

West African States back UN resolution promoting role of women in peace and security



Said Djinnit, Special Representative for West Africa

17 September 2010 – West African countries today moved towards ensuring the equal participation and full involvement in all peace and security issues in compliance with a landmark Security Council resolution.

Representatives of 16 countries across the region adopted the Dakar Declaration after a three-day forum in the Senegalese capital that considered how West Africa can better implement resolution 1325.

That resolution, adopted by the Council 10 years ago this month, is considered historic for its recognition of the vital role that women can play in preventing, diminishing and ending conflicts.

The Dakar Declaration stresses the need for the effective participation of women in peace processes, the protection of women and girls from conflict-related sexual violence and a reduction in conflicts through the greater involvement of women in preventive diplomacy.

It also emphasizes the importance of adequate care and humanitarian services during the relief and recovery periods after conflicts, disasters or other crises.

Gender ministers in West Africa have made commitments under the declaration to draw up national action plans outlining what steps they will take to implement resolution 1325 in their countries, while monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will also be set up to check what progress is being made.

This process will be shepherded by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with the UN Office for West Africa (**UNOWA**) and United Nations Women (**UN Women**), the new UN entity dedicated to gender issues.

Said Djinnit, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, attended the forum and told the UN News Centre that this week's forum represented the first time that such issues were being discussed at the regional level.

UNOWA, which Mr. Djinnit heads, organized the forum in cooperation with several other UN agencies, including the UN Development Fund for Women (**UNIFEM**), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**), the UN Population Fund (**UNFPA**), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**), the UN Development Programme (**UNDP**), the UN Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) and the UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Dakar.

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