




Chapter 25

Theorising Women's Inclusion in Peace Processes Towards the Actualisation of Agenda 2063

Adeogun Tolulope 

Durban University of Technology, South Africa 
tfor9@yahoo.com

Dorcas Ettang 

Durban University of Technology, South Africa 
dorcase@dut.ac.za

Rabele Litlhare 

University of Pretoria, South Africa 
dirabele@yahoo.co.uk

Introduction

For centuries, conflict of various shades has taken over nations of the world. As one country is coming out of war, another is on the verge of war. War is divided into two categories: interstate (country(ies) against country(ies)) and intra-state (wars within countries); however, intra-state wars have become popular in recent times. Expectedly, Africa is not exempt from this destructive and disruptive menace. In recent years, the African continent has witnessed genocide, ethnicism, terrorism, and other forms of unrest and political instability, leading to the loss of millions of lives and property, leaving people homeless, and straining the socio-political and economic fabrics of many African countries.

In Nigeria, governance, development, and peace have been disrupted by insurgent groups such as Boko Haram, armed banditry, killer herdsmen, and youth unrest like the #EndSARS protest.¹ Apart from the operation of the dreaded Boko Haram in other countries like Niger and Cameroon, there has been an insinuation that the global terrorist group, Islamic State in Syria (ISIS), has been active across these countries. Furthermore, waves of military coups have hit Niger, Mali, Sudan, Tunisia, and Burkina Faso (Adeduyite 2023). Decades of war and relapses of war have curtailed developmental initiatives in South Sudan, and natural disasters such as drought and floods have aggravated instability in Somalia, leading to the death and/or displacement of people. For instance, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2023), about 11.71 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) are now occupying East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region, not to mention other African regions experiencing displacement because of the diverse disasters cutting through different parts of Africa.

Although the effects of the above occurrences in African nations are felt by the general populace, viewing it from a gender stance reveals more complications for one gender than the other. Literature reveals that the prolonged war affects the status of women differently, such as having to become the breadwinner of the family (without much preparation) at the sudden loss of husbands and sons to war. Women are also displaced with their children, seeking refuge in bordering nations or within their nations. This leaves them more vulnerable to hunger, rape, and epidemic.

Given the above and many other issues, women began to embrace peaceful approaches to conflict resolution, such as dialogue, awareness, diplomacy, and mediation. This further resulted in the agitation of African women to become a substantial and effective part of a workable peace agreement in their

1 The popular #EndSARS protest was led by the youth to show their displeasure against police brutality and poor governance in Nigeria. It was a decentralised social movement aimed at pressuring the government to disband the special anti-crime police unit called the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in February 2021.

respective countries, to build a sustainable peaceful environment. The quest for women to be inclusive in peacebuilding has generated a lot of discourse on the continent.

According to Ghali (1992), peacebuilding can be described as processes put in place to prevent war or the reoccurrence of war. Also, it is a “political process in which conflicts are resolved by peaceful means” (Saunders 1999:31). This includes diplomacy, negotiation, dialogue, and mediation. Another concise definition is that of Nicole Ball (cited in Burgess 2004). Ball divides the peace process into two: one aspect deals with negotiation and cessation of hostilities, and the second aspect relates to peacebuilding, which can be transitional. This chapter refers to peacebuilding as a gradual process which involves stages that are transitional and mostly take place after a ceasefire, to put an end to violent conflict.

Women’s Inclusion: Negotiating Tables vs Grassroots Peacebuilding

Women’s inclusion should not only be numerical, but descriptive, that is, a process whereby women’s interests (both practical and strategic) are fully and effectively represented at all decisionmaking levels. It can also be seen as a platform where gender equality transcends mere legal documentation into reality while also doing away with gender biases and stereotypes with women’s representation at the negotiating tables (Annan 2006).

Women’s organisations at the grassroots level have made significant contributions to peacebuilding, with notable examples such as the Unity Club in Rwanda. In the aftermath of the devastating genocide in Rwanda, this organisation played a crucial role by engaging in concrete efforts. It showcased commendable levels of women’s activism and organisational effectiveness, particularly in responding to the genocide and addressing concerns related to potential relapses. Putting their own lives at high risk, the women started a campaign in which they acted as intermediaries between their relatives and the government troops to slow down and ultimately stop the genocide (Adeogun & Muthuki 2017). By peaceful and inconspicuous means, women

negotiated peace successfully between the two parties. This is one of the major roles African women's organisations perform at the grassroots level for the sustainability of peace and security.

