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## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**AU HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND GENDER  
TRANSFORMATION (6-7 October 2011)**

**High level Policy Dialogue on African Union's SSR Framework and the Gender  
Transformation Agenda**

**Intercontinental Hotel, Addis Ababa 6 October 2011**

**Chairperson,**

**Dear friends**

**Distinguished participants**

It is a great honour for me to be among you for this dialogue on a matter of personal interest. This session provides me a unique opportunity to reconnect with a subject matter and reality that is as some of you know is very close to me and the work that I engaged with until I took up this appointment last year. For that reason I am excited to be here to appraise myself with the developments since then and jog my mind with the perspectives that are evolving in an area that in my view constitutes the last bastion of women discrimination, namely the security sector. It is also a great pleasure to be offered a rare, very rare opportunity to reconnect with dear friends. Undoubtedly, I seem to have been ejected from the circle of the intellectual friends and therefore take this as a privileged access to help me renew those invaluable camaraderie. Therefore, I want to thank the organizers and particularly the logistics team that never tired of trying to fish me out.

Allow me chair to begin with a disclosure. For reasons that are someone inexcusable including not visiting any library, I did not spend sufficient amount of time nor did I apply myself with the rigour of any academic around this table to develop a keynote address to this audience. I have therefore elected not to deliver a key note address but to offer some personal reflections on the locus of women in the efforts to fully engage/transform and enjoy security in fragile situations – (that have become synonymous with peace-building). In doing so, I may end up controversial and for that reason wish to state for the record that my statement represent only my thoughts... which in fact can also change. The objective is to trigger discussion and hopefully provide some different perspective to our aspirations as an interest group to enhance the participation for women defining and shaping the relevant security for themselves.

Central to the nexus between security and the gender transformation agenda is a larger, perhaps first order question of why ownership is a problem in peace building.

The AU directorate has returned from a working session where it gender directorate validated a draft manual for training of trainers in PSO. Across the continent, countries have committed themselves to mainstreaming gender in PSO. A number of countries across Africa have established institutes that have fully fledged courses of a similar nature. In his report to the Security council in October 2010, on women participation in peace building, the UNSG outlined a detailed action plan that aimed at changing practices among national and international actors in order to improve outcomes on the ground. This plan had seven commitments to ensure that:

- a) Women are **fully engaged in**, and timely gender expertise is provided to, all **peace talks**
- b) **In post conflict planning processes**, including donor conferences, women should play substantive roles and methods should be used that ensure that **comprehensive attention is paid to gender equality**
- c) **Adequate funding** – both targeted and mainstreamed – is provided **to address women’s specific needs, advance gender equality and promote women’s empowerment**
- d) Deployed **civilians possess the necessary specialized skills** including expertise in rebuilding state institutions to make them more accessible to women
- e) **Women can participate fully in post conflict governance**, as civic actors, elected representatives or decision makers in public institutions, including through temporary special measures such as quotas
- f) Rule of law initiatives **encourage women’s participations in the process of seeking redress for injustices** committed against them and in improving the capacity of security actors to prevent and respond to violations of women’s rights, and

- g) Economic recovery **prioritizes women's involvement in employment creation schemes**, community-development programmes and the delivery of front-line services.

Yet, these efforts at the national, regional and international levels do not seem to translate in protection, assistance or recovery measures that guarantee public safety and security for populations in general and women in particular. Last May 2011 the situation in Darfur, South Sudan etc, reflects greater insecurity. And herein lies the dilemma that we need to work through in our efforts towards securing and stabilizing the continent.

### **What is my prognosis?**

It seems to me that central to anticipated outcomes, at all levels, is a common denominator/threat if you will. They are prescribed. Women are supposed to receive these outcomes. Yet a central feature of any transformation whether it be at the personal, institutional or societal level is the involvement of the person concerned – something I want to call ownership. And hence my reflection today, why is there a local ownership problem in peace-building for women today and what needs to be done?

Seemingly there is a consensus that local ownership is desirable – goes with building local capacity etc. – local ownership is rationalized as increasing effectiveness, reducing costs, growing legitimacy and responsiveness to the real needs on the ground, supporting local capacity and guaranteeing sustainability. Yet, in spite of these noble ideals and the rhetoric that goes with this, there is limited follow through.

