WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MEDIATION LEADERSHIP AS SPECIAL ENVOYS IN THE AFRICAN UNION

By

Ms Lindi Mminele

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Supervisor: Dr Cori Wielenga

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'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'

To God be the glory

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
AUWC	Africa Union Women's Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organisation/s
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GAD	Gender and Development approach
GMSP	Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan
GMS	Gender Management System
HoS	Head/s of State
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MSU	Mediation Support Unit
NAP	National Action Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAWO	Pan African Women Organisation
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WGDD	Women and Gender Development Directorate
WID	Women in Development.
WPS	Women peace and security

Abstract

The problem this study addresses is the limited inclusion of women in mediation leadership as special envoys in the African Union (AU). This qualitative case study research, taking a constructivist world view, intends to examine the African Union with the aim to assess how the organisation constitutes its mediation efforts on the continent with a particular focus on the appointment of special envoys. This will be done through a critical literature review of primary sources such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the AU gender policy (2009), including secondary academic sources. The study assesses progress in the AU following the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, and the period under consideration is from 2000 to 2019.

Most available literature addresses the importance of the inclusion of women as negotiators in mediation processes and in peacekeeping. Only a few specifically address mediation leadership as an area of concern in the African Union. The study contributes to the literature that highlights and brings this exclusion to the fore and interrogates the factors contributing to low women's participation in mediation leadership in the African Union, with the objective of making recommendations that will assist with addressing this exclusion, particularly by addressing the issues of lack of standardised selection criterion that may be utilised in the appointment of special envoys.

CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of this study is women's participation in mediation leadership as special envoys in the African Union. The African Union was chosen as a case study mainly because it is a continental body responsible for peace and security in Africa. Under the AU, we have the regional blocks which are responsible for peace and security in their respective regions. The inclusion of women in mediation by the AU, is therefore fundamental, because if adequately addressed, the Regional Economic Communities (REC) will follow suite, as well as AU member states at the national level, thus changing the current status quo and modus operandi. In this regard, addressing the issue at the highest organisational level on the Continent really matters.

This introductory chapter lays out the structural framework providing a clear outline of what this study is all about, what it intends to achieve, the problem it tries to address and its ultimate purpose.

This chapter further unpacks the methodology that will be utilised and gives a synopsis of the sources that were considered to be of importance to undertake and support the angle this study wants to take.

As the topic addresses the issue of gender discrimination, which is a historic phenomenon, it was important that the study be affixed to a time period, as such this will be addressed in the delimitations of this study and also consideration of its limitations will be broached. Ethical issues will also be dealt with.

This chapter therefore sets the tone and lays the foundation for the subsequent four chapters of the study that will address and further build on key areas as outlined in this founding chapter. The main aim is to analyse factors contributing to women's exclusion or low participation at the level of special envoys, with a long term view to bring forth recommendations that may be considered as possible remedial actions to the issue at hand.

1.2   RESEARCH PROBLEM

There are numerous conceptualisations defining the meaning of mediation. Mitchell (1981) underscores mediation as a go between process aimed at the achievement of a negotiated settlement on matters of contention between conflicting sides, bringing to an end ensuing disruptive clashing behaviour. According to Raymond and Kegley (1985) mediation is a mechanism utilised for the purposes of managing and resolving conflict by co-opting the services of third parties to assist conflicting sides to reach amicable solutions. Mason (2007) states that conflicts that are using mediation have a better chance to reach a resolution and the chance of this happening is fivefold as compared to conflicts that are not using mediation, thus emphasising the importance of mediation as an effective conflict resolution mechanism concomitant to the use of special envoys.

African countries have been affected by a number of conflicts and the African Union (AU) as a continental body remains central to the resolution of such conflicts amongst other means, through mediation efforts. However, the AU consistently overlooks a critical component that could make a valuable contribution in mediation and advance peace and stability, which is the inclusion of women, a human resource constituting almost fifty percent (49.5%) of the global population (World Bank 2016).

The African Union Gender Policy of 2009 calls for 50/50 inclusion of women at all levels, with no exemption from being appointed as AU special envoys and lead mediators in African conflicts. The AU in commitment eight of its Gender Policy of 2009, endeavours to integrate gender in policies, programmes and activities in peace processes, by using the frameworks of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The UNSCR 1325, adopted in 2000 advocates for the participation of women in all aspects of international peace and security and in conflict resolution, which indicates that amongst others, women could and should be availed an opportunity to participate and take a leading role in mediation.

However, facts on the ground paint a disconsolate picture. The African Union report of 2016 'Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Africa' stated that out of nine special representatives and 13 special envoys, the AU has only one female special envoy, the special envoy on women, Ms Bineta Diop. The UN Women report of 2018, 'Women's participation in peace processes' stated that in peace processes undertaken between 1990 and 2017, only two percent of chief mediators were women. Only two women have held the position of special envoy with mediation function, namely, Ms Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland was appointed as UN envoy to the Great Lakes region in 2013, and Ms Hiroute Guebre Sellassie of Ethiopia was appointed envoy for the Sahel in 2014 (UN Peacemaker, 2016).

These figures are a clear indication that participation of women in formal peace processes remain an area of concern, but more importantly that there is a pressing need to address their exclusion at the highest level of decision making and leadership as special envoys.

There are two predominant levels of mediation i.e. Track I and Track II mediation. Track I has been widely used in Africa as high level intervention and it normally includes the participation of seasoned diplomats, government officials and also Heads of State. Whereas, Track II is the lower level of intervention which is used in informal mediation and participation is usually by non-state participants, such as civil society, business or religious communities and traditional leaders (Ngwazi and Siangombe, 2013). The area of interest for this study is examining the exclusion of women in leading Track 1 mediation processes.

The exclusion may be attributed to a myriad of contributing factors but in addressing these impediments, the study finds that the lack of standardised selection criterion in appointment of special envoys is a critical explanatory factor.

The study therefore, intends to contribute to the literature that highlights and brings this exclusion to the fore and to interrogate the factors contributing to low women's participation in mediation leadership in the African Union, with the

objective of coming up with recommendations that will assist with addressing this exclusion.

1.3   QUESTION, OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The question this study tries to address is:

What might account for the exclusion of women as special envoys in mediation leadership in the African Union?

Objectives of the study

This study is concerned with the continued gendered exclusion of women in the AU and their lack of advancement in mediation leadership, particularly at decision making levels. In the light of this, the study intends to:

•   interrogate the reasons behind the continued exclusion of women as special envoys in mediation leadership in the AU; and

•   propose recommendations that will assist with advancing women's involvement in mediation processes, particularly at the level of special envoys.

Scope of the Study

The study assesses progress in the AU in implementing UNSCR 1325, particularly in the area of mediation. Therefore the period under consideration will be from 2000 to 2019.

Most available literature addresses the importance of the inclusion of women as negotiators in mediation processes and in peacekeeping missions. There is a limitation in finding literature specifically addressing mediation leadership in the African Union.

In this regard, this study is interested in addressing the appointment of women as AU special envoys where special envoys refers to the lead mediator (normally a former head of state or senior official) representing the AU in the mediation team.

1.4   CONCEPUAL FRAMEWORK

The research intends to address factors contributing to the limited participation of women in mediation leadership as special envoys in the AU. The main concepts entailed therein are: mediation, leadership, gender and gender mainstreaming. This section briefly introduces these areas in the literature, discussing them in more detail in chapter two.

In the leadership literature, we are able to identify elements of the current situation in global mediation leadership, where former heads of states, or 'great men', are perceived and assumed to be the only ones having inherent traits and capabilities to lead, as supported by the 'great man' theory popularized by Thomas Carlyle (1841) and the trait leadership theories by Ralph Stodgill (1974), which suggests that leaders are 'born'. More recent scholarship obviously challenges this and argues that women equally possess and are born with the same traits. In accordance with behavioural theories, leaders are argued to be 'made' and not born. Contingency leadership theory states that some leaders, while they may perform well in some areas, may underperform when taken out of their element (Hickson et al, 1971), meaning that by virtue of being a former Head of State it does not automatically translate into a person being a capable mediator.

Concerning gender, gender role theories suggest that certain roles are more suited for a specific gender to the exclusion of the other (Giddens, 2009). In global mediation leadership it seems there are already inherent perceptions that since mediation's operational sphere is generally in war ridden conflict areas, therefore it is a terrain suited for men. Feminist theories, however, advocate for social equality (Macionis, 2010), and therefore support the inclusion of women in all leadership roles, even in mediation.

Gender mainstreaming is understood to be a global strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities and ensures

that men and women can influence, participate and benefit from development efforts.

Mediation literature is not overly concerned with gender in mediation leadership. Its pre-occupation revolves around the issues of qualifications, effectiveness, influence, the knowledge base of the mediator and the achievement of goals and objectives (Douglas Noll, 2001). This study is concerned with the idea that mediation leadership should also be extended to women candidates who are found to be capable and qualified to lead. It refers to studies that have been done by the UN which unequivocally states that women bring a beneficial element to mediation and therefore, their inclusion should be encouraged and advanced.

1.5   LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The literature overview will be aligned to the concepts mentioned above, namely leadership, gender, gender mainstreaming and mediation.

On mediation, Duursma (2014), underscored international mediation as processes paying particular attention to the manner in which peacemakers consider well-versed decisions that will enable them to avert and resolve armed conflict in the twenty-first century. Ramsbotham et al (2011) is of the view that conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding have taken centre stage in the international agenda, since the end of the Cold War and further views this as an emergence of new way of addressing conflict resolution offering non-violent conflict mechanism. (Mason, 2007) indicates that in mediation various styles can be utilised, applying varying degrees of assertiveness such as manipulative meditation which uses incentives or sanctions with this being effective in reaching short term agreements, while in seeking long-term conflict reduction, facilitative mediation may be considered. Nathan, (2017) in consideration of mediation by the AU and its RECS cautions about the undercurrents in relation to multi-organisational disputes in mediation in Africa where mediation may be led by the UN, AU and the RECs.

Mediation sources will be used as a back drop to contextualise the field in which this exclusion of women is taking place, thus, looking at what mediation entails, its dynamics, complexities, importance and utilisation of special envoys as lead mediators in conflict resolution in the AU. The mediation literature does not extensively address issues related to the gender of the mediator but the focus is more on their skills set, influence and knowledge base.