Furthermore, women are more noticeable at grassroots peacebuilding (which can be referred to as the bottom-up approach) than at negotiating tables (the top-down approach) for many reasons. Firstly, they do not contend with political powers which are synonymous with man's area of autonomy and the natural levels of authority, as displayed in family settings (the husband being the head while wives and the children are sometimes seen as his subjects) and fully embraced by a large part of African society. In the context of women engaging in discussions on national issues alongside men, a subtle power struggle is evident, portraying women as subordinates vying for positions traditionally held by men. Despite the gradual fading of such beliefs in the physical realm, they persist prominently within the subconscious minds of many, influencing perceptions and attitudes toward women's participation in significant matters. Additionally, women at the grassroots level often face limitations due to religious and cultural prejudices. There is a prevailing belief that women should maintain a reserved demeanour and avoid being overly assertive, particularly in public settings. The grassroots are perceived as their immediate community, where they are expected to be content with the contributions they make towards peacebuilding, further reinforcing these biases.

Peacebuilding includes peace processes both at the top and bottom of the spectrum. The 'top-down' symbolises the decisionmaking arena for peace agreement ratification, while the 'bottom-up' represents the society, grassroots, and localities. Women are more visible in the 'bottom-up' peacebuilding approach, and very few women are located at the 'top'. It therefore can be argued that this pattern domesticates women's peacebuilding efforts, such as mediation, negotiation, and diplomacy at the grassroots level while reserving the 'top' level for men.

Despite this view, UNSCR Resolution 1325² of 2000 and other protocols and legal instruments have stated specifically that women have equal rights with men.

Therefore, women should be substantially represented in the peace agreements and decisionmaking arena. This non-adherence to these instruments has kept women at the base of the peace processes and limited them to the grassroots level. Indeed, Resolution 1325 marked a significant milestone as the inaugural Security Council resolution addressing women, peace, and security. This resolution recognises the profound impact of conflict on women and emphasises the crucial need for women's complete and equitable involvement in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Furthermore, despite member states of the African Union (AU) being signatories to Agenda 2063, which has sections 4 and 6 for women's equality and inclusion, African women's inclusion in peace processes still faces challenges. Moreso, with many failed peace agreements and relapses of violence in African post-conflict zones, African women are recently clamouring for more inclusion in peace processes. Indeed, there has been an improvement to a certain extent in women's representation. Therefore, this chapter is grounded in the theory asserting that the involvement of women in peace processes is crucial for the long-term sustainability of peace agreements. It delves into the actual roles of women in peace processes, and assesses the progress African women have made in alignment with Agenda 2063, which advocates for women's equality and inclusion. The research utilises desktop data collection methods and employs thematic analysis to explore these aspects comprehensively.

2 See https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC_ResolutionWomenPeaceSecurity_SRES1325%282000%29%28english_o.pdf.

African Developmental Goals and the Global Space (Agenda 2063 and SDGs 2030)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU's Agenda 2063 present vital ideas and considerations on development that traverse the local, national, regional, and global spaces. They also explore the links between peace, security, and development, and how these can be achieved in an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable manner. As important action plans, these two documents are critical in setting out processes and tracking the efforts to ensure development, peace, and security while ensuring that vulnerable groups are included and are active participants in that process. While the SDGs take a global focus, Agenda 2063 highlights the importance of Pan-Africanism in the development of the continent.

Building upon the foundation laid by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs are focused on enhancing the efforts to build a sustainable world. With 17 key goals, the SDGs reflect the current realities, challenges, and priorities for achieving a more developed and stable world. Through annual reports, the initiatives developed to attain these goals are outlined. The SDGs document is critical to understanding the global need to achieve sustainable development.³ These needs and priorities include ending poverty, hunger, and food insecurity, reducing inequality, and ensuring good nutrition, healthy lives, inclusive education, lifelong learning, and gainful employment for all, and creating spaces for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

It is worth noting that the SDGs focus on inclusivity in each of its goals. Acknowledging that the globe comprises multiple groups – including women, children, minorities, refugees, older people, and people with disabilities – is critical to developing relevant programming for these diverse groups. The effects of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine war are some of the impediments to efforts to meet these goals. These key global occurrences have contributed to increasing food insecurity, skyrocketing fuel costs, and high tax rates, thus

3 For more understanding, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

leading to further unemployment, increased poverty, and – in some cases – high levels of criminality as individuals and groups try to survive.

