



WPS BULLETIN

Message from the Editor



Dear Readers,

The December 2025 WPS Bulletin captures a pivotal moment for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda across Africa. It is a moment marked by a growing recognition that commitments alone are no longer sufficient. Across the continent, from high-level forums to community initiatives, there is a palpable urgency to translate WPS frameworks into tangible outcomes for women and girls affected by conflict, political upheaval, climate crisis, and entrenched structural inequality.

At the continental level, the 6th High-Level Africa Forum on Women, Peace and Security in Tunis was a stark reckoning. While Africa has demonstrated strong leadership in developing WPS norms, the implementation gaps remain stark. Twenty-five years after the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the challenge is no longer the lack of frameworks, but rather lack of political will, inadequate and insufficient financing, weak accountability mechanisms, and an uneven distribution of power between women and men. These realities echo throughout this Bulletin, reinforcing the key message: advancing the WPS agenda requires moving beyond symbolic inclusion and towards truly transformative change - change that redistributes power, centres women's lived realities and delivers

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measurable impact at national, regional and community levels

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, women have been active in building peace and have significantly contributed to peace processes, however, these efforts are constrained by entrenched structural barriers, insufficient resources, and limited influence over the substance of peace agreements and post-conflict recovery. But there are also glimmers of hope, initiatives like women-led mediation in South Sudan and Lesotho demonstrate that when women are empowered and trusted as peace actors, community resilience and the legitimacy of peace processes are strengthened.

This Bulletin also shines a light on the alarming shrinking civic space and the reality of the protection risks faced by women human rights defenders, as seen in Uganda's pre-election environment and the tragic killings of women protesters in Nigeria. These cases expose the heightened dangers confronted by women who dare to engage in politics, protest, and public accountability. They raise urgent questions about state responsibility, civilian protection, and the fundamental obligation to respect, protect and fulfil rights.

Woven throughout the Bulletin are the emerging and intersecting challenges reshaping peace and security across the continent - from climate change in the Sahel to digital insecurity for women journalists, and adolescent girls' health and rights in Zambia. Large-scale initiatives such as Scaling Up Resilience in Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA) hold immense potential for strengthening resilience and livelihood. However, they also risk reinforcing exclusion if gender considerations are treated as an afterthought rather than a core design principle. Similarly, issues like gender-safe media environment and sustainable financing for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are shown to be foundational, not peripheral, to democratic governance and sustainable peace.

The overarching message of the December 2025 Bulletin is clear: the time has come to move from mere commitments to consequential action. Whether in peace negotiations, climate adaptation, electoral processes, or the defense of civic space, women's rights, leadership, and safety must be central to peace and security outcomes. Without sustained investment, unwavering political will, and enforceable accountability, progress will remain uneven - at a time when conflict dynamics across the continent are becoming more complex, protracted, and deeply gendered.

This is a pivotal moment, a collective call to action, and a challenge to all who believe in the transformative power of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The path forward may not be easy, but the stakes have never been higher. In 2026, let us heed the lessons of this Bulletin, roll up our sleeves, and forge a future in which no woman or girl is left behind, even in the face of the most daunting of circumstances.

**In Sisterhood and Solidarity,
Helen Kezie-Nwoha**

Acronyms

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AWiM	African Women in Media
AWLN	African Women Leaders Network
CAAP	Collaborative Advocacy Action Plan
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
LGA	Local Government Area
MPs	Members of Parliament
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PA-GGW	Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SURAGGWA	Strengthening Resilience of Africa's Great Green Wall
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNOAU	United Nations Office to the African Union
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security



Tunis Declaration: 6th High-Level Africa Forum on Women, Peace and Security

From 9th to 10th December 2025, women leaders, policymakers, civil society actors, and partners convened in Tunis, Tunisia, for the 6th High-Level Africa Forum on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) under the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC) Office of the AU Special Envoy on WPS. The Forum marked 25 years since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and provided a critical space to reflect on progress and chart a renewed strategic vision for advancing the WPS agenda in Africa. The Forum celebrated Africa's global leadership in shaping the normative and policy frameworks for the WPS agenda. However, it also acknowledged the persistent gaps between the inspiring commitments and the realities on the ground, which continue to challenge the lives of women and girls in conflict-affected areas.

