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**THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF PEACE-BUILDING, CONFLICT
PREVENTION, RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA:
AFRICAN WOMEN'S CONCERNS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF PEACE-BUILDING, CONFLICT PREVENTION, RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA : AFRICAN WOMEN'S CONCERNS

1. INTRODUCTION

The case for enhancing women's role in the peace process has been made at various fora at all levels. Meeting to discuss the practicalities of setting up and operationalizing a regional mechanism for the full participation of African women in all the peace processes is a significant step. The Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting/Women Leadership Forum on Peace has an even greater significance as it is taking place in a democratic South Africa the erstwhile scene of many serious conflicts.

This paper focuses on the international dimensions of the peace process in Africa and the ways of incorporating women's concern in conflict and peace building in international processes, in particular, that of the United Nations and the European Union. It suggests ways in which African women's concerns can be incorporated into the work of these bodies. It also proposes ways in which the Committee of African Women on Peace could work on international initiatives for peace building in Africa and makes recommendations in this respect.

2. Conflicts and Women in Africa.

The recurrent wars and conflicts in Africa, brought about by a combination of factors including political injustice, violation of human rights, religious and ethnic intolerance, and clan rivalry, have left over 1 million dead between 1963 and 1993. The resulting refugee and displaced persons situations have had a disproportionately more negative impact on women who comprise the most victims of the scourges of conflict. At times the sole surviving parents, women often become the caretakers of the injured, managers of households and caretakers of the elderly and children. Despite the disproportionate share of suffering that women endure in times of conflict and their ability to cope with the chaos of conflict, their problems and efforts are rarely addressed and they are often not included in the decision-making processes related to conflict prevention, resolution and management.

3. Initiatives on Conflict Resolution by African Women

In many African countries embroiled in conflict, women's attempts at peace-building go undocumented and unrecognized by organizations/agencies involved in peace resolution.

African women have taken bold initiatives to make their voices heard at the highest level. For example, at the November, 1993 Kampala Conference on Women Development and Peace the Kampala Action Plan was adopted. It called for the setting up of a high level regional mechanism which would enable women to be involved in conflict prevention, management and resolution at the highest level. Also, the July 1994 Entebbe Seminar on Women and Governance focused on women in situations of conflict. Participants in a letter to the Secretary General of the OAU, called for the involvement of women in the peace process at the highest level. The Conference, among other things, stressed that all conflict prevention, management and resolution initiatives should contain gender perspectives and sensitivity. In November 1995, at a seminar and training Workshop in south Africa on African Women's Organizations and Civil Society focused on women working in conflict situations. Participants expressed their concern at the way

women's organizations were often ignored by agencies working in emergencies and conflict situations. They discussed the importance of involving women in governance as a way of minimizing conflicts in Africa. The Workshop recommended the highlighting and publicizing efforts by women working in conflict areas; the establishment of a Regional African Women's Peace Movement Network and the involvement of women at all levels in the peace process.

4. The importance of Gender Analysis in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

Because of the roles assigned to them by society, women have specific needs which are intensified in conflict situations and the rapid changes that arise out of them. The need for physical safety and freedom from violence, physical, psychological and reproductive health and for the welfare of their children and families are some of them. Gender analysis and hence gender considerations are therefore very important in conflict situations and emergencies.

To consider women as mere vulnerable victims to be saved by humanitarian aid undermines their coping strategies, resourcefulness and capacity to organize for mutual support since women play a crucial role during times of armed conflict and the collapse of communities. However, most of the decisions on preventive diplomacy or conflict resolution ignore the needs of women and sometimes worsen their situation because their impact on gender relations, is not taken into consideration.

5. The International Dimension of Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building in Africa

Some international actors play a role in resolving peace and security problems in Africa. Important among these is the United Nations, one organ of which is the Security Council which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security with specific powers to facilitate the pacific settlement of disputes. In the recent debates on a possible review of the membership of the security council, recommendations touching on many issues were made but none included making the security council more aware of the gender dimensions of conflict nor even the involvement of more women in the work of the council.

