THE 3RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE FEMWISE-AFRICA

26 November 2019
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Remarks by the Commissioner for Peace and Security
Ambassador Smaïl Chergui

Venue: Small Conference Hall 4, China Building, AUC HQ

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Your Excellency, Catherine Samba Panza, FemWise Africa Co-Chair and former President of the Central African Republic;
Your Excellency, Dr Speciosa Wandira, FemWise co-Chair and former Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda
Mme Honorine Nzhet Biteghe, Deputy Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise,
Members of the FemWise Steering Committee, our cooperating partners, friends and colleagues.

Good morning. Welcome to Addis Ababa, and a special very warm welcome to the headquarters of the African Union. It is my pleasure to address you this morning in this third meeting of the FemWise-Africa General Assembly.

So much has happened since our last meeting last December. It has been an incredible year for the Network. Together, we have been working tirelessly to enhance the participation of women, young and old, in peace processes, from Track 3, right through to Track 1. But even then, I realized that the enormity of the task ahead was also quite considerable.

Today, as you will hear from the Secretariat’s update, I am happy to report that you have risen to the task, under the leadership and guidance of our very visionary co-Chairs.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen
Since our last meeting, the Network has grown, not just in numbers but also in quality, visibility, outputs and more importantly, impact on the ground. For the first time in the Network’s history, one of our members, led an AU Electoral Observation to observe the recently concluded elections in Mauritius. Dr Speciosa Wandira, you made us very proud and I know for a fact that many young women continue to draw inspiration from you. Well done!

I have also received reports that ECOWAS has launched FemWise ECOWAS. This is exciting news and I want to reiterate our support to the colleagues in West Africa.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Through our cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs, we continue to see the deployment of our members to support the Commission’s efforts in the prevention of electoral-related conflict. It is my sincere hope that this collaboration will continue to grow, and that FemWise members will have more of these opportunities to contribute to these and other conflict prevention efforts across the continent.

Relatedly, one of our greatest achievements has been the long-term deployment of three FemWise members to support the AU Liaison Offices in Sudan and South Sudan respectively. FemWise is the only Network of Women mediators globally, that has deployed members on a long-term basis to support formal peace processes.
Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen

We are pioneers, we are breaking new ground, and showing the world that African women can!

By all accounts the long-term deployments have been useful and timely, especially in terms of ensuring that women, and their concerns aren’t left out of ongoing efforts to transform Sudan and South Sudan, and accompany them along the path towards peace. I look forward to the deployment of more women to more contexts where their capacity and support is desperately needed.

Finally, I am really excited by the capacity that we have brought into the Secretariat, and the direct value we are seeing through their various efforts, initiative and vision. I am particularly happy with the news of the mediation and induction training that was concluded yesterday. The fact that this training was organized and facilitated entirely by the Secretariat is commendable.

This dynamic team of young women have really raised the bar and are helping the Network showcase capacity and relevance, and for this, they will continue to enjoy my full support.

I thank you