The SDGs have seen various countries commit to achieving these goals, all of them at multiple stages. One of the positive developments about the contents of the SDGs is that, compared to the MDGs, they are deemed more holistic and inclusive of both the North and South dynamics and unique contexts. Horner and Hulme (2017) posit that while the developed countries exclusively set the MDGs, the development of the SDGs has included the Global South more strongly. The SDGs are also seen as holistic, where issues like climate change, health, and migration have taken on a more global focus, rather than a Global South focus (Scholte & Soderbaum 2017). Piper (2017) notes how the SDGs have increasingly focused on migration, a theme that has been generally pushed under the umbrella of human rights violations by both national and global policymakers. Piper also notes that the SDGs bring attention to not just the safe transit of migrants, but other rights, like access to decent work and their inclusion in decisionmaking, from a gendered perspective.

Struckmann (2018) acknowledges, however, that while the SDGs are much broader in scope than the MDGs by including environmental, social, political, and economic issues and engaging much more with civil society, both documents adopted liberal feminist and neoliberal frameworks. The author argues that this impedes gender justice and fails to reflect gender realities on the ground, and argues for a postcolonial feminist framework (Struckmann 2018). Battersby (2015) argues that the goal of food needs to be revised and considered as a critical development in Africa, particularly because of the urbanisation of food insecurity and the nutrition transition on the continent. These critiques reflect how important global frameworks must be in reflecting the grassroots realities and the developments in the Global South.

Moving on to Agenda 2063, five critical areas of importance are outlined, namely: peace, prosperity, partnership, people, and planets. The document notes that all stakeholders aim to achieve peaceful, just, and inclusive societies free from fear and

violence. It also emphasises the interrelation between peace and sustainable development; one fosters the other and *vice versa*. This sets a clear foundation that everyone is central to the success of peacebuilding, which can only occur with the perspectives, voices, and involvement of all the members of the society. The agenda focuses on essential factors like improving access to education for all, and ensuring that everyone can access economic resources and that individuals can participate in various political processes at different levels. The agenda further highlights how increasing investment and support from multiple organisations helps to empower individuals, prevent violence, and address poverty. The document acknowledges the importance of men and boys in efforts and processes to end all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

The agenda⁴ is also critical in pointing out key priorities and actions in achieving development in the world and Africa, namely: ending poverty, providing education, promoting mental and physical health, and empowering vulnerable groups like refugees, the disabled, the elderly, children, youth, and those living with HIV/AIDS. It also acknowledges various efforts to ensure the implementation of these multiple goals, including the need for an increase in global partnerships and collaboration around finance, technology, capacity-building, and trade.

More importantly, Agenda 2063 is grounded in the “Pan-African vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena” (AU 2015:1). The ideas of Pan-Africanism⁵ are integral to the success of peace, security, and development efforts on the continent as they contribute to building a common voice and strengthening the African community among Africans across the continent. These Pan-African ideals are evident in initiatives such as the African Union-led peacekeeping missions, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Peer

4 For more information on Agenda 2063 and its link with the SDGs, see <https://au.int/agenda2063/sdgs>.

5 This is advocacy towards political union of all indigenous inhabitants of the African continent.

Review Mechanism (APRM), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The broad nature of Agenda 2063 and the comprehensiveness of the document is a welcome development in building an inclusive and broad-based approach to development in the continent. In this context, however, the AU's commitment to the goals of the agenda will determine how effective and successful Agenda 2063 is in meeting the different needs of the continent's diverse groups. For instance, Amupanda (2018) notes that, while Agenda 2063 has successfully mainstreamed the youth perspectives and conditions, there is a need for effective regional initiatives to include youth in policy development, institutional development, and economic empowerment. Other challenges that can hinder the implementation of Agenda 2063 include poor integration and weak motivation, inadequate enforcement mechanisms, a lack of political will, and the absence of strong institutions, all of which require serious attention to ensure a shift towards a people-driven focus that is inherent in the framework.

