White Paper for a Sustainable Peace in Casamance

Perspectives from Women and Local Populations

August 2019
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>AFUDES</td>
<td>Association of United Brothers for the Economic and Social Development of the Fogny</td>
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<td>ASC</td>
<td>Sports and Cultural Association</td>
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<td>AJAEDO</td>
<td>Association des Jeunes Agriculteurs et Éleveurs du Département d'Oussouye</td>
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<td>AJWS</td>
<td>American Jewish World Service (NGO)</td>
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<td>ANRAC</td>
<td>Agence nationale pour la Relance des Activités économiques en Casamance</td>
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<td>ANSD</td>
<td>Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie</td>
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<td>ASAPID</td>
<td>Association d’appui aux Initiatives de paix et de développement</td>
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<td>CADP</td>
<td>Comité d’Action pour le Développement de la zone des Palmiers et des Narans</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>CGP</td>
<td>Peace Management Committee</td>
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<td>COPI</td>
<td>Construire la paix par le développement économique &amp; social (NGO)</td>
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<td>CRS</td>
<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
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<td>CU</td>
<td>Concern Universal (NGO)</td>
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<td>DER</td>
<td>Rapid Entrepreneurship Department</td>
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<td>DPC</td>
<td>Dynamic of Peace in Casamance</td>
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<td>FAS</td>
<td>Femmes Africa Solidarité (NGO)</td>
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<td>FDS</td>
<td>Defense and Security Forces</td>
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<td>GIE/EIG</td>
<td>Economic Interest Group</td>
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<td>GMP</td>
<td>Grandmother’s Project</td>
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<td>GPF</td>
<td>Women’s Promotion Group</td>
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<td>GRPC</td>
<td>Groupe de Recherche pour la Paix en Casamance</td>
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<td>MARP</td>
<td>Accelerated Participatory Research Method</td>
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<td>MFDC</td>
<td>Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance</td>
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<td>MJPI</td>
<td>Youth Movement for Peace and Integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-based Organization</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<td>PFPC</td>
<td>La Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROCAS</td>
<td>Programme Appui au Développement Socio-économique pour la Paix en Casamance</td>
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<td>PTF/TFP</td>
<td>Technical and Financial Partner</td>
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<td>PUDC</td>
<td>Emergency Community Development Program</td>
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<td>RADDHO</td>
<td>Rencontre Africaine pour les Droits de l’Homme</td>
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<td>REFEC</td>
<td>Réseau de la Fédération des femmes de l’Espace Communautaire</td>
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<td>RN</td>
<td>National trunk road</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
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<td>SENELEC</td>
<td>Senegalese Power Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our wholehearted thanks to the member organizations of the Consortium for the implementation of the Unaam Kayraay Project, with a special mention to the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (Women’s Platform for Peace in Casamance) that has coordinated the drafting of this White Paper, notably its president, Mrs. Ndèye Marie THIAM and the Project Manager, Jimmy Albert SAGNA. We also would like to offer our warmest thanks to Partners West Africa-Senegal (PWA-S) and its Executive Director Pr. Adjaratou Wakha Aidara NDIAYE and the Program Manager, Saidou KEBE; TOSTAN, especially Vivien MANEL, Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, and Project Manager Mamoudou NDIAYE; Partners Global through its Sub-Sahara Africa Program, notably Mrs. Kate RAVIN, Program Manager and Chief of Party of the Unaam Kayraay Project, and the Director, Dr. Solange Bandiaky BADJI. All members of the Consortium have contributed to the elaboration of this Paper.

We also would like to extend our gratitude to all Technical and Financial Partners that are supporting PFPC in its multiple interventions for peace in Casamance, and all those who have contributed to the drafting of this Paper. May they find here a sincere expression of our profound gratitude.

