



STRENGTHENING THE  
UN-AU PARTNERSHIP  
IN PEACE AND SECURITY

## Opening Remarks

**BY: Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga**

**UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and  
Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union.**

**At the 5th High-Level Africa Forum on WPS**

**Date: 5-6 December 2024 at the African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa Ethiopia  
Medium Conference Hall**

---

**Your Excellency, Sahle-Work Zewde**, Former President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Champion of the WPS Forum,

**Your Excellency, Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa**, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, on your merit and representing

**His Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, a true champion of the WPS Agenda,

**Your Excellency, Dr. Speciosa Naigaga Wandira Kazibwe**, Former Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda and Member of the AU High-Level Panel on Sudan,

**Your Excellency, Honorable Justice Effie Owour**, Chair of the AU Panel of the Wise and FemWise-Africa Co-Chair,

**Your Excellency, Maria do Rosário Bragança**, State Minister of Social Affairs of Angola,

**Your Excellency, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**, Former Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

**Your Excellency, Bineta Diop**, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security,

**Your Excellency, Signe Gilen**, Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security of Norway,

**Esteemed partners,**

**Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is both an honour and a privilege for me to provide opening remarks, on behalf of the United Nations, at this important forum on recalibrating the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda across the continent.



STRENGTHENING THE  
UN-AU PARTNERSHIP  
IN PEACE AND SECURITY

As we gather here today, we stand at a critical juncture where the complexities of the African continent demand innovative thinking and a renewed commitment to the principles of gender equality, equity, peace, and security.

Indeed, the WPS agenda, established with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, has served as a transformative framework for recognizing and advancing the role of women in peace and security efforts.

However, as we reflect on its implementation over the years, we must acknowledge the evolving conflict landscape and shifting security dynamics. New challenges have emerged, exacerbated by global crises, such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics, and rising inequalities.

Today, we are called to recalibrate our approach to the WPS agenda, ensuring its continued relevance and impact in addressing these contemporary challenges. This forum offers an opportunity to engage in thoughtful dialogue, share experiences, and explore innovative strategies to empower women and girls to actively shape the peace and security landscape in their communities and beyond.

This year's forum, along with next year's 2025 anniversary of Resolution 1325, presents important opportunities to reflect on and revive the transformative potential of the WPS agenda.

One important pathway enshrined in the recently adopted Pact for the Future, which encompasses the implementation of all four pillars of the WPS agenda, is the localization of WPS to address community-level security concerns and advocate for de-securitization across all aspects of the agenda. Specifically, taking into consideration the **inter-sectionality of Gender issues**.

The WPS agenda must consider inter-sectionality, acknowledging that women's experiences are shaped by various factors, such as age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disability. Tailoring programs to address these intersecting identities can lead to more inclusive and effective solutions that cater to the diverse needs of women in different contexts.

The recalibration of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda in Africa calls for an examination of the critical themes and dimensions that can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of peace efforts across the continent.

Understanding the historical and cultural contexts of different African regions is also essential for the effective implementation of the WPS agenda. Many African countries have unique traditions and social structures that influence women's roles in society. Recognizing and respecting these contexts can help in designing interventions that resonate with local populations while promoting a transformative approach.

Regional organizations, such as the African Union, ECOWAS, SADC, the East African Community, and IGAD, to mention a few, play a vital role in promoting the WPS agenda.

Strengthening collaboration among the diverse regions and countries across the continent can foster the exchange of best practices, optimize the sharing of resources, and strengthen the collective ownership of strategies to tackle shared challenges.



STRENGTHENING THE  
UN-AU PARTNERSHIP  
IN PEACE AND SECURITY

Additionally, it is essential to enhance collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations to share knowledge, resources, and best practices, particularly in addressing challenges such as the impact of climate change on the WPS agenda.

Moreover, the voices of young women and girls are essential in shaping a sustainable future. We must create platforms that not only amplify their perspectives but also empower them to take leadership roles and effectively participate in peacebuilding efforts.

In this context, I would like to emphasize the need for all these processes and initiatives to be data and evidence driven. Robust data and evidence are essential to inform our decisions. We must invest in research and data collection to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of our initiatives and adapt them to meet the needs and aspirations of those we serve.

**As we continue our discussions, let us remain committed to a shared vision:** a world where women are not only participants in peace and security processes but are also recognized as leaders and change-makers. Together, we can create a fairer and peaceful future for all, through comprehensive and inclusive approaches.

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the WPS agenda. I look forward to the fruitful conversations and collaborations that will emerge from this forum. Let us inspire one another and work collectively toward our common goals and aspirations.

**Thank you.**