As earlier reiterated, Pan-Africanism is the pivotal force behind Agenda 2063. In other words, peaceful cohabitation of people, despite their diverse ethnic and religious affiliations, is essential, hence the sustainability of this peaceful cohabitation and the general goals of Agenda 2063 will entail gender equality across the continent. As the 2030 deadline for Silencing the Guns, an element of Agenda 2063, draws close, collaborative efforts of both men and women are required to guarantee socio-economic stability and peacebuilding.

Meanwhile, the effort made by African women to reach the goal of Silencing the Guns on the continent by 2030 cannot be overemphasised. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2021), recorded an increase in children's school enrolment, especially before COVID-19 and after. This could be put down to rural women being empowered financially to start businesses, develop skills, and attend adult literacy schools to be able to enrol their children in school, especially in war-ridden zones where the fathers have died because of war or insurgencies of various kinds.

African Women in Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

The year 2023 marked the 10th year since the AU adopted a blueprint document called Agenda 2063. In 2023, seven more years remain until the 2030 SDG milestone is reached (Ntlama-Makhanya & Lubisi-Bizani 2021). The aspirations of Agenda 2063, as well as the 17 SDGs 2030, have direct implications on women's rights and development across the continent. The agenda is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future, and its strategic framework for delivering on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development. It is a manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress, and collective prosperity. It speaks about "the Africa We Want", without leaving anyone behind.

The AU Agenda 2063 builds on the AU Maputo Protocol on the rights of women in Africa (Ntlama-Makhanya & Lubisi-Bizani 2021). The seven aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 are all relatable to meaningful inclusion, empowerment, and participation of women. The key priority for women in Africa is gender equality, as stipulated in Aspiration 6, and Goals 17, 18, and 19. The priorities, as stipulated, are: women and girls' empowerment, and addressing violence and discrimination against women and girls. (AU 2013). The full implementation of the AU's Agenda 2063 would likely enable the fulfilment of women's rights across economic, socio-cultural, and political spheres.

The 17 SDGs 2030 were adopted by UN member states in 2015. They provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for all people. The actualisation of these goals calls for urgent action to end poverty and fast-track women's development while striving for a peaceful world. Like the AU Agenda 2063, the UN SDGs 2030 urges all states to empower women in all areas of life – political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects – and to strive for the protection of women's rights. This is explained in detail under SDG 5 on gender equality. Goal 10 focuses on the reduction of inequalities, and Goal 16 reinforces the need for peace, justice, and strong institutions (UN 2015a).

Therefore, all the gender-specific goals mentioned above represent significant progress in accomplishing other objectives before the designated time, emphasising the pivotal role of gender equality in these pursuits.



Figure 25.1: Women's Inclusion in Peacebuilding

Source: <https://www.connect4climate.org/sites/default/files/images/WPS-infographic-peacemakers-675px.jpg>

There have been questions on the importance of women's role as signatories in peace processes, especially after a ceasefire had been maintained, perhaps through peacekeeping missions or other soft power mechanisms. For instance, what evidence supports the idea that the involvement of women as signatories in peace agreements contributes to their durability?

Over the years, African women have been clamouring for inclusion in the decisionmaking arena, most especially in the peace agreements process, engaging key instruments such as the Beijing conferences, which brought gender equality to global attention (UN Women 2020). The drafting of the UNSCR 2242 and 1325 expressly describe the inclusion of women in peacebuilding as very important for sustainable peace across the globe. Given the progress of women's inclusion in peace agreements, the former executive director of United Nations (UN) Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, noted the significant progress in

women's active participation in peace processes over the years. Comparing the period from 1990 to 2010, when women were seldom acknowledged in peace agreements, to more recent years, where they have gained greater recognition, it is believed that this advancement positively influences the outcomes of peace agreements (UNWA 2021).

Radu (2016) assumes that the contributions of women at the negotiating table and the grassroots level may contribute to sustainable peace. After considering 13 peace agreements with women signatories in six peace processes – the DRC (2003), El Salvador (1992), Guatemala (1996), Liberia (2003), Papua New Guinea (2001), and the UK/Northern Ireland (1998) – Krause *et al* (2018) maintain that there are statistical records which prove that women's inclusion in the peace agreement, especially as signatories, increases its chances of durability. This is also reflected in Image 5.

