

TEN YEARS SINCE UNITED
NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 1325

Envisioning its impact on
African Women in 2020

'Funmi Olonisakin

Draft Background Paper,
ACCORD High-Level Seminar
08 – 09 October 2010
Durban, South Africa



TEN YEARS SINCE UNITED
NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 1325

Envisioning its impact on
African Women in 2020

'Funmi Olonisakin

Draft Background Paper,
ACCORD High-Level Seminar
08 – 09 October 2010
Durban, South Africa



1.INTRODUCTION

The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (hereafter UNSCR 1325) in October 2000 marked the first time that gender issues, and more specifically women's concerns, were placed on the peace and security agenda of the United Nations. This was the culmination of years of collaborative work between civil society and select policy actors. It was an important first step in addressing the multi-dimensional challenges that confront women in different contexts particularly in conflict-affected situations. The Resolution's focus on conflict and peace building was a valuable entry point given the magnitude of the problems posed for girls and women by conflict and insecurity globally.

The particular attention of UNSCR 1325 to a number of inter-related issues was considered path breaking in many quarters not least amongst women's groups, worldwide. Four of these issues are worth highlighting in any assessment of African women's agenda in the field of peace and security.¹ The first is that of women's representation at the highest decision-making levels in the systems and structures that deal with conflict resolution and management at national, regional and international levels. In this regard, the decision that the UN Secretary-General should appoint more women as Special Envoys and Representatives was a valuable step toward ensuring that the organisation embeds this principle in practice. Second and related to this is the provision for the expansion of women's role in field-based operations. Third is the demand for the inclusion of measures to support local women's peace initiatives and home-grown processes of conflict resolution in the agenda of actors responsible for negotiating and implementing peace agreements. Fourth and last is the treatment of women in situations of armed conflict including protection from gender-based violence by armed groups and ensuring that gender considerations are core to Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration programmes.

UNSCR 1325 does not explicitly address structural change but the results that it seeks require a fundamental shift in the prevailing systems. Recognising this in the application of 1325 would go a long way in ensuring its relevance across various contexts. At first glance a focus on these sets of issues appear to limit implementation of this Resolution to only a narrow range of situations – those affected by armed conflict – which also serve as potential areas of least resistance for international intervention. Upon closer examination however, these issues have application far beyond conflict and war-affected settings. In Africa, the potential relevance of UNSCR 1325 is manifested in several ways. It sets standards for addressing immediate symptoms or consequences of conflict; it also opens up a path for dealing with the structural issues, which created the symptoms in the first instance. Any effort, for example, to ensure women's representation at the highest decision making levels within mechanisms designed for conflict resolution, must effectively engage the factors or systems that prevented women from advancing to these levels. Similarly, efforts to ensure that armed groups

guarantee the protection of women and girls from sexual violence must assume a fair measure of transformation.

In the Euphoria that surrounded the adoption of this UNSCR 1325, little attention was paid to whether and how its implementation might be ensured across national and regional boundaries, particularly in regions such as Africa, where its application is most critical. This Resolution has since been strengthened by other UN Security Council Resolutions – 1820, 1888 and 1889. While UNSCR 1820, which was adopted in June 2008, reaffirms 1325, it more directly places the issue of the sexual violence on the agenda of the UN Security Council.

Adopted in September 2009, UNSCR 1888 follows up on the issue of sexual violence and makes specific requests in this regard including the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to coordinate UN efforts to address sexual violence. On 5 October 2009, UNSCR 1889 was adopted. It shifted attention back to the central role of UNSCR 1325 by requesting better reporting and resources to support gender equality; and the development of a set of indicators to track the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The extent to which these additional Resolutions can potentially impact the application of UNSCR 1325 negatively or positively has been the subject of much debate. While this debate is not the focus of this paper, it is important to indicate that UNSCR 1889 is a potentially enabling tool for UNSCR 1325.

The tenth year anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 offers an opportunity to critically examine what impact, if any UNSCR has had on Africa and what progress has been recorded for African women as a result of this resolution. In this regard, it is important to ask how we might envision using this Resolution to drive meaningful change for African women in the next decade.

