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LEVELS OF CHANGE IN WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACEBUILDING PROCESS IN AFRICA

Elias O. Opongo, SJ

With Christine Wangechi Muthui and Faith Ondeng



HEKIMA INSTITUTE OF PEACE STUDIES AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (**HIPSIR**)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
GII	Gender Inequality Index
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MONUSCO	The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SCS	South Central Somalia
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SMEs	Small and Micro Enterprises
SPF	Somali Police Force
SSR	Security Sector Reforms
SWSC	Somali Women's Studies Centre
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council

INTRODUCTION

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (one of several resolutions on the women, peace and security agenda). This resolution underscores a gendered perspective in all conflict prevention activities and strategies and women's meaningful participation at all levels of peace building processes. Since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000, there have been normative commitments at global, regional and country levels to increase women's representation in high-level peace building processes.

Ensuing UNSCR 1325, UNSCR 1889 guaranteed the express provision to “ensure that women are appropriately appointed as high level mediators and within the composition of the mediator's teams.”¹ Pursuant to that, the 2011 United Nations (UN) Strategic Framework on Women, Peace and Security 2011–2020 set the appointment of at least one woman in every three chief mediators or special envoys to the United Nations-led peace processes as one of its targets. Thereafter, UNSCR 2122 of 2013 was adopted, requesting the Secretary-General to support the appointment of women as senior level UN mediators.

However, the low level of women's participation in high-level peace and security interventions has been a concern. The African Union Commission report of 2016 pointed out that women were still underrepresented in decision making positions, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in armed conflict was still a reality and few member states complied with the regular annual reporting on implementation of UNSCR 1325 (as required by the

¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1889 (2009), <http://unscr.com/files/2009/01889.pdf>

Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).² Consequently, there appears to be a discrepancy between women's role in the 'soft' vis-à-vis the 'hard' work of peace building

The commitment to increase the number of women in high-level mediation roles is founded on the crucial role played by women at the negotiation table. Women's lived experiences in conflict and invisible expertise in mediation and conflict prevention continue to be unused and undervalued. Hanna Tetteh, Ghana's former foreign minister and a FemWise-Africa³ member, emphasized on women's role as mediators for sustainable conflict resolution. She argued that: "women's participation in mediation is simply a question of equality and fairness. Women make up half of a community. Their voices should be heard."⁴

Whether the levels of women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes in Africa have changed significantly since 2000 when UNSCR 1325 was passed is debatable. Therefore, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), Nairobi, Kenya, conducted an inter country research to review progress, achievements and shortcomings on the levels of change on women's participation in high level peace processes in ten countries in Africa. The findings of the study were intended to provide policy makers with insights on increasing the visibility and the impact of women in high level peace building in Africa.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate whether gender representativeness has improved in high level peacebuilding processes in Africa 20 years after the passage of the resolution 1325. This study also sought to identify the issues that may be hindering women's participation in high-level mediation or peace processes and possible ways of closing such gaps. By so doing, the study aimed to understand the impact of the views of peace

² Semiha Abdulmelik, *Implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in Africa*, eds. Bineta Diop, Butera Jean – Bosco, and Col Theophilia Shaaniko (Addis Ababa: Office of the Special Envoy of Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of African Union Commission, 2016), 12.

³ FemWise Africa is The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. It is an African Union initiative created to strengthen the involvement of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts.

⁴ Chris Simoons, "Women as mediators: an indispensable choice," *Globe for a Sustainable World*, accessed June 6, 2019, <https://www.glo-be.be/en/articles/women-mediators-indispensable-choice>

practitioners at both individual and organization levels who have been calling for gender equality and fairness in peace processes through the promotion of women's voices of reason in peacebuilding processes. The study is also a crucial resource for scholars who may want to study about the levels of change of women's participation in peace building.

The primary objectives of this study were fivefold: first, to map out the main peace intervention strategies in Africa; second, to identify key actors in conflict intervention in Africa; third, to study the role of women in high level mediation/conflict intervention in Africa, fourth, to identify the challenges faced by women in conflict intervention in Africa and lastly, to investigate the strategies that can be used to increase women's leverage in peace processes in Africa. To accomplish this, the research which was conducted in ten African countries sought to understand the role of women who are one of the actors in peace interventions and examine the dynamics of their participation in high-level mediation. The countries studied comprise; Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia, The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

Descriptive research design was used in this study for the following reasons: First, a survey made it possible to gather large data that was used to get frequencies as well as patterns on levels of change in women's participation in peace processes across various countries in Africa. Secondly, it was ideal for describing country demographics in terms of gender perspectives relating to the study topic. Thirdly, it helped in gauging people's opinions concerning gender inclusivity in peace processes.

The ten countries of study were selected through convenience sampling. These were countries that the researchers could easily access and contact people who could participate in the study. Other factors such as, language barrier, access to internet and resource availability were also considered in the selection process.

In line with this, the study targeted peace practitioners, both men and women, over the age of 18 years, who are involved in peace practice in the selected countries. Peace practitioners were identified as the target population because of: one, their expertise and direct knowledge of women's involvement in peace processes, two, the limited number of women in high level mediation, and, three, geographical dynamics involved in recruiting women in high level

mediation to participate in the research. A total of 200 participants drawn from 176 organizations spread across the 10 countries in Africa were recruited in the study. Majority of the respondents reported having 7+ years of experience in peace work. Illustrating that the respondents were competent and highly experienced people in peacebuilding. Out of the 200 participants, 108 of them (54%) were female while 90 (45%) were male. Only two of them (1%) did not mention their gender which demonstrates that the sample size was gender balanced.

In data collection, a structured questionnaire was administered to various organizations working on peacebuilding across the 10 countries using survey monkey web application. It shortened the timeframe for reaching peace practitioners in the ten countries. Additionally, research assistants were recruited to conduct face to face interviews in countries such as South Sudan and DRC because of poor internet connectivity in certain regions. Some respondents from Cameroon, were interviewed in person during a conference on a mediation training in Nairobi, Kenya. Above this, the development of the questionnaire involved a rigorous literature review process and a pilot test conducted to assess its validity. The pilot test involved a small sample of peace practitioners in Kenya. Based on the assessment of the tool's reliability in collecting the data, adjustments were made to fine tune it. In addition to seeking an informed consent, respondent's anonymity and privacy were considered.

Lastly, the information received from the various primary and secondary sources was analyzed systematically based on the study objectives in order to make informed conclusions and recommendations about the levels of change in women's participation in high level peace processes.

Theoretical Framework

The study utilized the functionalist theory as propounded by scholars Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim. According to the theory, the society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. Hence this perspective stresses the interconnectedness of the society by focusing on how each

part influences and is influenced by other parts.⁵ Under the functionalist perspective, women's input in conflict interventions is considered a crucial facet of any conflict intervention strategy without which the process is regarded as dysfunctional. Thus, there is a relationship between more inclusive and all-encompassing conflict intervention strategies and the success of peace agreements arising from such processes.

Organized participation of women's groups in peace processes as well as gender-sensitive agreements enhances comprehensiveness and legitimacy of the processes. In the global study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325,⁶ the strong influence of women in negotiation processes is positively correlated with a greater likelihood of agreements being implemented. The more specifically an inclusive composition of these commissions is written into the agreement, the more effective they have been in practice. This perspective therefore holds that social exclusion can be a major driver of conflict. In addition, inclusiveness involves a larger number of stakeholders who in turn ensure broader social acceptance and commitment to the peace deals.

This document is organized in four sections. In the first section, the study was introduced in detail. The second section presents the literature review of women's participation in peace building processes. Third section is an analysis of the findings of the study under the identified themes and lastly a conclusion to the study.

⁵ Linda Mooney, David Knox and Caroline Schacht., *Understanding Social Problems*, 5th ed. (Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth Publishing, 2006), <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/access/content/user/kfrench/sociology/The%20Three%20Main%20Sociological%20Perspectives.pdf> (accessed June 28, 2019).

⁶ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study: Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace*. (New York, NY: UN Women, 2016), https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf (accessed June 19, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter details literature on women's participation in peace building processes in Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zambia in accordance to the seven objectives of the study. These thematic areas include: Conflict intervention strategies; key actors in conflict intervention; the roles played by women in high level mediation; challenges faced by women in high level mediation; transparency on the appointment of women vis-a vis the quality of their contribution in peace processes and strategies of how to increase women's leverage in peace processes.

Conceptualizing Women's Participation in Peace Processes in Africa

The available secondary data on the participation of women in high level mediation is not presented uniformly by different authors, making it difficult to use it in a chronological or cross-country analysis. Similarly, analysis of the AU peace missions proved difficult because no gender disaggregated data of the number of women in high level mediation in the various missions is maintained.

Peace building and peace processes include a range of activities grouped as either formal or informal. According to UN Women (2000), informal peace processes include; peace marches and protests, intergroup dialogue, promotion of intercultural tolerance and understanding, and the empowerment of ordinary citizens in economic, social, cultural and political spheres. These activities are undertaken by actors ranging from the grass root level to the national, regional and international levels. The formal peace processes include; peace negotiations, formulations of peace accords, reconstruction plans and provision of humanitarian aid. The main actors for the formal peace process being the elite – those who control power and resources.

As peace makers, women have carried out several Building Bridges Initiatives (BBIs) to support peace building processes during and after conflict. For example, **in Somalia**, the Somali clan war in the 1990s saw Somali women playing the role of peace envoys and messengers, contributing to the reconciliation of the warlords who had failed to reach an agreement over twelve reconciliatory meetings.⁷ In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, The Council of Foreign Relations observes that during the 2002 Sun City Talks, the presence of women in the peace talks resulted in increased accountability.⁸ The efforts of women's groups helped in fighting against stalling tactics that the negotiators used during the talks. As a result, they [the women] prevented the conflicting parties from backing out of the negotiations before an agreement was signed. The women also helped in building coalitions across regional, political, and ethnic divides by calling for an immediate ceasefire and attention to women's rights across the country.

In addition to promoting dialogue between factions, more gains have been realized as a result of women participating in peace processes. **In Burundi**, the UN in partnership with the Burundian Ministry of Interior and Civil Society established a network that has managed to mitigate over 3000 local conflicts using non-violence methods such as dialogue, sensitization of the community and countering rumors and propaganda.⁹ **In South Sudan**, women have organized themselves into networks, for example, the Women's Bloc of South Sudan (WBSS) whose members participated as observers and as members of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. The WBSS tracked the implementation of the agreement during the IGAD-led peace talks in Addis Ababa that culminated in the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in August 2015.¹⁰ Other such networks include

⁷ Francis Tazoacha, "Integrating Somali women into peacebuilding processes." *Transconflict* (July 2013), accessed June 18, 2019, <http://www.transconflict.com/2013/07/somali-womens-role-in-peacebuilding-257/>

⁸ The Council on Foreign Relations, "Democratic Republic of Congo – The Sun City Agreement 2002," Women's role: In Brief, Council of Foreign Relations, accessed June 03 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/democratic-republic-congo>

⁹ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study: Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace*. (New York, NY: UN Women, 2016), 55 https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf (accessed June 19, 2019).

¹⁰ Sabiti, Stella "Women as mediators in South Sudan," *Spotlight*, March 21, 2017, accessed June 19, 2019 <https://www.vidc.org/en/spotlight-online-magazine/spotlight-402017/women-as-mediators-in-south-sudan/>

the South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN), South Sudan Women Peace Network (SSWPN), Women General Association, the Women Monthly Forum, and the Taskforce on the Engagement of Women, faith-based organizations and women entrepreneurs.