Moreso, the content analysis of the agreements – reached in Liberia in 2003, Sierra Leone in 1999, Côte d'Ivoire in 2003 and Niger in 1995, including a supplementary in-depth comparative case study – reveals compelling evidence suggesting that women do impact peace agreements, especially in the provision of social and security infrastructures to increase durability (Krause *et al* 2018). Given the above, it can be said that the increase in women's descriptive and substantial participation in peace agreements can affect the longevity of peace agreements.

Women in Peace Processes, Pre- and Post-Agenda 2063

Research shows that between 1990 and 2014, out of 130 peace agreements that were signed globally, women signed only 13 (Krause *et al* 2018). Also, in the global peace negotiations between 1990 and 2017 (a little beyond SDG 2030), women who were present during peace processes during this period comprised 2% of the mediators, 5% of the witnesses and signatories, and 8% of the negotiators (Olofsson 2018).

Table 25.1: African Women in Peace Processes 1992 to 2015

Countries	Years	Negotiators	Mediators	Signatories
Burundi	2000	2%	0%	0%
Central African Republic	2008 2011	0% 0%	0% 0%	0% No Data ⁶
Darfur	2006	8%	0%	0%
DR Congo	2002 2008	12% No data	0% 20%	5% 5%
Kenya	2008	25%	0%	0%
Liberia	2003	No data	No data	No data
Mali	2015	5%	No data	15%
Sierra Leone	1999	0%	0%	0%
South Sudan	2015	15%	0%	0%
Sudan	2015	15%	0%	0%
Uganda	2008	9%	0%	0%
Zimbabwe	2008	17%	0%	0%

Source: *cfr.org*

The above Table 25.1` highlights the roles of African women in some of the peace processes that took place before and shortly after the adoption of Agenda 2063 by member states. As reflected in the table, women appear mostly as negotiators while, they were signatories to the agreements only on three occasions. In all, 50% of women were not involved in many of these peace processes, either as a negotiator, mediators, or signatories. Although Liberia had no data on the three roles that are selected, it was recorded that 17% of the witnesses were female heads of civil society. This means that they just watched the agreement proceedings without fully participating in them.

6 No data means non-availability of data on *cfr.org*, where the information was gathered.

Table 25.2: African Women in Peace Processes from 2016 to 2022

Countries	Years	Negotiators	Mediators	Signatories
Central African Republic	2019	21%	11%	6%
Ethiopia-Ogaden	2018	14%	No data	0%
South Sudan	2018	33%	0%	20%
Sudan	2018	15%	No data	0%
Western Sahara	2018	20%	43%	N/A ⁷
	2019	0%	40%	N/A

Source: *cfr.org*

According to Table 25.2, after the adoption of Agenda 2063, women's level of representation as mediators and signatories increased. Comparison of the two tables reveals the level of increase in the percentage of women as negotiators, mediators, and signatories, especially with the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Also, Western Sahara in the last column of the above table includes the combination of these countries: Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, and Polisario in 2018; and Mauritania and Algeria in 2019.

Lastly, in the above tables, the South Sudan peace agreement comes to mind when discussing the sustainability of the peace agreement based on the effective inclusion of women as signatories. The 2018 peace agreement, where 15% of signatories were women, lasted longer (extended till 2024) than the peace agreement of 2015, with no women representation as signatories, which collapsed almost immediately (Human Rights Watch 2022). Even though the peace agreement signed in 2018 has not fully been implemented due to challenges like insecurity, it represents a significant milestone in the efforts of African women to enhance the durability of peace agreements on the continent.

⁷ Not applicable (N/A) indicates that this is not a comprehensive agreement, but a peace talk that needs no signatories.

Major Challenges of Women's Exclusion in Formal Peace Processes

Even though Africa has made progress and hopefully will keep making progress in this regard, however, there are reasons put forward for women's exclusion in peace processes:

