasis on attaining a solution and not on defining goals, values or gains that can be attained with the solution.
- Conflicts are personalised rather than objectively focused on facts and issues.

In ineffective practices, the parties are conflict-oriented, emphasising the immediate disagreement and not considering the long-term effect of conflict and its resolution.

c. Prerequisites for Effective Practice in Peace-Building and Non-violent Conflict Resolution

Sustainable peace is dependent on policies and institutional frameworks and the involvement and participation of all members of society in the management of conflict situations.

Achieving and sustaining peace and peaceful co-existence thus involves a number of fundamental habits and behaviour. These include:

- a) Knowledge and information about the nature, cause and extent of a conflict. In this regard, it is important to have a clear understanding of what resources are available for the peace process and how the resources can be used for preventive diplomacy, peace-making and post-conflict peace building.
- b) Skills and techniques of applying conflict management and problem solving strategies. It is necessary to be strategic and focus on outcomes through consensus-building and integrative decision-making.

Peace facilitators must have credibility, inspire trust and be in line with the emotional feelings of conflicting partners if they are to help in arriving at solutions that are acceptable to all sides.

- c) Desire and motivation to create and maintain peace. A genuine search for sustainable peace usually arises from stalemate solutions which are mutually hurting. When conflicting factions realise that an issue is capable of uniting or tearing them apart, they tend to be more willing to invest diplomatically and materially in the achievement of peace and unity. A fundamental basis for achieving sustainable peace is having absolute determination to solve the problem in a non-violent way.
- d) Knowledge and command of conflict management skills and techniques. To be effective, peace facilitators must know in what circumstances and at what specific stages to apply specific methods.



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ANNEXE 1

OUR COMMITMENT TO ACTION

We are encouraged by the democratic processes and regimes that are emerging in our sub-region. However, we are also concerned about the absence of peace, existence of political tension and wars in some parts of the sub-region which threaten the political and economic stability of the entire region, and the rising poverty that afflicts the majority of our people, especially women.

We believe that the solution to these problems requires active participation of all groups in society, full and effective partnerships between women and men, and leadership with integrity and vision.

Therefore, we as Eastern African Women in politics in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, having met in Entebbe from 22 to 24 February 1996, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), commit ourselves to the following political agenda:

1. PEACE as a prerequisite for sustainable human development.
2. Land and property rights, rural credit and sub-sub-sub-regional trade, as a means for ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.
3. Affirmative action, fund-raising and political skills training as a means for POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT.
4. Health and education, energy and water labour-saving technologies as critical for WOMEN'S WELL-BEING.

We will take the following actions:

1. Establish a sub-regional network of women in politics.
2. Set up a Committee of Eminent Women Leaders in the sub-region to participate in and enhance existing peace efforts and to serve as an early warning mechanism to avoid and avert the eruption of conflict and bloodshed in the sub-region.
3. We will commit ourselves INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY to be transformative leaders and change agents for our societies.

ANNEXE II

ECA/OAU/AH.EGM/WLFP/96/8

II. RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE AD-HOC EXPERT GROUP/WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP FORUM ON PEACE

171. The Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting/Women's Leadership Forum on Peace in Johannesburg, South Africa from 4-8 November 1996.

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity on conflict prevention, management and resolution;

Deeply concerned by the ongoing conflicts in many African countries inter alia Burundi, Zaire, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Western Sahara, Somalia and Liberia which have resulted in the killing of innocent civilian women, men and children and the consequent forced mass displacement of population;

Considering the continued depletion of resources and exacerbation of poverty in countries experiencing conflicts in regions hosting refugees contributing to rising instability and increasing tension between refugees and the local population and the efforts geared to prevent or contain new sources of conflict;

Having listened to statements from participants at this Forum who are nationals of African countries embroiled in conflicts;

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the contributions made by participants at the Forum;
2. **EXPRESSES** deep concern on the ongoing situation of conflicts and wars in some African countries;
3. **CALLS** upon African governments, the civil society and the international community to do their utmost to resolve the conflicts in these countries in keeping with the African traditional spirit of resolving conflicts in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and OAU on conflict situations in Africa.
4. **APPEALS** to international, Regional and Sub-Regional financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, the ECA, and ADB as well as NGOs, the UN Specialised Agencies and other donors to allocate funds for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of essential infrastructure in refugee hosting areas and in countries undergoing rehabilitation and post-conflict peace building.

*Adopted unanimously on November 8, 1996
Johannesburg, South Africa.*

ANNEXE III

KIGALI DECLARATION

ON PEACE, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

We the Women of Africa meeting in Kigali, Rwanda on 3 March 1997 at the Pan-African Conference on Gender, Peace and Development

Recalling the Kampala Declaration on Peace, the African and global Platforms of Action and the resolutions of the Johannesburg Women leadership Forum on Peace,

Concerned about continued internal armed conflicts on the continent and in the Great Lakes regions in particular and the consequences of war on the lives of ordinary people especially Women and Children.

Mindful of the recent genocide in Rwanda which is a scar on the African conscience and an experience never to be repeated on the continent but encouraged by the efforts of reconstruction in post-genocide Rwanda.