According to UN Women, women's organized groups, movements or networks, have an impact as they are more likely to raise concerns relevant to women.¹¹ Their participation increases the likelihood of the signing of peace agreements and further the inclusion of gender sensitive provisions in the signed peace agreement(s).¹² However, despite the heterogeneous experiences of women and their broadened approach to peace building, women are still conspicuously missing in high level peace processes

Historically, women have been crucial mediators and peacemakers in all countries across Africa. As discussed in this section, this is evident in many African countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, DRC, Sudan, Burundi, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda

Somalia

In Somalia, women were crucial mediators and peacemakers during the civil war. When the Somali clan war was at its peak in the 1990s and the warlords had failed to reach an agreement in twelve (12) reconciliatory meetings, Somali women played the role of peace envoys and messengers.¹³ They also used poetry as a method of promoting peace and tranquility. This went on until the Somali elders agreed to allocate 12 percent of the seats in the administration to women. In Somaliland, women played important roles in the local and regional peace processes throughout the nineties, through which local clans were reconciled. For instance, when tensions between President Mohamed Haji and Ibrahim Egal, and some high-ranking traditional leaders flared up in August 2001, Hargeisa Women Community published an open letter in a local newspaper demanding that the two sides "avoid all steps that

¹¹ UN Women, *Women's participation in peace negotiations: Connection between presence and influence*, (New York, NY: UN women, 2012), 7.

¹² Maria O' Reilley, Andrea Suilleabhain, and Thania Paffenholz, *Reimagining peace making: Women's roles in peace processes* (New York, NY: International peace institute, 2015), 15.

¹³ Francis Tazoacha, "Integrating Somali women into peacebuilding processes." *Transconflict* (July 2013), accessed June 18, 2019, <http://www.transconflict.com/2013/07/somali-womens-role-in-peacebuilding-257/>

endanger the peace of the country and give a chance to Somaliland enemies.”¹⁴ Somali women have played a critical role in disarming youth at the community level, training the youth and securing them jobs.¹⁵

In spite of these gains, the level of women’s participation in conflict resolution and prevention in Somalia is still low. For many years, their role has mainly remained unrecognized because they were only observers in the formal processes, for example, they were denied voting rights.¹⁶ Therefore, their greatest contribution was limited to involvement in peace, security and civic education where they constitute the largest percentage as compared to men. As a result, Somali women are more visible at the household and community levels as compared to the national peace processes. Similarly, their level of participation in post conflict building is reportedly low. Among the crucial sectors where women are poorly represented include Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), judicial reforms, post-conflict elections and governance, Security Sector Reforms (SSR), and small arms control.¹⁷ These efforts have been very minimal and limited, especially due to poor funding.¹⁸ When it comes to active combat, they have also been sidelined. For instance, in the Somali Police Force (SPF), women are considered fit for “lighter duties” as opposed to duties such as being patrol officers. This is largely attributed to cultural and religious norms. Though there is a women’s section within the SPF, it only operates sub-optimally owing to weak reporting structures coupled with cultural factors.¹⁹

¹⁴ Tazoacha, Integrating Somali women into peacebuilding processes.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Sugh and Agnes Ikwuba. “Women in mediation and conflict resolutions: Lessons, challenges, and prospects for Africa.” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 22, no. 1(January 2017): 01-06, accessed June 20 2019, <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue1/Version-2/A2201020106.pdf>

¹⁶ Elizabeth Sugh and Agnes Ikwuba. “Women in mediation and conflict resolutions: Lessons, challenges, and prospects for Africa.” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 22, no. 1(January 2017): 01-06, accessed June 20 2019, <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue1/Version-2/A2201020106.pdf>

¹⁷ Sugh and Ikwuba, “Women in mediation and conflict resolutions”.

¹⁸ Sugh and Ikwuba, “Women in mediation and conflict resolutions”.

¹⁹ Joyce Gichuru, “Participation of Women in Peace Building in Somalia: A Case Study of Mogadishu,” International Peace Support Training Centre Nairobi, Kenya, accessed June 18 2019, <https://www.ipstc.org/index.php/downloads-publications/publications/category/48-2014>

Ethiopia

The Ethiopia Country Office (ECO) works in close collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE), CSOs, and other partners to ensure that the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) commitments are achieved.²⁰ Accordingly, interventions such as Women in Leadership and Governance and the Liaison to the African Union (AU) have been put in place to support a gender responsive implementation of the AU's strategic plan, Agenda 2063 and other policy and legal frameworks. Such interventions also seek to promote a stronger focus on women's rights and empowerment in regional policy processes and programs.²¹ In 2018, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed conducted a cabinet reshuffle, in a landmark event appointing ten female ministers, thereby increasing the representation of female members in the cabinet to 50 percent. Besides the cabinet appointments, a new Ministry of Peace was created where Madam Muferiat Kamil²² was appointed the minister. Prime Minister Ahmed's efforts were geared to rein in the powerful security sector and take steps towards reconciliation.²³

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Women have made a difference in their participation in peace processes in DRC. The Council on Foreign Relations observes that during the 2002 Sun City talks, the proportion of women delegates was increased from 2 % to 12 %.²⁴ This was informally supported by a women's caucus of Congolese and regional civil society leaders. The presence of women in the peace talks resulted in increased accountability and helped in fighting against stalling tactics that the negotiators used during the talks. As a result, they prevented

²⁰ UN Women, "Ethiopia," UN Women, accessed June 19, 2019, <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa/ethiopia>

²¹ UN Women, "Ethiopia," UN Women, accessed June 19, 2019, <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa/ethiopia>

²² Rachel Vogelstein, "Women This Week: Equality in Ethiopian Cabinet," The Council on Foreign Relations, entry posted October 19, 2018, accessed June 20, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/women-week-equality-ethiopian-cabinet>

²³ Vogelstein, "Women This Week: Equality in Ethiopian Cabinet".

²⁴ The Council on Foreign Relations, "Democratic Republic of Congo – The Sun City Agreement 2002," Women's role: In Brief, Council of Foreign Relations, accessed June 03 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/democratic-republic-congo>

parties from backing out of negotiations before an agreement was signed. The women also helped in building coalitions across regional, political, and ethnic divides by calling for an immediate cease-fire and drawing attention to women's rights across the country.²⁵

Women's involvement in peace processes in DRC has also broadened the agenda through setting a 30 percent quota for women's representation in decision making bodies. This quota was later incorporated in the country's constitution. By acting as the "eyes and ears of ordinary people," DRC women have also enhanced the credibility of the peace processes.²⁶ Women in DRC have been active in planning and participating in mass actions, as observers and on a smaller scale through direct representation at the negotiation tables. Prominent women have also played high-level mediation roles in the country's peace process. For example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf not only chairs the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) Commission but also heads the Humanitarian, Social, and Cultural Commission.²⁷ Marie Madeleine Kalala Ngoy is an ICD participant after which she became the DRC minister of human rights. Catherine Nzuzi wa Mbombo was appointed as a signatory to the Sun City Agreement on behalf of the MPR-Fait Prive. Aningina Bibiane is not only a Congolese peace activist but also an advisor to the ICD women's caucus.²⁸ In a high level meeting of women in peace building in Kinshasa, women representatives from the African region adopted the Declaration of the High Level International Conference On "10 Years of Peace Building by Women, for Women and for All." The representatives were drawn from countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Uganda and Central African Republic. The declaration called on the UN and governments and civil society to heighten the inclusivity of women in peace building processes among other things.²⁹ DRC has also launched its second-generation (National Action Plan (NAP) that provides a framework for the implementation of agenda 1325.

²⁵ The Council on Foreign Relations, "Democratic Republic of Congo – The Sun City Agreement 2002."

²⁶ The Council on Foreign Relations, "Democratic Republic of Congo – The Sun City Agreement 2002."

²⁷ The Council on Foreign Relations, "Democratic Republic of Congo – The Sun City Agreement 2002." Women's role: In Brief, Council on Foreign Relations, accessed June 03 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/democratic-republic-congo>

²⁸ The Council on Foreign Relations, "Democratic Republic of Congo – The Sun City Agreement 2002."

²⁹ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), "IWD Spotlight: Ten Years of Peacebuilding by Women in the DRC," WILPF International, entry posted December 5, 2017, accessed June 17, 2019, <https://www.wilpf.org/iwd-spotlight-ten-years-of-peacebuilding-by-women-in-the-drc/>

Despite the gains made by the Sun City agreement in the establishment of a unified multiparty government, the conflict in the Eastern region of DRC persists. The escalation of the conflict has occurred beyond the agreements that have been made to mitigate the situation. Additionally, women are still underrepresented in all levels of government and decision-making bodies, including in formal roles in the negotiations.

Sudan

The August 2015 peace agreement in Sudan cited the need to involve women in the peace process, but it did not define a clear role for women or civil society in the implementation of the peace agreement. The Council on Foreign Relations explains that:

Women comprise 15 percent of the negotiation delegation, serving as three of twenty representatives for the Two Areas track. However, women are not represented as negotiators on the Darfur track, and all three of the African Union mediators are male... Women were also underrepresented in previous rounds of talks, including the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, in which no women were included in formal roles, as well as the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, for which women comprised only 8 percent of negotiators.³⁰

In order to address this gap, Sudanese female civil society and political leaders formed the Taskforce on the Engagement of Women (the “Women’s Taskforce”) in 2013 to provide a channel to the peace process. Women’s contribution to Sudanese peace includes acting as peace brokers due to their transparency and relationships with communities in conflict-affected areas. The Women’s Taskforce members played both the role of observer and that of informal mediators in the 2016 peace talks.³¹ The Women’s Taskforce also conducted community consultations to provide feedback to negotiators and relay information on the negotiations back to communities. In 2017, they met with the head of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North, Yasir Arman.³² These involvements broadened the agenda to include issues of education, food security, security concerns of the internally displaced and prevention of gender based violence. Sudanese women have also played

³⁰ The Council on Foreign Relations, “Sudan – 2020 Peace Efforts,” The Council on Foreign Relations, accessed June 03, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/sudan-0>

³¹ The Council on Foreign Relations, “Sudan – 2020 Peace Efforts.”

³² The Council on Foreign Relations, “Sudan – 2020 Peace Efforts.”

prominent roles in the country's peace processes. For example, Maria Abbas and Huda Shafiq were members of the Women Taskforce. Mekka Abdelgabar is the founder of Darfur's Women Alliance for Peace.³³ Mobina Jaffer is the former Canadian Special Envoy to the Sudan Peace Process.

However, a low level of women's involvement in formal peace processes is quite evident in Sudan in spite of numerous women's efforts to address the ongoing inter-communal violence and mediation of treaties among warring parties. The place of women at the country's peace table in the IGAD-led talks in Addis Ababa was notably low even though there were over ten rounds of negotiation and seven broken ceasefires.³⁴

Burundi

Women in Burundi have consistently initiated mediation and reconciliation processes. The national network of women mediators has been useful in violence prevention. It shares information and early warning data. The UN in partnership with the Burundian Ministry of Interior and civil society established that the network has managed to mitigate over 3,000 local conflicts in 2015. It uses mitigation methods such as dialogue, sensitization of the community and countering rumours and propaganda.³⁵

South Sudan

In South Sudan, "while women continue to play a significant role in promotion of dialogue, mobilize for peace and promote dialogue between factions, their ability to influence the formal processes meaningfully remains elusive."³⁶ However, in spite of resistance and internal divisions, South Sudanese women have made certain gains in their participation in peace

³³ Kia Zalan, "The Peacemakers of Darfur: 'We Are Your Aunties, and We Are Coming for Mediation,'" *Rewire News*, February 3, 2017, <https://rewire.news/article/2017/02/03/peacemakers-darfur-aunties-coming-mediation/>

³⁴ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study: Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace*. (New York, NY: UN Women, 2016), https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf (accessed June 19, 2019).

³⁵ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study: Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace*. (New York, NY: UN Women, 2016), 55 https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf (accessed June 19, 2019).