The discussions at the Forum highlighted the urgent need to move beyond mere policy articulation towards effective implementation of the agenda. Key issues emerging from the discussions included securing sustainable and gender-responsive financing, ensuring meaningful participation of women in peace processes, protecting women human rights defenders, and strengthening accountability for the violations committed against women and girls in conflict settings. Participants also explored emerging and compounding risks, such as climate change, digital technologies, youth exclusion, and shrinking civic space which are disproportionately impacting women and reshaping peace and security dynamics across the continent.

While the continent's normative leadership remains a strength, translating political commitments into tangible protection, participation, and prevention outcomes for women in conflict-affected contexts remains uneven. Advancing the next phase of the WPS agenda in Africa will require a decisive shift from symbolic inclusion to power redistribution, from ad hoc funding to sustained investment, and from rhetorical commitments to enforceable accountability. Without this transformative shift, the promise of the WPS agenda risks stagnation at a time when conflict dynamics on the continent are becoming increasingly complex, protracted, and gendered.

https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/45816-pr-FINAL_OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_6th_High-Level_Africa_Forum_on_Women_Peace_and_Security_1.pdf

DRC: Making Women's Priorities Non-Negotiable in Peace Agreements

In December 2025, a national workshop in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) renewed urgent calls for the systematic integration of women's priorities into peace agreements, highlighting the persistent disconnect between Women, Peace and Security (WPS) commitments and their implementation. Convened by the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children through the National Secretariat on UNSCR1325, the meeting brought together government actors, civil society, and gender experts at a critical moment for peacebuilding in the country.

At the heart of the discussions was the launch of a Women and Security database, a tool designed to support evidence-based policy, conflict prevention, and post-conflict recovery. While presented as a technical solution, this initiative responds to a deeply political challenge: the experiences of women during conflict, particularly the devastating impact of sexual violence, displacement, loss of livelihoods, and exclusion from decision-making. Women continue to be marginalized in formal peace negotiations and agreements.

Government representatives who attended the workshop reiterated their commitments to meaningful participation of women, including targets of 50% representation of women and 30% for youth in peace processes, alongside the implementation of the third-generation National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. However, women's rights organizations continue to caution that numerical inclusion alone does not translate into real influence. Without provisions addressing women's priorities such as protection, justice and reparations, land and resource rights, and economic recovery, peace agreements risk perpetuating the very inequalities that fueled the conflict in the first place.

The context in the DRC reflects a broader challenge across the continent. Women are increasingly recognized as key stakeholders in peace processes, but their priorities remain mere recommendations rather than enforceable requirements. Data, frameworks, and action plans exist; what remains lacking is the genuine political will, accountability, and sustained financing to translate these commitments into tangible, measurable outcomes.

For peace in the DRC to be truly durable, women must not only be present at the negotiation tables, but must also shape the substance of the peace agreements. Integrating women's priorities is not an optional add-on or a mere technical exercise, it is a political necessity. Without centering the voices and needs of women, peace processes risk remaining fragile, exclusionary, and disconnected from the realities of those most profoundly affected by conflict.

<https://acp.cd/anglais/drc-the-integration-of-womens-priorities-recommended-for-peace-agreements/>

Uganda: Gender-Responsive Election Security and Electoral Integrity

As Uganda approaches its January 2026 general elections, the pre-election environment drew attention to the importance of safeguarding human rights as a foundation for credible, inclusive, and peaceful electoral processes. ARTICLE 19 an online news outlet raised concerns around restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association, noting their potential impact on electoral integrity. These were worrying signs that the rights and voices of all citizens, particularly the most marginalized, might not be fully respected and protected in the lead-up to the polls.

