



PRESS RELEASE

Women and youth pledge to further engage for peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel

Dakar, 27 June 2019 – The President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council of Senegal, Mrs. Aminata Toure, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Senegal, Mr. Theo Peters, the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mrs. Ruby Sandhu-Rojon and Mr. Mohamed Ndiaye, Representing Mrs. Ndèye Saly Diop Dieng, Minister of Women, Family, Gender and Child Protection of Senegal co-chaired, on 25 June 2019, in Dakar, the official commemoration ceremony for the 10 year anniversary of the Working group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel (WGWYPS-WAS).

Women and young leaders from West Africa and the Sahel, members of the WGWYPS-WAS established in seventeen (17) countries in the region in addition to the diaspora, academics and representatives of civil society, Government structures, regional organizations and United Nations entities took part in the two-day celebration. They took the opportunity to take stock of the 10 years of existence of the Working Group, to discuss the achievements and especially, to articulate effective strategies for a better mobilization of women and youth for peacebuilding in the region.

The Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mrs. Sandhu-Rojon, highlighted the working group's added value and said that the WGWYPS "is a result to be proud of. It is also an asset that must be safeguarded, particularly in a regional context which keeps experiencing complex challenges.

Representing Mrs. Oulimata Sarr, UN WOMEN's Regional Director ai, Mrs. Marie-Josée Kandanga, Regional advisor for Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action urged the group to adopt new strategies to help face security challenges that threaten the subregion.

M. Theo Peters, Ambassador of the Netherlands, who, on 24 June 2019, convened a meeting between members of the WGWYP-WAS and Ambassadors accredited to Senegal, stated that the involvement of women and young people in peace and security is a "work that requires the efforts of the international community, the United Nations, governments, and especially civil society". During this meeting, members of the WGWYPS-WAS presented their strategic programs for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

While giving a background on the creation of the Working Group, Mr. Ahmed Awudu Gumah from the Ecowas Gender Development Center (EGDC) recalled the importance of "further strengthening the collaboration in the coordination of networks working on Women, Peace and Security".

For her part, Mrs. Aminata Touré, President of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, pledged to support the Working Group's initiatives in Senegal.

Put in place on 29 April 2009 and coordinated by UNOWAS and UN Women, the WGWYPS--WAS is an inclusive and participative platform for experience sharing, analysis and evaluation of the sub-region's initiatives and efforts in the promotion and implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and subsequent ones on Women, Youth, Peace and Security.