³⁶ Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study*, 52.

processes.³⁷ Such achievements include the formation of the Women's Bloc of South Sudan (WBSS) whose members participate as observers and members of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission. It tracked the implementation of the agreement during the IGAD-led peace talks in Addis Ababa that culminated in the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in August 2015. Other women groups have made an impact on the push for a representative democracy that recognizes women as equal partners in the process of democratic development.³⁸ Such groups include the South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN), South Sudan Women Peace Network (SSWPN), Women General Association, the Women Monthly Forum, and the Taskforce on the Engagement of Women, faith-based organizations and women entrepreneurs. Recently, women in South Sudan have also played official roles in the 2018 peace talks where one woman served as a mediator. In addition, 25 % of the delegates were women and members of the Women's Coalition (a network of civil society leaders) who acted as official observers. This has resulted into a more inclusive agreement in which women make up 35 % of the transitional government officials and one out of the four vice presidents.³⁹

This participation of women has helped in the de-escalation of tensions between the two main warring ethnic groups through the inter-religious and intercultural campaign for the "South Sudan We Want". They have also been pushing to have all agreements translated into local languages. South Sudanese women leaders also contributed to the 2017 cease-fire agreement, which expressly prohibited sexual violence in conflict. It also included strong commitments to protect civilians and reunify women and children. Other roles played by women in the South Sudan peace process include staging mass actions in protest over the killing of civilians and rape, through organizing workshops and community dialogue. Some of the prominent women in South

³⁷ Sabiti, Stella "Women as mediators in South Sudan," *Spotlight*, March 21, 2017, accessed June 19, 2019 <https://www.vidc.org/en/spotlight-online-magazine/spotlight-402017/women-as-mediators-in-south-sudan/>

³⁸ Sabiti, Stella "Women as mediators in South Sudan," *Spotlight*, March 21, 2017, accessed June 19, 2019 <https://www.vidc.org/en/spotlight-online-magazine/spotlight-402017/women-as-mediators-in-south-sudan/>

³⁹ The Council on Foreign Relations, "South Sudan – 2020 Peace Efforts," The Council on Foreign Relations, accessed June 03, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/south-sudan-0>

Sudan peace processes include Banguot Amumm, a member of the South Sudanese negotiation team, Sarah James Ajith, South Sudan Women's General Association, Amer Deng, Representative of the Women's Bloc of South Sudan and Awut Deng Acuil, Minister for gender, child and social welfare and negotiator on the South Sudanese government team.⁴⁰

Kenya

An electoral dispute on claims of rigging in the presidential elections triggered the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya. As a result, the Kenyan National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) process under the auspices of Kofi Annan and the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities sought to resolve the conflict towards the end of January 2008. The violence was brought to an end after 42 days of intense mediated negotiations in which women held prominent roles as mediators, negotiators, and civil society leaders. The women contributed significantly to the resolution of the violence and the implementation of the peace agreement.

The Panel of Eminent African Personalities that consisted of one woman and two men led the country's mediation process. Members of the panel were Graca Machel (a member of the Forum of the Elders); Benjamin Mkapa (the former president of Tanzania); and Kofi Annan (the former UN secretary-general). Women made up 25 % of both the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and the Party of National Unity (PNU) negotiating teams that comprised of one female and three male members. Additionally, women civil society leaders formed the Women's Consultation Group (WCG), which was one of four bodies that mediators consulted throughout the process. The WCG advocated for issues that promoted reconciliation and recovery. They mobilized public support for attention to humanitarian needs and justice issues.⁴¹

⁴⁰ The Council on Foreign Relations, "South Sudan – 2020 Peace Efforts," The Council on Foreign Relations, accessed June 03, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/south-sudan-0>

⁴¹ Meredith Preston and Njoki Wamai, "Beyond the numbers: Women's Participation in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation," Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, entry posted March 01, 2011, accessed June 24, 2019, <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/beyond-the-numbers-womens-participation-in-the-kenya-national-dialogue-and-reconciliation/>

The involvement of women in the Kenya post-election violence peace process had a unification effect since the WCG drew members from across tribal lines and ethnic affiliations. The agenda was also broadened to include a call to action to resolve the humanitarian crisis and combat gender-based violence. They also made calls to address the root causes of the violence such as land distribution and constitutional reforms. These recommendations were ultimately incorporated in the final agreement. Women also pushed for the implementation of the peace agreement as well as truth and reconciliation through inclusive commissions and direct representation at the decision-making table. Among the women who played a key role were Martha Karua (the Party of National Unity negotiator); Sally Kosgei (the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) negotiator), and Graca Machel (a high-level mediator and member of the Forum of Elders).

Other methods of intervention employed by women in Kenya included “spitting sessions” used to raise all the issues that divided the country. Women got together to “spit” at each other and vent their anger in order to move forward. This allowed them to rebuild confidence and trust in each other, as well as establish a common ground on deep rooted issues affecting the crisis. This strengthened their incorporation in the mediation and conflict resolution process in Kenya, since they had a “unified voice.” Another strategy devised by women was that Kenyan women formed a strong network locally, nationally, and internationally. They were among the first to lobby at the African Union to testify to the US Congress, and to pass messages to senior figures in the UN and other capitals.⁴² This strategy helped to ensure that Kenyan women’s voices were heard at the highest level of mediation and on the negotiation table. It also contributed immensely to the achievement of the peace agreement. Such initiatives can be used by women to advance their integration at all levels of mediation and peace processes.⁴³

⁴² Meredith Preston and Njoki Wamai, “Beyond the numbers.”

⁴³ Elizabeth Sugh and Agnes Ikwuba. “Women in mediation and conflict resolutions: Lessons, challenges, and prospects for Africa”. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 22, no. 1(January 2017): 01-06, accessed June 20 2019, <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue1/Version-2/A2201020106.pdf>

Uganda

The 1994 Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace⁴⁴ recommended the creation of a mechanism to facilitate the involvement of African women leaders in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict at the highest levels including in substantive roles such as mediators, negotiators and as signatories.⁴⁵

Rwanda

Rwandan women have increasingly been active in peace processes especially in their participation in Peace Support Operations (PSOs) as military and police personnel. The Government of Rwanda (GOR) reports that Rwanda is currently the second highest contributor of female police officers worldwide and the first highest contributor of female police officers in Africa. Between 2009 and 2012, 284 female police officers were deployed in PSOs as compared to a total of 18 in previous years. According to the GOR (2015), the overall (army and police) women participation in peace support operations missions increased from 0.4 % to 3 % from 2010 to 2014. The representation of women in the diplomatic sector has also risen from 17 % in 2008 to 28 % in 2013. Rwandan women, members of CSOs have actively participated in the creation and the development of the Regional Women Forum (RWF), which has managed to obtain a space for advocacy and to voice women's issues in all International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) key events. In addition, the forum has effectively played its high-level advocacy role in advocating for women's representation in the ICGLR regional committee on fighting illegal exploitation of natural resources. It also advocated for the launch of the Zero Tolerance Campaign and the institutionalization of the

⁴⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace: Adopted by the Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development (jointly organised by OAU, UNECA and the government of Uganda, Kampala, 22-25 November 1993*, Addis Ababa: UN. ECA, 1994. <http://hdl.handle.net/10855/14879>

⁴⁵ Irene, Limo, "What do Networks of Women Mediators mean for Mediation Support in Africa?" The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Conflict Trends 2018/1, entry posted on May 31, 2018), accessed June 4, 2019, <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/what-do-networks-of-women-mediators-mean-for-mediation-support-in-africa/>

Gender Unit.⁴⁶ Rwanda women have also played a key role in the Gacaca courts and as Community Mediators “Abunzi” with the GOR reporting that, “women represent 45% of the total community mediators (Abunzi) and 48% of the total MAJ staff.”⁴⁷

Conflict Intervention Strategies

Conflict intervention strategies can be classified as high or low. Both high and low-level intervention strategies have been used across Africa. Some examples of the high-level intervention mechanisms in place in various countries include the use of semi-military or direct military force, and multilateral diplomatic activity such as special envoys to negotiate peace agreements, mediation and conciliation. Others include economic interventions using bilateral aid as well as sanctions to bargain for cease fires.⁴⁸ Examples of low-level interventions include the use of moderate diplomacy and subtle discussions at international level, the use of civil society, religious groups to mobilize and sensitize the community at national and local levels. To exemplify the high- and low-level conflict intervention strategies, **DRC** was used as a case example to show case the various conflict intervention strategies.

As discussed below, some of the conflict intervention strategies observed in DRC and other African countries include military support, DDR, land mediation, civil society organizations involvement, involvement of regional bodies, and the UN stabilization strategy.

Military Support

The Congolese army, with the help of the UN mission, has been battling armed groups that continue to wreak havoc in the country. Rachel Sweet explains that the UN mission began military support for the Congolese army

⁴⁶ Republic of Rwanda. “Role of Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution in Rwanda: Evaluation of the Implementation of the 2009-2012 National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325.” August, 2015, accessed June 20, 2019, http://www.gmo.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/international/UNSCR_1325_Evaluation_Report_August_2015.pdf

⁴⁷ Republic of Rwanda, “Role of Women in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution in Rwanda,” 7.

⁴⁸ Meirav Mishali –Ram, “The Role of Intervention in Multi-Actor International Crises,” *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 18, no. 1 (Summer 2013): 55-82.

in 2009 against the *Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda*.⁴⁹ In 2010, the UN mission was revamped with a more aggressive mandate to stabilize conflict zones in the country's east (becoming MONUSCO, *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en RD Congo*). It adopted a counterinsurgency approach to help the Congolese military "liberate, clear, and hold" rebel territory.⁵⁰ Through the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), (an "offensive combat force" within MONUSCO), the UN uses military force to "neutralize" armed groups. Consequently, from 2014, "the FIB has been deployed to North Kivu to support Congolese military operations against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) using air reconnaissance, surveillance drones, aerial bombardment and support for ground operations."⁵¹

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

In DRC, there is the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (*Commission nationale de désarmement, démobilisation et réinsertion, CONADER*) (and later the PNDDR). The commission was responsible for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of 120,000 former fighters back into society between 2004 and 2011. These ex-combatants include men, women and children across the country. In return, the ex-fighters received individual reintegration kits comprising of money, tools and professional training corresponding to their chosen career.

Land Mediation

Due to the emotive nature of land and its link with rising conflicts in Africa, land mediation has been used as a conflict intervention strategy in some countries. In the DRC for instance, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in conjunction with other NGOs

⁴⁹ Rachel Sweet, " Militarizing the Peace: UN Intervention against Congo's 'Terrorist' Rebels," Lawfare, entry posted June 2, 2019, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/militarizing-peace-un-intervention-against-congos-terrorist-rebels>

⁵⁰ Rachel Sweet, " Militarizing the Peace: UN Intervention against Congo's 'Terrorist' Rebels," Lawfare, entry posted June 2, 2019, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/militarizing-peace-un-intervention-against-congos-terrorist-rebels>

⁵¹ Rachel Sweet, " Militarizing the Peace: UN Intervention against Congo's 'Terrorist' Rebels," Lawfare, entry posted June 2, 2019, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/militarizing-peace-un-intervention-against-congos-terrorist-rebels>

initiated land mediation projects in the two Kivu provinces and Ituri. This was done to resolve the land disputes that have emerged in the east of the country through engaging local and customary authorities in the mediation process. The authorities help to establish local structures that carry out land conflict mediation.