We are very gracious to all the institutions, resource persons and people of goodwill who have participated in the collection of data and reflections, and contributed to the drafting of this Paper, especially: Consultant Abdoulaye DIALLO who has assisted PFPC in emerging from the unknown; Ms. Oumou Khairy Sall DIOUF, Pedagogical advisor, Ms. Fatou Cisse DIEDHIOU, School inspector; Dr. Rosnert Ludovic ALISSOUTINE, Consultant and lecturer at Gaston Berger University; and the Women and Youth Working Group for Peace and Security in West Africa and in the Sahel. Our warmest thanks also go to Ms. Wore Ndiaye KANDJI for her noteworthy input, and our profound gratitude to Ms. Binta DIOP, founder of the Femme Africa Solidarité NGO, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for women, peace and security.

PFPC extends its warm thanks to all the resource persons, observers of the conflict and civil society organizations that have actively and collectively participated in this work. We hail their multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral contributions.

A special thank goes to Consultant Anne Mendy CORREA who, with her stellar writing skills, has drafted the general report of the White Paper, as per PFPC directives, and Dr. Solange Bandiaky BADJI for proofreading the said report and editing it for the production of the current version of the White Paper.

We would also like to pay a vibrant tribute to all the brave women of Casamance, to all civil society organizations that have always mobilized, from the outbreak of the conflict to date, to restore social cohesion in a region struck and affected by over thirty years of latent war, and who are resolutely active in accompanying the peace process in Casamance.
The drafting of this White Paper fits into the implementation of the *Unaam Kayraay* Project. The two-year project (2018 - 2020) has been implemented by a Consortium composed of PartnersGlobal, Tostan, Partners West Africa Senegal (PWA-S), and the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC). The project's main objective is to engage civil society organizations, notably women's associations, in efforts for the definitive return of peace in Casamance through dialogue and the mobilization of all stakeholders.

The White Paper on the peace situation in Casamance was drafted in the aftermath of public consultations held in Casamance, mainly in the nine (9) departments of the regions of Kolda, Sedhiou and Ziguinchor (implemented by PFPC); and based on the recommendations stemming from dialogues with women (PWA-S); and dialogues on peace and security with cross-border village communities and intercommunity cross-border conflicts in Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau (Tostan). All these dialogues and consultations at grassroots level have made it possible to take stock of the situation on the ground, notably with regards to the challenges and impacts of the conflict on the local populations, especially on women; but also to collect local populations’ perceptions, opinions and recommendations for the definitive resolution of the conflict and the sustainable development of their lands. It highlights the recommendations of civil society and women for a definitive and sustainable peace in Casamance.

The White Paper is neither an academic document, nor an act of political positioning regarding the conflict. It is rather an advocacy paper, a heartfelt appeal from the women of Casamance and the other regions of Senegal, with the support of their sisters from the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. It is also a call for action to the Government of Senegal and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) with the view to restoring peace in Casamance, on the one hand; but also to civil society actors and women's associations to help the population of the region, particularly women, to overcome the challenges caused by the conflict and advocate together for an inclusive and transparent dialogue in the quest for peace.

Thus, the White Paper urges all stakeholders to come together for a definitive and sustainable peace in Casamance. The conflict in this region is a national and regional concern that requires the mobilization of various actors at different levels who can contribute to peacekeeping and stability in Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, and in the sub-region as the whole. A special call is launched to the Government of Senegal and to MFDC for inclusive negotiations that take into account the aspirations and interests of local populations in peace agreements. Local populations are strongly demanding the resumption of peace talks for the definitive resolution of the conflict in Casamance.

**Consortium members**

PFPC, PWA-S, Tostan, and PartnersGlobal
Cry for action from the women of Casamance!

Our heartfelt thoughts go to all those who have died in this conflict. We would like to extend our deep affection to all the people affected by this painful conflict: orphans, widows, landmine victims, refugees, displaced persons, exiles, and all those that are still living the effects of the trauma caused by this protracted conflict.