Literature that will focus on the AU gender agenda and gender mainstreaming will be covered by Martin (2013), assessing the existing legal framework on gender equality and the history of the mechanisms set up by the AU to foster gender mainstreaming. Hendricks (2011) interrogates gender in conflict, post-conflict reconstruction, and security sector reform in Africa.

In terms of the importance of inclusivity, Agbalajobi, (2009) argues that protecting the world from war requires not only international communities, but inclusion of women as well, to prevent the commencement and spread of violent conflicts.

Furthermore, in relation to the capacity of women in mediation, Sugh and Ikwuba (2017) advocate for acknowledgement of women's involvement in conflict resolution processes and for increased training of women mediators and negotiators to help strengthen women's involvement at all levels of mediation and conflict resolution processes.

With regard to the Resolution advocating for women's inclusion in peace and security, Kronsell, and Svedberg (2012) stated that feminist scholars considered the probability of the UNSCR 1325 as a gender mainstreaming instrument and these scholars were of the view that the resolution had the potential to bring a major change on how security was conceptualised.

On the question relating to women's participation in leading mediation as special envoys, Turner (2017) corroborates that there is a gap between the local peacebuilding work of women mediators and the representation of women in high-level peace making. O'Reilly and O'Suilleabhan (2013) attest to the fact that currently, there are no women acting as lead mediators in formal peace processes around the world.

With regard to appointment and mandates of special envoys in the AU, Szewczyk (2015) specifies various ways how the AU and its RECs have appointed special envoys. Gordon (2015) attested to the fact that the appointment in the AU is drawn from HoS and former HoS and the process is mainly informed by political influence. The AU's system for appointing its envoys is said to be ad hoc and that inadequate support is provided for its mediators (Motsamai, 2017).

For a better and balanced understanding of the phenomenon, the study intends to cite examples of the existing areas of exclusion of women and where their inclusion was considered. In this regard, literature covering mediation cases in Africa particularly those led by the AU and its RECs, such as the conflict resolution in Zimbabwe, DRC, Liberia and South Sudan will be reviewed amongst others, corroborating the fact that the trend of gendered exclusion does exist and needs addressing. The study will not focus on any particular country, but will cite country specific mediation cases as examples, in order to put emphasis and underscore the argument that indeed, women are rarely availed an opportunity to lead mediation processes in the AU.

The mentioned sources articulate the expressed views on the importance of inclusion of women in mediation and gender mainstreaming in the AU. This area of literature is limited, particularly those focusing on mediation leadership at the level of special envoys. Hence, the focus and attention of this study wants to contribute to this particular gap.

Purposive sampling will be done to garner a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the topic. Once the objective of the study has been reached, the understanding of the circumstances contributing to women's exclusion in mediation leadership and a clear way forward is reached, this will be deemed the saturation point for the literature review.

1.6   RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD

Research Approach

A qualitative research approach is proposed for this study, as it will not be looking at quantifiable values but more on understanding circumstances around

a social phenomenon. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2004), the theoretical perspective associated with qualitative researchers is the phenomenological approach, in which researchers seek to understand meaning in events and in human interactions.

In this regard, the research seeks to explore and understand a social problem, pertaining to the limited inclusion of women in mediation leadership in the AU and to seek meaning and understanding of circumstances contributing to this phenomenon. The research falls within a constructivist world view as described by Crotty (1999) as being an approach which seeks to construct meaning and understanding of the world we live in, based on historical and social perspectives.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:55), describe research design as a plan or blueprint of how one intends conducting the research, while Bogdan and Biklen (2006: 49) view it as the 'researchers' plan of how to proceed'. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe qualitative research strategy as comprising the skills and assumptions one uses to collect and analyse data about a research subject in order to achieve the aims of the study. In this regard, the plan of action for the research will entail collation of qualitative data from primary and secondary sources that will be critically analysed in order to address the question of the study. This qualitative study will therefore, involve a descriptive case study on the African Union and will be literature based. Interviews will not be conducted due to time constraints.

Research Methods

For the purposes of the study, data will be sourced from primary sources such as the UNSCR1325, which is of key importance to address the topic of inclusion of women at all levels in peace making including mediation. Of particular significance will also be the African Union (AU) Protocol on the Rights of African Women (2010) and the AU gender policy (2009), particularly for emphasising that while there are existing legal frameworks that advocates for 50% women inclusion at all levels, however, the inclusion of women in the AU and regional mediation mechanisms is still at its lowest and not meeting the stipulated

thresh-hold. All the mentioned primary sources are available in the public domain, they can be accessed from the websites of the related organisations.

Secondary sources in a form of books and journals will also be consulted. There are two streams of relevant literature: mediation broadly and a small amount that focuses on gender and mediation, but this is very limited.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The literature will be reviewed using critical analysis, which Holland and Novak (2017) described as an approach that examines the historical and socio-political dimensions of texts for example, spoken and written words, nonverbal communication, and images. Furthermore, critical analysis will be undertaken with a view of seeking feasible recommendations that focuses on addressing structural barriers and lack of proper selection criteria as impediments to inclusion of women.

In addition to the secondary sources, the study intends to critically analyse the primary sources with a view of understanding the correlation between theory and practice. In this regard, the dictates of UNSR1325, the national action plans of AU member states, and the AU gender legal instruments will be critically analysed with a view to interrogate consequence management in case of non-compliance and the existence of accountability mechanisms from the institutions enacting them, particularly the AU.

1.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

The study will utilise literature from sources which are readily available in the public domain through the websites including resources that can be found and legally accessed from the internet, university library and book stores, thus limiting ethical concerns. The sources utilised will be credited and acknowledge accordingly.

1.9   LIMITATIONS

Merriam (1998, p.20) states that the human instrument is just as imperfect as any other research instruments, underscoring the possibility of limiting factors in any research.   In this study, for a better and deeper analysis of this phenomenon, interviews should have been conducted with affected women. The interviews may have provided a richer understanding on what the affected group might have perceived as impediments to their inclusion and active contributions in mediation and come up with their proposed solutions.   The phenomenon affects women across countries of the African continent, therefore, a sample of such diverse and widely located groupings would have been costly and laborious, and also impossible to achieve given the time frames of this research, thus limiting the scope of the study to a literature review.

1.10   STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The research will comprise five chapters that will entail the full body of the mini dissertation.   The contents of the chapters will be as follows:

Chapter one on Methodology, outlines the background of the study, statement of the problem and significance of the study, research question and its objectives, limitations of the research, theoretical framework and the structure of the research.

Chapter two, will consider the conceptual framework underpinning this study and make an argument on the importance of inclusion of women in AU mediation efforts and their valuable contribution therein.

Chapter three, will seek to understand the legal framework guiding the AU gender Agenda and undertake an analysis of primary sources briefly outlining the fundamentals of the UNSCR 1325 as it pertains to mediation; the status of implementation of the UNSCR 1325 by the AU; and broadly examining the existing AU gender legal framework, furthermore interrogating the successes and limitations of these legal instruments in advancing women's participation in mediation leadership.

Chapter four, will endeavour to unpack the selection process of special envoys by the AU. This is relevant to underscore that mediation is important in Africa and to highlight that the AU has extensively deployed lead mediators in the character of special envoys and to corroborate the notion that the inclusivity of women special envoys is limited in AU processes.

Chapter five, seeks to answer the question of this study by elucidating the reasons behind the continued exclusion of women in mediation leadership; and as the concluding chapter will therefore sum up the interpretation of the findings, conclude the study by giving recommendations that may be utilised by the AU in addressing the issue of exclusion of women as special envoys and provide proposals that may be utilised by the organisation to consider more inclusive approaches in line with its constitutive act and legal frameworks driving its gender agenda.

1.11   CONCLUSION

From the outline of this chapter, it can therefore be concluded that this study augments available literature that addresses the exclusion of women in mediation efforts particularly in leadership as special envoys in the African continent, specifically mediation efforts led by the AU.

There is some literature that explores the contributions that women make when they participate effectively in mediation processes. However, the study will primarily focus on women as lead mediators as opposed to women as negotiators or participants in the process, therefore making a distinction in womens' participation in track 1 and track 2 mediation with emphasis on track 1 mediation. There might be straddling of the lines from time to time because when applying AU gender protocols and the UNSCR 1325 it is difficult to singularly talk of one at the exclusion of the other. Reasons being that these legal instruments talk about inclusion of women in mediation broadly and holistically with limited distinction on the level of participation.

However, the research is advancing the argument that it is imperative to consider this topic of women in high level mediation purposefully, not addressed

in a compounded manner and reflected as one of the many areas of exclusion of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding.

As such, the study intends to deliberately single out, put emphasis and focus on the matter, as the most affected area. As indicated by the UN report, that women's global participation in this area is only two percent, and in the AU the figures dwindle even further. The reasons for this will be explored in this study.

CHAPTER TWO: IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN MEDIATION

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The study is guided by central concepts as follows: leadership, gender, gender mainstreaming and mediation. It is important to understand what the engagement with these concepts would reveal about the limited participation of women when it comes to the level of mediation leadership as special envoys.

In this chapter an analysis of the importance of the inclusion of women in AU mediation efforts will be undertaken. Women have been progressing in all other fields and some level of inclusivity has been advanced in AU member states where there has been an observable trend in exponential growth in the number of women parliamentarians, judges, politicians and in all other areas that seemed closed for women in yester years.

However, the area of mediation leadership seems to be impenetrable for women, particularly in the AU. In this regard, the importance of the inclusion of women in AU mediation efforts will be unpacked, looking into their contribution and what women can bring to the table that may be of benefit to the mediation process. This would include, for example, the role that women can play in bringing national buy-in to the peace process and the ways on which their inclusion opens the scope of the negotiations to issues that pertain to social development, youth and women empowerment.

In summation, the intention of this chapter is to bring to the fore that this study is guided by a conceptual framework that guides the topic at hand.

2.2   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE ARGUMENT OF THE STUDY

It was discussed in the preceding chapter that when it comes to leadership, the ancient great man theory (Carlyle, 1841) which advocates for male dominance in leadership roles and assumes that men are generally perceived to be born with the natural attributes that enable them to lead, is still influential. Gender role theory (Giddens, 2009) explains the impediment to women's advancement

showing how in society there has been a tendency of placing women and men in gender specific roles, and specifically women in soft roles, with leadership being seen as a male purview.

