Statement by Mme Bineta DIOP, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission

AU Peace and Security Open Session on ‘The Role of the media in conflict, post conflict and fragile settings in Africa’

Addis Ababa, 20th October, 2016

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YOUR EXCELLENCY, AMBASSADOR CATHERINE MWANGI, Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for the month of October,

EXCELLENCIES, Members of the Peace and Security Council

Dr ADMORE KAMBUDZI, Head of the PSC Secretariat, and Acting Director for Peace and Security, Representing the Commissioner for Peace and Security

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, INVITED GUESTS,
Members of the Media
I am highly honoured and thankful to be here again, four months after I appeared twice before you on two separate occasions during the month of May 2016, reiterating our call for the protection of women and children in armed conflict, and presenting to you the Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security in Africa. Offering me this opportunity is a clear testimony of your commitment to the cause of women and children in Africa.

Allow me, to express my appreciation and thanks to the Chair of this month, H.E Ambassador Catherine Mwangi, for accepting to host this critical and timely discussion on the role of the media in conflict, post-conflict and fragile settings in Africa.

I congratulate you for convening this open session that creates space for exchanges with a wider scope of stakeholders, in the spirit of the Livingstone formula. Indeed, the last time I was here, briefing the Peace and Security Council on the development of the Continental Results Framework, Council reiterated its commitment to continue to consult with various actors to raise awareness and inform the public.

It also marks the celebration of the month of October in which we celebrate the adoption of the historic UNSC Resolution 1325 that paved the way for women’s recognition in peace keeping, peace building and in conflict prevention and resolution.

It is for these reasons, and driven by the Fourth Aspiration of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 towards a “Peaceful and Secure Continent”,
that my office co-organized with UN Women, a two day workshop for journalists and media reporters from 16 African countries, who are currently experiencing conflict, are transitioning from conflict, or building systems to prevent conflicts. They come from South Sudan, Somalia, Mali, Central Africa Republic, Nigeria, Burundi, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Libya, DR Congo, Egypt, Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon and Ethiopia.

The workshop was designed to reinforce the reporters’ capacity, and offer them a platform to engage in a policy dialogue on gender-responsive reporting in conflict, post-conflict and fragile settings in Africa. I believe you agree with me that, this workshop was timely for our continent when some countries are embroiled in conflict, and having more refugees and IDPs than ever before. Therefore, we need to put the media at the centre of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, to tell our stories and narrate our accounts, clearly and profoundly, as peace reporters. We want them to be agents for change and bring visibility to issues of women’s participation in conflict prevention and peace building.

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security has since its inception in 2014, recognized the importance of the media in performing my advocacy role, to echo the voice of the voiceless and narrating what is practically happening on the ground.
Present here today, right in front of you in this August house, is a network of peace journalists, peace reporters, ready to be engaged in this first dialogue with the Peace and Security Council, and address not only challenges facing media in conflict and other fragile settings, but also exchange views on how better the media can push for accountability for performance on the women, peace, and security agenda. Let us encourage this network to be instrumental in silencing the guns by 2020, and help our continent to be the Africa we want, the prosperous, integrated and united Africa, the Africa with the capacity to secure peace and protect its citizens and interests.

Excellences,

Mesdames, Messieurs,


Il s’agit des recommandations suivantes :

1. Les missions de terrain, comme celle que vous comptez effectuer au Sud Soudan, devront rencontrer les femmes et les jeunes, pour les écouter, les encourager et tenir compte de leurs préoccupations ;
2. Il est nécessaire de soutenir les réseaux des femmes et leurs organisations, notamment à travers des mécanismes, tels que les fonds du programme de l'Union Africaine pour la reconstruction post-conflit ;

3. La question de la violence sexuelle et basée sur le genre doit être une des priorités du Conseil dans ses efforts de lutte contre l’impunité, notamment à travers des mécanismes telle que la Cour hybride pour le Sud Soudan ;

4. Il est nécessaire d’utiliser les femmes médiatrices durant les différentes initiatives de restauration de la paix et encourager les mécanismes mis en place par les femmes, telles que les salles de veille des élections, qui visent à prévenir l’éclatement des conflits, comme c’est le cas actuellement avec les Femmes du Kenya ;

5. Exiger la formation des militaires sur les questions de violences faites aux femmes, notamment pour les pays qui contribuent des troupes aux missions de maintien de la paix, comme cela est fait au Sénégal actuellement ;

6. Nous encourageons le dialogue avec les media, surtout dans les missions de paix, et demandons aux media d’agir toujours avec professionnalisme, sens de responsabilité et pas de déstabilisation et de porter la voix des femmes et des filles dans leur quête de paix et de progrès.
I call upon all of us to make sure that Women, Peace and Security Agenda forms an integral part in our day to day security practices, our planning, in media reports, and never be looked at as an isolated or peripheral agenda.

With PSC Support, I am sure that we are moving towards there. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank departments within AUC, UN Agencies, Development partners, civil society organizations that continue to support and work closely with my Office in this endeavor.

The inclusion of women in the management of peace, conflict prevention and resolution in our continent, will resolutely move us towards a peaceful and conflict-free Africa, leaving no one behind, the Africa we want and finally the realization of Africa Agenda 2063.

I thank you