Women And Peacebuilding In Africa Conference

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Isis WICCE

Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange
(Re)creating Peace Internationally

WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA CONFERENCE

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Women peace activists have played a role in preventing the resumption of conflict in various contexts by monitoring and advocating against the sale of small arms.

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ACRONYMS

CMI:	Chr. Michelsen Institute CMI
CPA:	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPA:	Concerned Parents Association
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
FGM:	Female Genital Mutilation
IGAD:	Inter governmental Authority on Development
Isis-WICCE:	Isis- Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange
KIWEPI:	Kitgum Women Peace Initiative
KJN:	Karibu Jeunesse Nouvelle
LRA:	Lord Resistance Army
NGO:	Non- Governmental Organization
SGBV:	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SOFEPAD:	Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development
SORD:	Sudanese Organization for Research and Development
UNSCR:	United Nations Security Council Resolution

I.   INTRODUCTION

The University of Wisconsin - Madison in partnership with African researchers, Isis Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) are conducting a research project that looks at the cost of women's exclusion and the possibilities for their inclusion in peace processes, peacebuilding, and politics in countries affected by war in Africa. The research project also examines the struggle for women's rights, legal reform and political representation as one important arena for stemming the tide of extremism related to violence in Africa. Lessons from these experiences have policy implications for ongoing conflicts elsewhere in Africa and the Middle East.

The research consortium is based at three research centers in the United States of America (US), Norway and Uganda, including nine experienced researchers. The research is being carried out in Somalia, Algeria, Northern Nigeria, South Sudan and Sudan. The three themes of the research include: 1) Inclusion and Exclusion in Post-Conflict Governance (Somalia and Algeria), 2) Women Activists' Informal Peacebuilding Strategies (South Sudan and Northern Nigeria) and 3) Women's Legal Rights as a Site of Contestation in North Africa (Sudan and Algeria).

Conflict in Africa has changed in nature and has become more intractable as the causes and solutions are more complex. This is happening at a time when donors are withdrawing support for peace initiatives. Conflicts today manifest further through activities of terrorist groups and election violence. The rise, for example, of Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Shabaab in Somalia, Ansar Dine in Mali, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQUIM) in Algeria and Mali, Movement for Monotheism and Jihad in West Africa in Mali (MUJAO), and other Islamic groups influenced by Salafism and other conservative ideologies, is posing new challenges to these societies. Women often find themselves at the front lines of war, not only as victims but also as prime opponents of some of the more extremist trends in affected countries.

The research is being conducted in five countries in Africa that have experienced or are currently experiencing conflict, to examine the role women have played in peacebuilding at the formal and informal levels and also look at the gains of inclusion and costs of their exclusion. The findings will be composed into case studies and overall comparative findings and a book along with other publications and policy briefs. The project will also hold international conferences and a meeting between women activists and stakeholders in participating countries.

This report is a documentation of proceedings at the Women and Peace Building in Africa Conference, organized by Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) in Kampala, Uganda. The conference convened a consortium of researchers and women activists working on peace building initiatives in Africa; it also involved those who informed the research. The team of women activists and peace builders joined together in sisterhood to learn from each other what has worked in promoting peace and what gaps remain. Uganda was selected to host the conference because of the country's long experience in conflict and currently hosting over a million refugees from South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda. Despite the silence of guns, Uganda itself is not yet at peace.

The conference centered on the following objectives;

* Facilitate dialogue and learning around women's participation and role in Peace building.

* Provide a platform for cross cultural exchange and learning amongst women peace builders in Africa.

> Women often find themselves at the front lines of war, not only as victims but also as prime opponents of some of the more extremist trends in affected countries.

II.   Background to Research

The conference was organized as part of a research project - women and peace building in Africa, which started in 2016. The project looks at the cost of women's exclusion and the possibilities for their inclusion in peace talks, peace building, and political institutions in countries affected by war in Africa. It's administered by the Center for Research on Gender and Women of the University of Wisconsin-Madison (lead), and is part of a consortium with the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway, and Isis-WICCE. The researchers are from Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Norway, the United States of America and Algeria.

The research was built on 3 areas;

1.   The ways in which the lack of incorporation of women into formal peace processes and post conflict governance arrangements have hindered peace

The reality is that women have been largely excluded from peace negotiations in all parts of the world even after the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in October 2000 that was intended to remedy this by calling on all actors involved, in negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective. National Action Plans have been passed, yet since 2000 women have represented only 9% of the negotiating delegations and 4% of the signatories.