ARTICLE 19 warns that this pattern of political arrests, violent dispersal of protests, and targeting of activists and journalists risks undermining the credibility of the 2026 elections. The organisation calls on the Ugandan government to urgently protect civic space by ending arbitrary arrests and detentions, ensuring due process, preventing excessive use of force, ending enforced disappearances, investigating abuses, and upholding Uganda's regional and international human rights obligations to guarantee free, peaceful, and credible elections.

At the heart of this effort must be a comprehensive, gender-responsive approach to election security. It is always essential that the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by women are addressed head-on. Women candidates, voters, and human rights defenders have long confronted heightened barriers to meaningful political participation, from gender-based violence and intimidation to entrenched cultural biases. Security measures must be designed and implemented with an acute awareness of these specific risks and concerns. This includes facilitating the freedom of peaceful assembly and expression, ensuring due process for any women who are detained, and equipping security forces with the training and protocols to prevent and respond to gender-based electoral violence.

Beyond just mitigating threats, however, there must also be a concerted push to empower women's political agency. This means investing in civic education initiatives that inspire and empower women to claim their democratic rights. It means working with women's civil society organizations to amplify their voices and strengthen their advocacy capacity, and ensuring women are represented at all levels of the electoral management process, from policymaking to on-the-ground implementation.

Ultimately, the full and equal participation of women is not just a box to be checked, but a vital component of Uganda's democratic development. When women are able to freely and safely engage in the political sphere, they bring vital perspectives, priorities, and solutions that strengthen the legitimacy and responsiveness of electoral outcomes. Protecting and empowering women's political agency, then, is not just a matter of rights, but of building a more inclusive, representative, and resilient democracy.

<https://www.article19.org/resources/uganda-protecting-human-rights-safeguards-electoral-integrity/>

Women Protesters Killed in Lamurde, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

On 8 December 2025, at least nine women protesters were killed and several others injured after the Nigerian Army allegedly opened fire on a peaceful demonstration in Lamurde Local Government Area, northeast Nigeria.

The women had gathered along a major road to protest persistent insecurity and the authorities' failure to prevent recurring communal violence linked to clashes between the Bachama and Chobo communities. The demonstrators were reportedly unarmed and carried green leaves, a traditional symbol of peaceful protest, to express grievances over ongoing attacks, displacement, and the limited protection provided by security forces despite the imposition of a curfew.

Soldiers encountered the protesters at a roadblock and attempted to clear the route. After an initial warning shot was fired into the air, troops allegedly opened live fire on the crowd. Several women were reportedly shot, while others sustained injuries as they attempted to flee. The wounded were taken to nearby hospitals amid reports of inadequate medical capacity.

In a statement issued on 9 December 2025, the Nigerian Army's 23 Brigade denied that its personnel killed civilians, asserting that soldiers were not responsible for the deaths and attributing the violence to local militia activity elsewhere in the area. Human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, disputed this account, citing testimonies from witnesses and families that directly implicate security forces.

The incident triggered protests and condemnation at both local and national levels. On 10th December 2025, demonstrators gathered in Abuja calling for accountability, justice for the victims, and an independent investigation into the killings.

This incident highlights ongoing concerns about the use of lethal force against civilians exercising their right to peaceful assembly in Nigeria. Women's leadership in community protest has historically played a critical role in conflict prevention and accountability, yet this case underscores the heightened risks faced by women who mobilise around security failures. Conflicting narratives between state authorities and civil society further point to longstanding challenges around transparency, civilian protection, and trust in security institutions. The killings raise urgent questions about Nigeria's compliance with regional and international human rights obligations, particularly in conflict-affected contexts where militarised responses continue to dominate over community-centred approaches to peace and security.

<https://apnews.com/article/nigeria-protesters-killings-human-rights-6e656a2599f60fddb048c5a8781a1db0>

Women Mediators Transforming Community Peace in Lesotho.

