

**REMARKS BY H.E MME BINETA DIOP
SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY
LAUNCH OF THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL CHAPTER OF
THE AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS NETWORK (AWLN)**

30th MARCH, 2022

- **Excellency Mme. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of Liberia - AWLN Patron**
- **Excellency Mme. Mrs. W.K. Mutale Nalumango, Vice President of the Republic of Zambia**
- **Hon. Princess Kasune, Member of Parliament**
- **Excellency Mme. Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General**
- **Ms. Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative of the UNSG for the Horn of Africa Excellency**
- **Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa UNDP Assistant Administrator & Regional Director for Africa**
- **Ms. Mme. Anita Bhatia Deputy Executive Director, UN Women**
- **Ms. Diene Keita, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director**
- **Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Representatives of Regional Organizations**
- **Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio, UN Resident Coordinator for Zambia**
- **Distinguished Members of the African Women Leaders Network**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am honored to be present in this platform today for the launch of the African Women Leaders Network's Zambia National Chapter (AWLN Zambia). I am pleased that the meeting is being held virtually which allows me to participate as well as our members from around the continent.

I commend the authorities for their support in this process, and I especially recognize the Vice-President, for being here this afternoon despite, I am sure, her busy schedule. I also Thank AWLN Patron, Mama Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, for her leadership and guidance and for being always present when we call upon her. I further seize this opportunity to thank to the UN Resident Coordinator, Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio, for spearheading these efforts with her team.

The commitment to establish a National Chapter was articulated during a meeting with the UN Resident Coordinator last year. We had discussed her office's assistance in launching the Zambia National Chapter as well as the development of the Zambia National Action Plan on UNSC Res.1325. I am glad that today, it has been materialized in coordination with AWLN Special Representative for the establishment of National Chapters, Awa Ndiaye Seck along with the UN team, and national actors.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Network has grown since its establishment in 2017 in New York. We recently underwent an evaluation process which results were remarkable and "stunning" according to the report. Indeed, the establishment of the national chapters and the adoption of national action plans were some of the key undertakings that have been commended. Today, we are pleased to announce that Zambia will become the 27th country to launch its National Chapter. I therefore congratulate the Government of Zambia and the women of Zambia for taking at heart this movement and for coming together to make this launch a reality. Bravo to the women!

We often say that the National Chapters are the driving force of the AWLN Network. For AWLN's sustainability, we must ensure that our actions are anchored within the National Chapters as well as at local levels. To this point, we must provide an enabling environment for the women to proactively shape their engagements around the various pillars. To recall, the Network adopted flagship projects in six strategic areas of action or pillars: (1) Governance and political participation, (2) Peace and Security, (3) Financial inclusion, (4) Agriculture (5) Social mobilization and (6) Young women leadership.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Let me underscore that AWLN is not meant to replace any existing women initiative, but instead, to stimulate and propel women's movements and boost the leadership role of Women in the transformation of our continent into a peaceful, prosperous, and inclusive continent through Africa's Agenda 2063 and the Global Agenda 2030. Indeed, AWLN's vision is to serve as a platform that builds the right ecosystems and synergy to mobilize women with the aim of delivering on AWLN priority areas. To illustrate, I wish to recall the creation of the African Women Leadership Impact Fund (AWLIF), under the leadership of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). AWLIF objective is to establish a robust and consistent pool of African Women fund managers who will open big capital to women led enterprises. The fund will allow women to move from the confinement of the traditional micro-credit dominated by women, to a larger capital-based enterprises.

We also have the initiative on Empowering Women in Agriculture (EWA), which builds the capacity of women farmers and promotes decent access of women to agricultural inputs (land, financing, technology...)

EWA initiative intents to pull women out of subsistence agriculture, into agribusiness and reap returns to change lives.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to stress the following: united, we succeed but divided, we fail! We must never underestimate the power of unity. I therefore call on the women of Zambia to unite around the vision, the mission, and the call to action of AWLN. I encourage all the women of Africa to strive for leadership, to run for political offices, to take their much-deserved seats in the boardrooms of private sector companies and in various sectors that impact the way to development. It is only then, that we will realize what we intended when we created AWLN, Five years ago.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

My last point is on the Youth. Today, we are faced with a generation of young women that are far advanced in their quest for leadership than my generation. We, the elders must encourage that boldness in our youth; we must lead them across the paths of success through mentorship and co-leadership through an intergenerational lens.

The AWLN Young Women Leaders Network created and launched a mentorship platform at their last Intergenerational Retreat in November 2021, and they will soon start with the first cohort. I encourage the young women to join the caucus (*Ms Fatou will share the link to the platform in the chat box, you can find out more about it*). I also encourage the young women to establish the Zambian Young Women Leaders Caucus to interact directly with other young women across the continent. (*They have their own social media account on twitter-info will be in the chat box*).

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

To conclude, allow me to note that AWLN is at the cutting edge of creating conducive conditions to unleash the power and leadership of women at all levels. It is important to remember that to succeed, we must apply the *women to women solidarity* as when women support each other, amazing things happen!

You can count on us, the women pioneer of AWLN. You can count on me.

Congratulations women leaders of Zambia!