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NIGERIA CALLS FOR MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN PEACE PROCESSES, CONDEMNS CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Nigeria has called for meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes and condemned all forms of conflict-related sexual violence at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security held on 27 October 2026 at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York. The debate was convened under the theme: "Women Peace and Security in the Next Quarter-Century: Fulfilling the Promise Through Implementation".

Delivering Nigeria's statement at the meeting, Ambassador Dunoma Umar Ahmed, PhD., Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the report of the UN Secretary-General, H.E. Antonio Guterres, on Women, Peace and Security. He, however, expressed deep concern over the persistent exclusion of women from most UN-led peace processes in 2025. He noted that women accounted for only 5 per cent of lead negotiators and 14 per cent of mediators across 57 negotiation processes, while just 10 peace agreements explicitly referenced women.

The Permanent Secretary expressed grave concern over reports that cases of conflict-related sexual violence had more than doubled since 2024. He observed that the situation was particularly alarming for Africa, given the numerous conflicts on Security Council's agenda, spanning the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, Sudan and the Great Lakes region. He emphasised that the exclusion of women from peace processes continued to undermine peace efforts, weaken fragile agreements, fuel new conflicts and cost lives.

Ambassador Ahmed noted that Nigeria's experience in the North East, underscored the disproportionate burden borne by women and girls in conflict situations, particularly in the face of terrorism, abduction, and displacement. He, however, emphasized that women remained indispensable to recovery and peacebuilding efforts, serving as mediators and first responders in their communities, and as members of security forces.

Highlighting Nigeria's initiatives in safeguarding the rights and protecting the dignity of women and girls, Ambassador Ahmed outlined efforts, including the implementation of the National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 of the UNSC, and the strengthening of legal protection through the

Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act. He further noted that Nigeria continued to advance regional efforts through the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan and the African Union's Continental Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security.

To bridge the gap between commitments and effective implementation, Amb. Ahmed outlined three key recommendations proposed by Nigeria.

First, Nigeria called for the institutionalisation of women's meaningful participation in peace processes, stressing that their inclusion must become the norm rather than the exception. In this regard, it urged the UN, the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to systematically include qualified women, where feasible, in every mediation and good offices team, drawing on the established expertise of regional networks such as the African Women Leaders Network. Nigeria emphasised that women must not only have a seat at the negotiating table, but also a meaningful voice in shaping the outcomes of peace processes.

Second, Nigeria advocated predictable financing for national and local action plans, including adequate support for women-led organisations working in conflict-affected communities. It also called for deliberate efforts to preserve and strengthen gender expertise in peace operations, particularly, in African Union-led operations financed under resolution 2719, notwithstanding current liquidity constraints.

Third, Nigeria underscored the need to place survivors of conflict-related sexual violence at the centre of protection, justice and accountability, while ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable, primarily through national justice systems, with appropriate international support. It stressed that survivors, including women and girls formerly held captive by terrorist groups, must have access to medical care, psychosocial support and economic opportunities to rebuild their lives with dignity. Nigeria also called on Member States to address technology-facilitated violence, which poses a growing threat to women’s participation in public and political life.

In conclusion, Ambassador Ahmed reaffirmed Nigeria’s conviction that sustainable and inclusive peace in Africa cannot be achieved without the full and meaningful participation of women. He reiterated Nigeria’s unwavering commitment to working with the Council, the AU and other international partners to translate the promises of UNSC Resolution 1325 into tangible and measurable outcomes for women and girls across the African continent.

Signed:
Oluwafemi Adeniyi
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja
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