Further, the Secretary General's "Agenda for Peace" makes no mention of women's participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution. the only reference to women is as members of *vulnerable groups of society* rather than a group of people capable of contributing to world peace. auspices

The value of peace and human dignity underlies all the work of the UN. Each of the four World Conferences on Women have dealt with the issue of peace in relation to development and equality. Other legal instruments from the UN system relate to women and peace among them, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (which points out that both peace and development require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields of life), the UN Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International Peace and Cooperation and the UN Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict. Unfortunately, these instruments are not enforceable but are only standard-setting with a moral force, but not legally binding on member States.

Another international actor playing a role in resolving conflict problems in Africa is the **European Union**, one of the world's largest providers of development assistance. A large part of its budget has been increasingly towards emergency humanitarian assistance as for example in 1994 when 25 % of it was devoted to Rwanda. Two of the EU's members have a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and other members are represented among the Council's rotating membership.

Though the Council of the European Union recognized gender and emergencies as one of the three main areas of consideration in its Dec. 1995 Resolution on integrating gender issues in development processes, neither its communication entitled "The European Union and the issues of Conflicts in Africa: Peace-building, conflict prevention and beyond", nor its guidelines entitled "Preventive Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution and Peace-keeping in Africa" contains any attempt to adopt a gender analysis in looking at the issues of conflict in Africa.

There is a general lack of systematic consideration of the role of women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building among international NGOs working in various areas of conflict. This is also true of academics and professional institutions whose ideas and analysis on improving responses to security situations in Africa have eventually been reflected in African Government policies and proposals.

6. African women's participation in International Initiatives on Conflict Resolution and Peace building in Africa: the Role CAWIPP

There are ways in which CAWIPP could get African women's concerns incorporated into the agendas of international actors on conflict resolution, in particular, the UN and the EU. These are:

- (i) Advocating vigorously for a gender approach to conflict resolution and peace building;
- (ii) Pushing for the inclusion of African women in international discussions, missions and other initiatives on peace in Africa;
- (iii) Monitoring the implementation of international initiatives on peace in Africa and evaluating the extent they involve African women;
- (iv) Building systematic links with the UN, the EU and other international actors including NGOS, academic institutions and think tanks;
- (v) Helping to make visible African Women's contribution to peace making;
- (vi) Commissioning research on the participation of African Women in decision-making processes related to peace and disarmament at the national regional and Africa-wide.

In order to build sufficient capacity in personnel, resources and expertise to formulate alternate policy options and carefully considered recommendations, CAWIPP will need human and financial resources. In this regard, International donors will be solicited to contribute to the African Women's Trust Fund for Peace.

Outline

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**THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF PEACE-BUILDING, CONFLICT
PREVENTION, RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA:
AFRICAN WOMEN'S CONCERNS**

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Thanks to the UN-ECA African Centre for Women and the OAU Women's Unit for inviting ABANTU for Development to take part in this historic forum.

2. The case for enhancing the role of women in the peace process has been made over and over again at various national, regional and international fora is therefore a very significant step forward that we are meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa to discuss the practicalities of setting up and operationalizing a regional mechanism for the full and effective participation of African women in all processes of conflict prevention, resolution, management and peace building. This meeting has an even greater significance in that it is taking place in a democratic South Africa, the scene of such serious conflicts in the past. South African women have been a source of great inspiration for their heroic struggle against apartheid.

3. The issue of women and conflict was one of the main critical areas of the Global Platform for Action agreed at the UN Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995. Among the main concerns reflected in the Platform for Action are: rape as a war crime and other forms of abuses of women's human rights; military expenditure and proliferation of anti-personnel mines, women's roles in conflict resolution and peace-building; and the withholding of food and medicines as a military strategy. The African Platform for Action, agreed to by African Heads of States and Governments in Dakar, Senegal, in November 1994, also had as one of its critical areas for action, the issue of women and conflict.

4. This paper focuses on the international dimension of conflict prevention, management and resolution and peace-building in African. In it we discuss ways of inserting African women's concerns on conflict and peace-building in international processes concerned with Africa. We examine in particular, two bodies active in promoting peace in Africa - the United Nations and the European Union, and suggest ways in which the work of these two bodies could be improved to take on board African women's concerns. We also make some recommendations on some of the ways the proposed CAWIPP could work on international initiatives for peace-building in Africa. The recommendations include lobbying for African women's concerns to be incorporated into the discussions and decisions of policy makers at the international level, including the UN Security Council; monitoring actions and initiatives for peace in Africa, at the international level; lobbying for a reduction on military spending; mobilising funds internationally and highlighting and publicising African women's peace initiatives.