Gender role stereotyping boxes women and men in separate perceived compatibility compartments (Giddens 2009). From that school of thought, it is generally assumed that women typically occupy soft social roles related to caring for others and the characteristics that are associated with such roles are for example, kindness and sensitivity. It is assumed that men typically occupy strong roles related to power and leadership as they are generally perceived to naturally possess characteristics such as boldness, influence, assertiveness and these attributes are generally suitable for mediation, automatically giving men a competitive advantage over women in this field.

Feminist, such as Krolokke and Sorensen (2005) are of the view that women and men should be treated as equals and therefore they are advocating for equal-opportunities and equity feminism, which dismantles any form of exclusion related to sex and gender. While the mentioned feminists are not ignorant of biological differences, they did not perceive them as an impediment to the ideal of human equality nor as justification for discrimination. Another feminist, Morgan (2014a) is also opposed to the notion of the so called natural feminine or masculine attributes, stating that women are not naturally submissive or non-violent; they are not naturally anything, but equal human being.

To take the discussion forward, attention and emphasis will be placed on role congruity theory which challenges so-called inherent gender roles particularly in relation to gender and leadership, addressing the prejudice thereof, which is the phenomenon this study is interested in.

Drawing from status characteristics theory and social role theory Eagly and Karau (2002) developed role congruity theory of prejudice toward women leaders in order to illuminate how gender roles and leadership roles come together to produce two types of prejudice that are bias towards male leaders. Eagly and Karau (2002) tabled the argument that given the incongruence of being a woman with leadership, women have diminished potential to be

appointed leaders as compared to men and will be evaluated more harshly than men when women do assume leadership roles.

Interestingly, two studies that were undertaken in 1984 (Carbonell, 1984; Wentworth & Anderson, 1984) revealed that even when women possessed traits suitable for leadership, these women were not guaranteed any appointments as leaders. They could still be overlooked and side-lined despite being on par with their male counterparts in all respects.

Role congruency theory is helpful in analysing what is happening in the AU in relation to the appointment of women as special envoys or special representatives. Women are disregarded for these positions given the general assumption that these roles are best suited for men and that women will generally be harshly criticised and not accepted even when they possess the qualifications and personal attributes necessary for mediation, such as good negotiation and leadership skills, assertiveness and influence.

These tendencies of discrimination against women in mediation leadership will be assessed throughout this study at the backdrop of all the mentioned concepts where there will be an examination of these theories as influential factors affecting women's right to representation in mediation leadership.

The deep rooted anomaly and prejudice against women in mediation is understood by this study as needing urgent attention and transformation in the AU in line with the AU gender instruments, its Agenda 2063 and the UNSCR 1325.

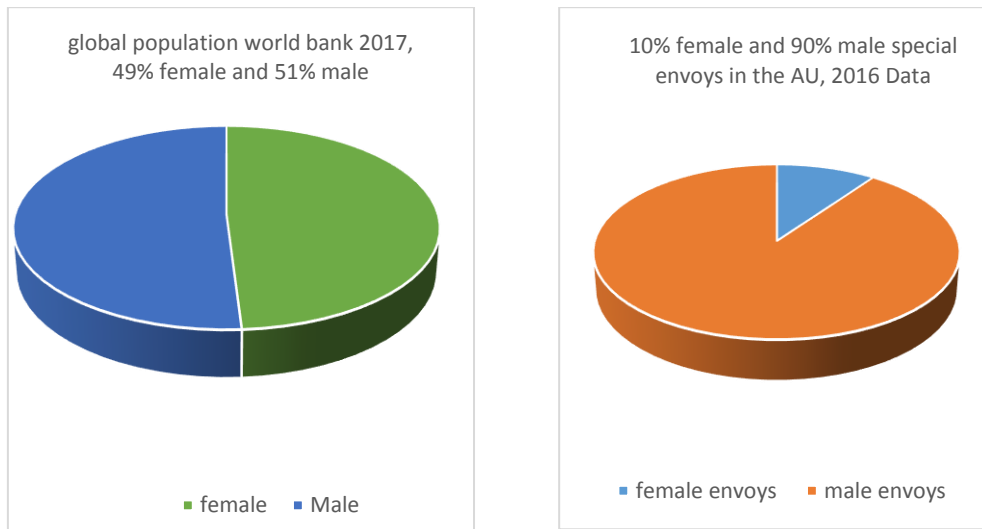## 2.3   INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN AU MEDIATION EFFORTS

Figure 1: Women special envoys in the AU

The illustration above in figure 1 depicts that currently, while women constitutes almost half of the world's population in accordance to World Bank 2017, in Africa less than ten percent according to the AU envoy list are utilised in this area. In bringing further clarity to this percentage, is that out of 13 special envoys in the AU only one is a woman. A woman special envoy was only appointed in 2013, meaning that before then, all special envoys in the AU were generally men.

What remains of interest is that these figures remain worryingly low, not because the AU is opposed to women empowerment or advancement. The contrary remains true as corroborated by Sugh and Ikwuba (2017), stating that there is full backing for women's involvement in conflict resolution processes and for women to be trained as mediators and negotiators in order to strengthen women's participation at all levels of mediation and conflict resolution.

To further support that the AU is fully aligned to women's inclusion, in 2018, President Kagame as the Chair of the AU, co-hosted a high-level meeting on "Women in Power" on behalf of the African Union together with the European Union (EU) convened at the margins of the 31st Ordinary Session of the

Assembly of the African Union, held in Mauritania in June 2018 where issues of gender equality and women empowerment were discussed.

In his speech (Kagame: 2017), President Kagame underscored the importance of gender equality in the AU further stating that: "Women can deliver more when they are enjoying their full rights, but men and women working together using their talents to the maximum the effect, is not just additive, it multiplies. All of society benefits."

Furthermore, in 2017 at the side event (unwomen report on call for stronger support on women's organisations: 2017) that took place on 21 September during the 72nd UNGA, bringing together for the first time women mediators networks affiliated with Member States and regional organizations, Ms Catherine Samba-Panza, former President of the Transition of the Central African Republic (CAR), and member of both the AU Panel of the Wise and the African Women Leaders Network, emphasised AU's efforts to involve women in peace and security initiatives and recommended the adoption of a quota for women's participation in mediation teams.

In these examples, the AU through its Chair and the Panel of the Wise reaffirmed the importance and relevance of women's inclusivity in the continent at all levels of participation. However, despite these important sentiments and oratory in advancing women's inclusion and participation, in practice this still remains to be realised.

It remains of concern that this exclusion of women from mediation processes in the AU, continues to grow and disregards all studies including the UN global study on UNSCR 1325 undertaken in 2015, indicating that women's involvement and participation would bring about positive contributions to conflict prevention and resolution. In this regard, it would be important to consider reasons given in the scholarship for why women are said to bring positive results to mediation processes.

There is an indication that women are seen as trustworthy negotiators. This was drawn from the outcomes of interviews with negotiators from Burundi and South Africa where the result of the study indicated that female representatives had

the ability to build trust, involve all sides and encouraged parties to negotiate and compromise, a notion articulated by Anderlini (2000). A further review of forty peace processes undertaken from 1990 also corroborated the reconciliatory nature of women's group stating that none such grouping had ever tried to sabotage any peace process according to O'Reilly et al. (2015).

Women's participation is also said to take into consideration issues of inclusivity and a collective approach as they bring participation of actors across cultural and sectarian divides according to Seth et al (2008) and there is some confirmations indicating that women's participation does bridge divides (Anderlini, 2000) and therefore women are more able to forge nation building by finding commonalities, work with conflicting parties and reach a compromise.

Women's participation in formal peace processes is said to contribute to the achievement and longevity of peace agreements and this is brought forth by Bigio and Vogelstein (2016). Furthermore, Paffenholz et al (2016) cited that conflicting parties were likely to agree to negotiations and ultimately reach an agreement when women's groups exerted pressure and influence on the negotiation process.

It is further expressed that when women's participation had been incorporated in peace processes as witnesses, signatories, mediators, or negotiators, their involvement did not only bring about an agreement but such agreements were thirty five percent more likely to last a minimum of fifteen years (O'Reiley et al, 2015).

According to a UNDPA Report (2012) women can better identify and address the sources of conflict and what is needed by those affected and this also reduces the likelihood that parties excluded from the negotiating table will undermine the peace process. Women comprising almost half of the world's population (World bank, 2017), have a right to representation according to feminist theorists and processes such as peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction that do not include half the population will therefore not be viable.

2.4 RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MEDIATION

Cohn et al (2004) states that while it is important to recognise the benefits of a feminine perspective in conflict areas as addressed above, this should not overshadow that women should be present to represent half the population, and it is their right to be as influential as men in decisions that affect them. Therefore, women's rights to representation and inclusivity are human rights.

In support of this notion, Irene Limo (2018) viewed mediation as a broad and fast growing area of interest and as such advocates for inclusivity and representation, similarly Vincent (2004) also pushes for women' s representation and particularly for inclusion of meaningful women's perspective rather than just numbers.

This right to representation created a need for women to take centre stage and push for their own inclusion and representation in order to play a meaningful role in mediation, as a result, they should be capacitated and mobilised to add their own voice in the conversation, in furtherance of the concept of 'nothing about us without us" (Charlton, 2000).

The establishment of networks of women mediators is aimed at ensuring that women chart their own path in matters concerning them and they become the main drivers of processes that will allow them to contribute towards strengthening mediation in Africa.

In this regard, the AU in 2017 established FemWise-Africa which is intended for that purpose, to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The network provides a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity building and networking aimed at enhancing the implementation of the commitments for the inclusion of women in peacemaking in Africa.

Additionally, there is the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO) which was founded before the AU in 1962. This is a women's organization purposed to bring together African women's organizations to promote human rights and gender equality. PAWO has an observer status in the AU and supports its programs including all activities for disarmament and reinforcement of peace.

Femwise's is still fairly new and its impact has not been fully analysed. PAWO's longevity on the other hand, seems to be constrained in relation to women in mediation, as evidenced by the mentioned figures of less than ten percent participation of women special envoys in Africa.

2.5 SUPPORT FOR THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN BY THE UN AND THE AU

The United Nations' Guidance for Effective Mediation of 2012 recognizes that women are powerful allies in any peace process. In its advice for UN appointed mediators, the guide asserts that "women leaders and women's groups are often effective in peace making at community levels and should therefore be strongly linked to the high level mediation process (UN Department of Political Affairs, "United Nations Guidance," p.11). However, very few women are appointed as lead mediators in track-one processes.