Women, Peace and Security agenda has strong roots in Africa and that progress has been made in relation to the development of frameworks, polices and strategies. Representation of women in the architecture has improved[1]. So there are lessons that can be drawn from the African experiences of inclusion and exclusion for other regions of the world. The references to women's rights between 2000 and 2012 tripled in all peace agreements in Africa (12% to 34%) and more than doubled in all comprehensive peace agreements in Africa (33% to 78%) from the previous decade. This helped set the stage for the later incorporation of women's rights into constitutions and into legislation as well as for women's presence in key governmental, legislative and transitional institutions.

The research project examines how women activists advocate for the participation of women leaders in peace talks, constitution-making processes and in new political arrangements. So often at the negotiations table, male leaders have simply divided up the spoils of war in new arrangements, focusing on who gets which positions of power and the trappings of power that go along with them. Male representatives generally negotiate at formal peace talks and come up with formal peace agreements, while women leaders tend to be relegated to the informal, invisible, and localized peacemaking strategies. The project further looks at how women's organizations can make a difference in enhancing peace outcomes by being included in peace talks and what are the obstacles for women being included in formal peace talks, in constitution making exercises, in post conflict electoral processes, and other decision making institutions.

2. How women have been engaging in unrecognized forms of peace building informally in Africa and the contributions and limitations of these forms of peace building

Women's collective strategies have ranged from organizing rallies and boycotts to promoting small arms confiscation, organizing bridge building activities, and negotiating with rebels to release abducted children and child soldiers. Women peace activists have played a role in preventing the resumption of conflict in various contexts by monitoring and advocating against the sale of small arms. There is very little recognition of these activities internationally. The research investigated what is possible in the informal arrangements of peace building and what their limits are.

3. The ways in which the struggle for women's rights and legal reform is a key battleground internally in African societies struggling to confront conservative Islamist and Salafist influences, which have fed to some of the militancy seen in Africa and the Middle East

One of the first of the recent wars against Islamic extremism was fought in Algeria (1991-2002). Lessons learned from this struggle, in which ordinary women and advocates of women's rights were key targets and opponents of attacks, are reminiscent of other contexts in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region today. The research examines legal reforms in such contexts.

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1   Cheryl Hendricks: Africa Development, Journal Article, Vol. XLII, No.3, 2017 pp 73-98 'Progress and challenges in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture'

III. SHARING AND EXCHANGES

Women and Peace Building: What has worked

This section presents case stories from Uganda, Sudan, DRC and Nigeria on what has worked for women peace activists working at the informal levels;

Uganda:

Kitgum Women Peace Initiative (KIWEPI):

KIWEPI was formed to advocate for peace and reconciliation as well as provide psychosocial support and trauma counseling to girls formerly abducted by the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) following the northern Ugandan war. The organization is currently localizing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 by empowering communities to identify their challenges and develop strategies on how to address them, hence playing a critical role in peace building. Isis-WICCE through collaboration and partnership empowered KIWEPI to amplify their voices on peace advocacy. As a result of this partnership, KIWEPI has engaged grassroots women to participate in peace building and conflict resolution. This they have done through radio programs which widely share information on peace building, local and national peace

Gladys Canogura (first from left) – Executive Director, KIWEPI sharing experiences of her peace work

dialogues where women speak out and document the experiences of women and girls war survivors to inform advocacy. They also provide economic recovery skills to women and girls through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) as well as providing psychosocial support and medication for physical and mental torture to women and girls survivors.

Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE):

Isis-WICCE peace building initiatives involved building movements for collective advocacy through, women coalitions for peace such as the Uganda Women's Peace Coalition for the Juba Peace Process and the Women's Task Force for a gender responsive Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for northern Uganda reconstruction. The institution has built strategic partnerships with medical professionals to treat and heal women survivors of conflict sexual violence and hence get them to meaningfully participate in peace building and post conflict reconstruction processes. They have built women's leadership to promote peace and influence decision making and have documented women's experiences in situations of armed conflict. This documentation is shared with policy makers and development partners to expose the atrocities women suffered during conflict, and this has been used as tools for advocacy.

The Abducted Aboke Girls: Experience of Concerned Parents in Addressing Issues of the Aboke Girls

Concerned Parents Association (CPA) Uganda was formed in 1996 following the abduction of the Aboke Girls by the LRA rebels in Apac District in northern Uganda. It was on the fateful night of Uganda's 34th Independence Day when the LRA rebels attacked Aboke Girls Secondary School and abducted 139 school girls. After the abduction the school's deputy headmistress, an Italian nun called Sister Rachelle Fassera contacted the government military camp about the abductions but no help or response was given to her. She then took the courage of following the rebels to negotiate the release of the girls. After so much intimidation by the rebels and her persistent bargaining, the rebel commander ordered the release of 109 girls, 30 girls remained in captivity.

