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**Consultative/Planning Meeting on the  
Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting/  
Women Leadership Forum on Peace**

**8 - 9 August 1996**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE/PLANNING MEETING ON THE  
AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING/  
WOMEN LEADERSHIP FORUM ON PEACE**

162  
01.03.14  
ECA/OAU

## **I. OPENING CEREMONY**

1. After a short statement of welcome to the OAU headquarters, Dr O. Khatib, Acting Director of Education, Science, Culture and Social Affairs Department at the OAU, introduced the Guest of Honour, Wro Tadelech Haile Michael, Minister for Women's Affairs in the Prime Minister's Office in Ethiopia.

2. Wro. Tadelech Haile Michael welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government of Ethiopia and the organizers of the meeting (ECA and OAU) and wished them successful deliberations.

3. She recalled the Kampala Action Plan adopted at the Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development in November 1995 which had recommended the establishment of a committee that would channel women's inputs into the peace process at the highest levels nationally, regionally and internationally.

4. The Minister observed that despite the proliferation of women's peace movements and organizations and their activities and efforts, these had had little impact on policies related to conflict and peace.

5. It was in this context that the ECA and OAU had decided to organize an ad hoc Expert Group Meeting/Forum of African Women Leaders to devise a mechanism for increasing active participation of women in the peace process in accordance with the provisions of the Kampala Action Plan.

6. The Minister reminded the participants that the objective of the consultative meeting for the collaborators of the intended forum was to brainstorm on modalities for setting up mechanisms for increasing women's participation in the peace process. She therefore urged participants to come up with concrete strategies for the implementation of the recommendations of the Kampala Action Plan. In this regard, she wished the

## II. SELECTION OF OFFICERS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

7. The meeting elected the Hon. Tadelech Haile Michaeli Minister of Women's Affairs in the Prime Minister's Office, Ethiopia, as Chairperson, the representative from the Ministry of Gender and Community Development, Uganda, as vice Chairperson and the representative of ABANTU for Development, as Rapporteur.

8. The Agenda was adopted with a slight amendment to item 3 on the presentation of papers by authors. In this connection, it was agreed that brief synopses of papers to be presented at the South African meeting be given. The programme of work was adopted.

9. The Chairperson gave the floor to the Chief of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa /African Centre for Women who drew participants' attention to the Aide Memoire prepared for the meeting in South Africa planned for October 1996. She recalled that one of the important outcomes of the Kampala Conference, was the Kampala Action Plan which, among other things, called for the establishment of a Committee of African Women Ministers and Plenipotentiaries to be involved in policy and mechanisms of conflict prevention, management and resolution of the highest organs of the OAU and the UN-ECA.

10. The Chief of the ACW commended the work of United Nations Development Fund for Women/African Women in Crises (UNIFEM/AFWIC) especially in the follow-up to the Kampala Conference. She then invited participants to debate the main objective set for the South African meeting.

11. A representative from the ACW clarified that the Forum planned for South Africa would bring together experts to elaborate on a mechanism for channelling African

12. The representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) raised issue with the wording of the objective, which she felt was not proactive. The representative from UNIFEM/AFWIC sought clarification on the purpose of the ad hoc expert meeting. On response, the OAU representative explained that the meeting would deliberate and make recommendations on the establishment of a mechanism that would bring together the different peace initiatives of African women so that they would become part and parcel of the OAU conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanism.

13. After an extended discussion regarding the wording of the objective of the ad hoc expert meeting/forum to be held in South Africa, the participants agreed on the following:

**The main objective of the Forum is to study, discuss and elaborate modalities for setting up and operationalizing a regional mechanism for the full and effective participation of African women in all processes of conflict prevention, resolution and management and peace building.**

### **III. PRESENTATION OF SYNOPSES OF PAPERS FOR THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

14. A representative of the ACW gave a summary of the background paper to be presented by the UN-ECA entitled: "The Role of Women in the Peace Process: An African Perspective."