This background paper addresses these core issues by focusing on the following specific sets of questions:

- a. To what extent has this landmark Resolution been useful in driving systemic change on the ground in ways that have advanced the cause of women in Africa? What has been the real impact of UNSCR 1325 in Africa? What are its limitations?
- b. Can UNSCR1325 alongside UN Security Council Resolutions 1820, 1888 and 1889 transform the situation of women in Africa? What does the African context require? Are there peculiarities that make 1325 and similar resolutions limited in their relevance ? If so, what can be done to address the gaps?
- c. What is the nature of the change we should seek for African women in the area of peace and security? What is the vision of African women for peace, security and stability by 2020? In what ways can UNSCR 1325 and other policy instruments advance this? What should be the role of various actors – national, regional and international actors in bringing about the outcomes desired?

2. UNSCR 1325 AND THE CHALLENGE OF APPLICATION IN AFRICA

In seeking to assess the relevance of UNSCR 1325 to Africa, it is important to understand the African context in which this Resolution is to be implemented. That environment is characterised by a number of factors, which are directly related to the structural gaps that UNSCR 1325 was designed to address, implicitly. These factors prevail in both situations of armed conflict and those not directly affected by armed conflict. Indeed, it is arguable that the factors merely transmute and differ in degree in conflict affected.

Across Africa as in other regions, the issues at the core of UNSCR 1325 are embedded in structural factors, which exist in peacetime and merely become magnified during periods of armed conflict.

The foundations of the exclusion of women from high-level decision-making and key institutional mechanisms and processes for human advancement; sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) in wartime; and gender blind approaches to peace building in post-war settings are laid during peacetime and are located within social interactions. The treatment of women in peace or war, including violence against women, has its basis in the prescribed norms about what it means to be a man or woman, which is underpinned by power inequality between men and women. A society's belief systems, cultural norms and socialization processes, ultimately inform the type of power hierarchies that guide social interactions, particularly gender relations. The four issues extracted from UNSCR 1325 and highlighted in this background paper are invariably an expression of these power hierarchies. It is not surprising therefore that in many societies this places women in positions of disadvantage in addition to the suffering they endure in times of war and relative peace.

In these largely patriarchal societies, it is commonplace to find some if not all of a whole range of discriminatory practices against women. These might include, for example, dowry-related death, sexual abuse of female children, marital rape, female genital mutilation (FGM) and other harmful traditional practices – all of which occur as acts of gender based violence in communities in normal peacetime. This is in addition to physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within communities. Also included are rape of women, sexual abuse, harassment and intimidation at work and trafficking in women and forced prostitution, as well as violence perpetrated or condoned by the state or its agents.

While these practices are not the preserve of African societies, the continent has a healthy share of these issues. They are part of the normal order of society. Armed conflict magnifies these problems. After all, it is to be expected that those who see girls and women as inferior to boys and men and accord them low priority in society during “normal” times would not suddenly elevate them to a higher status in times of war. Rather, in a climate of armed conflict in which the rules of war have been abandoned and anything goes,

this inferior sex is fair game and experience has shown how they have been easily preyed upon in situations of armed conflict from Bosnia to the Congo. Greater attention is however drawn more to some issues than others. For example, the issue of sexual violence becomes more widespread while the exclusion from leadership remains a peripheral issue.

The challenge for the application of 1325 in this environment is two-fold: The first is that there are rarely systematic approaches to addressing these problems in a manner that transforms society. African governments, despite instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which provided a framework to address women's rights have in many cases, kept these issues at the periphery of governmental action. Second and related to this is the tendency to target symptoms of a problem rather than tackle root causes. Overall, the terrain seems less receptive to the ideas of change and transformation on issues of gender equality in part because no genuine conversations have been possible in the many authoritarian settings that predated 1325 and which continue to exist to varying degrees. African feminist scholars continue to engage these issues. Some have attempted to offer an explanation as to whether and how Africa's situation is unique in this regard. Okech, for example, aptly concludes that:

Africa only presents a unique environment in as far as systems are dependent on individuals rather than the other way round. The will to implement and secure change (gender equity) that challenges the very institutions on which male power and privilege is vested (family, state, church) cannot happen within states whose ideological basis are driven by personal gain and neo-liberal economic agendas.²

There is therefore a structural challenge that confronts the application of UNSCR 1325 in Africa to which we will return in subsequent sections.