Fred Ocen shared the experience of Concerned Parents Association in supporting the Aboke Girls

This compelled parents of the girls to join together, raise their voices and put pressure on government for release of the 30 remaining girls. This campaign led to formation of Concerned Parents Association. The parents organized themselves with 3 objectives; 1) Unconditional release of all abducted children under LRA captivity; 2) Stop the war in Northern Uganda; 3) Reintegrate and rehabilitate former abductees.

> CPA has further provided counseling to survivors, sensitized communities to accept returnees and traced families of the returnees.

As a result, CPA gathered local and regional support which facilitated the returned girls to reception centers for health, education and psychosocial support. A dialogue was organized between the two ethnic tribes (Lango and Acholi) to reduce community trauma on the returnees. Parents' support groups were formed (500 groups of 10 – 15 members) from the entire community, including religious leaders, cultural leaders and opinion leaders. CPA has further provided counseling to survivors, sensitized communities to accept returnees and traced families of the returnees. In addition, the Association brought on board the Acholi Parliamentary Group to put pressure on the rebels to release the girls and other abductees. They collected evidence, documented and exposed stories of abducted children and the atrocities committed on the Aboke Girls to the Horn of Africa Heads of State, Embassies and Humanitarian Organizations. Since majority of the 30 girls who remained in captivity returned HIV positive and with children, communities are challenged with accepting these children, most of who have no family or father identity as recognized by culture. Worse still there is no policy that protects such children, the Transitional Justice Policy which could have supported them has been submitted to the Parliament; civil society organizations working with the Northern Ugandan Parliamentary Forum are working to present the Policy to the Parliament for approval.

Sudan:

The approaches women peace activists in Sudan have used to promote peace expanded beyond conducting research, writing papers and reports to going back to communities, discuss results and devise solutions and recommendations from them. Information gathered from these communities is developed into policy briefs and presented to policy makers. The women have gone a step ahead to look for partners with whom they have developed projects from researches conducted. The researches have documented cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence. Since rape is highly politicized in Sudan and collecting such information is regarded a security threat, peace activists have had to contact courts and lawyers for information on rape cases. Sudan has placed a lot of emphasis on implementing peace agreements as well as localizing UNSCR 1325.

DRC:

Women organizations in DRC such as Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development (SOFEPAD) and Karibu Jeunesse Nouvelle (KJN) have engaged in different peace building activities. They have trained women in conflict transformation, peace building and monitoring peacebuilding frameworks at all levels and documenting and reporting cases of Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Women peace actors are engaging in informal negotiations at grassroots, such informal approaches of peace building need to be documented.

KJN is working with youth to promote good governance by involving them in peace processes. The organization recognizes that youth participation in peace processes raises their conscience as peace actors. They have gone ahead to support the youth with entrepreneurship programs which in return address their livelihoods needs and empower them to participate in peace processes and politics. Youth clubs which constitute engendered boys have also been formed to promote women's rights and increase their ability to speak against negative cultural norms.

Nigeria:

The conflict affected communities of Bauchi, Borno and Yobe states in northern Nigeria are highly patriarchal, and the perception of people's personalities highly matters. Women peace activities therefore work with and respond to people who are highly perceived by the community to have integrity in the way they work. Women peace activities in these communities have also involved men - the women peace actors in northern Nigeria's Zamfara state have taken a bold step of working with cattle rustling gangs to spread the message of peace and reconciliation to other gang members.

Ruth (middle) has 3 of her children in captivity of Boko Haram rebels. This has not stopped her from her peace activism

Women peace activists in northern Nigeria conflict affected communities have further galvanized support from religious leaders to speak on their behalf, since only licensed Imams are allowed to preach. They have urged churches to preach peace and advocated for improved implementation of rape laws. Referral centers for cases of rape have been established and such interventions have built partnerships with media to profile women's concerns. Economic empowerment projects have also been set up to strengthen peace building through improved livelihood.

The team of peace activists conclusively affirmed that to enhance women's peace work, peace actors need to consolidate partnerships with CSOs and the academia, build strong networks and alliances, analyze, interpret and implement gender responsive policies and peace agreements. Peace building activities should be built on the realities of victims of conflict. They additionally agreed to devise local solutions to protect women from rape and sexual violence and adopt simplified and informal ways of documentation of the violence women experience in a bid to provide evidence for prosecution and accountability.