The UN for its part, has paved the way and made some limited progress in deploying women special envoys in track one mediation. Only two women have held the position of special envoy with mediation function. Ms Mary Robinson former President of Ireland was appointed as UN envoy to the Great Lakes region in 2013, and Ms Hiroute Guebre Sellassie of Ethiopia was appointed envoy for the Sahel a year later (UN Peacemaker, 2016). Significantly, both of these deployments were in Africa.

However, the AU on its part has not been able to deploy a single woman to lead mediation in Africa, its own area of influence and responsibility. These examples of women who led mediation in Africa offered an example that should be emulated by the AU that women can lead track one mediation and they can be equally effective in bringing about the intended results. It should also be noted that these deployments of women special envoys by the UN only happened over ten years after the UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000. This is another worrying matter, as to why it took the instituting organisation (the UN) over a decade to implement the provisions of its own resolution.

The lack of progress thus far is a clear indication that the envisaged results will not be achieved in the near future and that Africa is unlikely to see change

manifesting any time soon, bearing in mind the UNSCR 1325 has been in existence for 19 years in this current year (2019).

It should be noted that it is generally accepted that women's inclusion is imperative in peace processes and the positive impact that this is likely to have on the outcome but this is usually watered down to the lower levels of participation. In this regard the UN and the AU encourage that lead mediators should be provided with more gender advisers and women experts in support teams, so that women can be brought to the table and included in the process. While this is a step in the right direction, it is somewhat limited.

The SADC facilitation in Lesotho seems to be attempting the implementation of the inclusion of women in support teams where the lead mediator, former Justice Dikgang Moseneke (DIRCO:2018) who was appointed by the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018, is supported by women deputy ministers, Ms Regina Mhaule and Ms Ellen Molekane. These women are formidable leaders in their own right and this mediation could be a launching pad for them to be given the opportunity in the future to lead mediation in the region.

A similar example was seen, where Ms Graca Machel, who is currently a member of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation and who has a solid international reputation and experience in mediation, was not given a leading role in mediation in Kenya in 2008, but was part of team of mediators, as purported by Khadiagala (2008).

The inclusion of women as gender advisors and in support teams of lead mediators and the adoption of a quota system in mediation teams are welcomed. These initial steps should be perceived as a starting point or stepping stone and not the end goal, because they do not reflect the full purpose of the policy frameworks supporting women's participation. This will only be fully reflected when women are appointed as lead mediators and special envoys where technical teams and gender advisors (men and women) could be provided to them in support of their mediation leadership.

Therefore, the fundamental interest of this study is not only on adding numbers, but more importantly on numbers that matter particularly at decision making

levels. Application of quotas without proper analysis of the intended outcome will add no value but to further perpetuate women's actual absence of power rather than being an effective solution or bringing forth the required change (Vincent, 2004). Bringing on board diverse women of influence such as the former President of Liberia, Ms Sirleaf Johnson; member of the UN High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, Ms Graca Machel; former Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, amongst others, who will not only lead mediation in Africa and contributing to lasting peace in the Continent, but more importantly will influence the forces and structures they operate in, bring changes that matter, changing cultures, changing mind-sets, perceptions and perspectives including within the operations of the AU itself, transforming the AU to fully incorporate a gendered perspective in its operations and structures.

2.6   CONCLUSION

From the conceptual framework and the theories discussed, it is clear that great man's theory remains influential, perpetuating the notion that men are born leaders at the exclusion of women. The counter argument advanced is that women are also born with and possess similar leadership characteristics as men and therefore the unfair discrimination is unwarranted.

Gender role theory perpetuates the idea that certain roles are more suited for a particular gender. Role Congruency theory challenges this by emphasising that gender roles contribute to the exclusion of women where a certain group is seen to be more suited for a particular task and society frown upon those who take up roles outside their scope of allowed roles. This theory therefore brings to the fore the prejudice against women on tasks not congruent with women's roles such as active participation in conflict resolution and in mediation processes.

Feminist theories generally advocate for inclusion of women in all roles and at all levels of participation and challenges all epistemologies that boxes women in gender compatibility roles and stresses that inclusion of women is a right and

any form of exclusion violates that right. Mediation theories support that it is the influence, efficacy and efficiency of the mediator that matters, not the gender.

In this regard, it could be seen that there are contradicting theories that are against and those that are for inclusivity. However, it should be noted that those that are against inclusivity have been over ruled by legal instruments in the UN, AU, RECs and nationally that advocate for gender equity and women's advancement and these will be outlined in the succeeding chapter.

Women's participation in mediation remains an important and unavoidable matter. Women's inclusion sets the stage for the incorporation of broader issues that are important to women and development into peace agreements and reconciliation processes. Empirical studies indicates that countries with more gender equality are less likely to experience armed conflict. This could be incentive enough for the AU to take necessary steps to ensure that gender equality is improved, making the case for the inclusion of women so that they can be availed an opportunity to contribute towards a better Africa and a better world.

CHAPTER THREE: THE UNSCR 1325 AND AU GENDAR LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The UNSCR 1325 adopted in 2000 provided a legal framework that guides women's involvement is peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including mediation. This resolution was aimed at gender mainstreaming in peace and security. This UN resolution was to be implemented by all UN member states including continental organisations such as the AU, ensuring inclusion of women in their peace and security architectures.

In this regard, this study is exploring its implementation in the AU. Furthermore, it interrogates the systems that were put in place to avail an enabling environment for successful and effective implementation, steps taken to popularise the resolution, its inclusion in Regional Economic Communities' (REC) frameworks such as the Regional Action Plans (RAPs), its implementation by the AU member states through their National Action Plans (NAPs) and more importantly the success of these interventions in ensuring implementation of the resolution.

This chapter also interrogates the existing legal framework in the AU that guides gender parity and mainstreaming at all levels of the organisations' operations such as the AU constitutive Act, the AU Gender Policy, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), AU Agenda 2063. It further looks at their effective implementation, challenges, constraints and the role of existing implementing agents.

This chapter further considers the linkages of these gender legal instruments of the AU with UN mechanisms such as the 1948 UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3.2 PROVISIONS OF UNSCR 1325 ON MEDIATION

The United Nations Security Council adopted the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security on 31 October 2000. The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

The UN Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. The resolution provides a number of important operational mandates, with implications for Member States and the entities of the UN system.

In relation to mediation and peacebuilding the resolution categorically stipulates the following:

o Member States are to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;

o The Secretary-General should implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;

o The Secretary-General should appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard calls on Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNSCR 1325

The UN in March 2019, in preparation for twenty years anniversary of the UNSCR 1325 organised a side event, 'The road to 2020: Accelerating Action on Women, Peace and Security. At this event the UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, informed that while the UN has facts and empirical studies undertaken on the positive role of women's participation in peace and security, after nearly two decades the UN has not been able to realise its proposed agenda in relation to the successful implementation of the UNSC 1325 (UNWomen, 2019).

The UN Women Executive Director, is a formidable African woman in her own right who could and should be availed an opportunity to lead mediation in Africa and utilise the platform to continue advancing women's inclusivity and the right to representation. Ms Mlambo-Nqcuka has worked in government, civil society and private sector and has served from 2005 -2008 as the Deputy President of South Africa overseeing the national poverty alleviation programme with a particular focus on women.

While it is clear from the attestation of the UN Women Executive Director, that the resolution still has unfinished business to deal with, some scholars remained hopeful and had given it a positive review particularly on its potential to bring about the much needed change in peace and security initiatives. In this instance, Bachelet (2014) viewed the UNSCR 1325 as an attempt to correct the exclusion of women as a category of peacemakers whose contribution is often underestimated and that this Resolution will bring forth the important role that women and girls play in conflict prevention and resolution.

Agreeing with this view, Kronsell, and Svedberg (2012) stated that feminist scholars pondered this resolution as a gender mainstreaming tool and it was subsequently regarded as a radical document with the potential to have a positive impact on how security will be conceptualized henceforth. From these views, it seemed like the UN resolution was well received with the hope that it would advance women in areas once seen as exclusively in the male domain, such as politics, peace and security.

On the contrary, Bachelet (2014) stated that since the adoption of the resolution, few people knew of its existence, its meaning, importance and relevance to sustainable peace and security. Meaning that the resolution remains a restricted source of knowledge limited to some women and practitioners operating in the security domain, it has not filtered down to most women, particularly in Africa. African countries in enacting their national action plans, seem not to have done enough to popularise the resolution.

When it comes to its implementation, Otto (2016) mentioned that since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the Security Council was frustrated in its slow implementation and in its subsequent resolution (SCR 1889, preamble para. 7), expressed "deep concern" about women's underrepresentation in all levels of security.

Hendricks, (2017) attested to the fact that the AU acknowledges the importance of the UNSCR 1325, this being observed with the integration of the provisions of the resolution into the AU's gender related frameworks. However, Hendricks (2017) remained concerned that there is little evidence indicating tangible implementation that is result based.

Willett (2010) further stated that while the UN Security Council resolution 1325 was pronounced as a key landmark to address gender equality in all phases and levels of peacemaking, peacekeeping and post conflict reconstruction, the implementation thereof was minimal and does not call for any celebration. Willet (2010) on the other hand, argued that the Gender dialogue as advocated by the mentioned UN resolution was not heard it seemed to have been completely silenced by the 'epistemology of hegemonic masculinity, militarism and war'.

Ekiyor and Wanyeki (2007) stated that while there is some work done with regards to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000), a lot more still need to be done for this resolution to fully benefit African women. Further stating that, a common challenge facing the implementation of the resolution in Africa was the continued perception that the resolution was for women and not men and advises that in order to raise awareness of the resolution and to galvanise support for its implementation there should be efforts made to identify strategic

men, to draw in a male audience and broaden the debate to garner the necessary support for its realisation (Ekiyor and Wanyeki, 2007). The authors' argument holds, given the fact that most states in Africa are led by men HoS, as such men's full participation and buy in cannot be trivialised nor discarded when gurning for sustainable change in the AU and Africa.

In the first ten years following the adoption of the resolution in 2010, a study was conducted to assess the impact of UNSCR 1325 on Women and Peace and Security and according to the UN report (10 year impact of UNSCR 1325), the Resolution has played a crucial role in increasing women's participation and representation in politics, especially where countries have introduced quotas for women, for example, in Burundi. It has also led to legal reforms in the area of gender equality in several countries, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone.

However, the mentioned study found that the participation of women in peacebuilding negotiations has not significantly improved, partly due to insufficient or slow implementation by countries in conflict despite their ratification of the Resolution. In this regard, while other areas are seen to be slowly progressing, the low level of African women's participation in mediation is concluded to be the ineffectual area of the UNSCR 1325.