2. Conflict and Women in Africa

5. Between 1963 and 1993, there were about 24 full-fledged wars or conflicts within Africa. Currently, there are at least 12 ongoing conflicts which have left over 10 million people dead. These conflicts, civil wars and civil strife are caused by a combination of such factors as political injustice, violations of human rights, religious intolerance, ethnic violence, clan rivalry, as well as deprivation of economic, social, political and cultural rights. This has often led to refugee and displaced persons situations in which the impact has been disproportionately more negative on women. Women suffer more intensively from violence in times of conflict, particularly rape and abuse at moments of arrest, detention and interrogation. Women, children and the aged are the most vulnerable in armed conflicts and women comprise most of the victims. Sometimes as the sole surviving parents, women often become the caretakers of the injured, taken on the management of households and taking care of the elderly, in addition to children.

6. While the conflicts that cause people to flee often make the headlines, the plight of women who become refugees and displaced persons frequently remains unpublicised. In many cases, refugee and displaced women flee conflict after being terrorized with rape and other sexual and physical abuse. Refugee and displaced women, uprooted from their homes and countries by war, internal strife, or natural catastrophe are vulnerable to violence both as a result of the surrounding problem and because of their dependency on outsiders for relief provisions. The wide range of abuses against refugee and displaced women include, frequently, rape and other sexual assault. Human Rights Watch reported on the widespread rape of women in Somalia, refugee camps in the North of Kenya¹

7. The psycho-social stresses from the breakdown of the traditional family structures have contributed to the increase of female-headed households. Thus women who tend to have a subordinate position in society during peace time, find themselves even worse off in times of conflict. Nevertheless, women continue to display courage, endurance, strength and resourcefulness in coping under situations of conflict. Despite the disproportionate share of suffering that women endure and their ability to cope with the chaos of conflict, women are rarely included in the decision-making processes related to conflict-prevention, resolution and management or in peace-building initiatives.

3. Initiatives on Conflict Resolution by African Women

8. In the various countries that have been embroiled in conflicts in Africa, women have made various attempts at peace-building. Most of the initiatives are undocumented and often not taken into account by organisations or agencies involved in conflict resolution.

¹Human Rights Watch/Africa 'Somalia Faces the Future: Human Rights in a Fragmented Society,' *A Human Rights Watch Short Report*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April 1995) and Africa Watch, 'Seeking Refuge, Finding Terror: The Widespread Rape of Somalia Women Refugees in North Eastern Kenya', *A Human Rights Watch Short Report*, Vol 5., No. 13 (October 1993)

9. The majority of interventions in conflict ignore the special needs of women, miss opportunities to strengthen women's positions (and sometimes weaken it), ignore women's resourcefulness and disregard the long-term rehabilitation needs of the communities affected by conflict.

10. African women have taken bold initiatives to ensure that their voices are heard at the highest levels of conflict prevention, management and resolution. In November 1993 for example, a regional conference on Women and Peace was organised by the UN-ECA, African Centre for Women in collaboration with the Government of Uganda. The Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace was the major outcome of that gathering. The Action Plan consists of specific recommendations for institutional and capacity building in order to facilitate the involvement of women in the peace process. It was that conference that recommended that this high level mechanism for African women leaders be set up to enable African women to be involved in conflict prevention, management and resolution at the highest levels.