1. **Lack of education and skill:** In South Sudan, girls' enrolment in education increased from 39% in 2013 to 49% in 2021 (Windle Trust International 2023). In Nigeria, girls' enrolment in education has recently increased by 64% (UNICEF Nigeria 2023). However, it is surprising that, despite great improvement in girls/women's education in Africa, lack of education has still been used as an impediment to women's participation in decisionmaking or peace processes. Many times, African women still must go through rigours to prove their skills much more than their male counterparts to be fully engaged in decisionmaking and peacebuilding. The dominant culture of patriarchy in many African countries, which instigates gender stereotypes could also contribute to this effect.
2. **Sexism:** Gender stereotype is also another constraint on the part of African women. Women are still considered weak and emotionally unstable, and are stereotyped as domesticated beings in various ways. That is, no matter how educated or skilful they are, there are positions they cannot occupy. These positions are male-dominated and when women contest for such positions or are even nominated, they are stigmatised by society. For instance, the position of president is still far from the reach of women in some African countries. Also, African women face a lack of organisational strength (Chhabra 2005), hindering their ability to advocate for increased representation in decisionmaking spheres, particularly in peace processes, where their unique concerns could be addressed with sustainable solutions.
3. **Economic inequality:** Economically, women are not empowered, especially in war-ridden zones, where the effect of war could affect their source(s) of income in an irrecoverable manner. Since men are more likely to become casualties during wars, many women would have lost their

husbands and sons to war, and they suddenly assume the position of breadwinner. This situation can cripple them economically and their enthusiasm to actively contribute their quotas towards peacebuilding (especially in the formal peace processes axis) becomes rhetorical.

4. Victim-centred feminism: This puts fear into the hearts of girls and women who want to represent their gender in public spaces. In other words, this feminist idea is victim-centred. The focus on women as victims of circumstances can only hinder them from assuming more relevant positions as far as formal peace processes are concerned. Another aspect of this feminist idea, sometimes referred to as trauma-centred feminism, tends to exaggerate the potential harms that women in public positions and their families might face. This perspective stems from the perception of women as vulnerable, reinforcing the notion that women cannot attain public positions without male assistance. This belief has the potential to discourage aspiring girls and women from pursuing such roles.
5. Selfish and self-centred feminism: This new idea is being generated after keen observation of the few women who were selected or elected to the decisionmaking arena. Once these women find themselves in this domain, they often lose sight of the initial reasons for their election or selection, leading to the abandonment of plans to establish an inclusive peace process. Hence, it is of great necessity for women to scrutinise those who are selected to represent them at higher helms of affairs and the processes that get them there. In many cases, women may find themselves compelled to comply with the agendas of those who facilitated their positions, thereby impeding the advancement of African women in formal peace processes.

Conclusion: Reimagining the Prospects for Women's Representation

This chapter has attempted to locate the position of women within the framework of Agenda 2063 and SDGs. It noted the limitations of women's participation in the peace process, which contradicts

the objectives of both regional and global developmental and peace frameworks. The chapter argued that high-quality women's representation in peace processes is of great importance to the longevity of peace agreements. As noted in the main text, women should not just be at the negotiating table as subordinates but should be part of signatories to peace agreements. This enhances accountability and responsibility in implementing such agreements, as shown by the 2018 South Sudan peace agreement. In conclusion, the chapter highlighted the following important key points:

1. The importance of Agenda 2063: The agenda is achievable if the AU can enforce the implementation or adoption of its protocol or policy templates, particularly on gender equality and women's inclusion in peace processes. Harnessing the potential of women in peacebuilding and developmental endeavours is important for achieving "The Africa We Want" in 2063.
2. Moving beyond rhetoric to reality: To see a more peaceful Africa, African states should abide by the policies to which they are all signatories, especially when it comes to women's equality and inclusion in peace processes.
3. A combination of descriptive and substantive women's inclusion: Descriptive and substantive women's inclusion should follow due processes. Women should not only increase numerically, but be effectively represented at the helm of societal affairs. This will give African women more voice in decisionmaking and increase the AU's goals towards sustainable peace on the continent. Also, women should be allowed to select or elect their representatives through free and fair elections.
4. The utilisation of women's peacebuilding efforts at the grassroots level in formal peace processes: Since African women are very experienced in peacebuilding at the grassroots level, the government of each African country should liaise with grassroots women organisations and get feedback to improve on policies that will help further sustain peace in the country.

5. Eradication of gender inequality: Gender inequality has become Africa's culture and indoctrinated into the mentality of both men and women. This must change. This change will be evident in the way women's inclusion in peace processes is handled. Gender equality should therefore be included in school curriculums, where notions such as 'boys are superior to girls' can be easily nipped in the bud.
6. The system that denies half of its population from taking part in decisionmaking perpetrates injustice. Hence, all stakeholders, irrespective of their genders, must be well represented at the negotiating tables.

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