The UNSCR 1325 received further criticism for ignoring the structural changes needed to allow women to add progressive and transformative discourse (O'Connor, 2014). The resolution was seen to be doing little to challenge structural or root causes and power hierarchies that perpetuate women's inequality with further claims that the UN uses the resolution to validate their inability to address structural changes (Bosetti & Cooper, 2015). In this regard, Feminist thinkers were disappointed with this inaction because they had hoped that the resolution will address the male-dominated systems taking the necessary transformative actions to enable the systems to incorporate gender equally and represent all those affected by armed conflict.

Bosetti & Cooper (2015) further emphasised the importance of structural changes reasoning that increasing the numbers of women would not translate to any noticeable change or success, if women are merely plunged within the

same structures that are aimed at blocking their meaningful participation. As such, without dismantling and addressing institutional barriers, the participation and meaningful contribution of women will therefore remain limited, as mere window dressing.

This argument holds true, that African women including women organisations such as Femwise and PAWO will not make any significant progress in mediation, if they operate in rigid AU systems that are not allowing real structural changes aimed at full representation and meaningful participation of women.

3.4 APPLICATION OF THE UNSCR 1325 BY THE AU

The Women Peace and Security report of 2016 (WPS Report: 2016), gave an overview of progress made by the AU in efforts towards implementation of UNSCR 1325, with the intention to take stock of the achievements of AU member states and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that have developed Action Plans for the implementation of the resolution. The WSP report further highlighted the need to recommit to the work that must be carried on at a national level, and reemphasised the important part played by regional organizations in the implementation of the women, peace, and security agenda on the continent.

The Gender, Peace, and Security Programme (2015-2020) was launched in June 2014, to serve as a continental framework for the AU. It states that the RECs, member states and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) are to work together towards the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325 and succeeding resolutions on gender, women, peace and security.

To date, nineteen (19) AU Member States have developed and adopted the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans (NAPs). However, what needs noting is that the African Union (AU) does not have a dedicated action plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325. It has supported the UNSCR 1325 through entrenching its principles in AU policies, conventions, and protocols.

According to the WSP report of 2016, AU Member States have registered a number of achievements in the area of UNSCR 1325 implementation. In this regard, AU member states introduced special measures and quotas, aimed at increasing representation of women in decision-making, particularly legislatures within the security sector and peacekeeping forces. New institutions have been established and mechanisms put in place such as gender desks to facilitate implementation and mainstreaming.

At a regional level, only two (2) RECs have adopted Regional Action Plans (RAPs). Some regions, such as SADC, have used regional instruments to guide their member states' development of National Action Plans (NAPs). Implementation has been slow and uneven and the report also attested to the fact that representation of women among Special Representatives and Envoys, as well as Heads of Missions/Liaison Offices remains significantly low.

3.5 RELATIONS BETWEEN UN AND AU GENDER AGENDA

There is a growing recognition of the leadership role of women in all spheres of development, including their participation in decision-making at the international, regional and national level and this is reflected in the creation of platforms of action related to gender. It is in this context that the AU has developed a gender policy and other instruments that focus on addressing gender inequalities and to take concrete steps to increase women's political participation and leadership.

The AU's policy to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality does not exist in a vacuum but is largely informed by UN instruments. This can be traced to the 1948 UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights which states that rights and freedoms will not be limited by a person's gender and establishes that 'all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'.

Prominent among UN frameworks and instruments, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), also described as the 'international bill of rights for women', provides the basis for

realizing equality between women and men. In addition, the UN conferences held in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) and its Platform for Action, which aims to remove all obstacles in all spheres of public and private life based on a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.

The Millennium Development Goals also provided a primary global framework for international development intended to reduce poverty and to empower women (Goal 3) by 2015. Furthermore, in 2017 the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its UN Agenda 2030. Women's equality and empowerment is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 5). In this regard, the UN women report states that gender equality by 2030 requires urgent action to eliminate the many root causes of discrimination that still curtail women's rights in private and public spheres (UN women report on women and the sdgs).

3.6   AU'S EFFORTS IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The AU is comprised of 54 member states, which constitutes the total number of all African states, inclusive of Morocco which was readmitted to the organisation in 2017. The AU recognises eight regional economic communities (RECs) representing Africa's regions.

The gender architecture in the AU is conceived in line with AU aspirations and the constitutional framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created in 1963 and subsequently, established the Women's Division within the Community Affairs Department with the objective of mainstreaming gender in all actions. The OAU was transformed into the AU on 11 July 2000, Article 4 thereof, defines its principles as being to 'promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and other relevant human rights instruments' and the 'promotion of gender equality'.

The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), was adopted by the AU Summit in 2004. The SDGEA is an important African instrument for

promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, as it strengthens the ownership of the gender equality agenda and keeps the issues at the highest political level in Africa. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government is the supreme organ of the AU and one of its functions is to determine the sanctions to be imposed on any member state for non-compliance with the decision of the Union.

The AU Gender Policy and Action Plan, were approved in 2009 and adopted in 2010. The Gender Policy provides the basis for the elimination of barriers to gender equality and fosters the reorientation of existing institutions by making use of gender disaggregated data and performance indicators.

The Declaration of the Women's Decade (2010–2020), provides a road map for the realization of the objectives for the Decade and is intended to strength the Directorate through the funding of initiatives planned for the Decade and the Women and Gender Development Directorate (WGDD), as well as establishing coherent dialogue on gender.

The Fund for African Women, was created as a mechanism to ensure policy implementation as well as the effective mainstreaming of gender in policies, institutions and programmes at regional, national and local levels. It became operational in 2011. The AU organs, RECs and member are requested to devote one per cent of assessed contribution to the Fund.

The African Union Agenda 2063 adopted in 2013, envisions that an enabling environment should be continuously created, in which Africans will have the prerogative to plan and make informed choices about their political and economic security and thereby bequeath to future generations, the legacy of a continent free from conflicts and instability, and a prosperous and united Africa. Aspiration six thereof advocates for heightened inclusion of women in all aspects of development and aspiration four articulates the ambition of silencing the guns by 2020, which will largely be dependent on sustainable mediated solutions. These two aspirations surmises that, how the AU selects influential, effective mediators and envoys for political mandates in Africa would remain of critical importance in advancing its Agenda 2063.

3.7   EFFICACY OF THE AU'S GENDER ARCHITECTURE

While the AU may be commended for the work done in enacting legislature aimed at addressing women's rights and gender mainstreaming dating back to its OAU tenure. When reviewing the successful implementation of these comprehensive AU gender instruments, Martin (2013) stressed that although African leaders have undertaken to promote the principles of the AU, including respect for gender and human rights in all member states, implementation of these principles remains a challenge. Further argued that in many countries, legislation has been enacted and advanced, but customs and practices remain the same.

Hendricks (2017) also shared the same viewpoint, stating that there is abundant AU frameworks and policies in place in relation to implementing the WPS gender agenda. Despite the existence of these policies and frameworks calling for gender equality and for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, there remains a huge gap in terms of achieving the desired outcomes of these frameworks.

This was further corroborated in the speech of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security in March 2018, stating that the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions has been weak, despite the existence of a strong framework for the promotion of the WPS security agenda in the AU.

The question this study is grappling with is, while there is a UN resolution as a universal legal instrument and the AU legal framework advancing its gender Agenda, why do women remain excluded? The reason might be attributed to the fact that there are no consequences attached to this. To substantiate the question of consequence management, Fujio (2008, p. 231) further states that while UNSCR 1325 is a binding resolution to UN member states, without any penalties and monitoring, or even the need to ensure that they are created, the resolution serves as nothing more than a word of encouragement to governments to include a gender perspective in peacebuilding and Chinkin & Lewis (2015), reemphasised that lack of sanctions relegates the resolution to a soft law.

In this regard, if the AU Commission is determined in seeking to achieve what is envisaged in their Gender Agenda, then there is a need to scale up its

advocacy and monitoring role, and conduct proper assessments and evaluations on the impact of these gender instruments. Furthermore, the AU may need to consider bringing in consequences and incentives to encourage compliance and implementation of commitments made in National Action Plans and Regional Actions Plans by AU member states and its RECs, respectively.

3.8   CONCLUSION

The UNSCR 1325 has availed the global basis on which discrimination against women in peace and security should be contained with the view to its complete eradication in order to avail an environment of inclusivity and gender parity at all levels. With regards to the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 by the AU, almost nineteen years following its adoption in 2000, the organisation is still grappling with making inroads in its implementation.

Only a few RECs have regional mechanisms that speaks to advancing women in this area. This is also limited, because while some progress is noted is other areas, the review by the Women Peace and Security categorically states that no progress has been achieved in the appointment of special envoys in the AU. Nationalisation of the UN resolution is also limping with only 17 out of 54 AU Member states having national action plans therefore, the level of accountability remains low, as such not impactful.

What remains of concern is that this male dominance in mediation leadership continues to take place while the AU has extensive elaborate legal instruments that advocate for gender parity and inclusivity at all spheres of leadership roles within the AU. These, amongst others include the constitutive Act of the AU, AU gender protocol, ACHPR, SDGEA, and the AU Agenda 2063. The challenge seems not to be with the lack or absence of guiding documents but the deficiency in effective implementation thereof. The AU acknowledges this deficiency but there seems to be little political will to take decisive corrective measures.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government is said to be the supreme organ of the AU and one of its functions is to determine the sanctions to be imposed on any member state for non-compliance with the decision of the

Union. However, the AU does not have a culture of accountability, to the least consequence management. Therefore, member states who do not implement AU decisions on gender equity can go scot free with no sanctions to that effect, more so including the AU itself, prevaricates implementing its own decisions and no other body holds it accountable. Hence, gender mainstreaming in the AU is saturated with legislation but little action.

The AU will not make any significant progress in its gender Agenda, despite the extensive gender instruments in place and the established women offices and organisations under its leadership such as the Femwise and PAWO, advocating for women in mediation, as long as the AU does not make a firm decision to implement structural changes that will open up room for the inclusion of women in its selection processes pertaining to the appointment of mediation leadership.

In terms of gender legislations, there seems to be adequate and substantive regulations put in place by the AU, the area of need seems to be in effective and efficient implementation of the existing instruments in order to turn the tide towards women's inclusion and appointment as special envoys assisted and supported by a decisive selection criterion.