Civil Society Organizations Involvement

Civil society organizations have played a key role in political discussions and peace accords in various countries. For instance, they played a significant role in the Sun City Accords in 2002 and the Goma Conference in 2008 in Eastern DRC. This was mainly at the “Track 2” level e.g. its contribution to the Sovereign National Conference (Conférence Nationale Souveraine, CNS) in 1991– 1992. CSOs also engage in peace initiatives towards increasing awareness, peace education, skills development (training), advocacy and mediation, reconciliation and arbitration of local land disputes. They help in resolving intra-family disputes through the use of inter-community “Barazas” that promote dialogue between the various communities. CSOs are also involved in the creation of alert hubs along with efforts to monitor and improve reporting on and response to acts of violence.⁵²

Involvement of Regional Bodies

Regional bodies continue to play a critical role in intervening in various conflict situations across Africa. In DRC for instance, the African Union (AU) under the auspices of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development worked on a post-conflict reconstruction framework. The framework was structured around three broad phases: the emergency phase, the transitional phase and the developmental phase. Similarly, the ICGLR has taken a regional stance to finding a lasting solution to the DRC crisis.⁵³

⁵² International Alert, “Ending the Deadlock: Towards a new vision of peace in eastern DRC-September 2012.” Accessed June 18, 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/201209EndingDeadlockEasternDRC-EN.pdf.pdf>

⁵³ John Ahere, “The Peace process in DRC: A transformative quagmire,” Accord Publication, Policy and Practice Brief, entry posted December 6, 2012, accessed June 18, 2019, <https://www.accord.org.za/publication/peace-process-drc/>

The Use of Stabilization Strategy

Stabilization strategy has been widely used in conflict interventions in African countries such as DRC. Under the MONUSCO Stabilization Unit (SSU), the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) was designed to support the implementation of the National Stabilization and Reconstruction Program (STAREC) in the DRC. The program was launched in 2012 as a government programme under the Congolese Ministry of Planning. It aimed at restoring state authority in eastern DRC and facilitating dialogue initiatives that enable women, girls, boys and men in conflict affected communities to play a key role in conflict transformation alongside traditional authorities and state representatives.⁵⁴ Since its inception, the ISSSS has become a key instrument in harmonizing and coordinating the stabilization interventions of the international community and the Government of DRC (GoDRC). The ISSSS targets thirteen priority zones across five provinces in Eastern Congo.⁵⁵

Key Actors in Conflict Intervention

Conflicts in Africa are characterized by a complex web of people, groups of individuals, and institutions who are either engaged in the conflicts or suffer the effects of the same. The actors in conflict interventions include governmental as well as non-governmental actors. Governmental actors include governments and intergovernmental organizations that comprise of state coalitions forming bodies such as the UN, AU, and international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF. States that intervene in international conflicts have been the Major Powers (MPs) whose dominant status allows them to have high-level involvement. Further, MPs have broader strategic interests. Binaifer Nowrojee provides some of the A.U. initiatives adopted in conflict intervention such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).⁵⁶ He cited the intervention of the Southern African Development

⁵⁴ Randi Solhjell and Madel Rosland, "Stabilisation in the Congo: Opportunities and Challenges," *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 6, no. 1 (2017): 2, accessed June 03, 2020, <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.478>

⁵⁵ MONUSCO. "Stabilization Strategy (ISSSS)," accessed June 18, 2019, <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/stabilization-strategy-issss>

⁵⁶ Binaifer Nowrojee, "Africa on its Own: Regional Intervention and Human Rights," Human Rights Watch Africa Division, accessed June 14, 2019, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/402ba4fbb.pdf>.

Community (SADC) through mediation processes and deployment of troops on the ground in fighting extra-territorial threats. Intervention by other African countries include talks such as the one that Thabo Mbeki led in DRC culminating in the Pretoria Peace Accords of 2002 among others.⁵⁷

In Africa, non-governmental actors involved in conflict intervention have majorly comprised of individuals or organizations that have significant political influence but are not allied to any particular state or country. They include religious groups, civil societies, private corporations, non-governmental organizations, and transnational diaspora communities. Their roles include advocacy for democratic processes, acting as a link to the various state actors and local mobilization towards peace.⁵⁸ Table 1 below summarizes governmental and non-governmental actors.

Table 1: Key Actors in Conflict Intervention

Governmental Actors		Non- Governmental Actors		
States	Intergovernmental Organizations	Local Organizations	International/ Trans-border	Individuals
Foreign and neighbouring countries	MONUSCO, UN, AU, IGAD, Femise, Panel of the Wise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communities• Religious bodies• Civil society• Women groups	Multinational Corporations	Prominent personalities (if any)

(Source: Irrera, 2019)

Conceptualising Women Mediation in Peacebuilding

For the purposes of this study, the terms below are defined as follows:

Mediation is defined as “a facilitative form of conflict resolution, which focuses on the parties’ commercial, financial, as well as social and personal interests, with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement while promoting the principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent in decision making. In mediation, there is a third party, a mediator, who

⁵⁷ Binaifer Nowrojee, “Africa on its Own: Regional Intervention and Human Rights.”
⁵⁸ Daniela Irrera, ed. “The relevance of third-party intervention in conflict management.” Conflict Management and Peace Science, accessed June 12, 2019, https://journals.sagepub.com/pb-assets/cmscontent/CMP/Irrera_third%20party%20intervention-1540301056737.pdf

facilitates the resolution process, and may even suggest a resolution, but does not impose a resolution on the parties.”⁵⁹ Within the context of conflicts in Africa, mediation is applied to mitigate the conflict in negotiations, peace talks and often culminates in the formulation of peace agreements and ceasefires.

Conflict intervention refers to the various processes involved in conflict prevention; conflict resolution includes humanitarian intervention to mitigate against the adverse effects of war, military and non- military counter-insurgency tactics as well as the use of peace talks and mediation.

Peace processes refer to an all-encompassing term that factors in the aspect of prevention of conflict, peace keeping efforts, the diplomatic role of negotiation and mediation and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. This involves a wide range of efforts to prevent the re-occurrence of conflict, to mitigate against conflict and post-conflict efforts.⁶⁰

Roles Women Play in High Level Mediation

Women engage in peace processes in various ways.⁶¹ First, they participate as mediators or members of mediation teams. Secondly, they act as delegates of the negotiating parties. Thirdly, they also participate as all-female negotiating parties representing a women’s civil society with an observer role. Fourthly, they act as witnesses. Fifthly, they play a major role in a parallel form or movement and lastly, they act as gender advisers to mediators, facilitators or delegates and as members of technical committees or a separate table or working group devoted to gender. The UN designates some 80 plus persons worldwide as Under Secretaries-General (USGs), and over 100 as Assistant Secretaries-General (ASGs).⁶²

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Sugh and Agnes Ikwuba. “Women in mediation and conflict resolutions: Lessons, challenges, and prospects for Africa”. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 22, no. 1(January 2017): 01-06, accessed June 20 2019, <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue1/Version-2/A2201020106.pdf>

⁶⁰ Bosede Awodala, “Peacebuilding in Africa: A review of the African First Ladies Peace Mission,” *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 17 (October 2016): 17-31. Accessed June 26, 2019, <http://www.csq.ro/wp-content/uploads/Bosede-AWODOLA.pdf>

⁶¹ Pablo Diaz et al., *Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence*. (New York, NY: UNIFEM, 2010).

⁶² Global Peace Operations Review, “Gender and Demographic - 2015-2017 comparative data on UN senior appointments by gender,” accessed June 03, 2020, https://peaceoperationsreview.org/featured-data#Gender_UNsenior

Women have been gender advisers who carry out the duty of providing strategic advice to senior leadership. They advance gender equality as well as assisting senior leadership in monitoring progress and ensuring accountability and compliance by all personnel. Therefore, gender advisers facilitate the implementation of gender equality and women, peace and security mandates through leading and guiding a gendered contextual analysis that informs the various stages of peacekeeping planning. They are particularly crucial in mission start-ups, strategic reviews, mandate renewals, transitions and drawdowns. They also advocate and promote the inclusion of women in political and electoral processes, in national governance and security sector structures, in peace processes and as oversight observers in ceasefire agreements. Furthermore, their role in conflict management, prevention and coordinating efforts to promote a protective environment for women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence is evident across Africa and beyond.⁶³

The African First Ladies Peace Mission (AFLPM) that was formed in 1997 has been promoting the inclusion of women in peace building processes. Among the initiatives of the mission include conflict intervention by way of humanitarian assistance to the victims of conflict across African countries. It has also been holding sensitization forums on the need to have more women not only in peace processes but also in decision making and policy formulation.⁶⁴ Similarly, wives of ambassadors have also been known to take on a diplomatic role in support of their husbands' diplomatic and consular roles.

Multiple Tracks of Engagement and the Role of Women in Mediation

Peace processes take place at different societal levels (tracks). The first level (track 1) comprises the leadership of a country (e. g. political and/or military). The second level (track 2) covers leading figures in society such as religious dignitaries, intellectuals, political parties and regional power figures. Track 3 comprises leading civil society figures at the local level and grassroots initiatives. "A further component, track 1.5 level refers to top-level

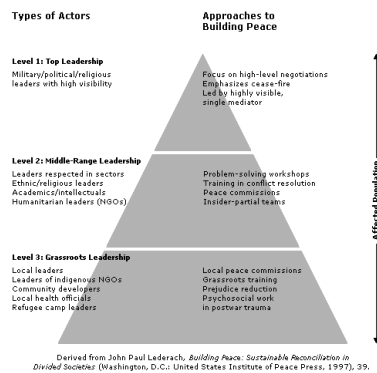
⁶³ UN Peacekeeping, "Promoting Women, Peace and Security," accessed June 19, 2019, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/promoting-women-peace-and-security>

⁶⁴ Bosede Awodala, "Peacebuilding in Africa: A review of the African First Ladies Peace Mission," *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 17 (October 2016): 17-31. Accessed June 26, 2019, <http://www.csq.ro/wp-content/uploads/Bosede-AWODOLA.pdf>

political decision-makers, yet in informal, non-official settings. The track 1.5 mediation/dialogue processes often serve to sort out and prepare for track 1 talks, develop options, and help bring about better comprehension and understanding between conflict parties.”⁶⁵

While women are active as mediators, their work tends to be limited to the Track 2 and Track 3 processes as intermediaries. In this case, they have mainly been helping to create conducive environments for peace negotiations and in ‘ripening the ground’ for peace. Additionally, since women’s involvement in mediation starts from the grass roots, they are often more acquainted with the local context and culture and are more suited to facilitate the acceptance of the agreements reached by the local communities.⁶⁶ A lasting peace process thus often requires a multi-track approach, which does not only mean conducting activities on all tracks but also interlinking these activities in ways that increase their effectiveness. The figure below illustrates the multiple tracks of engagement.

Figure 1: Types of Actors and their Approaches to Peacebuilding



(Source: Maiese, July 2003)⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Federal Foreign Office, “Basics of Mediation: Concepts and Definitions,” Initiative Mediation Support Deutschland (IMSD) (2017), accessed June 7, 2019, http://www.peacemediation.de/uploads/7/3/9/1/73911539/basics_of_mediation_concepts_and_definitions.pdf

⁶⁶ Catherine Turner, “Increasing the Visibility of Women Mediators: Some thoughts for the new Networks of Women Mediators,” *Global Policy Journal* (January 12, 2018), accessed June 5, 2019, <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/12/01/2018/increasing-visibility-women-mediators-some-thoughts-new-networks-women-mediators>

⁶⁷ Michelle Maiese, “Levels of Action: Lederach’s Pyramid,” *Beyond Intractability*, entry posted July 2003, accessed June 03, 2020, <https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/hierarchical-intervention-levels>

Outside the UN system, a small number of women like Graca Machel and Ambassador Liberata Mulamula have served as track-one mediators in peace talks sponsored by the AU in Kenya and eastern DRC respectively. There are only a few women in substantive positions in the AU Panel of the Wise, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The Panel of the Wise is mandated to carry out mediation initiatives and broker peace agreements. Beyond track-one processes, women have acted as chief mediators and in other active roles in less recognized and more informal negotiations at community and civil society initiatives which tend to be less well documented. Women play roles as chief mediators, witnesses and signatories as well as peace negotiators.⁶⁸ While women are actively involved in “track one-and-a half” mediation initiatives, such as those led by non-governmental organizations and “private diplomacy” actors, few women lead these mediation teams.⁶⁹ Track-one mediators engage directly with the leadership of warring parties in an effort to open negotiations and broker a peace agreement. Women are often at the forefront of informal, behind-the-scenes peace initiatives. In addition, “peace agreements are usually negotiated predominately, if not exclusively, by men” to the exclusion of women. Ideally, women should equally be at the forefront since peace negotiations and the agreements they generate set the structure and direction for post conflict reconstruction and politics that affect the lives of the society as a whole.⁷⁰ Women may bring different mediating styles or experiences to the talks since female mediators are more effective at mediating binding settlements that improve the durability of peace.⁷¹

The 2017 decision of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) to create FemWise-Africa was aimed at strengthening the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).⁷² Some of the roles played by the FemWise- Africa network include enhancing the professional capacity

⁶⁸ UN Women, “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence,” UN Women, accessed June 13, 2019, <https://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Media/Publications/en/03AWomenPeaceNeg.pdf>

⁶⁹ Marie O’Reilly and Andrea Súilleabháin, “Women in Conflict Mediation: Why It Matters.” *International Peace Institute* (September 2013), accessed June 7, 2019, https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/ipi_e_pub_women_in_conflict_med.pdf

⁷⁰ Marie, O Reilly and Andrea Súilleabháin, “Women in Conflict Mediation: Why It Matters.”