Noting with great concern African women's lack of awareness of their civic and human rights

Determined to contribute to conflict prevention and conflict resolution in Africa by introducing our perspectives, priorities and culture to all peace-making initiatives.

DO DECLARED THAT :

Peace is a pre-requisite for Development

We commit ourselves to the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts on our continent.

We demand from our governments recognition of women's traditional peace-making roles and their rights to equal involvement in all peace initiatives including early warning mechanisms and swift responses at national, regional and international levels.

We urge the Secretary General of the OAU to accelerate establishment of the African Women Committee on Peace (AWCP) and ask our governments to give full support to the process.

We encourage Governments and NGOs and international Organisations to develop and increase civic and human rights education programmes for grassroots women.

We affirm that peace can only be built on equality and freedom from injustice

We urge African Governments to adhere to the rule of law and enforce respect for human and women's rights.

We call upon the OAU and UN to establish a compensation fund for the victims of genocide in Rwanda. And ask all governments to cooperate in bringing the perpetrators of genocide to justice.

We urge the UN particularly the UNDP to assist in organising an immediate mission of eminent women to Burundi in order to support women's initiatives for peace and to examine the effects of the embargo on the people of Burundi and provide informed recommendations.

We request the OAU and ECA to follow up implementation of the Kigali Plan of Action including mobilising resources for its realisations.

We commit ourselves to establishing and strengthening partnerships of men and women, Government, media, NGOs and the private sector for peace in our countries.

Poverty and ignorance are major sources of conflicts.

We urge our Governments and the International Community to give priority to poverty eradication policies and programmes which foster the economic empowerment and advancement of women.

ANNEXE IV

FLA/Decl.(I)

ABUJA DECLARATION OF AFRICA'S FIRST LADIES ON PEACE AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

We, the First Ladies of Africa, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, from 5 to 7 May, at the First Summit of Africa's First Ladies on Peace and Humanitarian issues jointly organised by the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Her Excellency, Mrs. Maryam Sani Abacha, the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa,

RECALLING the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution adopted by the 29th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and

Government of the OAU in July, 1993, at Cairo, Egypt:

RECALLING the **KAMPALA ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN AND PEACE** adopted by the Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development in Kampala, Uganda on 25 November, 1993; the **AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION** adopted the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women in Dakar, Senegal, on 23 November, 1994; and the **GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR ACTION** and the **BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION** adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, on 15 September, 1995;

RECALLING FURTHER the Communiqué issued on 15 September, 1995 by the African First Ladies on their peace initiative in Beijing, China during the Fourth World Conference on Women;

RECALLING ALSO DECISION NO. CM/Dec.315 (LXV) of the sixty-fifth Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers relating to the Preparation of the African First Ladies Summit, adopted in Tripoli, Libya, on 28 February 1997;

CONCERNED about the grave political situation in Africa, characterised by inter-state and intra-state conflicts and wars that not only lead to an increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons and cause destruction of life and property and infrastructure but also bring about untold misery and suffering to women and children who largely bear the brunt and are the major victims of all these conflagrations;

APPRECIATIVE of the various initiatives launched towards achieving lasting peace in Africa and the world;

CONCERNED that women are marginalised in the decision-making process, in general and in matters related to peace, in particular;

DETERMINED to promote the economic, political and social empowerment of women with due recognition being given to the importance of integrating a gender perspective into the mainstream of development; and to enhance women's effective participation in the process of conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as post-conflict peace-building;

NOTING WITH GRAVE CONCERN, the dire need to mobilise additional resources for peace and humanitarian activities;

HEREBY DECLARE our commitment to work towards lasting peace, stability and development in our Continent, in accordance with our Programme of Activities by:

1. promoting initiatives that enhance peace in our respective countries;
2. assisting in on-going conflict prevention, management and resolution efforts aimed at re-establishing peace in conflict areas through peace missions;
3. engaging in humanitarian activities in order to alleviate the effects of war;
4. calling on parties to armed conflicts in our continent to desist from child-soldiering and the international community to declare it a war crime;
5. strongly condemning child labour and child prostitution and calling on the international community to ban them;

6. strongly condemning the use of land mines and appealing to government to ratify and the International community to ban the use of land mines, assist in their clearance and mobilise relief and rehabilitation services and materials for the victims of land mines;
7. strongly condemning the illegal trafficking of arms across borders;
8. requesting our Governments and international Organisations to appoint and recommend more women for decision-making positions;
9. initiating and promoting programmes for the economic and political empowerment of women, for full participation in the civic and political processes;
10. encouraging public sensitisation and the introduction of education on peace, human rights, democracy, rule of law as well as a culture of tolerance at all levels of education;
11. empanelling a committee of First Ladies to form a team of mediators to respond to crises and emergencies that threaten peace and stability in Africa;
12. strongly recommending to our governments and international organisations to provide appropriate and adequate health and socio-educational facilities to women and children in general and victims of conflicts;
13. mobilising resources for peace and humanitarian activities;
14. building and strengthening linkages with existing peace and humanitarian initiatives/mechanisms/organisations; and
15. ensuring follow-up.

DONE IN ABUJA, NIGERIA, THIS 7TH DAY OF MAY 1997.

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