“African women who build peace”

Final declaration
Madrid, 27th October 2015

15 years have passed since the Women, Peace and Security Agenda of the United Nations was opened with Security Council Resolution 1325. Strengthened by seven additional resolutions that address the use of sexual violence as a weapon in armed conflict, and gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of peace-building and the prevention of conflicts in the long term, Resolution 1325 has turned the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women into an international peace and security concern. More recently S.C. Resolution 2242 dated October 13, 2015, presented by Spain, represents a new step forward.

Regionally, the connection between women and conflict prevention, management and settlement is also a priority for the African Union (AU). To stress this, a declaration of commitment to advance in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda of the AU was made during its 25th Assembly, in which the main theme was the empowerment of women towards the 2063 Agenda.

Nevertheless, there is still a big gap between words and facts in the implementation of UNSC resolutions. Prevention, management and settlement of conflicts with a gender equality perspective are still pending challenges.

We, as African activists for women’s rights, peace and security and the organizing entities, gathered in Madrid for the Round Table African Women Building Peace

DECLARE

- That a new strategy is required including specific measures and clear activities that have a direct impact on women’s lives and underline their necessary participation in peace-building and negotiating processes;

- That woman must be present in sufficient numbers throughout the peace-building process, from conflict prevention up to the negotiation, management and supervision of peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction. They must be, however, women engaged with women’s rights and capable of introducing women’s agenda at national, regional and global level

- We need women leaders capable of managing, organising and raising awareness on the need for women and the society to fight violence in general and particularly gender violence.

- To reject and put an end to the outrageous impunity of violence – often resulting in death – against women who fight for peace and for women’s rights. Moreover, perpetrators of sexual violence in armed conflict must be investigated, prosecuted and severely punished.
- That sexual violence crime in conflict be investigated, prosecuted and punished.

- Those women victims of these atrocious crimes must be compensated. They should receive not only moral but also economic compensation that will enable them to rebuild their lives.

- More commitment from international organizations, governments and civil society organizations towards Education for Peace. Effective peace-building initiatives would entail a holistic approach, with a curriculum on Education for Peace at primary and secondary levels, as well as in the informal education sectors.

- We propose the creation of an independent International Committee of African Women, made up of women nominated by women’s organizations in the countries in conflict. This Committee should be completely independent but be backed by United Nations. Its functions will be, among others:
  
  - To carry out assessment and monitoring of the practical implementation of the international resolutions;
  
  - To assist and give strategic orientation to all actors involved about the problems affecting women in conflict and post-conflict situations
  
  - To obtain financial resources to train women leaders and support civil society organizations committed with peace;
  
  - To make governments and national and international institutions accountable for their responsibilities and commitments;

All the women leaders that have taken part in this round table today agree that our demands will be met only if we continue to fight every day with ever more tenacity against the inequality and discrimination suffered by women.

Let us fight for equality and we shall be fighting for peace.