In a significant shift toward community-driven peacebuilding, women leaders and mediators in Lesotho are being equipped with skills to prevent and manage local conflicts, and strengthen social cohesion at the community level. Through support from the UN Peacebuilding Fund and UN Women, initiatives across the country are training women mediators in negotiation, conflict analysis, and dialogue facilitation, equipping them to address disagreements before they escalate into violence.

These trained mediators will engage with local stakeholders including traditional leaders, community councils, youth groups and security actors to support peaceful resolutions of disputes ranging from land disagreements to family conflicts. By placing women at the forefront of conflict prevention, the programme recognises not only the disproportionate impact of insecurity on women and girls, but also the unique contributions women make to strengthening social trust and community resilience.

Socio-economic and political tensions sometimes spill over into community-level disputes, the presence of women-led mediation networks is helping to fill gaps in formal conflict resolution structures. By creating culturally grounded spaces for dialogue, these mediators build bridges of understanding in contexts historically dominated by patriarchal leadership systems.

Support for these initiatives aligns with broader regional momentum. Across Southern Africa, networks of women mediators are being launched to strengthen women's participation in conflict prevention and peace processes, recognising that inclusive peace mechanisms produce more sustainable outcomes.

Women mediators in Lesotho report that their work has helped reduce tensions in several districts by fostering timely communication between disputing parties and by promoting accountable local governance. Their interventions are not limited to conflict resolution; they also nurture civic participation, reintegrate marginalised voices into community decision-making, and challenge gendered norms that have traditionally constrained women's leadership.

The Lesotho experience illustrates that meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding strengthens both prevention and resilience. Training women mediators expands the peace ecosystem beyond enforcement-led responses, centering community agency and trust. However, structural barriers persist, including limited funding, entrenched gender norms, and under-representation in formal political spaces, which can constrain the long-term impact of women's mediation efforts. For lasting peace, these community gains must be matched by institutional reforms, predictable resources, and policies that secure women's leadership in all peace and governance structures. Investments in local women peacebuilders are not just about representation but about transformative, community-rooted conflict prevention and sustainable peace that resonates with ordinary citizens.

<https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/feature-story/2025/12/women-leaders-and-mediators-are-equipped-to-transform-communities-in-lesotho>

Leaders Speak Out for Gender Justice in Peacebuilding in Somalia

In a significant move towards lasting peace and development, Somalia has placed gender justice at the forefront of its peacebuilding efforts. At the opening of the country's first Annual Justice Sector Conference, UNDP Somalia Resident Representative Lionel Laurens emphasized that advancing gender justice and ensuring equal access to legal aid and protection are not only moral imperatives, but essential to sustainable peace.

This aligns with Somalia's Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP), launched in 2022, which commits the state to strengthening women's participation, protection, and access to justice across peace and security institutions. The NAP recognizes that durable peace in Somalia depends on dismantling systemic barriers that exclude women from decision-making and deny survivors of violence effective legal redress.

However, the implementation of the National Action Plan remains uneven across the country. Women continue to face significant obstacles in accessing formal justice systems, especially in conflict-affected and displaced communities, where insecurity, poverty, and social norms intersect to limit women's agency. While women's networks have played critical roles in mediation, early warning, and community peacebuilding, their contributions remain under-resourced and insufficiently institutionalized within national peace and security frameworks.

Somalia's WPS National Action Plan offers a clear roadmap, but its effectiveness will be measured by delivery, not design. Without sustained financing, coordination across federal and state levels, and robust accountability mechanisms, the NAP risks remaining aspirational. Gender justice cannot be advanced through isolated conferences or policy commitments; it requires structural investment in justice institutions, protection systems, and women's leadership at all levels.

For Somalia, accelerating WPS implementation is not optional but essential to breaking cycles of violence and building peace that is inclusive, resilient, and legitimate in the eyes of its people. The time for action is now, as the country strives to forge a future where no woman or girl is left behind, even in the face of ongoing challenges.