3. WAS UNSCR 1325 DESIGNED TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES? COULD IT HAVE?

At first glance, any attempt to implement UNSCR 1325 in Africa faces a daunting challenge particularly where there is a recognition of the complex structural roots of the problem and in that regard, the entrenched nature of the problem. For a Resolution, which places a great deal of responsibility for implementation on states, regional and international actors, it is important to critically assess whether and how it was it is expected to deliver the desired change on behalf of ordinary people, particularly the women whose lives it seeks to transform. The assumptions on which the Resolution was based ought to be examined. And the legitimacy of states as well as external actors to deliver gender-related structural changes must be questioned.

Understandably, like many Resolutions that predate it, UNSCR 1325 was the product of delicate negotiations and compromise among UN Member States in the bid to deliver a resolution that would find universal resonance. The reality of the times and circumstances in which UNSCR 1325 was negotiated makes it difficult to expect a document that would directly challenge some of the fundamental agendas connected to notions of masculinity and gender inequalities that are deeply embedded in the discourses surrounding international security institutions, and which have been challenged by a number of analysts.³ Thus the best that was on offer was a Resolution, which recognised and articulated in the strongest sense possible, the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women, and offered a framework for addressing this challenge even if it was not as comprehensive as was expected. The real achievement of finding common ground and articulating a Resolution which captured critical issues now popularly labelled the 3 P's – protection of women, the prevention of conflict and increased participation of women – should not be lost.

While UNSCR 1325 did not directly articulate an agenda of structural change, it was sufficiently cleverly crafted to imply it. Furthermore, the framing of the Resolution around issues of peace and security and the need to address the gender inequalities and injustices within this is in itself innovative. It made it possible to capture the critical issues and events of the time, the debates surrounding them and related interventions to build a valuable entry point for placing women's issues at centre stage of international action in ways that was not previously possible. This has provided an important rallying point for a wide range of actors, not least a global civil society movement, which would otherwise not have been empowered to take up issues of peace and security with their governments and regional organisations.

A number of factors must however be borne in mind when applying this Resolution to the specific African contexts described in the previous section. The first is that while critical, women's participation does not automatically equate change or transformation. Thus a piecemeal

approach to change through, for example, adoption of laws and conventions, negotiations based on compromise, are often not comprehensive or sufficiently path breaking to destabilise the structures that foster insecurity.

Second, the concentration of attention on states is particularly problematic where those very states have historically been responsible for unequal and insecure governance. Vesting them with the authority to structure equity and change appears to be a futile undertaking particularly where no windows of opportunity exist for systemic change. This is equally evident not only within national change processes but within international systems that make the state the primary vehicle of reform, particularly with regard to agreements that seek to secure women's rights. This is compounded by the reality that most of Africa's post-war governments are not radically different from the old guard but are in many cases, complex re-configurations of the old order with minor amendments to the rules of the game. This is not surprising, given that most peace agreements being implemented in these settings are the result of elite compact, rather than a compact between the people and their rulers.

Third and last, the fact that the conduct of governance and the state in Africa still operates within the (false) public/private dichotomy that continues to perpetuate the myth that women and 'their politics' is designated to the private sphere. Thus even attempts to address questions of sexual violence in particular are framed within a lens that situates these as private act of violence even while occurring in the public domain.

Given these challenges, it is important that any effort to implement UNSCR 1325 in Africa must do so with an understanding of this context and a strategy that seeks to anticipate and destabilise the bastions of resistance in this terrain.



4. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS UNSCR 1325 BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER CHANGE IN AFRICA?