The public consultations provided the occasion to communities - particularly to the woman, the mother, the sister, the spouse, the neighbor, or simply the relative - to speak out on their experiences during this conflict and to realize, by listening to their sisters, brothers and friends, the complexity of this situation that has originated from a lack of communication, in the majority’s opinion.

Nobody is accused, or singled out, but people’s weariness and perceptions should force us to look within to assess our responsibility in the strife.

Thus, by transcending our egos, let us have the courage to pay attention to these people that, for a long time and for a lack of a forum in which to voice the speakable and the unspeakable, have had to repress their rage and suffer in silence.

Thereupon, we do hope that this sharing will culminate into strong and bold decisions for the definitive resolution of this conflict, considered as the “longest in Africa”, and for the sustainable development of the region of Casamance.

For that reason, it is the entire population of Casamance, particularly women, that is expressing to you, stakeholders and protagonists in this strife, communities’ experiences with and perceptions of the conflict’s adverse effects on the local population on the whole; and shares its vision of a Casamance in need of development, with the involvement of all actors.

Through your acts and decisions, you will make it possible, in a future that we hope very near, for us, and mainly for the youth born during this period, to (re)discover this green, peaceful and prosperous region of Casamance they have long heard of and rebuild it.

La Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC)
PartnersGlobal is pleased to present this White Paper, together with our colleagues from the *La Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC)*, Partners West Africa Senegal (PWA-S), representing our joint reflections on the conflict in the region of Casamance in Senegal, and recommendations for sustainable peace.

These reflections represent the hard-earned collective voice of local communities, community-based organizations, women's groups, and civil society organizations. PFPC, women's groups from other regions in Senegal, and the Women’s Forum, for the first time came together from Senegal, The Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau to join efforts to advocate for policies and resources needed to achieve peace in Casamance. These organizations are led by women, representing the often-marginalized voices of women and youth who are most affected by violence and instability on the ground in Casamance. They have had first-hand experience of the conflict for decades in all three countries Senegal, The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. Yet, these groups have never formally worked together on a peacebuilding effort before now. As a consortium, we have overcome many challenges to formulate a joint proposal and advocacy campaign to highlight the importance of peace in Casamance. Therefore, women's voices deserve to be heard and their perspectives incorporated into improved policies that can be implemented at the regional, national and local levels to achieve lasting peace.

While the important role of women in formal peace negotiations is gaining attention globally and is mandated by UN Resolution 1325, PartnersGlobal is committed to ensuring that the legitimate leadership and grassroots organizing of women at the community level is also recognized and supported. The following White Paper highlights the need for renewed attention and investment to continue to address the changing nature of the conflict(s) experienced by women and young people. Because of the lack of stability and economic development in the region, these communities have been facing complex issues of cross-border trafficking, displacement and land disputes amongst many others described below. No one understands the nature of these conflicts better than the populations that contributed to this document.

I encourage you to join forces with the brave women who are organizing and leading change in their villages and cross-border communities in the three countries. Raise your voice with theirs to ensure that needed support continues to flow to this region to bolster the fragile peace. PartnersGlobal understands the power of working in authentic partnership with local and global peacebuilding efforts, and we believe that the women and youth leaders in the Casamance are poised to bring about lasting, peaceful change if those partnerships continue and are expanded. We hope you will join us.

Julia Roig
President
PartnersGlobal
Even though Senegal is viewed as a stable and democratic country in the insecurity-rife West African context, the country has been entangled in one of the longest conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, notably in Casamance. The populations of this region have, since 1982, been held hostage in an ongoing conflict between Senegalese armed forces and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC). This conflict, which has continued for three decades, now manifests itself by moments of sporadic respites and intense tensions that challenge national and international public opinion. This conflict still exerts adverse impacts on the populations of Casamance, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, particularly those living in cross-border areas; and on the political and economic situation in Senegal, and in the sub-region at large. In addition to the armed aspect of the conflict, other types of conflicts are emerging and intensifying at community-level, regarding the use of the land and natural resources, inter-community conflicts, human and timber trafficking, etc.