⁷¹ Marie, O Reilly and Andrea Súilleabháin, “Women in Conflict Mediation: Why It Matters.”

⁷² Marie, O Reilly and Andrea Súilleabháin, “Women in Conflict Mediation: Why It Matters.”

of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation at Track 1, Track 2 and Track 3 levels; providing avenues for women's leadership of official high-level mediation missions, overseeing quick impact projects and establishment of local and national peace infrastructures.⁷³ In 2012, a study by UN Women indicated that women were poorly represented in peace processes. Out of a representative sample of 31 major peace processes that occurred between 1992 and 2011, only two per cent of chief mediators, four per cent of witnesses and signatories, and nine per cent of negotiators were women.⁷⁴

In a similar study that was conducted in 2008 involving a sample of 33 peace negotiations, only four per cent of respondents were women. In 2014, 75 per cent of peace processes where women were in senior positions were those led or co-led by the UN compared to only 36 per cent in 2011.⁷⁵ The role of women in peace processes was key in pushing for the commencement, resumption, or finalization of negotiations when the momentum had stalled or the talks had faltered.⁷⁶ This finding is complemented by recent statistical analysis based on a dataset of 181 peace agreements signed between 1989 and 2011. When controlling for other variables, peace processes that included women as witnesses, signatories, mediators, and/or negotiators demonstrated a 20 per cent increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years. This percentage increases over time, with a 35 per cent increase in the probability of a peace agreement.⁷⁷

Challenges that Women Face in Peacebuilding

Meaningful participation of women in high level peace processes are sometimes met by a number of challenges. They may include, patriarchal governance systems, gender discrimination and inequality, high rates of

⁷³ African Union Peace and Security, "Operationalization of "FemWise-Africa: General Information," accessed June 14, 2019, <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/final-concept-note-femwise-sept-15-short-version-clean-4-flyer.pdf>

⁷⁴ UN Women, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence," UN Women, accessed June 13, 2019, <https://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Media/Publications/en/03AWomenPeaceNeg.pdf>

⁷⁵ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study: Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace*. (New York, NY: UN Women, 2016), accessed June 19, 2019, https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

threats and violence against women human right defenders; limited funding for government agencies and civil society organizations responding to women agenda, and limited recognition of women's expertise and lived experiences in peace processes among others.⁷⁸ The Reductionist approach to women peace and security agenda continues to portray women's human rights as women's concerns and priorities rather than as critical issues for national advancement and development.

According to Catherine Turner, "the term mediation is narrowly understood as only Track I (or track 1.5) diplomacy, and the term mediator is understood to refer only to an envoy of the Secretary General. As a result, the impression is created that women are simply absent as mediators."⁷⁹ The blurred meaning of who is a mediator denies women's contribution and recognition in international terms.

Another challenge is that appointments to senior level UN envoy roles lack transparency.⁸⁰ Candidates are selected from lists forwarded by member states or other UN bodies, but the lists are not published. In addition, the requirements or recruitment criteria is not made public. As a result, women fail to attain an equal nomination for envoy posts as men.⁸¹

The other challenge that limits the benefits of women's participation is the compromised quality of participation and women's limited opportunity for influence. The UN Women Global Study cautions that, an improvement, simply in numbers does not necessarily mean that women are able to effectively influence negotiations and shape their implementation.⁸² The indicators mentioned, important as they are to highlight progress, often mask a reality that still excludes women from decision-making and limits their engagement to tokenistic or symbolic gestures.

⁷⁸ UN Women, "Women's meaningful participation in negotiating peace and the implementation of peace agreements: Report of the expert group meeting," (New York, NY: UN Women, 2018), 7 <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2018/egm-womens-meaningful-participation-in-negotiating-peace-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3047>

⁷⁹ Catherine Turner, "Absent or Invisible? Women Mediators and the United Nations," *University of Durham Global Policy* 9, no. 2 (May 2018), accessed June 6, 2019, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1758-5899.12532>

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Radhika Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study: Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace*. (New York, NY: UN Women, 2016), https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf (accessed June 19, 2019).

For many years now, women have lacked adequate power to influence peace proceedings. This can sometimes be the result of division among women over key issues or lack of a collective voice. As a result, few male leaders make all the important decisions even when the peace processes have been opened to include women groups. In the 2001 Somali peace process, women were allocated a quota in all the six reconciliation committees. However, any decision required the authorization of a leadership committee of male clan elders. Decision-making has been left to a small group of male leaders.⁸³

As stated earlier cultural and religious norms are not supportive of women's involvement in formal peace building activities and decision-making. The clan system as part of the cultural institutions is considered undemocratic as the decision-making process tends to be male dominated and non-inclusive. As a result, women are denied any leadership roles in formal peace building activities.⁸⁴ Additionally, the limited access to formal peacebuilding processes is due to lack of power and access is attributed to cultural perceptions and beliefs. In a number of African contexts, women are excluded from the formal and informal process by patriarchy and stereotypes that place women in the margins of decision making and peace, the processes are highly militarised and considered a man's world.⁸⁵

The distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' work of peace building compounded with institutionalized sexism is a major challenge that women face in peacebuilding. Turner highlights the "problematic link" between the idea of power and mediation.⁸⁶ In this case, there is a perception that the 'hard' business of peace making at state level is 'masculine' while the 'soft work' of peace building at the grassroots and community level is feminine. This

⁸³ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *UN Women Global Study: Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace*. (New York, NY: UN Women, 2016), https://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/en/GlobalStudy_EN_Web.pdf (accessed June 19, 2019).

⁸⁴ Joyce Gichuru, "Participation of Women in Peace Building in Somalia: A Case Study of Mogadishu," International Peace Support Training Centre Nairobi, Kenya, accessed June 18 2019, <https://www.ipstc.org/index.php/downloads-publications/publications/category/48-2014>

⁸⁵ Irene, Limo, "What do Networks of Women Mediators mean for Mediation Support in Africa?" The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Conflict Trends 2018/1, entry posted on May 31, 2018), accessed June 4, 2019, <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/what-do-networks-of-women-mediators-mean-for-mediation-support-in-africa/>

⁸⁶ Catherine Turner, "Absent or Invisible? Women Mediators and the United Nations," *University of Durham Global Policy* 9, no. 2 (May 2018), accessed June 6, 2019, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1758-5899.12532>

is the prevalent understanding instead of viewing mediation as a ‘process of sustaining and developing a dialogue’ that seeks to provide an objective perspective beyond the traditional model of Track I.⁸⁷

This leads to the perception of women as ‘peace builders’ suited in community work. Consequently, there has been a failure to encompass the efforts of women’s work in community mediation as part of the Track I process. In other words, the efforts of local women are not considered to be ‘political’ enough to earn them a role in the Track I process. This results in the replacement of local mediators with international teams of mediation experts at some point in the mediation process. Additionally, some of the positive qualities associated with women mediators such as empathy and inclusivity tend to work against women. The reason is that they are seen to emphasize ‘softer’ goals of peace building as opposed to ‘hard’ politics of brokering a deal with belligerent parties. This increases the chances of women being left out in the appointment of the mediator and ‘his’ team. Consequently, the tension between mediation and advocacy poses a challenge as women are perceived to represent women only.

Strategies on Increasing Women’s Leverage in Peace Processes

There is a great need to break down the perceived distinction between the “soft” and “hard” peace building work conducted by women and men respectively. There is need to move beyond a system in which women are simply “added” to the existing power and authority centred structures. On the contrary, adopting a holistic understanding of mediation that encompasses both the “soft” work of community peace building and the “hard” work of international peace making in order to increase women’s visibility in high-level processes is highly recommended.⁸⁸

Taking the case study of Myanmar and Ukraine’s national plans for action have been instrumental in creating space for women’s participation in the peace process and promotion of gender in peace dialogue. National Plans are also useful points of reference for CSOs and other organizations at the

⁸⁷ Catherine Turner, “Absent or Invisible?”

⁸⁸ Catherine Turner, “Absent or Invisible?” 11.

national level during meetings with the government and other peace process stakeholders. They help in addressing some of the key issues around women's participation in peace processes. They also hold the government accountable for its national and international obligations to support women. Furthermore, they install the legal and institutional frameworks to prevent violence against women among other relevant issues.

There is need to leverage international frameworks and support in promoting women's inclusivity in peace processes. In the absence of a national plan or where the national plan for action is insufficient, women have relied on international instruments such as The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UNSCR 1325 in order to promote inclusivity in the peace process. Such frameworks are seen to be more effective at holding the government to account on its compulsory commitments. They also allow women in civil society to monitor and provide feedback through reports. Similarly, UNSCR 1325 is sometimes preferred over national plans since it addresses women's participation in peace processes directly hence useful in raising awareness, training, and to advocate for women's rights.

Women capitalize on gender quotas that prescribe the minimum percentage required for women in terms of participation in formal peace mechanisms. This is a useful tool to secure women's participation and to ensure policies and procedures to bring women into the peace process. Women should utilize the positive reputation of women's strategic networks of organizations to collaborate with other organizations and with government. Women mediators and peace building experts should also capitalize on their reputation and technical knowledge to participate in peace process meetings that act as a hub for building networks. The importance of building trust with key stakeholders is crucial in creating avenues through which women can influence, receive information and forge alliances in demanding an increase in women's participation.

Through a network or database, mediators can gain access to women with different levels of expertise and experience. This would increase their engagement in both formal and informal mediation processes. Such a database may also include trained standby teams ready for deployment to respond to emergency situations. Networks are also useful in information sharing and

access to best practice from women's experiences in mediation. They provide a forum for women to document their experiences in mediation through research and documentation useful for reference by other experts. Networks provide a platform for structured engagement with women who are working on peace processes. Such women can access the women working at the grass roots level in order to support the official peace process. Additionally, they assist in bridging intergenerational gaps. International networks such as FemWise Africa have provisions for mentoring young women interested in mediation. Strategic advocacy has been a crucial approach towards increasing women's leverage in peace processes. The contribution of women in civil societies, even in contexts of protracted conflict, has gradually gained traction through collection and dissemination of information. Such information is mainly about the conflict's effects on women, which garners international attention and informs advocacy on gender-equitable policies. Women's civil society organizations also build the capacity of women leaders seeking to enter public life. In so doing, women are able to push for more participation and to liaise with high-profile individuals.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Catherine Turner, "Absent or Invisible?," 9

RESEARCH FINDINGS ANALYSIS

This chapter gives a detailed analysis of the research findings based on the thematic areas identified through the literature review. The research findings strongly support the literature review already undertaken while qualitative responses from respondents, assisted in describing nuances about women's participation in peace building processes that were valuable in offering a deeper understanding of the research topic.