This section assesses the impact of UNSCR 1325 and examines broadly, the extent to which it has made a difference at national and regional levels in Africa. Since its adoption in October 2000, there has not been a systematic attempt to assess the impact of Resolution 1325. Nor is there ready evidence of fundamental change that has occurred as a direct result of this Resolution at any of these levels. The development of indicators to track the implementation of the Resolution as demanded by UNSCR 1889 is a positive step in this regard. Arguably, it is difficult to quantify the impact of changes in policy or approaches given that it can take a long period of time for gender-equality related ideas to percolate through organisations and society as a whole. It is nonetheless possible to identify qualitative shifts in attitude or organisational impact. Doing this in a consistent manner across national and regional settings is in itself a daunting task and studies of that nature in Africa or indeed globally are rare. This lack of empirical evidence makes it particularly difficult to state categorically the extent to which UNSCR 1325 has made a difference in the lives of ordinary women in Africa and other places.

We can however capture observable trends in the application of UNSCR 1325 in Africa, which tell a story about the type of influence that the Resolution has had on the ground across the African continent. Here, we will analyse trends in three main areas. The first is in conflict-affected settings, where typically, UN peace operations have been present and in some cases tasked with the implementation of UNSCR 1325. In these settings, the degree to which peacekeeping missions have been able to interact with existing local initiatives to bring about gender-related changes is of particular interest. And in this regard, the extent to which the peacekeeping presence undermines or reinforces these local initiatives will form part of the trends to be captured. The second is to examine how national and regional actors have attempted to use the Resolution to effect change on the ground.

Africa has provided much of the empirical evidence that makes this type of assessment possible. Its experience of conflict and conflict resolution and peace building efforts in the last decade offers valuable lessons. Of 16 operations led by the United Nations at the beginning of 2010, Africa is host to seven. These include, Democratic Republic of Congo Central African Republic and Chad, Dafur, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Western Sahara. What is more, these African missions account for approximately 75 percent of all UN peacekeepers deployed worldwide.⁴ Also, a recent study led by this author in collaboration with others examined the application of UNSCR 1325 in eight national settings and within four regional organisations. Five of the national settings (Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sudan) and three of the regional organisations (African Union, ECOWAS⁵ and SADC⁶) contained in that study are in Africa.⁷

It is therefore possible to collate observable trends in the application of UNSCR 1325 in these settings and the rich UN peacekeeping experience and to draw preliminary conclusions about these trends.

What has been the impact of UN peace missions in the local contexts and areas of operation?

The United Nations continues to enjoy immense credibility across the world despite some of its major failings in the field. Thus there is often a high expectation when a UN peacekeeping mission is present on the ground, that it will make a qualitative difference in the lives of the people – and on many occasions, it has. A similar expectation is however placed on the UN when it comes to struggles for the gender equality in the places where its peacekeeping personnel are deployed. The demands made by UNSCR 1325 heighten such expectations. But in none of the cases that have been studied on the continent did this international presence fundamentally transform the situation of women.⁸ The exceptions have been the cases where implementation of UNSCR has been backed by committed mission leadership are the exceptions rather than the norm and the best-known examples of these are outside Africa (e.g. UNTAET⁹). Also rare but not entirely extinct are situations where gallantry on the part of Gender Adviser have motivated action on the ground. Indeed, one pattern that was observed (e.g. Liberia and Sudan) is that UN presence other than peace operations have been more actively engaged in the implementation of aspects of the Resolution.

The limited influence of peacekeeping missions observed is not surprising, given that gender equality is little understood within the still largely male dominated peace missions. Besides, gender equality is often not paramount on the agenda of peace missions. Typically, gender equality is considered a long-term agenda that can be put on the back burner or compromised for more pressing security concerns. As such it is not unusual for peacekeeping personnel to argue that the military-type exigencies are the real concern while women's concerns can wait until later. Thus peace missions that have gender-related issues or specifically, implementation of UNSCR 1325 on their mandate typically take a mechanistic approach to reporting to the Security Council on these issues by focusing on particular items for reporting purposes rather than for reasons of commitment to the agenda.

How do local communities engage with issues at the heart of UNSCR 1325 whether or not in collaboration with the UN peacekeeping presence?