<https://peacenews.com/leaders-speak-out-for-gender-justice-in-peacebuilding-in-somalia/>

Regional Launch of SURAGGWA: USD 222 Million to Strengthen Climate Resilience in the Sahel

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PA-GGW), officially launched the Strengthening Resilience of Africa's Great Green Wall (SURAGGWA) regional programme in Nouakchott in December 2025. Approved in July 2025 by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the programme mobilised USD 222 million, including USD 150 million in GCF grants and USD 72 million in co-financing from eight Sahelian countries which include: Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

Designed to strengthen climate resilience, restore degraded land, and improve food security, SURAGGWA responds to escalating climate shocks that continue to exacerbate poverty, displacement, and insecurity across the Sahel, where environmental stress increasingly intersects with fragile governance and conflict dynamics.

While framed as an environmental and development intervention, SURAGGWA will have significant social and gendered consequences. Women in the Sahel are at the centre of agriculture, food production, and natural resource management, yet they are disproportionately affected by climate change through increased unpaid labour, declining livelihoods, food insecurity, and heightened exposure to protection risks, particularly in displacement and conflict-affected settings. As land becomes more degraded and water scarcity deepens, women's economic autonomy and participation in community decision-making are further constrained, deepening existing inequalities. Large-scale climate finance initiatives therefore carry both opportunity and risk: they can strengthen resilience and livelihoods, or they can entrench exclusion if gender considerations are treated as secondary.

From a Women, Peace and Security perspective, the success of SURAGGWA will depend not only on hectares restored or funds disbursed, but on whether it meaningfully addresses power, access, and inclusion. Without deliberate measures to secure women's land rights, support women-led livelihoods, and ensure women's participation in climate governance, resilience efforts risk reinforcing the very vulnerabilities they seek to address. In a region where climate stress fuels instability and competition over resources, climate adaptation that sideline women undermines both peace and sustainability. For SURAGGWA to contribute to lasting resilience in the Sahel, gender-responsive implementation and accountability must be integral not optional, recognising women as central actors in climate adaptation, food security, and peacebuilding rather than passive beneficiaries.

<https://www.fao.org/africa/news-stories/news-detail/regional-launch-of-suraggwa-usd-222-million-to-strengthen-climate-resilience-in-the-sahel/enwomen>

South Sudanese Women Mediators Leading Peace Discussions, Juba, South Sudan

With UN Women's leadership, and in partnership with the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) and women's civil society organizations, 21 women have been trained, mentored, and coached in mediation and negotiations, strengthening the national Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and empowering women to lead inclusive dialogues at a critical juncture in South Sudan's peace process. In December 2025, these mediators played a central role in high-level peace discussions in Juba, contributing directly to political dialogues aimed at advancing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). Their participation reflects a meaningful shift from tokenistic inclusion toward genuine engagement, ensuring that women's voices shape decisions that affect the country's future. Beyond formal negotiations, these mediators have connected local peacebuilding experiences to national policy discussions, challenging entrenched gender norms and creating pathways for broader societal participation.

Supported by UN Women, CEPO, and international partners including Norway, the European Union, and the United Kingdom, these women have shown that women are not merely beneficiaries of peace agreements but essential architects of inclusive and legitimate political settlements. Their work demonstrates how gender-responsive mediation can strengthen both the effectiveness of negotiations and the legitimacy of outcomes, reinforcing women's centrality in peacebuilding and governance structures. This approach is particularly critical in South Sudan, where decades of conflict have disproportionately affected women and girls, eroding access to education, livelihoods, and protection while reinforcing systemic inequalities.

Despite these advances, South Sudan's post-conflict recovery remains fragile. The peace process continues to face significant obstacles, including delays in reunification of forces, incomplete implementation of ceasefire provisions, and persistent intercommunal violence in multiple states. These challenges disproportionately impact women, who continue to bear the brunt of displacement, economic insecurity, and gender-based violence. Structural barriers, including limited access to justice, weak governance systems, and entrenched social norms, continue to constrain women's full participation in public life and in decision-making at all levels of peace building and reconstruction processes.