Commonalities of what has worked for African women in building peace

* Influencing legal reforms
* Building capacity of women to promote peace using informal peace processes
* Documenting women's experiences of conflict
* Women mobilizing and organizing for advocacy
* Re-integrating formerly abducted women and girls, including providing psychosocial support
* Establishment of income generating projects for economic sustainability
* Building networks, partnerships and alliances for advocacy and support
* Community sensitizations on peace using radio talk shows, cultural events and peace campaigns
* Resource mobilization and fundraising for peace activities
* Holding peace negotiations with rebels and state actors

Failures and Hindrances

* Divisions among women (political, religious and cultural divides)
* Poor representation of the women's agenda
* Government restrictions to women peace activities
* Insecurity – working in situations of conflict
* Limited funding for women peace initiatives
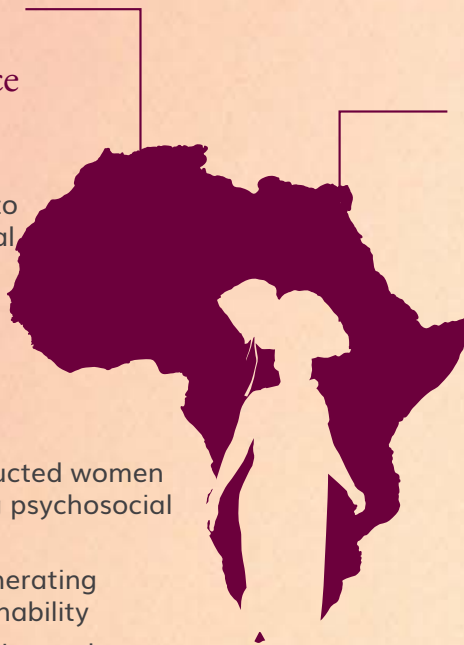
Inclusion and Exclusion of Women in Post Conflict Governance
Shared Experiences from Uganda, DRC and South Sudan

The conference presented an opportunity for women peace actors to share experiences on inclusion and exclusion in post conflict governance. This discussion was guided by three questions;

1. Are women included or excluded from post conflict governance? If included what is the percentage?

Women are excluded from peace building processes due to cultural hindrances; peace negotiations are considered a male space.

2. If included how effective has this been? How has this impacted on women's rights generally in the country?

Women in South Sudan advocated for inclusion in the negotiation process which led to 25% quota for women representation at the peace table.

During the insurgency in Northern Uganda, Betty Bigombe initiated the peace process by holding discussions with the rebels. Unfortunately, this raised the ego of male politicians who couldn't stand a woman bringing peace and challenging them, so they distorted the entire peace process between Betty and the rebels. Since Betty's strategy had been sidelined, Ugandan women peace actors formed a Coalition for peace to increase the numbers of women at the negotiation table during the Juba Peace Process. This was also ignored so women mobilized their own resources and organized a caravan which marched from Kampala to Juba to take part in the peace process.

Women's involvement in the Juba Peace Process created peace in Northern Uganda and South Sudan.

Protection of children in conflict lies with government but they don't play their role. In Northern Uganda, parents in their powerlessness formed Concerned Parents Association (CPA) to rescue their children from conflict, and this brought a lot of attention to the issue from the international community.

Women organizations were formed during conflict and these have tremendously supported survivors of conflict.
Documentation of women's experiences in situations of conflict was a very empowering approach that got women to speak about their situation for effective and evidence based advocacy, this also united and brought together women who had experienced similar experiences of conflict to amplify their voices.

3. What gaps remain and what are the recommendations to address them?

Gaps

The few women who are voicing out on peace at present are threatened, pulled down and sexually harassed.

Despite South Sudanese women being are part of the 25% quota, few are able to influence decisions and represent women's issues effectively.

Another challenge to women's inclusion in peace negotiation processes are the different divisions; amongst women in government, CSO is divided by their priorities and political party affiliation, islamists against secular groups, geographical divides, age divides, political affiliation and tribal divides.

Political systems have furthermore been militarized hence affecting women's inclusion in governance and peace processes.

Recommendations

Informal processes of peace building implemented by women at local level should be recognized at the peace table.

And such informal processes of peace building should be recorded for reference in future processes in order to bargain for space at the peace table, whilst replaying such initiatives to women members of parliament to strengthen women's voice and make it risky for the women's cause to be ignored.
Women peace actors should cut across all divides and stand united to strengthen their peace advocacy.

Deliberate action should be taken to support women's participation in the security sector reforms for inclusion into peace processes and negotiations.

A role play on women's exclusion in peace processes

Women Activists Informal Peace Building Strategies
Shared Experiences from South Sudan, DRC, Nigeria and Uganda

Amidst the challenges of on-going conflict and post conflict situations, women are developing effective strategies to participate in peace and security mechanisms and to advance women's rights. This section examines how women are building peace using a variety of informal strategies. While national plans and formal peace processes have had mixed results for women, alternative steps notably including informal relationships and utilizing other local methods and norms can be highly effective for advancing women's interests.