In many conflict settings, civil society had been actively advocating for the rights of women and for recognition of their role in peace building ever before the arrival of the UN mission. Many civil society groups undertook UNSCR

1325-like activities even when they were not familiar with this Resolution. Rwanda and Sudan, for example, had active women's movements at various stages before and after the adoption of UNSCR 1325. It is not unusual that the experience of war strengthens women's activism and fight for gender equality. To be certain, much of the achievement of women in many such settings took place without the presence of peace operations and often at the informal, grassroots level. Peace missions have often failed to make systematic connections between such local efforts and formal initiatives, which can help upscale the activities of these women. This has had the unintended consequence of obscuring valuable local ideas and approaches to gender equality. In Sudan, UNMIS¹⁰ did not build on the women's peace building activities that existed prior to its deployment. Similarly, in Liberia, UNMIL¹¹ did not take advantage of the knowledge base of the women's networks that played a critical role in bringing about peace in the country.

Implementation of UNSCR 1325 by regional organisations

Africa's continental and regional organisations have made some progress in implementing UNSCR 1325. The experiences of the African Union (AU), ECOWAS and SADC reveal some common trends, both positive and negative. On the positive side, all these regional organisations have adopted instruments that relate directly to the objectives of UNSCR 1325. These include, for example, AU's Maputo Protocol, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), and SADC's Protocol on Gender and Development. Second, these organisations have included civil society in many of the activities surrounding the preparation, adoption and implementation of the instruments.

On the negative side, the organisations have tended to emphasise the protection elements of the UNSCR more than the strategic role that requires participation of women in peace and security issues and structures. Indeed, it is the case that women are hardly represented in the peace and security structures of the organisations. Interestingly the same goes for an organisation like the EU. Secondly, discourses on core peace and security issues in these organisations remain insulated and separated from debates on women, peace and security. This particular point is telling; it is a good indicator of how much progress has (not) been made in bringing issues of women into mainstream peace and security discourse. Indeed, there Lastly, there has been relatively limited success in implementing these instruments at the national level.

Implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the national level – the framework of national action plans

The creating of National Action Plans (NAPs) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is potentially useful instrument for the monitoring of the Resolution by governments. The processes of developing these plans have been seen as questionable in many instances as they have tended to be done without the inclusion of civil society. Issues such as inadequate funding for implementing the plans and a general apathy toward the plans are seen as the

main challenges of any effort to drive implementation at the national level. Less than 6 African countries have NAPs in place at the time of writing this paper.

What can we learn from these trends? What are the main challenges to overcome?

Despite obvious developments seen, for example, in the development of national action plans and the adoption of UNSCR 1325 approaches by regional organisations in Africa, there is no noticeable impact on the lives of ordinary women beyond anecdotal evidence. Perhaps the biggest indicator of this is the fact that despite continued advocacy and activism amongst women's groups nationally and regionally, and the embrace of Resolution 1325 by regional actors (at least on paper), this has not systematically crossed over into main stream policies on security-decision making whether at the national or regional levels. At the same time, African women remain grossly under-represented in the peace and security structures of the regional organisations; and sexual violence against women has continued unabated in many instances in private and in public settings.

There can be no doubt that the structural challenges described in the earlier part of this paper have served as a major obstacle in the application of UNSCR 1325 on the ground across national and regional settings. These obstacles are by no means limited to Africa. One, for example, is the highly militarized and patriarchal environment of peacekeeping missions, which is in itself a stumbling block to the implementation of any agenda that seeks to transform that very culture in order to deliver gender equality.

Related to this is the structure of the international system, which invariably, and understandably focuses on the state as the primary reference point. In this regard, like most other UN Resolutions, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 relies almost exclusively on the UN system itself and Member States as the primary actors. Thus there is a natural tendency to leave civil society actors to the periphery in the implementation of this Resolution. Yet, the Resolution emerged as a result of civil society activism; and civil society actors have primarily driven its implementation on the ground.

Typically, international organisations and state actors even when committed to a particular agenda are likely to gravitate toward bureaucratic approaches and the experience of the application of UNSCR 1325 is no different. In this regard, the tendency of UN entities to focus on treat UNSCR as a technical programme is hardly surprising. In the particular context of Africa, where as earlier indicated, in many cases, governance remains over-centralised in the hands relatively few, institutionalising the agenda of UNSCR 1325 can become a perennial struggle, given that it demands an alteration in power relations and invariably implies some loss of power, which the power holders are not often willing to give up. It is in this regard that African regional organisations might fill an important gap, by bridging the space between the people and their national rulers where it is possible to do so.