15. The Chair commended the ACW representative for the comprehensive synopsis and in particular, the focus on areas for women's empowerment. A comment from the floor urged that the paper incorporates the involvement of the African Centre for Women's in peace initiatives.

16. A participant drew the attention of the meeting to the fact that the staff from the OAU Conflict Management Division, were not represented at the meeting. The representative of the OAU was requested to communicate this concern and to request their active participation at the meeting. She explained that the unit was very short-staffed and only one member of staff was available and he was preparing for a mission to Burundi.

17. The representative of UNIFEM/AFWIC stated that UNIFEM's paper would address issues of crisis in Africa: it would look at the cycle of UN conferences and their implications for women: the work that AFWIC had done in collaboration with the African Women's Peace Movement: the development of the network of African women's peace movements: and the need for a group of African Women Ambassadors for Peace to be elected by the women's peace movement.

18. The paper would highlight achievements of AFWIC and the women's peace movement. In particular, the documentation of women's contribution to the peace process, coalition-building and networking and capacity building activities.

19. The representative of UNIFEM/AFWIC also informed participants of the Pan-African Conference to be hosted by the Rwanda Government on Gender, Development and Peace from 1-3 December, 1996 in Kigali, at which AFWIC hopes to facilitate the launching of the Federation of Women's Peace Activists.

20. The representative of the OAU presented a synopsis of the OAU's paper entitled: "OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution: The Role of Women". She explained the workings of the OAU's mechanism adding that the Secretary General had the mandate to collaborate with NGOs and civil society. The paper would present examples of what the OAU's mechanism had done, as well as the specific role the proposed Committee could play in the work of the OAU's mechanism.

21. The representative of the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) outlined the issues that the UNHCR's paper would cover. These included the policy on Refugees and Displaced Women in Africa. It would elaborate why the refugee problem was a consequence of conventional and unconventional wars and conflict.

22. The UNHCR had adopted a policy that recognised the differential impact of conflicts on men and women and had developed appropriate ways of ensuring the inclusion of gender concerns in all areas of UNHCR's work. There were also parallel programmes to address women's specific needs. The paper would also highlight the institutionalisation of UNHCR's policy on women and displaced persons, which is based on a recognition of refugee and displaced women as agents of change, and an insistence on their participation in all aspects of refugee policies and programmes. The UNHCR was involved in dealing with consequences of war but it also addresses root causes of war and conflict.

23. The representative of ABANTU for Development outlined the main points that ABANTU's paper would cover. It would focus on the international initiatives on conflict prevention, management and resolution and peace building in Africa. She gave the example of the policy of the European Union (EU) on gender that had been adopted in December 1995 where it was indicated that the European Parliament would focus on the issue of women and emergencies. She also cited the recent communication from the EU on the issue of conflicts in Africa, 'Peace-Building, Conflict Prevention and Beyond' which completely ignored the role of African women. ABANTU's paper would focus on ways of inserting African women's concerns on conflict and peace-building in international processes.

24. The paper would make recommendations on some of the ways the proposed Committee could work on international initiatives for peace-building in Africa: these would include lobbying for African women's concerns to be incorporated into the

Security Council: monitoring the actions and initiatives for peace in Africa at the international level; lobbying for a reduction on military spending; mobilising funds internationally; highlighting and publicising African women's peace initiatives.

25. The representative from the UNDP informed the meeting that the UNDP office in Pretoria had been requested to fund the hosting expenses of the Expert Group Meeting on behalf of the South African government. She also suggested and it was agreed that she would propose to UNDP Headquarters that UNDP funds a paper to be written by Synergies Africa. The paper would discuss the peace initiatives of women in Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as the role of women NGOs in the peace process.

26. In conclusion, it was agreed that the papers being prepared for the Expert Group Meeting would include proposals on how the Committee could be involved with the various United Nations agencies and other organizations. They would also include proposals of how the agencies could support the work of the Committee. The papers which would provide a background for the discussions on the Terms of Reference for the Committee would be presented to the meeting in summary to be followed by discussions.

