

THE WOMEN, PEACE & SECURITY AGENDA IN AFRICA – GENDER EQUALITY AS A CROSS- CUTTING OBJECTIVE IN THE GIZ APSA PROJECT

CONTEXT: INTRODUCING THE APSA PROJECT & GENDER CHALLENGES ON THE CONTINENT

The GIZ Project “Support to the African Peace and Security Architecture” (APSA) collaborates with the African Union (AU), regional organizations (RECs), Member States and other stakeholders (civil society) to **improve and strengthen the use of instruments for crisis prevention, conflict management and peace consolidation** under particular consideration of gender aspects. The development of the APSA instruments at the level of the AU Commission are complemented by pilot measures in selected AU member states.

Over the past years, increased efforts to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda, specifically United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325¹, and to progressively integrate gender mainstreaming into APSA have been made. However, to date the vast majority of actors in the peace and security sector (on the African continent) are still men, and the marginalization of women and girls remains a challenge. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all activities of the peace and security sector, ranging from mediation and preventive diplomacy to increasing the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping operations, is still to be realized.

¹ UNSCR 1325 calls for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls across the entire conflict cycle.

Similarly, threats, harassment, violence and hate speech against women as well as gender-based discrimination more generally continue to persist.

Against this background, the GIZ 2020 Gender Competition is a great opportunity to showcase how the APSA project considers **gender aspects in all three intervention areas of the project** (crisis prevention, conflict management and peace consolidation). The project provides a good example of how women (and youth) can be better involved as actors **across the entire conflict cycle** and more generally in the peace and security sector at continental and at regional levels in Africa.

The project takes into account continental guidelines and mechanisms like inter alia the AU Protocol to the *African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003), the *African Union Gender Policy* (2008), and the *Continental Results Framework* which calls for gender equality and the implementation of UNSCR 1325. In addition, the project also aligns its efforts with international obligations like *UNSCR1325* and other subsequent UNSCR resolutions of the *Women, Peace and Security* agenda. The project further supports the domestication of other global and continental agendas like the *Agenda 2030* (SDGs) and the *AU Agenda 2063*.

THE APSA PROJECT: ADDRESSING GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS THE ENTIRE CONFLICT CYCLE & AT DIFFERENT POLICY LEVELS

In the African peace and security sector, the APSA project supports continental and regional capacity building measures for the prevention of crises and conflicts, and in case conflicts escalated into violence, their management and successful

mitigation. The APSA project thereby aims to approach gender mainstreaming and gender equality across the entire conflict cycle and at different policy levels.

1. Intervention Area: Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation

In the intervention area of preventive diplomacy and mediation, the APSA project supports capacity building measures ranging from human capacity building to institutional capacity building and societal outreach activities. The project's interventions are anchored at different policy levels.

At the **AU level**, the project supports the [FemWise-Africa network²](#) which has been launched in 2017 and is being operationalized with the support of the APSA project. The network is a mechanism to **enhance the participation of women in conflict prevention** activities within APSA. The project's support focuses on furthering the development of the FemWise strategy, training development and lessons learned. In the past year, the APSA project supported the FemWise General Assembly, the FemWise Strategy Meeting, two FemWise Steering Committees, a FemWise Conflict Prevention and Mediation Training as well as a FemWise Outreach Workshop. The short-term goal of our support to FemWise is to **build the capacity of female mediation experts** at AU and REC level. Overall and in the long-term, the support to the FemWise network is then an essential prerequisite for the **increased deployment of women in mediation teams at AU and REC level**. Consequently, female mediators will be able to represent and address the demands and needs of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation.

In order to strengthen the links between mediation processes at different levels, the project is also working together with **civil society organizations** to particularly promote the involvement of

² Please follow the links provided to get an impression of concrete examples of our work (strategy documents, videos, etc.).

women in community mediation processes. The first [International Young Women Mediation Forum](#),

which was organized in collaboration with the International Center for



Human Rights and Development (IPHRD-Africa), can be seen as a milestone. The Forum brought together **30 young mediators from 27 countries** to address the lack of women in the field of mediation through the development of strategies to tackle the specific challenges faced by young women in this field. The Forum provided a platform for interaction between young women and experienced women mediators in order to **bridge women's intergenerational experience gap in mediation**. The second *International Young Women Mediation Forum* will again bring together 30 young mediators in end of January 2020 – this time under the theme of “Young Women in Arts for Peace”.