RESOLUTION1325 Draft Background Paper

African regional and continental organisations, while also of a similar bureaucratic disposition to the UN and state actors (after all they too are a collective of Member States), offer a real chance for facilitating the application of UNSCR 1325 on the continent in more robust ways. In part because the continent and by extension its regional organisations is going through a series of transitional moments, the activism shown by these organisations has been more apparent. As the particular experiences of the AU, ECOWAS and SADC have shown, regional organisations are able to set a normative framework that engages and compels their Member States over time to embrace certain core values that can lead to meaningful change. This will by no means be a revolutionary agenda, but it will be consistent and gradual in its approach to change. All of these organisations once held on to principles of non-intervention in internal affairs of their members and held rigidly to the concept of sovereignty but they have gradually embraced new norms in response to the reality on the ground. They have changed in ways that individual states, on their own, might not have changed.

The experiences of these African regional organisations have revealed an important trend in the behaviour of a group of states vis-à-vis individual state actors. While individual states might be resistant to change, they sometimes behave differently when within a grouping where they might be compelled to commit to certain norms and values to which they might otherwise not conform. Systematising such core values into state practice is however another question altogether. However, it is important that national and regional actors can play a mutually reinforcing role in the process of change. The activism of regional (and indeed other international actors) creates legitimacy for civil society actors especially when the space at the national level is not sufficiently open for change. This makes regional organisations potentially viable partners for civil society on an issue such as the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

How should we respond to the gaps in application of UNSCR 1325?

In moving toward the gender-related structural changes that can lead to the outcomes sought by UNSCR1325, the continent must make a bold move toward transforming the status quo. The structures and avenues through which UNSCR 1325 has been implemented in Africa so far, are not ideal nor are they equipped for transformation even though as earlier indicated, certain regional organisations can potentially set the tone for this time of change. This will be a vital step for taking UNSCR 1325 far beyond the shores of war-affected countries.

Indeed, the reliance on United Nations peacekeeping for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 – within its own structures and for onward transmission into society – has proven to be extremely limited in terms of overall impact. Besides, this method of application is likely to be short lived. As Africa advances toward an era in which conflicts are better managed thus preventing large-scale armed conflict and as its governance structures improve, we are likely to see a reduction in UN peacekeeping missions. Additionally, the continent cannot reasonably rely on the presence of the

United Nations peacekeeping mission in less than two tenths of the continent as a means of implementing an agenda that requires continent-wide change. It may well be that this method of application will soon outlive its usefulness and perhaps its function and relevance was for a period – to serve as an entry point and to project UN influence on this issue in the societies where the opportunity existed to influence change. At a minimum, the implementation of 1325 by peace missions helps the UN improve its own records on gender-equality and enables the organisation to move toward making gender-related structural changes.

The reality on the ground tells us that we must look below the state for a transformative agenda that will make the impact of UNSCR felt by the masses of African women and men. The concerted efforts of ordinary people within civil society provided the fuel that propelled the action that led to the adoption of UNSCR 1325. Individual statesmen and women then put their support behind such efforts and shepherded through the UN system to the Security Council. It will take this type of alliance to galvanise the type of action that can break the barriers that have stopped the effective application of Resolution 1325. The case studies across Africa indicate that civil society has the potential to be a driving force for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325. Civil society has continued to work to implement the UNSCR 1325 agenda at various levels. It requires support by the right actors – individual statesmen and women and regional on the African continent to upscale and spread the work being done at this level.

However, civil society is not without its own challenges and inherent weaknesses, some of which are significant. The problems of coherence and ethics have been raised in other places but this paper will focus on one challenge direct relating to the ability of civil society to implement UNSCR 1325 on the ground and continent wide. A crucial problem that continues to plague civil society is the dearth of expertise on peace and security issue. Despite impressive local knowledge and active engagement in community peace building, the absence of a robust understanding and analytical capacity to engage peace and security issues at the appropriate decision-making level continues to restrict and relegate African women to the periphery of decision-making on these issues. Every effort has to be made to develop a critical mass of African women with a sound knowledge base and analytical capacity on peace and security issues for Africa. Among other things, this demands that a robust collective vision of the place of African women in the African as well as global peace and security system be crafted.