CHAPTER FOUR: APPOINTMENT OF AU SPECIAL ENVOYS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This study examines the exclusion of women in mediation leadership. Building on the summation of what mediation entails and its importance in conflict resolution in chapter two, it interrogates its operational environment with the view of understanding women's exclusion.

The African Union has vastly utilised mediation as a tool for conflict resolution on the continent. In this chapter, a situational analysis will be done on the existing AU special envoys and appointments made by the RECs. The focus thereof, will not necessarily be on the conflicts mediated, but on the gender of the special envoys that led such mediation processes, with the aim of assessing whether inclusivity was applied, incorporating the participation of both men and women as lead mediators.

The selection of special envoys in the AU, is one of the critical causal factors contributing to the exclusion of women. Therefore this area will also be considered, particularly addressing how special envoys are appointed in the AU, including in some of its RECs such as SADC and ECOWAS as institutions and organisations that appoints the special envoys. It will consider their mandate, their norm and standard practices.

The selection process will elucidate how the AU comes to the conclusion that a particular candidate will be the best appointee to lead a particular mediation process, and the requisite attributes that lead to the determination of that particular outcome.

4.2   SPECIAL ENVOYS IN MEDIATION EFFORTS IN AFRICA

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), since its inception in 1963, acknowledged the need and importance for collective action in the areas of regional security, peace and stability, as well as the promotion of economic development through economic cooperation and integration (OAU Charter,

1963). The Charter provided for a Mechanism for Mediation, Arbitration and Conciliation, to handle the conflicts in the continent. The OAU was subsequently renamed and reformed into the African Union (AU) in 2000.

The AU and the RECs have appointed various mediators and facilitators to engage the conflicting parties with the aim of achieving lasting peace and stability.

Table 1 below, show cases the current AU special envoys. More importantly it brings to the fore the argument that the selection process used by the AU for its special envoys, or special representatives, lacks inclusivity.

Out of thirteen (13) special envoys comprised largely of men, only one was a woman. Of note is that this inclusion of a woman envoy, Ms Diop only happened in 2013, under the leadership of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma from South Africa, as Chairperson of the AU Commission and was the first woman to take up the post, the highest at the AU Commission, and her appointment was seen as the advancement of women at the political level and this appointment was seen as a victory for women of the continent.

Ms Binneta Diop is the founder of Femme Africa Solidarite (FAS), an international NGO aimed at advancing women's leadership in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. She has led peace building programmes as well as women's peace and security initiatives and it should be noted that these were not at the highest level of Special Envoy or Special representative.

Despite her background and experience in peace and security, her current role as special envoy does not include mediation and conflict resolution, she is a Special Representative for Women, Children and Armed Conflicts. Ms Diop is mainly responsible for advancing gender mainstreaming in the AU which includes the implementation of UNSCR 1325. The appointment of Ms Binneta Diop of Senegal, remains another breakthrough in the AU for women's advancement, though the area of special envoys for conflict resolution in Africa still remains closed.

Table 1: AU Special Envoys

No.	Name and (Nationality)	Position	Gender	Date Appointed
1.	Abdoulaye Bathily, Senegal	Envoy on Migrations of Mbororo Nomadic Pastoralists	Man	2007
2.	Thabo Mbeki, South Africa	Chairperson of the High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP)	Man	2008
3.	Ibrahima Fall, Senegal	Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission to Guinea	Male	2009
4.	Teferra Shiawl-Kidanekal, Ethiopia	AU Representative on the tripartite team for Humanitarian Assistance to South Kordofan and Blue Nile State	Man	2012
5.	Pierre Boyoya, Burundi	AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel	Man	2012
6.	Boubacar G Diarra, Mali	Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region	Man	2012
7.	Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Ghana	AU-UN joint special representative for Darfur	Man	2012
8.	Sekouba Konate, Guinea	High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for the Operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF)	Man	2012
9.	Bineta Diop, Senegal	Special Representative for Women, Children and Armed Conflicts	Woman	2013
10.	Pedro Pires, Cabo Verde	Special Envoy for Tunisia	Man	2013
11.	Joaquim Alberto Chissano, Mozambique	Special Envoy for Western Sahara	Man	2014
12.	Jackson Kiprono Tuwei, Kenya	Special Envoy of the African Union for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) Issue	Man	2014
13.	Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Djibouti	Special Envoy for Libya	Man	2014

Compiled from data received from the AU website: https://au.int/en/cpauc/envoys

It should be noted that the AU recognises eight RECs that also undertake mediation efforts in their respective regions. Therefore, it is important to sample how they handle their mediation efforts and who led those mediation in relation

to their gender. In order to do this, this section will now discuss examples of mediation processes led by regional organisation or the RECs of the AU.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), for example took the lead in the mediation between the two parties, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in the Zimbabwe mediation process. Mr Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa, was then mandated by SADC to facilitate dialogue between the parties and the success and failures of such mediation was widely analysed (Hove and Ndawana, 2016).

Another example from the SADC is that of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country which remains in conflict. SADC in 2017 nominated former President Pohamba as facilitator (DIRCO, 2018) in the DRC leading to the elections in 2018. The special envoys was rejected by the Government of the DRC.

An example from IGAD was the appointment of Ambassador Dr Wais as the Special Envoy to Somalia and South Sudan (IGAD, 2019), who in February 2019 met with South Sudanese stakeholders on the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

An example of ECOWAS was the appointment of Mr Abdul Salm Abubakar of Nigeria (AU, 2003) to mediate in Liberia successfully negotiating a transitional agreement, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2003 leading to the 2005 elections.

From the cited examples of mediation in Africa from 2000 to 2019 on AU high level mediators and facilitators or special envoys, the observation and conclusion drawn corroborates that the AU's appointments encompassed mostly men thus, highlighting a visible discriminatory trend in the AU in relation to appointment of its special envoys, with the tendency being emulated by the RECs as seen in the examples from SADC, IGAD and ECOWAS, perpetuating the ongoing trend that special envoys should be men.

This trend could be attributed to afore mentioned great man's theory that men are generally perceived to have the right stature and acumen to lead mediation. Also elements of role congruency theory are deduced, because high level mediation is perceived to be incongruent to roles imagined to be ordinarily occupied by women.

What needs to be noted in these mediation efforts in Africa, is that in most of these conflicts there was a relative inclusion and participation of women in mediation processes in Track two mediation, at grass roots levels such as Liberia, Kenya and South Sudan (Desmidt et al, 2017). However, there are no recorded cases of women at the mediation leadership level in relation to conflict resolution in Africa, particularly the level of special envoy (O'Reilly and O'Suilleabhan, 2013).

This categorically indicates the existing gap between the lower level peacebuilding work of women mediators and the representation of women in high-level peace making (Turner, 2017). There seems to be resistance to inclusivity when it comes to high level, track one mediation processes.

To further build on the evidence brought forward by the situational analysis of the current developments in the AU pertaining to the deployment of special envoys in conflict resolution in the continent, it will be important to further scrutinise the processes that leads to the appointment of AU envoys.

It should be noted that the deduction above was that the AU special envoys were generally men and former HoS. This section further discuss the pros and cons of such an approach and how it impacts on women's participation in track one mediation.

A better understanding of how the AU deploys its special envoys therefore, deserves attention. The use of special envoys has been found to be generally acceptable to governments compared to the alternative of bringing peacekeeping missions in the country and being tabled for the scrutiny of the UN Security Council's agenda (Gordon, 2015).

In this regard, it has become normative practice for multilateral organizations, including the AU, to appoint high-profile envoys to address conflicts. These include HoS and former HoS, and former heads of multilateral institutions. The main reasons brought forward for selecting envoys with such prestige is that they tend to have influence, access and leverage and therefore better poised to accomplish the desired outcome that will results in a peace agreements (Gordon, 2015).

However, there are several challenges to mediation posed by the appointment of high-profile envoys. For an example, it is often taken for granted that high profile mediators will possess a certain knowledgebase, and are generally well acquainted with the political complexities in question. However, whether a high level of representation results into good mediation is debatable (Motsamai, 2017).

The capability and efficacy to mediate is not always taken into consideration, particularly for mediators of prominent stature. Not all envoys necessarily have this ability and as purported by contingency leadership theory, that ability in one area does not translate to all other areas. Because leadership is perceived to be inherent trait at the level of HoS and former HoS it is not possible to provide training to this high level mediators.

In an attempt to address the issue of the skills and attributes of a mediator, the AU came up with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) which state that mediators should have experience and competence in mediation; knowledge of the country, region and availability for full-time deployment and possession of the personal attributes of a peacemaker. However, the application of this criteria for appointment of special envoys is still questionable, (Motsamai, 2017).

The other challenge for mediation of a HoS would be time constraints, which contradicts the specification by the SOP that the mediator must be available for full time deployment. Limited availability of HoS may compromise the mediation process where the HoS would be constrained in what he can achieve given

other existing commitments and obligations, thus not being in a position to give full attention and dedication to the mediation process (Gordon, 2015).

In addition, other governments do not always welcome high-level envoys. These governments may prefer to avoid the media attention that high-level mediators can bring to a conflict (Gordon, 2015). An example in case, is President Kabila who, leading up to the elections scheduled for December 2018, rejected several envoys including former President of Namibia, President Pohamba who was proposed as a SADC facilitator to the DRC in August 2017. The reasons provided for the rejection was that the DRC was saturated with deployment of special envoys and there was no need for further additions.

The selection of AU special envoys from former HoS has negative implications for women candidates. It adds to the exclusionary nature of the selection of special envoys given that a larger part of HoS in Africa are men, currently in 2019 all HoS in Africa are men. There is only a small pool of women former HoS from which the AU can select from. Hence, the figures of AU special envoys indicating a slant in favour of men.

The SOP criterion for experience, is also limiting as those who currently have experience in leading mediation in the AU are male former HoS. Women candidates will therefore be excluded as not meeting the criteria even though they may have experience in grassroots mediation and in supporting lead mediators, they will be found lacking in mediation leadership experience as special envoys.

4.3   HOW THE AU AND THE RECs APPOINT SPECIAL ENVOYS

Bart Szewczyk (2015) undertook a study on special envoys and outlined that different organizations use varying methods in selecting their special envoys. The African Union envoys, also known interchangeably as special representative, special envoy, high representative are usually appointed by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the AU Commission Chairperson. (Szewczyk, 2015). Interestingly, while in concurrence with the appointment by

the PSC and the AU Commission a third element is added that some appointments are made by the AU Summit, which is the highest decision-making structure in the AU (Motsamai, 2017).