27. Authors of papers were requested to ensure that their papers were received in advance at the joint secretariat to enable their translation into French in time.

## V. PRESENTATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE

28. The ECA was invited to present the proposed Terms of Reference by the proposed Committee. The ACW representative, on behalf of the ECA, explained that the proposals contained suggestions on the method of selection, membership, tenure of office of the members of the committee, institutional framework, some of the functions of the committee, mobilisation of resources for supporting the committee, to whom Committee would be accountable, and some thoughts on institutionalising general

29. On the suggestion of the Chairperson, it was agreed that the discussions should first focus on the functions of the Committee. It was agreed that:

30. The purpose of the Committee was to ensure that the different initiatives on peace by African women and African women's concerns on conflicts are incorporated into decisions by policy-makers at the national, regional and international levels.

31. With respect to the functions of the Committee the following was decided: The Committee will have the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the Regional and Global Platforms for Action with regard to peace.

32. The Committee will serve as a Permanent Select Committee of the Central Organ of the OAU and will participate at all levels of the Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Mechanism. (This was agreed on the understanding that the organising committee of the conference would research on the status and implications of such a select committee.)

33. At this point a representative from the OAU's Conflict Management Division was invited to provide advice to the participants. After apologising his Division's non-participation in the meeting, he explained that OAU's mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, operated at the levels of Heads of State, Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors.

34. The OAU's Conflict Management Division was looking at the role that NGOs could play, and that they were aware of the absence of women in the Division. He mentioned the initiative that had come from African First Ladies who wished to visit conflict ridden areas. The Division was trying to encourage women to assist in any way they can, and were trying to encourage women to take up the various vacant posts in the Division as well as the post for consultancies that existed.

35. In response to a question on whether there were any steps being taken towards institutionalisation of women's participation in decision-making in the OAU Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Mechanism, the representative of the Division said that no steps were being taken at the moment in that regard.

36. The Division was currently revisiting the Cairo Declaration that established the OAU Mechanism but the representative did not see any possibility of the proposed Committee having membership of the Central Organ since only member states of the OAU can take decisions at this level. He therefore recommended that the proposed Committee act as a Select Committee to advise the Central Organ.

37. At the end of this intervention the meeting continued its discussions of the functions of the committee. It was agreed that other functions of the Committee would be to:

- ♦ Facilitate and ensure the participation of women in all peace initiatives in Africa, including peace missions, negotiations, observer missions etc... organised at the local, national, sub-regional and international levels.
- ♦ Ensure early engagement by peace networks with parties to potential and current conflicts in order to increase the knowledge base of causes of conflict and to provide alternative perspectives for conflict prevention, resolution and management.
- ♦ Promote and support the participation of women at decision-making levels to advocate for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and ensure the adherence to humanitarian law during conflicts, in particular the protection of civilians, refugees and displaced persons.

- ♦ In collaboration with refugee assisting agencies, ensure that the specific needs and situations of refugee and displaced women are adequately addressed at the highest level.
- ♦ Lobby for reduction in military expenditure and directing resources currently allocated to military spending towards increased expenditure in the social sector
- ♦ Support and strengthen initiatives that promote a culture of peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts, in particular through peace education.
- ♦ Report annually to the OAU Council of Ministers through the OAU Secretary General and to the ECA Conference of Ministers through ARCC.
- ♦ Ensure that its activities are widely disseminated through the joint secretariat of the OAU Women's Unit and the UN-ECA African Centre for Women. As a necessity this calls for the strengthening of both units.

38. There was a suggestion that participants express support for the OAU women's unit by sending a letter to the OAU Secretary-General and suggest the steps that he could take to strengthen the Women's Unit.

39. The Chief of ECA/ACW responding to the suggestion of writing to OAU Secretary General pointed out that the mandate of the consultation group was to discuss the setting up of the Committee.