The engagement of trained women mediators represents tangible progress for the WPS agenda, moving beyond rhetoric to practical influence in negotiations. However, for these gains to translate into lasting impact, they must be reinforced by institutional reforms, accountability mechanisms, and dedicated resources that protect women's space in peace processes and strengthen their leadership in post-conflict reconstruction. Real and sustainable peace in South Sudan will not be achieved without dismantling socio-political barriers that undermine women's agency. Ensuring that women mediators are contributors to the country's peace strategy is essential because inclusive peace is not optional—it is foundational to stability, equity, and lasting reconciliation.

<https://southsudan.un.org/en/306922-south-sudanese-women-mediators-leading-peace-discussions-juba-south-sudan-%E2%80%93-december-2025>

Advancing Gender-Safe Media in Africa: UNESCO presents its new World Trends Report on Freedom of Expression and Media Development

From 4th to 5th December, the African Women in Media (AWiM), a key UNESCO partner, held its annual conference (AWiM25) at the African Union Commission headquarters in Addis Ababa under the theme “Beyond Commitments: Advancing Policies for Gender-Safe Media.” The event brought together over 200 journalists, policymakers, academics and gender advocates from across Africa and beyond to discuss policies and practices to strengthen women’s safety, participation and representation in the media sector. The conference coincided with the presentation of UNESCO’s World Trends Report on Freedom of Expression, situating gender-safe media as a central pillar of democratic governance, accountability and inclusive peacebuilding.

Discussions highlighted that women journalists and media personnel across Africa continue to face disproportionate risks, including online harassment, intimidation, surveillance, and physical threats. These violations not only undermine individual rights but also restrict women’s freedom of expression and participation in public discourse, weakening the media’s role in exposing injustice, preventing conflict, and amplifying community voices. Participants stressed that unsafe media environments silence women and marginalised groups, reinforcing gender inequality and shrinking civic space at a time when credible, inclusive information is more critical than ever.

The conference called for stronger, enforceable policies that move beyond commitments to concrete action. These include gender-responsive media laws, workplace protection, accountability mechanisms for online platforms, and national strategies to address digital gender-based violence. Speakers at the conference emphasised that women’s safety in media spaces is inseparable from broader Women, Peace and Security (WPS) objectives, as women communicators play a vital role in shaping narratives on peace processes, good governance, human rights, and post-conflict recovery.

UNESCO’s World Trends Report provided an evidence-based foundation for advocacy, highlighting persistent gender disparities in media leadership, representation, and protection, alongside emerging threats linked to digitalisation and disinformation. African women media practitioners underscored the need for sustained investment in training, mentorship, and institutional reforms that enable women not only to survive in media spaces, but to lead and influence them.

Ultimately, AWiM25 reaffirmed that gender-safe media are not a peripheral concern but a democratic necessity. For Africa’s peace, security and governance agendas to be credible and inclusive, women must be able to speak, report and participate in public discourse without fear. Advancing gender-safe media requires political will, coordinated policy action and accountability across governments, media institutions and digital platforms. Without these measures, commitments to freedom of expression and the WPS agenda will remain incomplete, and the voices most vital to peace, justice and accountability will continue to be pushed to the margin.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/26/guinea-bissau-officers-take-total-control-close-borders-amid-election-chaos?CMP=share_btn_url



Zambia: Collaborative Advocacy Drives a Turning Point for Adolescent Girls' Health

Momentum building around adolescent wellbeing in December 2025 marked a turning point for adolescent girls' health in Zambia, as the Collaborative Advocacy Action Plan (CAAP) initiative brought government, parliament and civil society together in a unique and meaningful policy dialogue. Members of Parliament from the Health Committee and the SRHR Caucus, senior officials from the Ministries of Health and Finance, decentralised health representatives, youth advocates, community health workers, civil society organisations, technical partners and legal experts convened to address long-standing gaps in transparency and accountability in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) funding and expenditure. Rooted in the voices and lived realities of adolescents and young people, the dialogue demonstrated how CAAP has strengthened cross-constituency engagement and created spaces where advocacy is credible, evidence-informed and politically relevant.