11. In July 1994, ABANTU for Development and One World in collaboration with the Government of Uganda, organised a Seminar on African women and governance in Entebbe, Uganda. Among the issues discussed was the question of women in situations of conflict. Participants discussed the impacts of conflict on women and agreed a number of actions. In solidarity with women of Rwanda, participants contributed some money to be donated to women's organisations in Rwanda, through the Pan African Women's Movement. A letter from all participants requesting that women be involved at the OAU's highest organ for conflict management was sent to the Secretary-General of the OAU. In addition, participants called for support and implementation of the Kampala Action Plan; for more women in decision-making levels of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms; for training in conflict resolution skills. There were also calls for new ways of working between men and women in order to minimise conflicts in Africa. It was also stressed that all conflict management, resolution and prevention initiatives should contain gender perspectives and sensitivity, to ensure their success.²

12. In November, 1995 ABANTU in collaboration with the South African based Gender Education and Training Network organised a seminar and training workshop on African Women's Organisations in Civil Society. Women's organisations working in situations of conflict was a major focus of the deliberations of the Seminar. A member of the Movement des Femmes pour la paix du Burundi spoke of the difficult conditions under which her organisation had been mobilising women to work for peace and end the conflict in Burundi. Basilisa Ndayezega said that *'we women have realised that irrespective of what ethnic group we belong to, we have more in common between us as women who want to live in peace'* The Movement has had an impact in Burundi where as a result of its organising, the authorities were forced to think of ways of achieving peace. The Movement has also encouraged many other NGOs to get involved in the peace process.

²See ABANTU for Development: *African Women and Governance: Towards Action for Women's Participation in Decision Making*, ABANTU Publications, London January 1995

13. In discussions at the Seminar, participants expressed their concerns at the way agencies that worked in emergencies and conflict situations often ignored women's organisations. Participants discussed the importance of involving women in governance as a way of minimising conflicts in Africa. Among the recommendations made were:

- ◆ that efforts of women's organisations working in conflict areas be highlighted and publicised
- ◆ that women's organisations work for the establishment of a regional African women's peace movement/network
- ◆ that women be involved at all levels, including the highest levels of conflict prevention, management and resolution.³

14. There are a whole host of other noble initiatives for peace undertaken by African women and their organisations, such as the AFWIC initiatives, the various peace activities in different African countries. We mention these few examples to focus the minds of policy makers on the potential for African and their organisations as actors in the peace process.

4. The Importance of a Gender Analysis in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

15. Women have specific needs in situations of conflict, arising out of their gender roles and out of the changes to these that result from rapid change. These immediate specific needs are for physical safety and freedom from violence, for economic opportunities, for physical, psychological and reproductive health, and for the welfare of their children and families.

16. Eurostep's paper on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance and Sally Baden and Bridget Byrne paper prepared for the WID desk of the European Unions Directorate General VIII on Gender, Emergencies and Humanitarian Assistance, provide very thorough analysis of the importance of consideration of gender in emergencies. The two papers make concrete recommendations for the European Union and policy makers on how to integrate gender into emergency responses.

17. Three general concerns are highlighted by Eurostep in relation to the subject of gender and emergencies: women's immediate needs in emergency situations and the adequacy of the response to them; the problem of women's subordination, which is fundamental to the question of how women's needs are voiced and responded to; and the importance of maintaining a long-term perspective in which women as crucial actors in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction, a perspective which must inform emergency responses just as firmly as immediate survival needs do.

³ABANTU for Development: *African Women's Organisations in Civil Society: Transforming the State and the Economy*, ABANTU Publications, London, March 1996

18. The assumption that displaced or disaster-affected communities are 'saved' by humanitarian aid undermines people's coping strategies, their resourcefulness, and their capacity to organise for mutual support. This is particularly problematic for women, whom aid agencies look upon only as vulnerable victims.

19. A gender analysis of conflict situations is vital. Women play crucial roles during times of armed conflict and the collapse of communities. They often work to preserve social order in the midst of armed and other conflicts. However, women have been under represented in the decision-making process related to preventative diplomacy or conflict resolution. Most of the decisions taken do not consider their impact on gender relations, ignore the needs of women and sometimes make the situation worse for women.

5. The International Dimension of Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building in Africa

20. In this section we describe some of the international actors who play a role in resolving peace and security problems in Africa. Important among these actors is the United Nations.

The United Nations System

21. In the fifty or so years of the United Nation's existence, it has been a major agent in addressing the day-to-day problems that lead to war and violence. Under the UN Charter, the first and primary purpose of the UN is the maintenance of international peace and security (Article 1). The UN's other purpose as outlined in Article 1, are the development of friendly relations among nations, achievement of international cooperation in addressing social and economic matters, and the harmonising of national actions in the attainment of common ends.