Women's informal peace efforts

The informal role of women in the peace processes in DRC has been effective though the number of women at formal peace tables remain low; even as most of them are selected by the state for their own interests. This approach makes it difficult for such women representatives to promote women's agenda.

In 2016, the Congolese system couldn't talk about sexual violence, so women used radical activism to get the law on SGBV passed.

Women activists advocated for change of articles 444, 448, 450, 454 and 497 of the Democratic Republic of Congo's Family Code of 1987. Through women's advocacy, the DRC Family Code was amended in 2016

Jolly Kamuntu (second from left), a passionate peace activist from DRC sharing peacebuilding strategies

Women's advocacy was strengthened by backup from different allies such as community leaders, media, and politicians. They faced threats but these pushed them to advocate even more.

Women in South Sudan built networks with a common agenda on peace; documented women's experiences in armed conflict; monitored implementation of the August 26, 2015 peace agreement. Women peace actors further organized peace conferences to discuss and analyze the 2015 peace agreement and mobilized grass root women who they availed information to articulate issues at community level and forwarded them to national level.

Women peace actors in Uganda looked for a commonality that brought women together, they developed a women's agenda to promote peace e.g. through religious and cultural affiliations. Women organizations have focused on sensitizing communities on peace using different methods such as narrating the truth about the atrocities of conflict and hence dealing with the trauma, documenting experiences of conflict so that the youth do not repeat this history. These approaches have benefited grass root women to open up and release information required for advocacy.

The Nigeria team has created youth spaces which have enabled them gather together to learn life skills, leadership skills and this has broken the culture of silence. Youth have likewise been given psychosocial support and therapy which has increased their resilience to finding peace.

Naomi speaks about the on-going conflict in Kasese – Rwenzori Region, Western Uganda

Rural women have formed groups through which they discuss and address issues that concern them. They meet every Sunday after church and contribute money to support each other's financial needs.

Women peace actors have organized dialogue sessions between power holders and local authorities as a platform for them to speak out on their concerns. They are however challenged by suspicion from government, cultural and religious institutions, and lack of funds to facilitate and sustain their advocacy programs.

My IDP camp experience as a GBV champion

"I was selected as one of those who distribute food in an IDP camp in Northern Nigeria. I was recruited by the International Rescue Committee as a GBV response person. My role is to support with mediating and referring cases of rape and defilement which were rampant in the camp. Because of my advocacy, which also led to provision of light and separate toilet facilities for male and female, I have been labeled a gender champion. Communities in Nigeria recognize and value integrity among activists. This builds my trust, confidence and solidarity." Fatima Ali

Women's legal rights as a site of contestation in Africa
As shared by Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Algeria

Women in African countries, most especially countries affected by conflict are facing human rights abuses unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Despite the region's diversity, its female inhabitants largely share experiences of sexual discrimination and abuse, intimate violence, political marginalization, and economic deprivation. A major obstacle to checking these abuses is women's marginalization and under-representation within the nation-states responsible for implementing human rights standards and during peace negotiations. Women at the conference presented their country legal reform systems and their effects to promotion of sustainable peace.

Women's Participation in Legal Reforms

In Sudan, the 1991 family law emerged as a highly contested piece of legislation in post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement Sudan, thus since early 1990's women activists have been voicing their concerns with the law. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was considered as an opportunity by activists for the family law review. Several initiatives for reforming the family law led to formation of an alternative family law which restricts husbands and family males' rights over the woman before or after marriage.

Activists in Khartoum (not involving those at state/local level) mobilized for law reform for promoting women's situation, social and political participation. They succeeded in integrating the gender quota in the election law working together across all political divides. They also succeeded in separating the rape from adultery law.

However, although women activists in CSOs and government worked hard for criminalization of issues that violet women's rights in the national law, the FGM law was not approved. But the activists at national level motivated those at state level to work for an anti-FGM law at their states and some succeeded.

In South Sudan, the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) allowed women to participate in the peace process as delegates of the negotiating parties, signatories and witnesses.

Despite the region's diversity, its female inhabitants largely share experiences of sexual discrimination and abuse, intimate violence, political marginalization, and economic deprivation.

In 2012, the constitution was reviewed with a gender lens; the President was in agreement with what the women recommended and this led to the state developing Gender Policies. These policies are still not implemented as majority of the Policy makers are not conversant with these Laws.