I dare say that there is nothing new in today's ownership problem/question? because it is not new in the history of interventions generally in the third world, but more specifically in Africa. Whether one reflects on the history of development – putting the last first (Robert Chambers); or on discourse and practice on humanitarian assistance/relief/aid where growing evidence by the end of the 1990s showed that the massive aid injected in interventions not only shrank local ownership but in some cases created parallel structures that profoundly undermined local ownership and legitimacy; or now the in post war/conflict areas which at the turn of the century has become the

new niche area of operations, in terms of firstly, peacekeeping where we are injecting more than USD 7 billion annually – without much return in terms of sustainable peace, followed by the burgeoning peace building industry – seen as the twilight zone between relief and development, there is a pattern with some distinct characteristics:

- 1) These industries are characterized by a dominant northern imprint – characterized by the domination of northern based organizations –that articulate common norms, provide financial resources, that have developed institutions and strategies that both define and address problems of the south = in many ways it's an imperfect market where the determinant of need are at the same time purveyor of goods/mercy.
2. This reality raises some fundamental – 1<sup>st</sup> order questions on the role/standing of local or southern actors can and should play:
  - Should local ownership be an issue in peace-building? If yes why? - or for what reason is building peace desirable? (ideological question) – determine both the content and scope (stabilization versus sustainable/human development)
  - What constitutes local ownership? - civic organizations (most of them NGO urban based that have appropriated the language, ethos and methodologies of the industry?; focus on the state i.e. public sector development and institution building based on the failed state framework – what about regions (karamajong), intra-regional fragility or partial fragility in a country; or the society who may not recognize the state nor the NGO industry that has been the foci of peace-building? Local ownership – acknowledgement of knowledge and norms that are relevant reference points for action in a political arena or a public interest sector – informed by Ernst Gellners “socially approved cognition, typically has ritual expressions or subtle forms of institutionalization that may not be obvious to outsiders, yet constitutes an institutionalization of capacity (1988).
  - How should ownership be ensured? How can we go beyond the rhetoric that has characterized those regimes that have come before peace-building – namely the

failed development project as well as the humanitarian assistance industry - process issues (Vasu): Lessons learnt need to be drawn from these other sectors rather than limited often contested success cases – currently.

- Reality check question: do the peace builders – in particular UN agencies have comparatively less interest in this area, in maintaining the current division of labour that heavily favours northern actors/intervenors emerging from the projects

3. The African Union answer to these questions is contained in the framework for PCRDR – which professes the objective of these activities as attaining sustainable development – long term transformational and hence ownership in one of the five principles that constitute “ basic minimum values and standards that inform action across all PCRDR activities and programmes – including in the security sector.” This local ownership comprises of five elements:

- a) PCRDR should have as a central concern the rebuilding of **legitimate** state authority (redefining social contract)
- b) National ownership (**involvement not receiving**) should apply to all aspects of implementing PCRDR, from assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (versus JAM)
- c) National ownership should commence with emergency assistance in the immediate post conflict situation (versus capacity issues) **timings**
- d) National state and non state actors should work together to determine the priorities of PCRDR process and implement these in ways that enhance the legitimacy of government
- e) Local beneficiaries of PCRDR activities should have ownership of the programmes and should be involved in their design and implementation.

4. If this is the basis for local ownership then it cannot be business as usual and yet the discussions on peace building that I have had the fortune to listen to suggest to me that we have not moved beyond the discussions of the previous niche areas:
  - a) Conceptual frameworks and normative – are critical – what are we doing and why (ideology)
  - b) How are these framed and pursued - Language and methodologies. There seems to be different languages that end of up in different expectations and sometimes projects
  - c) Need to acknowledge the limit of our knowledge and
  - d) Perhaps consider that we could be asking the wrong questions and no matter how well framed questions this are, they may be unlikely to offer sustainable peace. For instance, can peace-builders within the current framework of intervention secure local ownership?

## **WHAT TO DO? 2**

1. I argue that this is critical to look at the political economy of this industry – to determine the drivers in terms of: whose interest is being pursued? What power relations are forged and how do they impact on local ownership? Until we are able to frame the debate – and this calls for the right capabilities and engagement – why Funmi's work is so critical to where we are going. We must create a critical mass of players that can provide a paradigmatic shift in terms of how they perceive the problem and the solutions that are needed to deal with them – and perhaps the methodologies as well.
2. Really think through how to forge solidarity with the people who are receiving the brunt of conflicts and poor intervention - experience from local areas of IDS in Kenya suggest that affected groups that determine the nature and size of intervention recover better than those who go through a path dependency - Turkana

district. In some cases they ask for no intervention – until they have dealt with first order issues.

**Thank you for your attention.**