Women's Involvement in Key Peace Intervention Strategies

Understanding the level of involvement of women in the formal peace building processes serves as an important backdrop for contextualizing the levels of change in women's participation in high level peace processes. Respondents were asked to rate the level of involvement of women from a list of six conflict intervention strategies, namely; peace talks, disarmament, peace enforcement, religious leaders' intervention, and peace agreements. The aggregate analysis drawn from table 2 below indicates that most respondents believe that women are moderately involved in most of these conflict intervention strategies except for disarmament programs. The favourable attitude towards women's involvement in these interventions could be attributed to the fact that the women, peace and security agenda has gained much attention among different stakeholders including African regional economic blocs and African States.¹ As reported in the literature review, these stakeholders have put in place policy frameworks² for promoting gender

¹ ECOWAS, IGAD and SADC has a plan of action for implementation of UNSCR 1325.

² AU member states that have launched 1325 national action plans include: Cote D'Ivoire (2007), Uganda (2008), Liberia (2009), DRC, Sierra Leon, Ghana, Rwanda, Guinea Bissau (2010), Guinea, Burundi, Senegal (2011), Burkina Faso, Gambia, Mali, Togo (2012), Nigeria (2013), CAR (2014), Kenya and South Sudan (2016).

equality and women's participation in peace building and decision making processes. The responses are summarized in the table below.

Table 2: Level of Women Involvement in Conflict Intervention Strategies

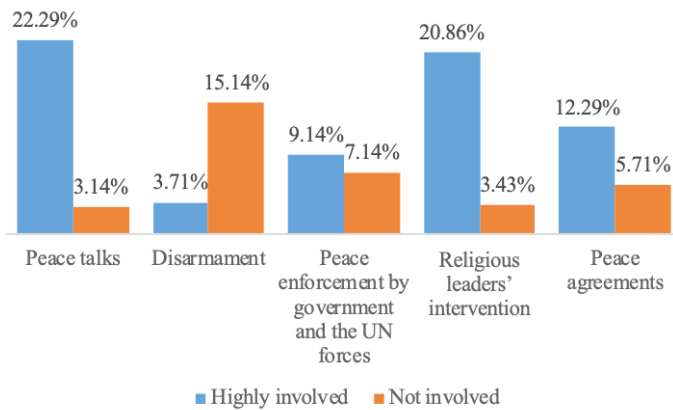
How do you rate the level of involvement of women in the following conflict intervention strategies?						
	Highly involved	Low involvement	Moderately involved	Not involved	Not sure	No Response
Peace talks	78	65	169	11	23	4
Disarmament	13	114	66	53	83	21
Peace enforcement by government and the UN forces	32	92	114	25	67	20
Religious leaders' intervention	73	64	152	12	34	15
Peace agreements	43	92	125	20	52	18

(Source: HIPSIR Research)

As indicated in figure 2, the discrepancy between women's role in the 'soft' vis-à-vis the 'hard' work of peace building was clearly evident. In this case, the hard work of peace building that comprises disarmament recorded the highest percentage of those who felt that women were not involved at all. However, a slightly higher number of the respondents felt that women were highly involved in peace enforcement, which is also categorized as 'hard' work of peace building, as compared to those who believed that women were not involved at all.

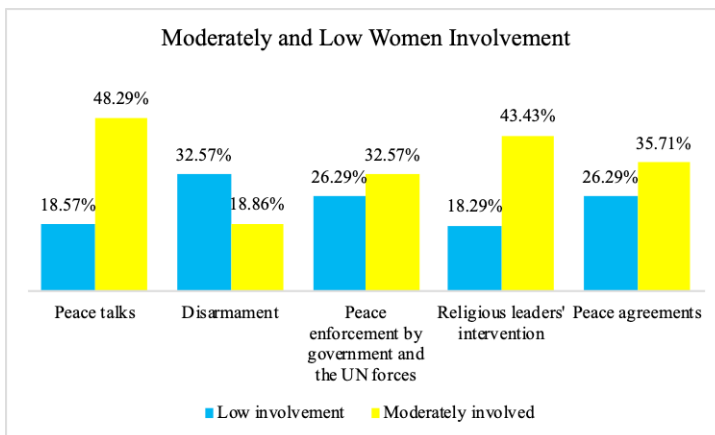
The soft work of peace building such as peace talks and religious leaders' interventions attracted the lowest percentage of those who felt that women were not involved. However, the results indicated that a significantly large number of respondents believe that men dominate the peace intervention strategies by more than three times the proportion of women. In fact, only peace talks recorded 22.29% of those who felt that women are highly involved. All the rest had less than 22% response of high women involvement (see figure below). Even though more efforts are required to improve women participation on all peace processes, disarmament exercises, peace enforcement, and negotiating peace agreements require deliberate actions to accommodate more women. This is evident in Figures 2 and 3 that show a huge disparity between women involvement in such interventions.

Figure 2: High Women Involvement Verses No Involvement



(Source: HIPSIR Research)

Figure 3: Moderately and Low Women Involvement



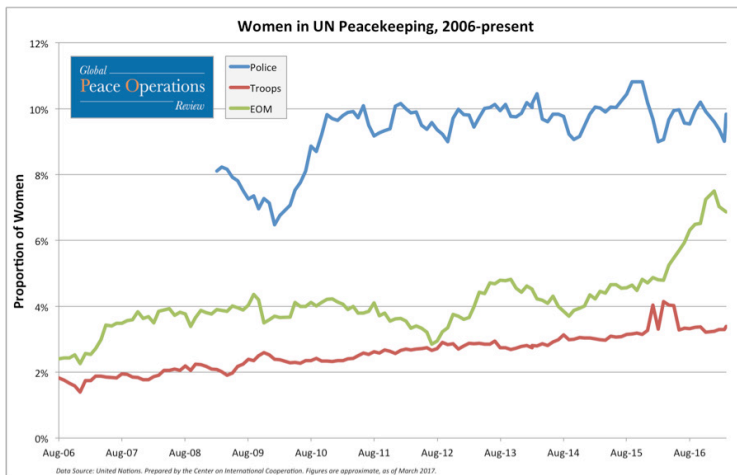
(Source: HIPSIR Research)

As indicated in figure 3 above, peace talks and religious' leaders conflict interventions strategies had the highest scores at 51% and 47% respectively comparative to disarmament programs which had the least percentage at 17%. The low score of women involvement in the disarmament programs may be attributed to what was stated by Susan McKay where she states that, DDR

programs do ignore the needs and realities of women and in particular the ex-combatants. McKay further notes that women are not recognized as combatants and where they are associated with armed groups the community perceives them as perpetrators, limiting their access to DDR benefits and contribution to peace building.

Even though the number of female military personnel in peacekeeping operations is small, the number of women who are being deployed has been increasing. The figure below represents the trend of deployment of women as military personnel, as police officers and in election observation missions (EOM) between 2006 and 2016.

Figure 4: The Trend of Deployment of Women as Military Personnel



(Source: Global Peace Operations Review, 2016)

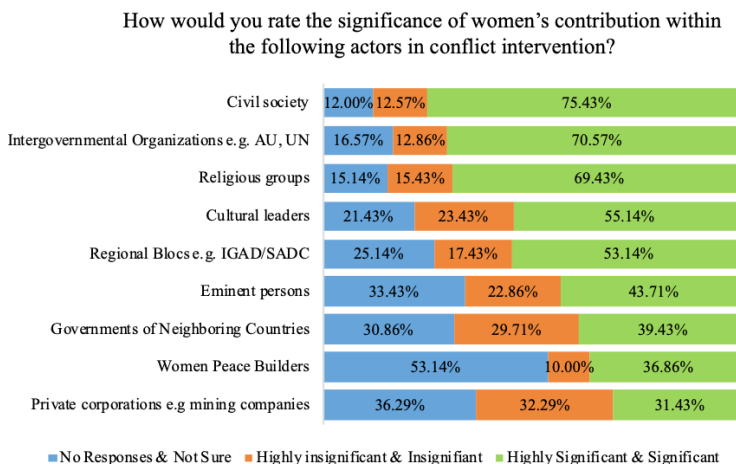
This steady increase in women deployment in UN Peacekeeping contributed to the outcomes of the study as depicted in figure 3 and 4. The graphs showed that more respondents felt that women were highly involved or moderately involved as compared to those who felt women were either inadequately involved or not involved at all.

Key Actors in Conflict Intervention

To have a deeper understanding on the level of involvement of women in high level peace processes and to determine the levels of change, respondents were asked to rate the significance of women's contribution within various actors in conflict intervention. According to the respondents, the greatest contribution of women in peace building processes was felt in the civil society organizations at 85.5%. The findings from the research mirror the claims presented in the 2012 UN Women report on *Women's participation in peace negotiations: connections between presence and influence*. According to the report, women organized in groups have created more impact in peace processes comparative to women individual representatives.

Women's contribution through religious groups came second at 79.5%, followed by women contributions in international organizations at 77.5%. Women in eminent persons category, women in government of neighboring countries category and those in private corporation's category scored 58%, 49.5% and 40.5% respectively.

Figure 5: Significance of Women's Contribution in Conflict Intervention



(Source: HIPSIR Research)

Although women are predominantly involved in Track 3 that has had influence at local and grassroots level, such efforts are undocumented and rarely acknowledged. This has been evident in countries like Somalia, Sudan, DRC, Kenya, and Burundi. In Burundi for instance, these women CSOs have been mitigating conflicts through a well-coordinated network. This has also been witnessed in Sudan where the Women's Taskforce continue to propel women in peace processes.

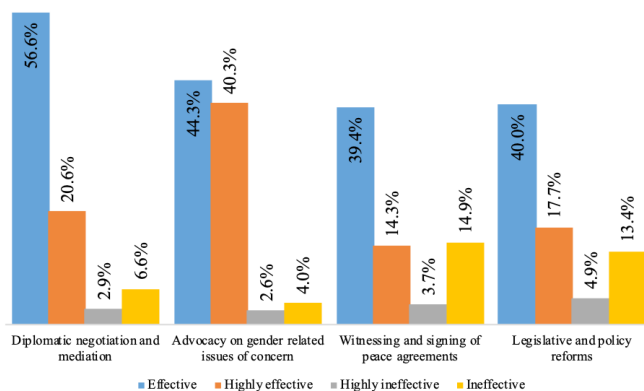
In Kenya, women CSOs played a major role in resolving the 2008 post-election conflict. In addition, they have continued to promote peace through the Women's Consultation Group (WCG). Besides representing women in peace negotiations, women CSOs play an observer role in peace processes and promote gender inclusivity through capacity building, advocacy, and awareness creation. Women's contribution through religious groups came second. Akin to CSOs, religious groups fall under non-governmental actors that comprise of what is commonly referred to as low level interventions. In this case, women have mainly been involved in community mobilization as well as sensitization. It is important to note that women's involvement in religious leadership has been impeded by cultural and religious norms. This deprives them of the opportunity to participate in formal peace building activities and decision-making. For instance, Somali Police Force (SPF) assigns women 'lighter duties' as religious and cultural norms in the country demand. Explaining why many respondents cited religious leaders' intervention as a major role of women involvement in peace processes.

Women Roles in High Level Mediation/Conflict Intervention

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of various roles played by women in high level mediation/peace building. The roles were: diplomatic negotiation and mediation, advocacy on gender related issues of concern, witnessing and signing of peace agreements, and legislative and policy reforms. As figure 6 below indicates, most of the respondents expressed their confidence in women in high level peace building. This shows that given the opportunity, women can greatly contribute on matters of peace building. Furthermore, the study negates any stereotypical assertion that links women's exclusion in peace processes to claims of their ineffectiveness in playing such

roles. Even though effectiveness of women's roles is an important aspect of discussion, it is worth noting that the gender disparity is still wide when it comes to provision of the opportunities. The main focus should be to bring more women on board and offer them the necessary education and skills on peacebuilding.

