

REMARKS BY H.E MME BINETA DIOP
SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY
4TH HIGH-LEVEL FORUM FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
13-14 DECEMBER, 2023

Your Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,
Your Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
Your Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of Liberia and Patron of the African Women's Leaders Network,
Your Excellency Catherine Samba-Panza, Former President of the Central African Republic,
Representatives from civil society,
African Women Leaders,
Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Permit me to start by giving my most heartfelt thanks to Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde under whose leadership we are here today. As you said yesterday, you live for this continent and your passion truly transpires through your support of the AWLN network and our peace and security initiatives.

Son Excellence Moussa Faki, mon frère et boss, vous avez su à travers vos mots et anecdotes nous montrer l'urgence et l'attention qui doit être portée à la situation des femmes dans les zones de conflit. Nous sommes vraiment honorés de vous avoir comme un champion de la femme au sein de l'Union Africaine. Que Dieu vous garde et sachez que toutes les femmes présentes ici vous sont reconnaissantes.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Gratitude is the word that encapsulates my feelings towards all those of you present at this forum.

I am grateful to our excellencies and leaders, who understand the need for women's participation in peace and security and continue pushing this agenda. I mentioned a few of them at the beginning but I would like to personally thank a few more.

Catherine Samba Panza

Madame Awa Ndiaye Seck

Dr Joyce Banda

Dr Aisha Buhari

AWLN leaders

I am grateful to our women leaders and civil society representatives here who, despite the obstacles and the hostile environment, continue to fight for their sisters, mothers and daughters.

I am grateful to our partners: UNOAU, FemWise, UNDPM UNFPA, la Francophonie, Denmark, GIZ for their continuous and unbreakable commitment to our cause. Without your kind support, this forum would not have been such a success.

I am grateful to Her Excellency Helen Johnson Sirleaf, you are a pioneer and paved the way for women leaders of today and tomorrow. Still, you continue to support, guide and reinforce us. Your availability and support are not taken for granted.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This forum in particular is an important turning point. We truly focused on actioning the participation of women and ensuring we listened to the recommendations from the diverse communities present. The three working groups were not chosen lightly and we thank each group for making such insightful inputs on the situation in each of their regions. We have heard your plea and, as the special envoy, I reiterate my and the office's commitment to carrying out the recommendations that stem from this forum.

Before I close, I would like to remind you of the reason why we are here. We have been advocating and claiming the need to include women in peace negotiations and processes. However, that stems from an undeniable fact: women are at the heart of societies and they are being violated. As we push for recommendations, we need to remember the women refugees who are trying to recreate a home far away from home, the women who have been raped and are trying to reconstruct their identities and the women who are still going through these injustices. As we move forward, let us think: what can we as individuals do for these women?

I thank you for your kind attention.