The RECs under the AU which are said to lead in conflicts in their regions, also undertake mediation processes and appoint their special envoys. In the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), special envoys are appointed through the endorsement of the respective member states. In the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) the special envoys are appointed by the Commission President (Szewczyk, 2015).

Mandates of special envoys are determined by the appointing organisations. For instance in the AU, it would be the AU Peace and Security Council and the AU Commission Chairperson. In the region it could be the IGAD Council of Ministers and in the ECOWAS it would be the Commission President on the advice of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security. Mandates vary in terms of their level of specificity and comprehensiveness. (Szewczyk, 2015).

Within the AU, Envoys are supported by experts working on contract basis, drawn from governments and other international institutions. Although there is no standby unit equivalent to the UN MSU, the AU has desk officers that support the envoys as experts (Szewczyk, 2015).

In the RECs, IGAD has a Mediation Support Unit, which has the roster of prospective mediators and a list of technical experts to support the mediators. ECOWAS has established a Division of Mediation Facilitation to manage a standby roster of experts but not of mediators (Szewczyk, 2015).

Reporting and oversight mechanisms are under the leadership of the organisations that select and mandate envoys. The AU special envoys report to the AU Commission Chairperson and the Peace and Security Council. At IGAD, special envoys report to the IGAD Summit and in the ECOWAS they report to the Commission President (Szewczyk, 2015).

4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS OF SPECIAL ENVOYS IN THE AU AND ITS RECS

From the above mentioned selection process undertaken by the AU and its building blocks, the RECs, there seems to be no clear guidelines that inform the appointments of special envoys in relation to experience, training, academic standing, track record of efficiency and effectiveness. It is also not clear whether there is an existing roster in the AU that is utilised for rotational purposes and a decisive short listing mechanism for such a roster.

In IGAD, there seems to be an existing roster that is utilised for the appointment of possible mediators but to date there has not been any woman appointed to that position in that region. In the ECOWAS, the roster seemingly is for possible technical staff in support of the mediators. In this regard what informs the region's appointment of its lead mediators is not clear in the absence of any roster that guides that process.

The mediation framework has clear institutional shortfalls and the most frequently cited has to do with how mediators are selected. This is an old criticism, that the appointment of high-level mediators has not always taken their specific peacemaking abilities and experience into consideration. Linked to this is the way in which the mandates of mediators are renewed and the lack of thorough training of high level mediators.

The fluidity in appointment of special envoys in the AU was glaringly brought to the fore in 2005, where former president Obasanjo of Nigeria had to publicly dispute the AU Commission's decision to appoint former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda as special AU envoy to Togo (Mail and Guardian, 2005). President Obasanjo found out about the appointment from the media, with no prior consultation with him as the AU Chair. The AU commission, which is the main organ for the day-to-day running of AU affairs was supposed to consult the chairperson before making key decisions. This pointed to the lack of systematic approach in appointing special envoys in the AU and that procedural requirements are not clearly defined nor followed.

In this regard, Desmidt et al (2017) corroborated the general observation that the AU has not yet consistently applied a more technical criterion for selecting mediators.

From the above, there is a visible pattern that the AU selects its envoys from current or former HoS. However, of note is that in Africa there are women former HoS (e.g. in the Central African Republic, Liberia, Mauritius, Malawi), but they have not yet made the list, as special envoys in mediation led either by the AU and the regions. While the CAR and Liberia were conflict ridden countries, the same cannot be said with Malawi and Mauritius, so the categorisation of conflict state, would not hold as reason for possible exclusion. The only viable reasoning towards their exclusion and a common denominator could be that they are not men, since they equally possess all other attributes as the African male former HoS counterparts in terms of ranking, leadership and experience.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The AU has played a critical role in solving conflicts in the continent by deploying mediators and special envoys and relative success was recorded while some areas still remain of concern.

This chapter described cases of mediation that were led by the AU and its REC's in the African continent. It became apparent that almost all the special envoys have been men. This may be because of the way men and women's roles are perceived.

Central to this is the selection process of special envoys in the AU. The process seems to be clear only as far as who appoints and gives mandates to the AU special envoys but it is blurred on what informs the selection criterion that is applied in order to come up with the best candidate for the job. What seems to be constant, is that an AU special envoy should fulfil two criterion: that it should be a man and current or former HoS. The issues of training, efficacy and competency seem not to be of particular concern.

In addition, it is difficult to find literature that categorically outlines and informs the appointment process of special envoys in the AU. The information on how the appointment or the selection came about, seems to be contained in highly classified documents not available in the public domain. What is available is mainly the *fait accompli* pronouncement of the appointed envoys through AU public statements and communiques. There seems to be lack of transparency in this process and thus, no accountability.

The selection of the special envoys if left to the unilateral prerogative of the AU Chairperson without any existing guidelines, will perpetuate the appointment of men at the exclusion of women.

Furthermore, with the emphasis on experience and status in the selection of envoys, it can be more difficult for women to obtain the desirable characteristics of envoys, which contributes to their under representation.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSSION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The study has been able to underscore the issue of women's exclusion and gender inequality in AU processes. In this regard, it proved that women are systematically excluded when it comes to the area of mediation leadership as special envoys.

While it is deduced that women have a valuable contribution to make in mediation, they still remain excluded. The reasons thereof, are summed up in the question this study sought to address. Therefore, this chapter will want to reveal the factors behind the continued exclusion of women in mediation leadership.

In this regard, an analysis of the reasons behind the continued exclusion of women in mediation leadership, will be undertaken taking into consideration the existing cultural norms and trends that are being practiced in the AU. Additionally, considering any shortcomings embodied by women candidates that make them unsuitable for the job at hand looking in the area of training, capacity building and experience.

In this concluding chapter, the study would like to encapsulate firstly the findings of the study as it pertains to reasons behind women's exclusion in mediation leadership. This chapter will also consider findings in relation to the existing legal frameworks, particularly those relating to gender parity and inclusivity in the AU, their implementation successes and failures.

Furthermore, attention would be given to the analysis and findings regarding the selection processes of AU special envoys. This will be underscored bringing to the fore the structural barriers leading to the continued exclusion of women and perpetual appointment of men as AU special envoys.

Finally, recommendations will be put forward that will assist the AU to address this issue and forge inclusive processes that will allow for women to be included in the selection processes as special envoys and special representatives.

While the recommendations will pay attention to the selection processes of special envoys within the AU, these will also be expanded to other areas such as training, bridging cultural barriers and financial support as these will contribute to creating a roster of qualified, trained and experienced mediators that can be deployed to lead mediation in Africa.

5.2   CONCLUDING SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

It has been accentuated that mediation remains a fundamental tool for conflict resolution (Mason, 2007; Nathan, 2017; Ramsbotham et al (2011). In Africa the AU, including its RECs, have extensively used mediation across the continent to address conflicts of high, medium and low intensity emanating from various root causes

In cases needing mediation, the AU appointed lead mediators in the form of special envoys or special representatives. What became apparent in the appointment of special envoys in most cases is that they were either current or former heads of states and occasionally, high level diplomats or officials. What seemed consistent is that most of such appointees have been mostly men in all cases assessed, from 2000 to 2019.

Reasons given for taking such a trajectory are that governments are more accepting of high ranking envoys and that their stature is perceived to yield some influence that will contribute to the success of the mediation process (Gordon, 2015; Motsamai, 2017). Counter to this, it has been argued that some governments are not welcoming of high level envoys given the media and international attention they attract to the mediation process (Gordon, 2015).

Also further counter arguments pointed out that high level representation does not guarantee all the necessary traits required in mediation in accordance to contingency theory (Hickson et al, 1971), in fact HoS and former HoS were

found lacking in some areas and this posed a challenge because the possibility of providing training to a HoS would not be welcomed (Gordon, 2015; Motsamai, 2017).

What was also observed is that this exclusion of women at the level of special envoy takes place against the back drop of an extensive legal framework (inter alia, AU gender policy, AU constitutive Act, AU Agenda 2063), advocating for gender mainstreaming at all levels of participation including the security sector, incorporated in the AU Gender Agenda. However, implementation was found lacking (Martin, 2013; Hendricks, 2017), as such there is no improvement in inclusion of women in mediation leadership in the AU.

Of particular importance when it pertains to women's inclusion in the security sector is the adoption of the UNSCR 1325 of 2000 which the AU has assimilated in its Gender Protocol. The UNSCR 1325 was found wanting in achieving its intended outcomes and key amongst those being issues of limited implementation (Willett, 2010; Ekiyor and Wanyeki, 2007; Hendricks 2017). Secondly its shortcomings in terms of its publicity that it is not well known in women organisations, particularly in Africa (Bachelet, 2014). Thirdly, it is lacking in addressing structural barriers impeding women's participation in mediation (O'Connor, 2014; Bosetti & Cooper, 2015). Lastly, though it is a binding resolution, there are no consequences attached to its non-application (Hendricks, 2008; Fujio, 2008).

The Security Council resolution commands authority and states are sworn to follow its recommendations. They design national plans within the scope of local cultural and operational contexts (Rahmanpanah & Trojanowska, 2016).

In terms of its application in the AU, it was mentioned by WPS in its 2016 report that the AU has no mechanisms in place for effective implementation of this UN resolution and few member states have national action plans and even fewer regional economic communities with regional actions plans, thus defeating the purpose in terms of adequate implementation of this resolution.

The mentioned factors in the concluding summary encapsulated the basis from which, key findings outlining the reasons for women's exclusion when it comes to high level mediation in the AU at the level of special envoy were drawn.

5.3 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The main quest of this study, was to explore the reasons for women's exclusion in mediation with the view to answer this particular question on *'What might account for the low participation of women as special envoys in mediation leadership in the African Union?'*

It is argued that it will be a misleading notion to say there are no women with the right skills and qualifications that can be appointed to lead mediation in Africa (O'Reiley, 2013). The UN figures indicating only two percent women's participation in mediation globally, point out that clearly there are substantial impediments blocking this reality from happening and women in Africa are not exempted from this exclusion.