Figure 6: Ranking Effectiveness of Roles Played by Women in High Level Peace Building



Diplomatic Negotiation and Mediation

Those who ranked diplomatic negotiation and mediation highly provided the following reasons. First and foremost that, women are good advocates for gender related issues. For instance, one of the respondents stated:

“having women participate in diplomatic negotiations and mediation helps them to voice out the need to take into considerations salient issues that men may not be keen on. This also helps to inform advocacy on gender and policy reforms.”

Another respondent pointed out that, the South Sudan women coalition bloc for peace for example, is composed of 46 or more organizations including individual activists. During the 2017 peace negotiations, this coalition established a technical team to ensure gendered perspectives were considered in the peace negotiations. More specifically, was the establishment of a legal support team. Consultations were conducted at grassroots levels and lobbying carried out with some of the key actors in the peace processes including IGAD

and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Former Detainees (SPLM- FD). As a result, women's concerns were tabled in the peace negotiations and further acknowledged in the ARCSS, by passing the 35% women representation at all levels of governance. [However, this is yet to be implemented as it has to be constitutionalized].

Second of all, some respondents felt that women have exceptional foresight, diplomacy, negotiation, and mediation skills. These skills have continued to improve as many of them are acquiring education and training on skills related to peacebuilding. One respondent said:

"I went through training of trainers (TOT) on mediation and conflict resolution. Working within a network of several organizations, I carry these skills with me in my daily work and share with colleagues. I believe this has been helpful. I have also helped them organize themselves in other networks at the community level. Networks are informative, they help members share knowledge, skills and resources."

Other respondents felt that because women are disproportionately affected during conflicts, they understand the need to build and sustain peace through diplomatic negotiation and mediation. In this case, women are not only motivated to build peace but also understand the consequences of conflict better since they are mainly the victims of violence.

Women were also perceived as good facilitators of mediation and peace building, good peace enforcers of peace agreements, lobbyists, and peace advocates. One respondent pointed out that:

"Women are naturally non-violent, and this makes them most suitable to handle diplomatic and advocacy issues."

Respondents held that women who hold diplomatic positions have performed well in countries like Kenya. In particular, one of the respondents cited Amina Chawahir Mohamed Jibril who handled numerous diplomatic negotiations and mediations when she was the Kenya's Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign affairs and International Trade.

In countries like Rwanda, the number of women who are playing a crucial role in peace processes within the diplomatic sector has been growing. Such women engage diplomatic activities that include being special envoys in negotiations on peace agreements, mediation as well as conciliation. Even though women are actively involved in tracks 1 and 1.5 mediation initiatives,

few of them lead these mediation teams. A good example is the role that ambassadors' wives play in diplomatic peace initiatives. Nevertheless, the blurred meaning of who is considered to be a mediator denies women's contribution the recognition in international terms.

Advocacy on Gender Related Issues of Concern

Advocacy on gender related issues of concern was highly ranked because of the following reasons. According to one of the respondents:

"Any discussion on gender without including women does not yield effective results."

The voice of women has been increasingly heard due to the rising level of their empowerment and education. In this case, women have continuously been creating awareness on their rights and claiming their place in peace processes. Consequently, women are increasingly acquiring the competency skills that are required for effective negotiation, mediation, peace talks, and other peace processes. Through advocacy, women have been seeking to end the suffering that they have endured for many years in conflict situations. Another respondent noted:

"As mothers, wives and caregivers, we always see the two sides to the story. We are more level headed than men. We prefer peace to an unstable community."

Women have taken upon themselves to inform other peace actors about the importance of gender-inclusive peace processes. Most of the respondents agreed with the fact that the involvement of women has in the recent years increased. However, a significant number of women's voices are still the missing link to having a cohesive society. As a mitigation measure, one respondent said:

"Women don't have to be technical, all they needed is to speak in one voice. This helps in creating awareness at the grassroots while also increasing access to the peace processes. Thereafter, establishment of a technical team would then ensure women's concerns are well articulated."

Witnessing and Signing of Peace Agreements

Few women talked about women roles in signing peace agreements. They felt that women and women's organizations are rarely involved in such

processes. This finding is confirmed by Maria O' Reilley et. al., who noted that, women's representation in official positions in peace agreements have been conspicuously low. In the period occurring between 1996 -2015, only 2% of women served as chief mediators and 9% as negotiators.

Legislative and Policy Reforms

On the issue of women's involvement in legislative and policy reforms, women have played a significant role in addressing issues especially those involving discrimination and SGBV. For instance, women have been significantly involved in the passage of the law criminalizing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Kenya. They are also accredited for the passing of laws against sexual and gender-based violence in Kenya and other countries in Africa. In addition, they have been championing the passage of vital laws that promote inclusivity through affirmative action. An example is the two-thirds rule in Kenya which women have been pushing for its full implementation. According to the respondents, women's effectiveness in peace processes was attributed to their increased involvement in political, legislative, and policy reforms. They have been very instrumental in the creation of national plans for action that create the legal basis for fighting SGBV.

The Challenges Faced by Women in Conflict Intervention

To identify the gaps that may be hindering women participation in high-level mediation, respondents were asked to rate the challenges women face with respect to their participation in high level peace building processes. 68% of respondents pointed out cultural/patriarchal stereotypes as an extremely challenging factor, this was closely followed by inadequate funding at 56% and lack of government support for women in conflict mediation activities at 43.5%. Key informants offered more detail on how cultural/patriarchal stereotypes affect women's participation in high level peace processes. One respondent stated:

"There is a belief out here that all women care about is the 35% representation. During discussions women opinions are viewed as 35% rather than as an added expertise. A woman's participation is sought for at a specified time. In addition, women are seen in terms of their sexuality. The strong ones are humiliated and frustrated to give up."

Another respondent said:

“We also have to question how representation is achieved. We have had a woman minister without a portfolio. Men support women they can manipulate and compromise. Representation at the moment is still serving men’s interests rather than women concerns.”

While another respondent held that:

“Men don’t believe women have a role to play in the public offices, women on the other hand, have internalized this belief and are reluctant to participate.”

These findings affirmed the narrative of the soft work of peacebuilding having a glass-ceiling effect on women’s inclusion in high level mediation thus mirroring the literature that cites the case of Somalia as an example where cultural and religious norms limit women participation in high level peace processes. As the literature indicates, women are considered in peace processes at the grassroots because they are expected to align their duties and roles with the expectations of the society on what women ‘should do’ but not what they are capable of doing. As a result, women lack the power to act and support due to stereotypical perceptions and beliefs.

According to the respondents, the push for gender quotas has lost its intended goal to increase women’s intervention in conflict intervention. Women are yet to broaden their scope beyond representation to full participation on one hand and on the other men are not yet ready for gender equality.

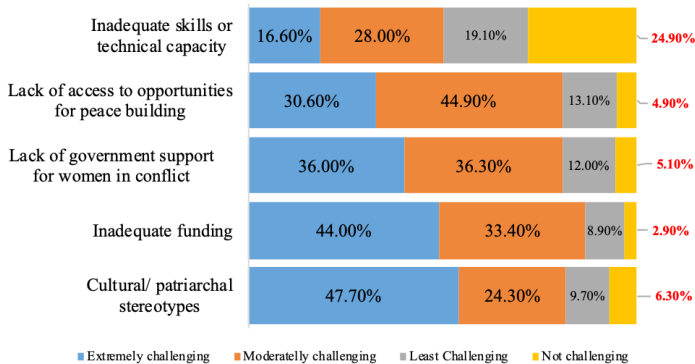
As figure 7 below indicates, inadequate funding is also a major challenge. In Somalia for instance, women’s efforts in high level peace processes is minimal due to poor funding. The same case applies to other countries across Africa. Inadequate skills and technical capacity are least challenging when compared to the rest that were listed for rating. This is attributed by the improvement of literacy level among women in countries like DRC.

In addition, the efforts that governmental and non-governmental organizations have put in place to empower women seems to be bearing positive results. As the high illiteracy and ignorance among women continue to decline, women voice in peace processes is growing louder.

Lack of government support as a challenge to women in conflict intervention came third, according to the views of 36% of the respondents. This is in line with literature that showed that individuals or organizations

that have significant political influence play the greatest role in conflict intervention in Africa. This means that poor political representation of women in the political arena also contributes to the inadequate involvement of women in conflict intervention. It also explains why 30.6% of the respondents cited lack of access to opportunities for peace building as a major challenge and why many governmental and non-governmental organizations are increasingly advocating for more enrolment of women in learning institutions in order to be empowered on peace education and other skills or training. The study results indicated that such efforts have begun to bear positive fruits with only 16.6% of the respondents citing inadequate skills or technical capacity as a major challenge that women face in conflict intervention. Figure 6 below summarizes the respondents' ranking of the challenges.

Figure 7: Challenges Faced by Women in Conflict Intervention



(Source: HIPSIR Research)

Respondents also identified other challenges that women face in conflict intervention. One of them was poor infrastructural facilities such as poor roads and lack of internet connectivity that hamper their movement and communication. Poverty and high levels of corruption have also suppressed women's voices because of lack of opportunity. One respondents noted that "women's organizations are not adequately involved because funding is only given to large organizations." Many of them, according to one respondent, "are financially dependent on men." As a result, local organizations benefit

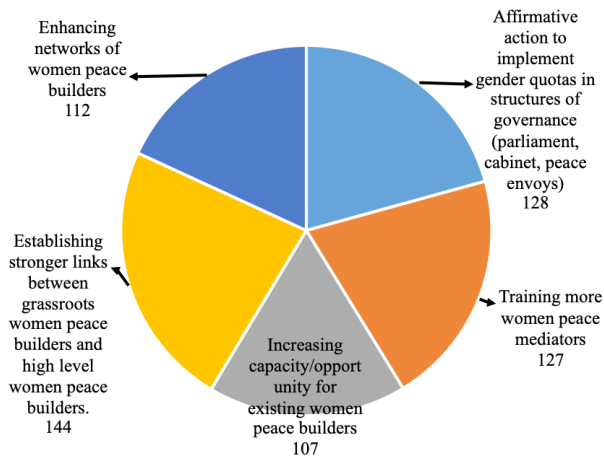
less, yet they are best suited to reach the many actors in conflict situations.” Due to lack of solidarity, women have also failed to speak in one voice on matters affecting them. Activities of CSOs, NGOs, and Government are not well coordinated to create a good platform for such solidarity in order to thrive. Women at the local level feel that they are ignored because the elites do not take their voices to the negotiating table. They feel that they should not only be represented but also given a platform to voice out their concerns. This is not possible in many countries since they lack adequate and clear structures that would facilitate sharing their ideas and incorporating them in high-level decision-making fora. Few women in leadership positions has exacerbated the situation and many of them are delinked from the formal mediation processes.

Strategies for Increasing Women’s Leverage in Peace Processes

This research illuminated a number of strategies for increasing women’s leverage in high level peace processes. The options provided to respondents were framed to look specifically at ways in which women at the grass root and middle level of the peace building pyramid can be supported to have a seat at the table – in high level peace processes. Establishing stronger links between grassroots women peace builders and high-level women peace builders garnered the highest support of 144 respondents or 41.4% of the sample. Affirmative action, training more women peace mediators, increasing capacity/opportunity for existing women, and enhancing networks of women peace builders received support of 45.0%, 45.0%, 37.0%, and 35.0% of the respondents respectively (see figure below for a summary of the responses).

The fact that more than 52% of the respondents failed to answer this question concerning strategies for increasing leverage for women in peace processes could be interpreted as their lack of trust in the strategies presented to them (See Figure 7 below on the strategies and the number of respondents who selected each one of them).

Figure 8: Strategies for Increasing Leverage for Women in Peace Processes



(Source: HIPSIR Research)

Key informants shared their own experiences and ‘how to’ increase women’s leverage in high level peace processes. One respondent suggested that younger women need to be mentored and exposed in order for them to build confidence in taking leadership positions. She also highlighted that:

“Whenever I am invited for an event, I negotiate for an extra seat. I carry along the younger women (interns). Prior to the event, we talk through the subject to increase their level of engagement. Many at times, such women build their own confidence and are at times invited directly to subsequent forums. As a result, what started as a mentor- mentee relationship ends up maturing to a colleague relationship. So far, we have 3 young people who have grown through such processes.”