22. To facilitate the achievement of the UN's purposes, the Charter provides for the establishment of six principal organs and such subsidiary organs as may be found necessary (Article 7). These organs include the General Assembly, the Security Council, Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and a Secretariat. These organs with the exception of the Trusteeship Council, have some part to play in addressing matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security.

23. Article 24 of the Charter confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Under the Charter, the Security Council is granted specific powers to facilitate the pacific settlement of disputes (Chapter VI, Articles 33-38) and to take action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression (Chapter VII, Articles 39-51). The Security Council comprises ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms and five permanent members: China, France, Russia, UK and US (Article 23). The 47th UN General Assembly in 1992 adopted a resolution (UNGA 47/62) requesting the Secretary-General to invite UN member states to submit comments on a possible review of Security Council membership. More than one

hundred states provided their views. ⁴ These varied widely: some were limited to the question of membership, while others went further to such issues as increased transparency, closer cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly, wider consultations with concerned parties including regional organisations, and limitations of the right of veto. None of the recommendations included making the Security Council more aware of the gender dimensions of conflict or even involving women in the work of the Security Council. Given what we have argued earlier of the importance of gender considerations in conflict, we think that this was a regrettable omission. Very few African women have been members of delegations to the UN and none have sat on the Security Council, where only two women have sat.

24. The UN's Secretary General's 'Agenda for Peace'⁵ made no reference whatsoever to women's participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution. This is another regrettable omission as this document presented the Secretary-General's proposals for dealing with conflict. The only reference to women is as '*more vulnerable groups of society, especially women and children*', again portraying women merely as victims rather than a group of people capable of contributing towards world peace.

25. Since its foundation, the UN through the Security Council has been the main organisation developing peace-keeping as a cooperative security response. Notable exceptions were the Commonwealth, which played a major role in ending the conflict in Rhodesia in the 1970s through both peace making and peace keeping, and the OAU, which has been involved in peace keeping in Chad and Liberia.

26. Underlying all the work of the UN, are the values of world peace and human dignity. As part of a global effort for the advancement women, the issue of peace has been seen as being integral to attainment of that goal. Each of the four United Nations world conferences on women have dealt with the issue of peace in relation to development and women's equality.

27. In addition to the declarations and Platforms of Action arising out of the UN conferences, three other international legal instruments relating to women and peace have emerged from the UN system: an international convention to eliminate discrimination against women, a declaration on women's participation in the promotion of peace, and a declaration on the protection of women and children in war.

⁴See the Report of the Secretary-General to the Forty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly, A/48/264.

⁵Boutros Boutros Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping*. Report of the Secretary General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992: United Nations, New York: 1992

28. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979 and is the most comprehensive legal document on the advancement of women. The document points out that both peace and development require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields of life. The document is a major instrument in the field of human rights protection.

29. The UN Declaration on the Participation of Women in Promoting International peace and Cooperation makes it clear that the UN considers women's civil and political participation essential to peace. A specific statement on peace appears in this declaration which was proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1982. As a declaration it is only a standard-setting instrument with moral force, but is not legally binding on member states.

30. The UN Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1974 because of the effects of armed conflict on women and children. It called for strict observance by all member states. Like the above declaration on women's participation in international peace, it is not enforceable but sets a standard to be pursued to stop the suffering of women and children and civilian populations during conditions of emergency and war.

31. While it is now widely acknowledged that the present UN international system has serious inadequacies in dealing with conflict, for the time being the UN system with its specialised agencies remains at the forefront of humanitarian and peace operations. It is suggested here therefore that CAWIPP examine the various ways it could be involved with the UN system, including seeking recognition as a regional body under the terms of Chapter VIII of Article 21 of the UN's Charter.

The European Union

32. The EU is one of the world's largest provider of development assistance. Increasingly a large proportion of the EU aid budget has been taken by emergency humanitarian aid. In 1994 for example, the Union provided ECU 72 million in humanitarian aid. Of this, 25% was devoted to Rwanda.

33. Two members of the EU are permanent members of the Security Council and other EU members are represented amongst the rotating membership. This gives the EU a powerful voice within the Security Council.