Further, the APSA project also promotes gender equality in its attempts to better involve youth in preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. A prime example is the initiative [Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism \(iDove\)](#) for which the APSA project cooperates with the AU Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and the GIZ Sector Program Values, Religion & Development. The iDove initiative stands out for its emphasis on the soft power of religion and innovative youth-led approaches in preventing violent extremism (PVE). While the initiative primarily focuses on youth in general, its various activities aim for **gender-balance among the participants** and make **gender-sensitive approaches to PVE** a subject of discussion thereby taking into account the varied roles of women as victims, as central members of a community as well as perpetrators of violence.



- Illustratively, out of 44 participants who took part in **iDove' s 3rd Intercontinental Youth Forum**, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 18 – 20 September 2019, 19 participants were female.
- With regard to **iDove' s Training of Trainers (ToT)** activities, female participation is even higher. All ToTs conducted between 2018 and 2019, show gender-equal participation or even a higher female-to-male ratio.

2. Intervention Area: Conflict Management

In line with UNSCR 1325, the project supports the AU in improving professional standards in AU peacekeeping missions. The **compliance framework** for peacekeeping missions,

developed by the AU, thereby serves as a fundamental set of rules and regulations pertaining to human rights and zero tolerance for sexual abuse. In this regard, the APSA project supported the implementation of a **training course on the “Protection of Civilians”**. Together with the AU, the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the project supports the development of a corresponding **compliance training**. It is expected that in the future, this compliance training shall serve as a mandatory preparation for seconded personnel in African-led peacekeeping missions.



Moreover, the project supports the AU in strengthening its **civilian capacity in African-led peacekeeping missions**. The recruitment system (the so-called African Standby Capacity Roster), set up with technical support of the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), enables the accelerated recruitment of qualified civilian personnel. In order to specifically enhance the deployment of women in peacekeeping missions, the project works in cooperation with the AU to develop **gender-sensitive recruitment and secondment** measures. This includes the development of **gender-sensitive outreach material** which specifically targets women. Further, the APSA project supported the review of the AU Recruitment Guidelines for Civilian Personnel that are also focusing on gender. Overall it is aimed to increase the number of female experts on the civilian expert roster for the African Standby Force (ASF) from currently 116 to 250 by 2021.

3. Intervention Area: Peace Consolidation & Post Conflict Reconstruction

In the intervention area of peace consolidation and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD), the project supports the AU in implementing the **Regional Stabilization Strategy (RSS) for the Lake Chad basin region**. The **strengthening and empowerment of women in peace processes** in the region is one of the nine pillars of that strategy. In this context, the project has supported the development of gender sensitive guidelines for Territorial Action Plans, which guide the implementation of the RSS.

As part of the implementation process, the project supports gender-sensitive activities at regional and national levels to implement the RSS. These included, e.g. a **regional stakeholder forum with civil society**, a **pilot training on mental health and psycho-social needs in affected regions**; and a **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) workshop** in collaboration with the Multi-National Joint Task Forces (MNJFT) to raise awareness on compliance regulations and guidelines pertaining to SGBV in armed forces.

MULTI-LEVEL COOPERATION ACROSS THE CONTINENT: FROM THE AU TO CSOs

Cooperation is **anchored on different levels** in the APSA project, both with **internal and external stakeholders**. Internally, the project is well connected across GIZ. The APSA project is a member of the **Network International Cooperation in Conflicts and Disasters (NICD)** and a core member of the **Addis Group for Peace & Security (AGPS)**. In the realm of the AGPS, the APSA project cooperates closely with GIZ projects working at the continental and regional levels in Africa in the area of Peace & Security.

Externally, the APSA project's main cooperation partners are the **AU** and the **RECs**. Within the AU, the project's main partners are the **Department for Peace and Security and its sub-divisions**, as well as the **Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO)**. The project also cooperates with the office of the **AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security**, and other **international cooperation partners** such as the UN, the ICRC and the IOM.

A key focus of the APSA project is to also cooperate with **civil society actors** with which various capacity building measures have been implemented to enhance young women's participation in mediation. As such, the APSA projects represents a unique multi-level approach of cooperation addressing gender equality across the entire conflict cycle with a wide range of partners. The APSA project is overall considered a strong partner for the AU to work together towards gender equality in the African peace and security sector.

ACCOUNTING FOR GENDER: RESULTS-BASED MONITORING

A gender dimension is an integral component of the project's M&E system. The APSA project has a Gender marker (GG1) and, therefore, gender considerations are reflected in the project's **impact matrix**. The equal participation of women is reflected in several outputs and indicators of the project (3, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2). This includes, as has been exemplified above, both measures for gender mainstreaming and those specifically targeting women. Therefore, bi-annual M&E activities, which are held in cooperation with the AU partners, naturally also include an analysis of aggregated and disaggregated data as well as a qualitative gender analysis of the various activities conducted.

Further, the APSA project has a **Gender Focal Point** who provides the gender disaggregated data for the M&E system.