Participants reaffirmed that adolescents and youth are central to Zambia's social and economic future and must be treated as a national priority for health and human rights. Members of Parliament underscored that teenage pregnancy constitutes a development emergency, undermining skills

development, entrenching inequality and slowing broader socio-economic progress. Testimonies from adolescent girls powerfully illustrated how early motherhood disrupts education, limits life opportunities and erodes dignity, laying bare the human cost of policy inertia. Civil society and community actors emphasised that sustainable change requires an integrated approach that aligns grassroots realities with legislative oversight and executive decision-making.

The CAAP platform emerged as a trusted and transformative mechanism, breaking down silos between ministries, parliament and communities while enabling the co-creation of evidence-based policy priorities. Government officials acknowledged that fragmented and uncoordinated advocacy has historically weakened political traction for SRHR issues at senior levels. CAAP is addressing this gap by unifying stakeholders behind clear, data-driven advocacy demands. Commitments from the dialogue included strengthening financial oversight, improving SRHR financing mechanisms, and developing a unified inter-ministerial financial tracking system to enhance transparency and accountability in health budgeting.

The dialogue signals a critical shift in how adolescent health advocacy is translating into political will and institutional engagement in Zambia. By elevating adolescent SRHR from the margins to the centre of national policy discourse, and by embedding youth voices within sustained parliamentary and ministerial engagement, CAAP has contributed to reframing adolescent girls' health as a core governance issue. However, the durability of this progress will depend on whether political commitments are translated into concrete policy reforms, adequate and sustained budgetary allocations, and enforceable accountability mechanisms. Without integrating adolescent health priorities across national planning and financing frameworks, Zambia risks perpetuating cycles of rhetoric without results particularly for adolescent girls, whose rights, wellbeing and futures remain most at risk.

Conclusion

The December 2025 WPS Bulletin reveals a moment of reflection and renewed possibility for the Women, Peace and Security agenda across Africa. Across the continent, women continue to play indispensable roles in preventing conflict, sustaining dialogue, strengthening community cohesion and advancing inclusive governance, often in contexts marked by insecurity, political tension and social change. The stories featured in this Bulletin highlight both the progress made and the gaps that still remain in ensuring that these contributions are fully recognised, supported and protected.

Twenty-five years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, Africa has developed strong normative and policy foundations for advancing the WPS agenda. The challenge lies in translating these commitments into consistent, context-responsive practice. Evidence shows that peacebuilding outcomes are strongest where women participate meaningfully, where their priorities shape decision-making, and where institutions invest in long-term prevention rather than short-term responses. Across peace processes, electoral cycles, climate adaptation initiatives, and justice systems, inclusion is not symbolic; it is central to building trust, legitimacy and durable peace.

Encouraging examples throughout this Bulletin demonstrate what becomes possible when women are supported as peacebuilders. Women mediators in South Sudan and Lesotho are strengthening local dialogue and preventing the escalation of disputes. Women journalists and civil society actors are contributing to informed public discourse and accountability. Collaborative platforms, such as those advancing adolescent girls' health in Zambia, demonstrate how sustained engagement can bridge policy, community realities and political will. These experiences reaffirm that inclusive peacebuilding is practical, effective and grounded in local contexts.

At the same time, shrinking civic space, protection risks and structural inequalities continue to constrain women's meaningful participation. Addressing these challenges requires a collective commitment to safeguard dialogue spaces, strengthen accountability, and ensure predictable, gender-responsive investment across peace and security institutions. Peacebuilding efforts that centre equity, participation and human security are better equipped to respond to complex and evolving conflict dynamics.

As we move into 2026, this Bulletin serves as an invitation to deepen collaboration, align resources with commitments and prioritise prevention. Advancing the WPS agenda is not only about addressing the impacts of conflict, but about shaping inclusive systems that reduce violence, strengthen social cohesion and uphold dignity. By centering women's leadership, safety and agency, peacebuilding across Africa can move closer to its core objective: fostering resilient, just and sustainable peace for all.

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