The women's movement in South Sudan is currently advocating for a policy on SGBV since the state signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations to mitigate sexual violence.

Somalia has a gender quota of 30% female representation in parliament which was given in 2012, from 12% in 1999. The current parliament is at 25% female representation which is the highest number the state has so far had. However, there is a lot of contention by clan elders and religious actors towards women's rights. Women have therefore had to fight a lot of resistance by clan elders to achieve the 25% representation.

Somali women have had to collaborate amidst resistance to advocate for their rights. Their advocacy led to the passing of a Rape Law in Somali Land and Punt Land. They also plan on getting powers off the clan elders.

Algeria has experienced changes of 3% female representation in parliament to 32% representation. Changes on the legal front include passing Laws on Sexual Harassment, Prohibition to Marry the Rapist, Prohibition of Domestic Violence, and Nationality of the Child to follow the Father or Mother.

Samia (third from left) sharing the women's legal rights situation in Sudan

Gender Equality Laws in Algeria have been steadily passed because there is political pressure from high authorities. The country has used women's rights advocacy to stop Islamist extremism while co-opting religious leaders to respect and recognize women's rights.

Additionally, gender equality has been achieved through the engendered France Law which was left behind by the colonies and because of the liberal pluralism which challenged the revival of all Laws to promote women's rights.

The Role of External Actors in Peace Building in Africa

The former Director General to the External Security Organization (ESO) for Uganda, and currently a Political and Human Security Analyst – David Pulkol presented an analysis on the role of external actors in peace building in Africa.

There are different types of external actors who include; nationals doing business in war torn countries, Embassies, International NGOs, United Nations, multi-companies and governments. External actors have self-interests when it comes to negotiations and this can jeopardize peace processes (some sustain conflict for their interests). For example United States of America, China and Russia know their interests in South Sudan. China is oil, while Russia is selling their weapons and using African leaders to intrude peace processes.

Peace actors should therefore map out such interests and develop mechanisms to influence them. Such mechanisms include;

> Strengthening women peace coalitions to voice out and advocate on the concerns of women; build back up support and alliances, and influence or conduct decision audits in African conflict countries (since decisions are made without women's involvement.)

> Since peace negotiations in the region and beyond have dynamics, it's important to know who is influencing negotiations, for example conflict over the Nile is affecting peace processes so it's important to know who the allies of the passing of the Nile are. The issue of arms also has to be dealt with from the source. It's vital that a revitalized IGAD is established and an African parliament to push for more inclusive peace processes is set up.

> Setup of a strong Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) like IGAD in the African region.

> Amend the transition peace agreement to include women's concerns and revise the language during peace processes for even the grass root woman to understand.

External actors have self-interests when it comes to negotiations and this can jeopardize peace processes (some sustain conflict for their interests).

Grace Andura from South Sudan Women Association Uganda
sharing the experience of South Sudan

Ladan (second from right) from Somalia presenting the situation in
her country

Build a strong force of advocates who will influence the African Union to take decisive action on the peace process in South Sudan and bring an end to the ongoing conflict, as well as galvanize an East African Community secure policy of peace negotiations.

Conduct a mapping on which women peace actors should be brought on board to rally behind the women's cause, who the women want to influence and target and what kind of information they want to convey to the peace negotiators.

Expose the sufferings of the ongoing conflict and involve female combatants in the peace process (they are usually ignored since they are not looked at as a security threat.)

IV. Evaluation of the Conference

The conference provided statistics of formal and informal initiatives of peace building and how to conduct research with emphasis on simplifying documentation for evidence-based advocacy. Based on practical experiences in and outside the region, you can't find the kind of information shared here written anywhere and this availed opportunity and safe space for the women to share information and experiences e.g. the situation of conflict in Kasese which calls for urgent support and intervention. The women's movement requires concerted efforts on how to make women inclusive in decision making processes; hence the need to utilize the platforms we have such as the African Feminist Forum to push the issues we need addressed as a collective, and develop alternative and more effective ways of advocacy, through strong networks. The formation of Concerned Parents Association in Uganda inspired the Nigerian team to form a similar association that will advocate and demand release of the girls abducted by Boko Haram.

Out of the research and action, the women hope to collaborate with women politicians to cut across political divides and focus on the women's agenda in order to support each other and continuously share experiences which build and strengthen regional solidarity, activism and empowerment. Sharing research findings widely (regionally and globally) is key for evidence-based advocacy, and focusing on gaps from the research and developing solutions for redress. This should enable the research to inform policy change and resource mobilization.

