



THE WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN, YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

ABIDJAN CALL

For Enhanced Investment in Women, Youth, Peace, Security and Economic Resilience in West Africa and the Sahel

We, the participants in the High-Level Regional Week on Women, Youth, Peace, Security and Economic Resilience in West Africa and the Sahel, convened in Abidjan, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, from 28 September to 3 October 2026,

Reaffirming our commitment to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), as well as Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), 2535 (2020) and 2807 (2025) on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS);

Concerned by the persistence of conflicts, violent extremism, forced displacement, gender inequalities, youth unemployment, the adverse effects of climate change, transnational crime including drug-related vulnerabilities, challenges related to digital resilience, migration, and socio-economic fragilities that continue to undermine peace, security and sustainable development across our region;

Recognizing that women and young people remain inadequately represented in decision-making processes despite their critical role in conflict prevention, social cohesion, mediation, innovation and economic transformation;

- The Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel (GTFJPS-WAS) is a multi-stakeholder platform whose primary mission is to promote, monitor, evaluate and support the effective implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 2250 (2015) and subsequent resolutions on Women, Youth, Peace and Security. The Working Group is coordinated by UNOWAS and UN Women. Its Secretariat is based at UNOWAS in Dakar, Senegal. The Group is represented in 17 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Chad and Togo, as well as within the diaspora in France.

Aware that the chronic underfunding of the WPS and YPS agendas, limited access to decent employment, the mismatch between education and training systems and labour market demands, as well as restricted access to productive resources and financing, constitute major impediments to economic resilience and regional stability;

Convinced that investment in women and young people represents one of the most effective means of preventing conflict, strengthening community resilience and building sustainable peace;

Hereby issue the Abidjan Call and call upon:

I. Member States to:

- Increase public and private investment in the economic empowerment of women and the promotion of decent employment opportunities for young people, particularly in fragile, rural, border and conflict-affected areas, making economic resilience a central pillar of peace and development policies.
- Strengthen and support education systems, technical and vocational training, apprenticeships and career guidance programmes in order to reduce skills mismatches and better align available competencies with labour market needs, particularly in high-potential sectors such as the digital economy, the green economy, sustainable agriculture and innovation.
- Ensure the effective, meaningful and inclusive participation of women and young people in public institutions, decision-making processes, conflict prevention mechanisms, mediation, dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the WPS and YPS agendas.

II. Regional and International Organizations to:

- Further integrate the WPS and YPS agendas into regional policies, strategies and mechanisms relating to peace, security, governance and development.

- Establish or strengthen regional mechanisms for monitoring, learning, data-sharing and accountability in order to assess progress in the implementation of the WPS and YPS agendas.
- Enhance the production, analysis and use of sex-, age- and location-disaggregated data to inform public policies, measure results and improve the monitoring of commitments.
- Develop regional initiatives that promote skills mobility, entrepreneurship, innovation, employability and the economic resilience of women and young people.

III. Technical and Financial Partners to:

- Significantly increase financing for the WPS and YPS agendas and ensure more direct, flexible and sustainable access to resources for local women's and youth organizations.
- Invest further in vocational training, apprenticeship, mentorship, digital skills development and entrepreneurship programmes tailored to the actual needs of labour markets.
- Support innovative financing mechanisms for peacebuilding, economic resilience, social innovation and enterprises led by women and young people.

IV. The Private Sector and Financial Institutions to:

- Facilitate access for women and young people to credit, financial services, markets, value chains and investment opportunities.
- Develop structured partnerships with universities, training centres and public institutions to bridge the gap between available skills and labour market requirements.
- Create increased opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, decent employment, mentorship and entrepreneurial support, with particular attention to young women, displaced persons, young people living in fragile environments, persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable populations.

V. Women's Organizations, Youth Organizations and Civil Society to:

- Strengthen coalitions, intergenerational dialogue platforms and mechanisms for collaboration and cooperation between the WPS and YPS agendas.
- Promote citizen-led monitoring of commitments undertaken by stakeholders and contribute to strengthening transparency and accountability.
- Develop, document and scale up innovative initiatives promoting peace, inclusion, entrepreneurship, social cohesion and economic resilience.

Collective Commitment

We commit to:

- Strengthening synergies between the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas;
- Promoting transformative leadership by women and young people at all levels;
- Investing in employment, education, vocational training, innovation and entrepreneurship as foundations of sustainable peace;

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- Developing strategic partnerships among governments, regional organizations, the United Nations, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society;
- Strengthening coordination, accountability and the monitoring of commitments at national, regional and international levels;
- Promoting an inclusive approach that pays particular attention to women, young people and communities most affected by conflict, forced displacement and multidimensional crises;
- Ensuring regular follow-up on progress achieved and commitments undertaken.

Final Call

We call for the development of a Regional Pact for Employment, Skills Development, Entrepreneurship and Economic Resilience for Women and Youth in West Africa and the Sahel, with a view to making access to decent employment, quality vocational training, innovation and financing central pillars of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

We further call upon States, regional organizations, technical and financial partners, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society to join efforts in addressing the deficits in financing, participation, skills and economic opportunities that continue to hinder the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas.

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Finally, we call for renewed regional mobilization to ensure that investment in women and young people becomes a tangible and strategic investment in peace, security, social cohesion, economic resilience and shared prosperity.

Because investing in women and young people is investing in peace, security, resilience, research, knowledge generation and the future of West Africa and the Sahel.

Adopted in Abidjan, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, on 29 September 2026.

The Participants