Concept Note

Making 1325 a reality in Africa: filling the gaps between rhetoric and reality

Virtual Briefing (via Zoom)
Tuesday 24 November | 10h00 to 12h00 (GMT+2)

Introduction

UNSCR 1325 is a land-mark resolution in recognizing the role that women play in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts as well as underlining the need for gender-sensitive approaches to the restoration of peace and stability in post-conflict contexts and the need to incorporate a gendered perspective into all aspects of peace and security governance in Africa. The significance of the resolution has been strong in the continent, with the establishment of women networks and the special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security. Moreover, the development and adoption of the Continental Results Framework (CRF) by the African Union Commission (AUC) was a significant step towards closing the gap between WPS policy development and implementation. It demonstrated the AUC’s deep commitment to the WPS agenda, gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa.

However, assessment of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 indicates that Africa, despite good policies and National Action Plans among its Member States, has a long way to go in terms of effective implementation of the resolution. Women and girls are still the major victims of the protracted conflicts in the continent and their representation in peace processes continue to be limited. Structural gender inequalities continue to prevail in the continent, driven by patriarchal ideologies, which still dominate much of the world. Unfortunately, these structural challenges are also pervasive in political structures that are responsible for the implementation of the resolution.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of this landmark resolution, which provides an opportune moment to reflect on achievements, challenges, progress of implementation, addressing gaps and renewing commitments to enhance its implementation. The fact that 25 of the 55 African states developed National Action plans of UNSCR1325 provides a good entry point to push for concrete actions at the national, regional and continental levels.
As the world begins to reflect on the secondary impacts of COVID-19 and its longer-term implications. The question is whether these extraordinary circumstances, and the response to them, will present an opportunity to build back better and create more inclusive societies. Or whether the WPS agenda will suffer delays to fully, meaningfully and equally engage women in what will definitely be a new reality.

Against this background, the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) are organising an online workshop to discuss how to overcome structural barriers to the implementation of Women Peace and Security (WPS) in Africa. The workshop will provide a platform for robust interactions between relevant stakeholders and provide policy recommendations for localising UNSCR 1325 within Africa.

This builds on a first-round roundtable ISS organised in October 2019 on ‘Women, Peace and Security in Africa: Towards pragmatic implementation beyond 2020’. The round table focused on reflecting on the achievements, challenges and future prospects of implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Africa. Three key messages emerged from the roundtable. First, violent conflicts adversely affect the well-being of individuals and damages the social fabric of societies, thus, WPS interventions should follow comprehensive strategies. Second, sustainable and adequate funding is critical for the implementation and monitoring of actions of the WPS agenda in Africa. Third, strong coordination between national and regional gender equality machineries such as ministries, gender offices are important, to ensure meaningful participation of women in all sectors.

Objectives of the Workshop

The major objective of the workshop is to discuss how to overcome structural barriers to the implementation of WPS in Africa. In line with this, it also covers the following sub-objectives:

- Identify avenues for establishing sustainable and adequate funding mechanisms
- Identify avenues to strengthen partnerships between national and regional gender equality processes/machineries to ensure better implementation
- Operationalise the WPS network established during the October 2019 roundtable.

Expected outcomes

The roundtable is expected to achieve the following:

- Suggest strategies on how to overcome structure barriers to the implementation of WPS in Africa
Recommend ways in which to establish sustainable and adequate funding mechanisms
Suggest ways in which partnerships can be enhanced between national and regional gender equality processes/machineries
To draft an action plan of engagement of the WPS network established in October 2019
What building back better beyond the COVID-19 pandemic from a WPS perspective entails.

Target Audience

The roundtable will bring together approximately 15-20 WPS policy makers, experts, academics, and practitioners. The roundtable expects to deliver constructive contributions to fresh ideas beyond the current status quo. Discussions will focus on supporting better implementation of the WPS agenda in the continent.