The team of women peace actors agreed to the importance of deepening and documenting reflections, mostly for future reference and development of new approaches. The conference brought women to the realization that they have been reflecting even if they didn't realize and acknowledge they were doing so, most of which they said would come out naturally. For example, the team from South Sudan reflects on challenges which eventually define their strategies, their reflections are done as SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analyses which enables them prioritize and celebrate their successes. The women agreed to carry out regular reflections for purposes of continuity, as well as train other women on how to reflect and articulate issues for advocacy and decision making.

> The women agreed to carry out regular reflections for purposes of continuity, as well as train other women on how to reflect and articulate issues for advocacy and decision making.

the meeting useful?
would you have done
rently?

do you hope will come,
of research and action?
does research help?
can

you stop to reflect
your strategies, challenges

you find it useful to
from other experiences?
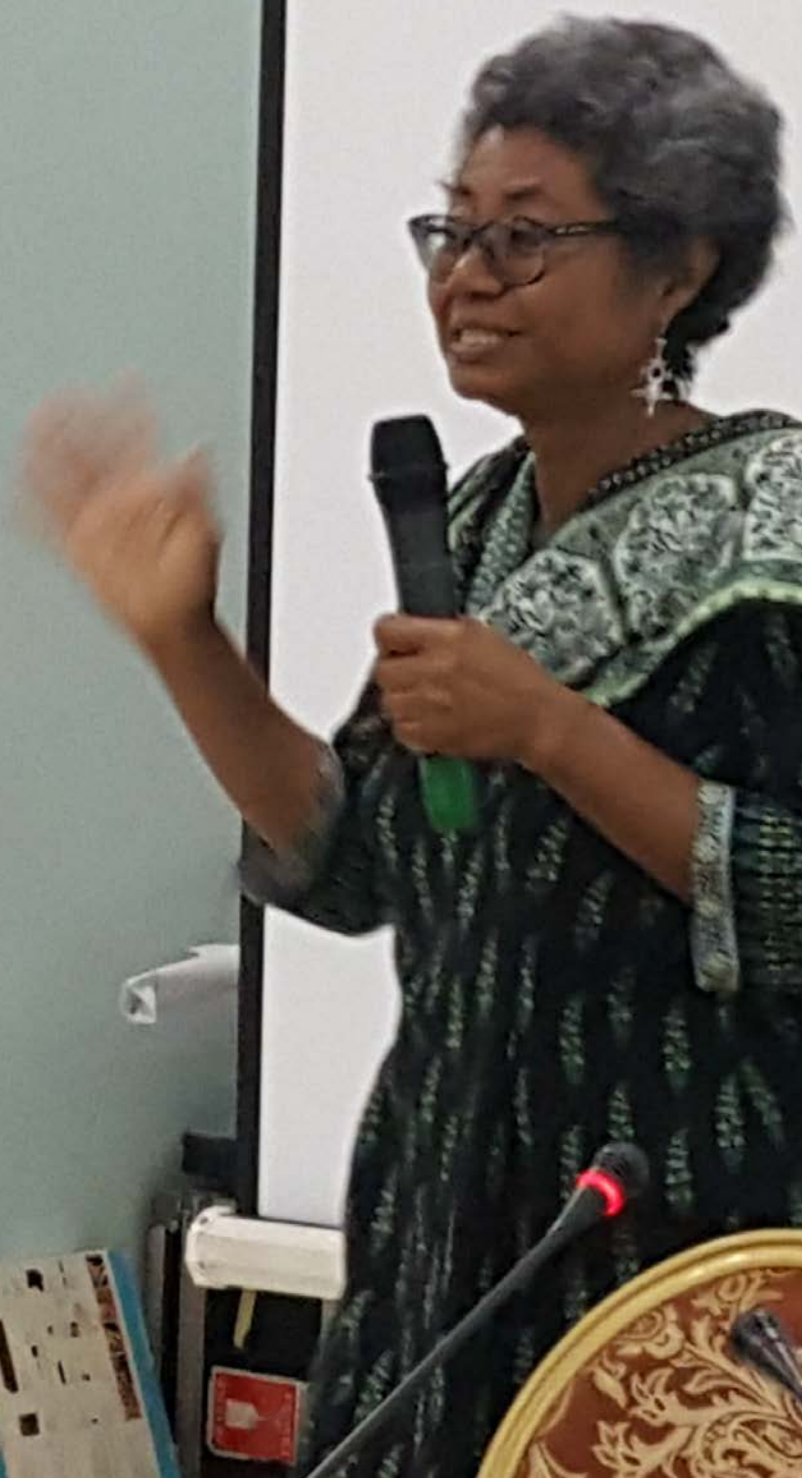
V. Conclusion