5. ENVISIONING THE SITUATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN 2020? A FIVE-POINT AGENDA FOR TRANSFORMATION

It is important to seize on the momentum potentially generated by the global review of ten years of UNSC 1325 to articulate a new robust vision for African women in the next decade. The lessons of experience of the last ten years of UNSCR 1325 implementation tell us that unless we radically transform the underlying systems that relegate women to the position of peripheral players in the national and regional and global structures that govern peace and security, we will achieve at best only marginal progress for women. Returning to the four factors at the beginning of this paper, which constitute part of the focus of UNSCR 1325, the next ten years should see the realisation of the following five-point agenda:

1. A critical mass of African women with solid expertise in the field of peace and security driving the policy agenda of national and regional organisations; and leading scholarship and analysis in this field.
2. Visible participation and representation of African women in the highest decision-making structures of national, regional and global institutions charged with the responsibility for managing peace and security. In this regard, the appointment of African women as Special Representatives and Envoys of the UN Secretary-General; and into the highest leadership positions in African regional organisations should become a “normal” feature of regional and global governance.
3. The systematic inclusion of gender, and in particular, women’s concerns in all policies that address issues of peace and security as well as in conflict prevention mechanisms of African regional organisations – including, for example, those relating to security governance, arms control and disarmament, regional security, peacemaking and peacekeeping among others.
4. Legislation against sexual violence against women as a regular feature of national laws; while reporting and prosecution of violence against women becomes routine practice.
5. A phasing out of National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 because they have run their course and desired outcomes have been achieved.

This agenda requires commitment and dedication of an entire community of actors from local to national and regional levels. Only an alliance of like-minded people

– dedicated women and men, committed stateswomen and men; and reform minded leaders of national and regional institutions will build a continent wide movement that will achieve the type of transformative action dictated by this agenda. Such a powerful movement can potentially compel even the most recalcitrant keepers of the state to relinquish a measure of power to create an opportunity to make a qualitative shift in the condition of African women, guaranteeing their place as equal citizens alongside their men folk. Realising this will have fulfilled the spirit if not the letter of United Nations Resolution 1325.

Dr ‘Funmi Olonisakin
Senior Research Fellow: Conflict, Security and Development Group, Department of War Studies, Kings College, London

Endnotes

- 1 All of these are contained in S/Res/1325 (2000)
- 2 Awino Okech, *The Character and Evolution of the African Feminist Movement*, Unpublished research paper, Cape Town, September 2010.
- 3 See Karen Barnes, “The Evolution and Implementation of UNSCR 1325: An Overview” in ‘Funmi Olonisakin, Karen Barnes and Eka Ikpe (eds), *Women, Peace and Security: Translating Policy into Practice*, London: Routledge, 2010, pp. 19-20; See also, Carol Cohn, “Mainstreaming gender in UN security policy: a path to political transformation? In Shirin M. Rai and Georgina Waylen (eds), *Global Governance: Feminist Perspectives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- 4 UNITAR, *Peacekeeping Capacity Development: Why now in Africa?* Concept note for Panel Discussion, Room IV, Palais des Nations Geneva, Switzerland, 8 September 2010; See also Centre for Conflict Resolution, *Peacebuilding in post-Cold War Africa: Problems Progress and Prospects*, Policy Seminar Report, August 2009, p.11. CCR’s count is 8 Africa based operations contributing 70% of the peacekeepers globally.
- 5 Economic Community of West African States
- 6 Southern African Development Community
- 7 Southern African Development Community
- 8 Ibid. p. 226
- 9 United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor Ibid., p. 227. See also Chapter by Sumie Nakaya in the same volume.
- 10 UN Mission in Sudan; see chapter on Sudan by Gihan Eltom in Olonisakin, Barnes and Ikpe (eds).
- 11 UN Mission in Liberia; see chapter on Liberia by Njoki Wamai in Olonisakin, Barnes and Ikpe (eds).