40. It was agreed that within the context of the discussions of the meeting, the operations of the proposed Committee will be enhanced by a greater balance of women's representation at the OAU and a strengthened Women's Unit.

**41. Resource Mobilisation:**

The Committee should ensure the establishment of a Special Trust Fund for African Women's Peace Initiatives and request that the OAU contribute to this fund. Some of the peace dividend from cuts in military spending could also be channelled into the peace fund contributions from other individual, national, regional and international donors would also be welcome.

**42. General Meetings:**

The Committee should organise to meet regularly to precede key meetings of the OAU, UN-ECA and relevant bodies of the UN in order to lobby for and channel the critical gender concerns on matters of war and peace in Africa.

**43. Membership:**

The Committee shall be made up of 15 members (3 per sub-region; one from government; one from NGO and one in her personal capacity) and will develop mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of concerns of the different constituencies in the women's peace movement in its deliberations.

**44. Method of Selection:**

It was agreed that the Interim Committee appointed at the Kampala Conference in collaboration with the joint Secretariat of the UN-ECA African Centre for Women and the OAU Women's Unit will make the selection of the 15 members by November 30 so that the outcomes can be presented for endorsement at the Pan-African Conference in Rwanda.

45. **Term of Office:**

Members could serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms of two years each. At its first meeting the Committee will elect office bearers who will remain officers for one more year after the two-year term of the Committee.

46. **Institutional Framework:**

The Committee will be an autonomous Committee with a joint OAU/ECA Secretariat for limited period of time.

**VI. TIME FRAME FOR THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF CAWIPP**

47. A representative of the ACW presented the proposed time frame for the operationalization the proposed Committee which was examined by the meeting.

48. It was agreed that the selection Committee would finish its work by November 30, 1996 and inform the selected members by December 15. At the Rwanda meeting the presentation would only involve reporting on the formation of the Committee, its Purpose, Functions and Terms of Reference.

49. The organising secretariat would send invitations for the first meeting of the Committee by January 15, and the first meeting would be held from 6 - 8 March, 1997.

50. The organising secretariat was requested to co-ordinate with the Ethiopian government to celebrate International Women's Day, 1997 as a day of focusing on African women's contribution to the Peace Process. This would provide an opportunity for giving a high profile to the Committee's launch.

51. Participants agreed that messages would be sent out to peace networks that the theme for March 8, 1997 should focus on African women's contribution to the peace process and that this could also be announced at the Rwanda conference.

**52. Division of Labour:**

The joint OAU/UN-ECA Secretariat were responsible for organizing conferences and mobilising resources. Participants committed themselves to support this initiative, particularly with regard to mobilising resources to operationalize the Committee and support its subsequent work.

53. It was agreed that the joint secretariat should invite possible donors, including UN agencies, to the South African meeting.

**54. The proposed name of the Committee:**

It was proposed that the committee be called **'The Committee for the Participation of African Women in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and Peace Building'**.

55. It was agreed that the South African meeting would adopt a methodology that would ensure creativity, and full participation of members.

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

56. With respect to the earlier suggestion that a letter should be sent to the OAU Secretary General regarding the strengthening the OAU Women's Unit the meeting reiterated that the concerns in the letter should be included in the report and that it was not necessary to send a letter to the OAU Secretary General.

57. The participants recommended that the OAU Conflict Management Division should participate fully and be represented at the highest level in the meeting in South Africa.

#### **8. ADOPTION OF REPORT AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

58. The report was amended and adopted at 7.20 p.m. on Friday August 9, 1996. Participants commended the rapporteur for producing the report.

59. The Vice Chairperson thanked participants for their hard work and contributions to making the meeting a success. The Chief of the ECA/ACW and the Head of the OAU's Women's Unit made brief statements in which they thanked participants for their contributions. The Vice Chairperson declared the meeting closed .

ANNEX I

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