Africa has made progressive and significant strides with regards to the women peace and security agenda, both at continental and regional levels. UNSCR 1325 has not only been domesticated on the continent, but elaborated and further developed. This being the case, currently only a third plus one of African Union Member States have put in place National Action Plans to drive implementation nationally of these commitments. Implementation has been slow, ad-hoc/uneven, and largely limited to process outcomes. This report recognizes that the African region has huge limitations to women's involvement and recognition in peace processes. The informal approaches of women peace actors in promoting peace at regional, national and local levels need to be acknowledged and documented. More importantly there is need for a large push to ensure gender-sensitive constitutions and gender equality provisions within national laws and policies. There still exists consistently high rates of violence against women and girls in conflict situations, as well as post-conflict settings and poor access to justice; extremely low levels of participation of women in formal peace processes and political settlements; and weak support to women's economic recovery and empowerment in post-conflict settings.

The informal approaches of women peace actors in promoting peace at regional, national and local levels need to be acknowledged and documented.

VI. Policy Recommendations

i.   Peace in South Sudan should take centrality in all negotiation processes across the region.

ii. Increase on humanitarian assistance.

iii. Raise funding for research and documentation.

iv. Develop a law/policy that protects women human rights defenders.

v.   Develop a law/policy on trauma from conflict.

vi. Joint monitoring of the African situation of conflict and peace building.

vii. Conduct comprehensive studies in various conflict and post conflict regions.

viii. Acknowledge and appreciate women peace activists in humanitarian work.

ix. Consider women involved in peace work as an entity to the peace table rather than just including women at the peace table. United Nations should identify these women at the start of the peace negotiation process.

x.   Document period reports and updates on the situation of women in conflict and peace building.

xi. Debrief governments and stakeholders of each country on the research report.

xii. Develop a strategic plan on women peace and security.

xiii. The research should reflect and highlight gaps on non-implementation of policies.

xiv. Build a girl alliance and mentor them in form of clubs and other programs for peace work.

VII. ANNEX 1: CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Day One: May 1st, 2018

Session One: Introductions and background	
08.30 – 09.00	Registration
09.00 – 10.15	Introductions, Opening Remarks and workshop objectives
10.15 – 10.30	Background to research Prof. Aili Tripp
10.30 – 11.00	Health Break
11.00 – 13.00	Sharing and Exchanges
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	Theme 1: Experience Sharing on Inclusion and Exclusion in Post Conflict Governance - Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan Moderator: Ladan Affi Uganda : Ms. Rosalba Oywa DRC: Ms Flora Libakale South Sudan: Ms Rita Abrahams
15.30 – 16.30	Theme 2: Experience Sharing on Women Activists Informal Peace buildingstrategies -Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan Moderator: Ayesha Imam South Sudan: Ms Harriet Baka DRC: Ms Jolly Kamuntu Nigeria : Uganda : Ms Mbambu Naome
16.30 – 17.00	Closing/Tea Break

Day Two: 2nd May 2018

Session Two: Perspectives on Women and Peacebuilding in Africa	
08.30 – 09.30	Reflections from Day One Selected participants
09.30 – 11.00	Theme 3: Women's Legal Rights as a site of Contestation in Africa. Sudan and South Sudan Moderator: Liv Tønnessen Sudan: Samia El Nagar/Samia Ahmed Nihar South Sudan: Jackline Nasiwa
11.00 – 11.30	Tea Break
11.30 – 13.00	Open Mic Topic: What works for women and peacebuilding in Africa – Experiences from Uganda (Ruth Ochieng, Gladys Canogura), South Sudan (Harriet), DRC (Jolly/Flora), Sudan (Samia El Nagar/Samia Ahmed Nihar) and Nigeria Moderator: Hauwa Bui
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
Session Three: Role of External Actors and its impact on women's participation	
14.00 – 16.30	Panel discussion: The role of external actors in peace building in Africa Moderator: Prof. Aili Tripp Panelist: Hon David Pulkol
16.30 – 15.00	Closing/Tea Break

Day Three: 3rd May 2018

09.00 – 10.00	Reflections from Day One Selected participants
10.00 - 10.30	Tea Break
Session Four: Experience sharing	
10.30 – 12.30	Women and Peace Building: What has worked Uganda, South Sudan and DRC Uganda : The Experiences of Concerned Parents in Addressing the Issues of Aboke Girls DRC: Responding to the Long term conflict and its impact in DRC Moderator: Helen Kezie-Nwoha
12.30– 13.00	Advancing research findings: Policy implications
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 18.00	Cross Cultural Learning – visits to craft centre or museum

VIII. Annex 2: Conference Participants

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