34. In November 1993 the EU established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) under Title V of the Maastricht Treaty. The objectives of the CFSP include: 'to preserve peace and strengthen international security, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter as well as the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the objectives of the Paris Charter.' This shows that conflict prevention is an objective of the EU.

35. In its Communication to Council entitled 'The European Union and the issue of Conflicts in Africa: Peace-building, conflict prevention and beyond' The aim of the Communication was to outline the European Commission's response to the challenge of the growing number of violent conflicts in Africa without prejudging the basic principle that

Africans should remain primarily responsible for the handling of this issue. The Council of the European Union produced guidelines and principles on 'Preventive Diplomacy, Conflict Resolution and Peace-Keeping in Africa' on December 4, 1995.

36. The one glaring omission from the Commission document and from the African response presented at a consultative meeting in Lisbon, Portugal on May 8, 1996 was the lack of any attempt to adopt a gender analysis in looking at the issues of conflict in Africa. This was surprising given that the Council of the European Union recognised gender and emergencies as one of three main areas of further consideration in its December 1995 Resolution on integrating gender issues in development cooperation. At the July 17, 1996 conference organised by International Alert, the UK Platform of EU-NGOs and Saferworld, ABANTU for Development presented a strong critique of this document from a gender perspective⁶ and called for the following:

- ◆ Inclusion of gender considerations in each of the aims outlined in the document under the policy of peace-building and conflict prevention. Inclusion of a specific activity of examining the gender implications of conflict
- ◆ The strategic importance of including women and their organisations as actors in conflict prevention, resolution, management and peace-building
- ◆ The importance of listening to women, and using their expressed concerns as an important factor in determining peace-building initiatives
- ◆ Strengthening the capacities of women's organisations to be effectively involved in peace-building and enabling women to have decision-making power
- ◆ Supporting current initiatives by African women and in particular the setting up of CAWIPP
- ◆ Ensuring that strategies which strengthen gender equality are incorporated into all aspects of EU work.

Other Actors

37. International non-government organisations have played important security roles in particular situations or more generally. A notable organisation is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which, in recognition of its formal mandate under the Geneva Conventions and its Protocols and its widely recognised humanitarian record in conflict situations, is the only NGO invited to participate in the work of the General Assembly. International NGOs are motivated by essentially humanitarian or developmental concerns but,

⁶See, Kihoro, W: 'The Gender Implications of Conflict Prevention in Africa' paper presented at International Alert's Conference on: European Union and Conflict Prevention in Africa: Response of UK-NGOs, July 17, 1996: London

in working to foster local economic and social processes, can also have a positive impact on peace and security. Organisations like OXFAM, Save the Children, Medecins sans Frontieres, for example, have played a useful role not only in supplying humanitarian relief and development assistance, but also in alerting the world community to diverse humanitarian crises. OXFAM UK/I has in particular, focused on the gender dimensions of conflict in its relief work in conflict ridden areas of Africa. Organisations like International Alert and Accord have developed track records of working on conflict in Africa, and in the case of IA, is the only NGO with the mandate of working on all aspects of conflict.

38. Academics and professional institutions, as well as ad hoc groups of eminent persons, have also played a role contributing to debate on improving responses to security situations in Africa, and in many specific situations, putting forward ideas and analyses which are eventually reflected in the policies and proposals of governments. Some of these institutions include the Palme Commission, the Commission on Global Governance; the International Peace Academy, the Ford Foundation, Stockholm and Oslo International peace Research Institutes, and the Carter Centre.

39. The one common feature of the actors described above, in particular the UN Security Council and the European Union, is the absence of any systematic consideration and involvement of women roles in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building. With the UN we have a situation where some parts of the organisation have made very concrete recommendations as to how women could be incorporated into peace-building activities of the organisation, especially as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action, and then the parts of the organisation charged with the responsibility of maintaining peace and security completely ignoring women's important roles. If women in general are missing in any of the initiatives of the major actors, African women are never even considered actors in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building.

6. African Women's Participation in International Initiatives on Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Africa: The Role of CAWIPP

40. Let us now turn to some proposals on the ways in which African women's concerns could be inserted into the agendas of international actors on conflict resolution. We shall concentrate our attention on the UN system and the European Union.