Interrogation of the reasons behind the continued exclusion of women in mediation leadership revealed that there are possible areas said to be limiting women's participation in mediation leadership and some of these are as follows:

Lack of experience and training

There are claims that women's inclusion in peace and security processes is not possible because of lack of women with the necessary technical expertise (Bigio and Vogelstein, 2016). However, this gap is closing due to training and capacity-building in women's organisations such as Femwise. South Africa through its Diplomatic Academy in the Department of International Relations also provides annual mediation training to women in Africa. However, despite these efforts to train and identify women to participate in peace and security processes, women in peace processes face greater scrutiny of their credibility and qualifications than their male counterparts (O'Reilly et al, 2015).

What was conspicuously apparent in the AU is that African women former HoS have never been appointed to lead any mediation in the continent. They are not selected as they are argued to lack experience and skills. If the standard criteria in the AU for appointment of special envoys is the ranking of former HoS

and political clout (Gordon, 2015), these women former HoS do qualify and have the same training and skills as their male counterparts.

However, the issue of training and experience goes beyond the level of HoS. All mediators at all levels remain in need of continuous training in mediation and practical experience in mediation is also of necessity for capacity and confidence building. The AU through donor funding under its Gender funding has made some limited inroads in this area.

Cultural barriers

Traditional cultural practices and beliefs are cited by Agbalajobi (2010), as deterrents to women's participation in peace and security processes. The concern that promoting women's participation might be culturally inappropriate undermines initiatives in calling for gender quotas and for other decision-making processes to include women's perspectives.

This notion is therefore carried through to mediation where men high level mediators are culturally accepted in that role while women may be looked upon with scepticism in accordance with congruency theory (Eagly and Karau, 2002). The cultural phenomenon may be what is informing the AU in appointing its special envoys who are mostly men.

Africa like the rest of the world, is changing though gradually so. We have seen women HoS being elected to lead their countries within the very societies in Africa being perceived as culturally inclined to accept only male leaders as opposed to women.

Issue of acceptability of women mediators by the conflicting parties

Women lead mediators were not generally accepted by the conflicting parties and the reason for this being the issue of power sharing. The conflicting parties are said to be gurning for power and positions for themselves and the inclusion of women lead mediators was seen as opening a door for women's participation and inclusion in negotiations which will lead to sharing of power and positions

with women. The woman lead mediator is perceived as an encroachment to the already existing power struggles in the conflict, therefore conflicting parties are reluctant to accept a woman mediator or special envoy. This was observed by Mpoumou (2004) in the peace talks of the DRC where men negotiators were opposed to women's inclusion in the negotiations.

Caution is also made that involving women in conflict resolution is not welcomed as it is perceived to threaten already fragile deliberations (Nderitu and O'Neill, 2013). The counter argument would be that women's participation as negotiators, experts, or mediators in fact decreases the threat of spoilers to negotiations, increases public perception of legitimacy, and improves the likelihood of reaching and sustaining a peace agreement (Paffenholz et al. 2016).

Women special envoys have been appointed by the UN in Africa, such as Mary Robinson in the Great Lakes region (UNwomen) and was accepted by the parties as lead mediator and as anticipated, she did encourage and include women's participation in the negotiations such as women of the DRC, thus changing the status quo.

Lack of political will in the AU

The main challenge in the AU seems be the structural barriers within the AU and secondarily its RECs, which remain resistant to change and want to maintain the normative historic practices, as such have not made any significant efforts towards empowering women in the area of mediation nor pragmatically advanced their inclusion. Furthermore, power dynamics seem to be at play in the AU in appointing lead mediators, where appointment of women special envoy is met with resistance and perceived as a threat of women sharing power with AU's men's group of mediators. Morgan (2014b) cautioned against this, stating that while in the long run women's liberation will free men, but in the short run it is going to cost men a lot of privilege, which they will not give up willingly or easily.

Beyond the extensive legal framework advocating for gender parity in its Gender Agenda, the AU has done very little to create an enabling environment conducive for the advancement of women in the area of mediation leadership.

The importance of the inclusion of women goes beyond gender parity, the UN research and others have proven that women have a valuable contribution to make in mediation and that their inclusion contributes to sustainable peace and lasting agreements (Bigio and Vogelstein, 2016; Paffenholz et al, 2016; O'Reiley et al, 2015), an objective that the AU needs to consider to ensure stability and to avoid recurring conflicts in the continent.

Unclear selection criteria in the AU

When it pertains to the selection processes and the appointment of special envoys in the AU, there seems to be fluidity. Currently, while the process might be underway, there seems to be no particular selection criterion that informs who should be appointed as special envoy and what informs that appointment, including what characteristics or attributes to be considered. There seems to be no roster from which rotation of envoys could be drawn from. The same heads of state seem to be recycled across conflicts in Africa, such as been seen with former President Mbeki's mediation in the DRC, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, Sudan and South Sudan and similarly, former President Chissano in Madagascar and Western Sahara. It seems like the AU has established its' tried and tested envoys' and it is sticking to them with no room for deviation. In this regard, it has been deduced that the selection process of the AU is perpetuating the appointment of men and is lacking in inclusivity.

5.4   SUMMATION OF FINDINGS

There are numerous reasons brought forward as impediments to the deployment of women as special envoys and counter arguments have been tabled to contradict the notion of some of them being total barriers to inclusion of women. Some of these reasons were external factors such as perceptions and cultural inclinations which the AU may take several decades to remedy.

However, the latter two are factors within the mandate and purview of the AU, i.e. lack of clear inclusive selection criteria, based on meritocracy which should be strictly adhered to in deployment of special envoys or high level mediators in the AU; and the lack of political will from the AU to transform the entrenched discriminatory systems, practices and operational norms in order to pragmatically advance women in mediation leadership. The AU may not be in a position to fix everything at once given the limited resources, but should prioritise making systemic changes as an enabler for inclusivity and all other related changes will emanate therefrom.

The research was able to point out that while the AU has made an attempt to address gender parity in its operations and some notable success has been achieved in some areas, in the area of mediation leadership there has been limited progress due to the reasons brought forward.

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings of this research, a number of areas can be identified in order to allow for women's participation in mediation leadership as special envoys in the AU. Primarily, the AU should take decisive steps and commit to their implementation particularly in addressing its roster system. This should be finalised, with clear guidelines of required attributes and qualifying candidates, men and women should be placed on the roster for possible future deployment. The list could include but not be limited to HoS and former HoS. It needs to be inclusive of diverse candidates deemed to possess the requisite traits for effective mediation.

The overarching selection process in the AU needs to be transparent and systematic to allow for participation of both men and women to put their names forward for inclusion in the roster, be shortlisted and subsequently appointed as special envoys based on meritocracy. The AU should start incorporating women candidates in their mediation selection processes and be decisive in appointing those women as envoys.

To strengthen conflict prevention and resolution efforts, the AU should accelerate implementation of its existing legal instruments on gender mainstreaming and inclusivity in the security sector and integrate women into peace and security processes, particularly in mediation, which seems to be lagging behind.

Providing a platform for women to contribute in mediation would require financial and technical support. The AU can make its own operations more effective by investing in inclusive conflict prevention and resolution but also set an example for others such as the RECs of the AU and its member states to follow, thereby strengthening security efforts around the continent. The AU should increase resources to facilitate women's involvement in peace and security processes by adopting the United Nations' funding target to provide a minimum of 15 percent of all peace-building and security budget to promote women's participation and protection.

The AU should report annually on its expenditures on women, peace, and security. To promote better outcomes, the AU should establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effects of its investments on women's participation in broader security and should support additional home grown research on the relationship between gender equality, women's participation, and state stability.

Despite perceived cultural barriers and claims that it is inappropriate to encourage women's participation in mediation in conservative societies, the AU should continue to make inroads in this area. There are qualified women leaders in conflict and non-conflict affected countries of Africa such as, but not limited to South Sudan, DRC, Libya, Liberia, Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa who can and should be availed an opportunity to contribute to peace and security and in mediation leadership. This could be facilitated through FemWise.

The AU should advance targeted training related to women's participation in peace and security processes. Failure to support women would ignore the growing body of research confirming that the inclusion of women is a critical element that should be incorporated to reduce conflict and increase stability.

A significant gap remains in translating rhetoric to action. Notwithstanding the enactment of the legal frameworks that inform the AU Gender Agenda, including its member states' National Action Plans on women and the Regional Action Plans of the RECs, participation of women in security processes is not yet standard practice across the continent. In this regard, the AU should strengthen mechanisms to monitor progress on commitments made at national and regional levels, hence enact a culture of compliance and accountability.

There are many missed opportunities where women's contributions could have improved the effectiveness of AU operations. Shifting this trend would require a new level of commitment by the AU and this has the potential to significantly improve peace and stability in the continent.

The AU needs to move towards the direction of transformation and consider deploying women candidates in the role of special envoys in line with feminist theories of equity, contingency leadership theory and mediation theory, supporting full participation of all genders in all areas of leadership including mediation processes.

5.6   CONCLUSSION

In the AU since its establishment, the issue of gender mainstreaming has been deliberated on and there is a general consensus that women should be incorporated in all areas of leadership. There is a visible and positive trajectory in some areas where women's inclusion is gaining momentum in Africa.

However, mediation at the level of special envoys remains a key area that is completely closed for women and while there is enough rhetoric towards women's advancement in mediation and women's groups have been formed to advance their interests, the AU has not been in a position to open up space for the effective inclusion of women as high level mediators.

While there are many factors contributing to this exclusion, the key reasons have been summed up into two factors i.e. the lack of political will on the part of the AU. Without the political will to embark on the desired changes envisaged in the AU gender policy and the AU Agenda 2063, the organisation would not

be in a position to make the necessary structural changes that will advance women's course in mediation leadership. This matter of women's inclusion will remain at theoretical and conceptual phase but never advancing to practical or implementation phase.

The other impediment or reason, is the lack of a clear selection criterion in the AU that will allow for a fair selection of special envoys based of merit and not gender. The AU is still in the process of developing the mediation component of standby rosters and working to further professionalize mediation at the AU through the Mediation Support Unit established in 2017.

With growing emphasis on conflict prevention through mediated solutions, deployment of special envoys in countries affected by conflicts in Africa will remain of critical importance for the AU. Efforts to select special envoys of different backgrounds, gender and with a wide range of skills will be essential in the achievement of the AU's vision 'towards the Africa we want' and silencing the guns in 2020.

The year 2020 will be a crucial year coinciding with the commemoration of 20 years of the existence of the UNSCR 1325, where a review will be undertaken to assess its success and failures. This study has brought to the fore that inclusivity in the field of mediation particularly, decision making and high level mediation, the AU seems to be lacking behind and this remains an area of concern requiring concerted efforts towards improvement.

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