Another respondent pointed out the need for continuous capacity building to encourage women to participate in leadership and governance positions. She stated:

“Women need to be encouraged to join political parties. They shy away from it believing it is a man’s job since most meetings are done at night. However, I believe women can still be lobbied and empowered to create their own dimension to participate. They need to be helped to find ways of engagement even if the current contexts do not work in their favor. As it is right now, women empowerment and gender equality will not be achieved.”

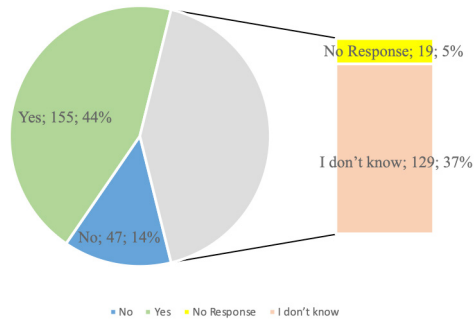
Respondents also identified other strategies that can be fast-tracked to increase leverage for women in peace processes that included the following. First, governmental and non-governmental organizations should provide adequate funding to improve on advocacy. This should include civic education. To achieve this, there is need to create or strengthen the networks for organizations that deal with peacebuilding in each country. In addition, the issue of empowering women to participate in high level mediation should include training women on peace practices, building their capacity, and promoting their academic aspirations. This should not exclude men. Women in rural areas should also be included in such empowerment exercises. However, these alternative strategies that respondents provided affirmed the claim that respondents lacked confidence with the strategies that have been commonly used in the past. This can be explained by lack of support and goodwill from governmental and non-governmental organizations that can be identified through poor funding and ineffective approaches of women empowerment.

Existence of Effective National Action Plans (NAPs)

The study revealed that 155 respondents (44% of the sample) were aware of existing effective national action plans (NAPs) on women in peace building (UNSCR 1325) in their respective countries. This is in line with the revelations from the literature review that showed that Kenyan, DRC, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Uganda have NAPs already. Somalia is in the process of developing one. However, Lesotho, Malawi, and Zambia have none. While 99% of the respondents were drawn from countries with NAPs, 37% of them could not tell whether such plans exist (see figure below).

These results show the need to develop and popularize NAPs on UNSCR 1325 across Africa. By so doing, many people and organizations shall actively participate in promoting gender inclusivity in peace processes. There is also need to review the existing NAPs on UNSCR 1325 and establish why such a high percentage of respondents' term them as ineffective. No matter how many countries put NAPs on UNSCR 1325 in place, nothing much will be achieved if they are ineffective.

Figure 9: Effective National Action Plan



(Source: HIPSIR Research)

The study results indicated that even many of those who said a NAP exists in their country do not understand what a NAP is. For example, some talked about ‘affirmative action’ others cited building bridges initiative (BBI). One of the respondents pointed out that “Another respondent talked about “national organisations like *Sauti ya Wanawake*.” Referring to the country’s NAP, another respondent stated: “the church is highly engaged in peace conferences and prayer for the nation.” Given its importance lack of an effective NAP based on Myanmar’s and Ukraine’s case, partially attributes to low levels of women participation in high level mediation. However, international instruments such as CEDAW and UNSCR 1325 have helped in filling such vacuums.

Other Government Policies for Promoting Women in High Level Peacebuilding

Other government policies that are geared towards the empowerment of women in high level mediation/peace building that respondents identified included the following:

Many respondents cited the creation of organizations, associations, movement of women peace builders as one of the important efforts that governments have made. This includes inclusion of women in district peace committees and *Nyumba Kumi* initiatives (Kenya). It also includes supporting women self-help groups. The Forum of Women in Burundi, for instance, has been spearheading major decisions that seek to influence policy in the country.

In addition, some countries like Kenya have made efforts to create a space to address gender-related issues especially those relating to violence against women. Such plans include the establishment of a gender desk and a gender ministry in government. In conjunction with non-governmental organizations, some governments have been training women leaders at all levels on peacebuilding and other issues. For instance, the Government of Kenya is implementing a UN joint programme on gender. There is also a USAID-backed program on gender equality and women empowerment in Kenya. However, most of the empowerment programs were found to be inadequately funded. Contrary to the expectations under the functionalist theory, questions were raised on the political will to implement government policies for promoting women in high level peacebuilding.

Additionally, the government has put in place affirmative action plans that seek to empower women and enhance inclusivity. Examples include the two-thirds gender rule in Kenya, 25% women participation in government, 35% allocation of position to women in the government in all sectors. Such initiatives have had meaningful outcomes when backed by the constitution and the laws of the country. A respondent identified some laws that DRC has enacted to champion women's inclusion in high level peacebuilding. According to the respondent:

“The Constitution of the DRC, in Articles 14 and 15, respectively, establishes gender equality and the elimination of sexual violence. Law No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on the Application of Women's Rights and Parity; Law No. 001/2001 of 17 May on the organization and operation of political parties; Law No. 08/005 of 10 June on the public financing of political parties. Organic Law No. 11/012 of 11 August 2011 on organization and functioning of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo.”

However, some respondents raised concerns about poor implementation of such laws. One respondent stated: “we might have many laws. The big challenge is that we are still far from the stage of implementation.” Another respondent observed that “policies exist but not used to empower the women in peace building.” Some countries have made gender policy and enacted family laws on inheritance and property rights. The implementation of these quotas has been a major problem. In addition, some respondents expressed their reservations on the effectiveness of nominating women to certain positions.

CONCLUSION

The current study explored the issues of gender inclusivity in peacebuilding processes in Africa two decades after the passage of the UNSCR 1325 that sought to bring more women on board after many years of exclusion. According to the functionalist theory, all actors should work together harmoniously with a common goal of building peace, failure to which a lasting peace cannot be achieved. While women are involved in all peace intervention strategies across Africa, the study indicated that their level of involvement is concentrated on soft peacebuilding work. Furthermore, their involvement level varies from one country to another

However, there has been great improvement in women's involvement in high level peace processes as compared to the situation two decades ago. The impact of passing the UNSCR 1325 in 2000 and the NAPs that countries have been making and implementing has partially contributed to this progress. Such efforts have been responsible for the emergence and reinvigoration of women's groups and organizations that continue to agitate for inclusivity in peacebuilding processes. However, there is need for deliberate efforts to propel women into high level mediation that has culturally been associated with men. As the study revealed, disarmament exercises, peace enforcement, negotiations and signing of peace agreements are the main areas where women have been poorly represented.

The study results also affirm the findings of the global study on UNSCR 1325 that revealed a positive relationship between women's involvement in peace negotiations and the successful implementation of peace agreements. It's therefore no wonder that many peace agreements in Africa fail because of a failure to include significant numbers of women in the high-level negotiation process. This was evident in the current study that showed a low significance

of women's contribution as leaders of private corporations, governments, eminent persons, and cultural leaders. In fact, the key decision-making team of corporations that are involved in the extractive industry, which has been at the centre of conflicts in Africa, is largely male dominated. The study also provides compelling evidence of the vital role of women in high level mediation. Their exclusion has however limited their influence in peace processes. Among other things, there is need for greater efforts to counter cultural or patriarchal stereotypes that impede gender inclusivity. CSOs, FBOs, and NGOs empower women to participate in peace processes.

While such groups complement the work of governments' efforts, the study showed that the strategies that they used to increase women's leverage in peace processes are inadequate. One of the issues that strongly emerged is the need to increase funding to promote affirmative action. Others include training of peace mediators, increasing capacity and opportunities for women to participate in peace processes, and enhancing their networks. The study revealed the urgent need to help countries to enact, popularize, and implement NAPs on women in peace building (UNSCR 1325). While some countries lack NAPs, many of the existing ones are highly unpopular and poorly implemented.

In conclusion, looking back over twenty years since UNSCR 1325 was adopted in order to specifically address women's issues with regards to peace and security, significant strides have been made globally, regionally and locally. At the minimum this resolution helped highlight the previously somewhat overlooked reality that women could not be removed from the peace and security agenda. While it is well documented, women bear the brunt of wars and insecurity specifically in Africa, it is less recognized that women are under-utilized in high level peace processes and have the potential of being powerful agents of change in peace building. We therefore hope that as we commemorate 20 years of UNSCR 1325, this study will once again remind us that women have a legitimate space to occupy in peacebuilding, particularly high-level peace building processes.

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APPENDINCES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How do you rate the level of involvement of women in the following conflict intervention strategies?

	Highly involved	Moderately involved	Not sure	Low involvement	Not involved
a. Peace talks					
b. Disarmament					
c. Peace enforcement by government and the UN forces					
d. Religious leaders' intervention					
e. Peace agreements					

2. How would you rate the significance of women's contribution within the following actors in conflict intervention? (Please tick the most appropriate answer).

	Highly effective	Moderately effective	Not sure	Ineffective	Highly ineffective
a. Intergovernmental Organizations e.g. AU, UN					
b. Regional Blocs e.g. IGAD/SADC					
c. Neighboring States					
d. Private corporations e.g mining companies					
e. Religious groups					
f. Cultural leaders					
g. Women peace builders					
h. Eminent persons					
i. Civil society					

3. a) In your opinion, how do you rate the effectiveness of the following roles played by women in high level mediation/ peace building?

	Highly effective	Moderately effective	Not sure	Ineffective	Highly ineffective
a. Diplomatic negotiation and mediation					
b. Advocacy on gender related issues of concern					
c. Witnessing and signing of peace agreements					
d. Legislative and policy reforms					
e. Other (please include any other)					

- b) Please explain your highest ranking.

4. a) How would you rate the following challenges with respect to the participation of women in high level peace building processes?

	Extremely challenging	Moderately challenging	Least challenging	Not challenging	Unsure
a. Lack of access to opportunities for peace building					
b. Inadequate funding					
c. Cultural/ patriarchal stereotypes					
d. Inadequate skills/ technical capacity					
e. Lack of government support for women in conflict mediation activities					

- b) Please mention any other challenges and rank not captured above?

5. In your opinion what is the most instrumental strategy of increasing the participation of women in high level peace building processes?

	Highly effective	Moderately effective	Not sure	Ineffective	Highly ineffective
a. Affirmative action to implement gender quotas in structures of governance (parliament, cabinet, peace envoys)					
b. Training women peace mediators					
c. Increasing capacity/opportunity for existing women peace builders					
d. Establishing stronger links between grassroots women peace builders and high level women peace builders.					
e. Enhancing networks of women peace builders					

6. a) Does your country have an effective National Action Plan (NAP) on Women in Peace building (UNSCR 1325)?

b) Please elaborate on your answer above?

7. a) Please identify any other government policies in your country geared towards the empowerment of women in high level mediation/peace building?

b) How do you rate the effectiveness of the government policies (mentioned above) on women empowerment in structures of governance in your country? ('Highly effective', 'moderately effective', 'not sure', 'ineffective', 'highly ineffective')

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. a) Please some of the roles you have played under the following tracks of conflict intervention:

Track	Description	Specific roles played
Track 1	High-level peace building, engagement with top government officials and rebel leaders.	
Track 2	Middle-level engagement with civil society human rights organizations, religious bodies and international organizations	
Track 3	Engagement with community leaders, cultural leaders, women and youth groups.	
Multi-level	All the above combined.	

- b) Among all the conflict intervention missions you have been involved in, which role did you play that you consider to have had the most significant impact?
2. a) What are the top three challenges you have faced as a woman in high-level mediation?
- b) How were you able to circumvent those challenges?
3. What strategies do you think would increase the leverage of women in high-level mediation /peace building?
4. What are some of the initiatives to groom younger women for high level peace building are you involved in?
5. Do you find networks of women in peace building effective? Please explain your answer.



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