41. One of the key roles of CAWIPP should be to advocate vigorously for the inclusion of a gender approach to conflict resolution and peace-building in Africa by all actors in the field. The other related role is pushing for African women to be included in the various discussions, missions, and other initiatives on peace in Africa originating from these international actors. CAWIPP should monitor the implementation of international initiatives on peace in Africa and evaluate the extent to which they have involved African women.

42. The UN Charter should be revised to expand the powers of the Security Council and General Assembly to enable them to enforce international rules adopted to protect human rights, and in particular, women's human rights. The Council's powers should expand to include all matters that may endanger peace and security, regardless of whether they may or may not be defined as international. It is particularly important to include in the Council's

concerns, the gender dimensions of peace and security, the gross violations of women's rights that are often the early-warning indicators of violent conflicts.

43. CAWIPP should have an important role in early warning. The Committee should seek observer status at the UN and to be linked, with the security mechanisms of the UN. It should also build systematic links with the UN, the EU and other international actors including NGOs, academic institutions and think tanks. NGOs, think-tanks and academic institutions often possess operational information, conduct significant research projects and implement major development or conflict prevention programmes in Africa and could therefore be useful allies and partners of the Committee.

44. CAWIPP should commission research on the participation of African women in decision-making processes related to peace and disarmament at national, regional and Africa-wide levels. The objectives of such research should be: to present the situation of African women in concrete, measurable terms on the basis of reliable data, to conduct thorough analyses leading to identification of obstacles, and to make recommendations for overcoming them.

45. Another important role for CAWIPP would be helping to make visible African women's contributions to peacemaking. This might include producing and widely disseminating information on different initiatives by African women; sponsoring young women to study international affairs, conflict resolution and mediation and any other high profile activities that would focus attention on African women's peace initiatives.

46. One of the areas outlined in the Platforms for Action is the area of advocating for a reduction on arms spending. I believe that it is only through a carefully orchestrated, sincerely and zealously pursued process of demilitarization that the violence in the world can be reduced. As the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies sated, *'One of the main obstacles to the effective integration of women in the development process is. . . a continuing arms race. . . As a result, immense material and human resources needed for development are wasted.'*⁷ During the International Year of peace in 1986, the world's military expenditures were estimated at \$900 billion.⁸ In the 1990s, this figure now exceeds a trillion dollars. Data regularly issued by Sivard, together with the information on arms spending from the Stockholm Peace Research Institute and some research conducted into the relationships between disarmament and development, shows clearly that world poverty is due in some significant measure to militarism and the arms race. CAWIPP should therefore compile similar statistics for Africa and advocate strongly for reduction on arms spending and switching of expenditure from arms to social and economic development.

47. These recommendations should be taken together with the other proposals presented by the other contributors to this forum and which focus on CAWIPP's role in Africa.

⁷Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, para 95

⁸Sivard, Ruth K: *World Military and Social Expenditures*

48. In order to carry out its work, CAWIPP will need human and financial resources. If the Committee is not to suffer the fate of other initiatives, it must be supported in order to build sufficient capacity in personnel, resources and expertise to formulate alternative policy options and carefully considered recommendations. International donors, and in particular, the European Commission's should be approached to fund CAWIPP and contribute to the proposed African women's Fund for Peace. Raising funds from international donors is not going to be an easy task as most of the aid budgets are experiencing severe cuts. For example, recent proposals to the EU budget (to be decided in December 1996), indicate a 20% cut to the budgets intended for cooperation actions in the field of NGO co-financing, rehabilitation, the environment, women, public awareness raising and human rights. The food aid and emergency aid budgets are set to fall by 6.5%. Nevertheless, the EU and other international donors have professed a commitment to supporting the advancement of women and it is this lever that should be used to argue for funding for African women's initiatives on conflict prevention and peace-building.

49. Let me conclude by welcoming once again the establishment of CAWIPP. ABANTU for Development will do whatever is necessary to support and contribute to the strengthening of CAWIPP, especially in the three areas of our expertise namely, training, providing and disseminating information, and advising on mobilising resources. May African women's efforts bring peace to our continent.

Thank you.

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