The conflict in Casamance is multidimensional and has political, military, religious, social and cultural effects; and features the involvement of many actors. Every President of the Republic of Senegal, from Abdou DIOUF to Macky SALL, through Abdoulaye WADE, has attempted to end this conflict in different ways, either by making it a national priority; or through strategies of suppression, armed attacks, the signing of peace agreements, and detentions and liberations of prisoners, among others. The Presidents of the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau have also been involved throughout the process, as mediators between the Government of Senegal and MFDC and during negotiations for ceasefire agreements. The political context in both countries has both positively and negatively impacted the peacebuilding process in Casamance. The involvement of Father Diamacoune (a priest) as MFDC leader from the outbreak of the conflict brought a religious character, with the participation of the clergy. Non-governmental organizations and international bodies, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, have established many programs and in diverse sectors to assist local populations and contribute to the resolution of the conflict.

From the public consultations, dialogues and interviews with local populations, community leaders, women and the youth, a shared willpower to reach a definitive peace in Casamance through inclusive negotiations has sprung forth.

The content of this White Paper is based on the results of the public consultations held in the three regions of Kolda, Sedhiou and Ziguinchor vis-a-vis local populations’ experiences and perceptions of the conflict; interviews with resource persons and/ or actors involved in the conflict management/resolution process; surveys conducted in the communities; and multi-actor dialogues in cross-border areas of Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. This methodology and inclusive approach have made it possible to highlight the local realities, as well as the national and sub-regional dimensions of the conflict.
These various consultations, through focus groups (with men and women), mixed plenary sessions/assemblies, and validation workshops in each department have made it possible to:

- Take stock of the conflict on the ground;
- Identify the economic, social, environmental and political challenges related to the conflict;
- Record the real-life experiences of men, women and youth;
- Document cases of gender-based violence;
- Perform a mapping of stakeholders involved in the resolution of the conflict;
- Highlight the participation of civil society actors in the conflict resolution process, and women's role in peacebuilding; and
- Present conflict resolution options/opportunities and major recommendations for a definitive and sustainable peace in Casamance.

The definitive resolution of the conflict in Casamance is a prerequisite for stability, social peace and sustainable development in the region, in Senegal and in the sub-region at large, especially in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.
The origin of the conflict in Casamance is complex and multiform. Yet, the unforgettable repression of the demonstration on 26 December 1982 is still cited as a key historical moment and one of the rebellion’s triggers. The condemnation of MFDC leaders on 13 December 1983, which then led to the formation of the MFDC’s military wing, commonly known as ATIKA, that same year, as well as the beginning of MFDC armed attacks. Various political, economic, social and cultural factors have fueled the conflict, exerting adverse impacts on the peace process. (The table in Annex 1 gives a summary of the background of the conflict, the peace process and the intervention of civil society therein).

Considering the magnitude of the conflict, political leaders then became aware of the need to embark on a process of dialogue and peace. Thus, the first Ceasefire Agreement between the MFDC and the Government of Senegal was signed on 29 March 1991 in Toubacouta. However, despite other subsequent peace agreements (see Annexes), a definitive resolution of the conflict has yet to be achieved. Even though the involvement of political and religious leaders and the liberation of MFDC detainees have helped broker these agreements, various factors jeopardized their full application and success: condemnations and imprisonments of MFDC leaders, losses of human life (military, MFDC members and local populations), political instability in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, the consolidation of the rebel movement as an armed force, splintering of the MFDC with the creation of various factions, the radicalization of the separatist movement for an independent Casamance from Senegal, arms trafficking, etc.

Although the crisis in Casamance is generally perceived as a conflict between the Government of Senegal and MFDC, the populations of Casamance, particularly women and children, have always borne its brunt. In 1997, the appearance of landmines wreaked havoc in villages. In 1998, the army massacred 30 villagers in Djifangor. Clashes between the military and MFDC raged in the villages, leaving behind widows, orphans and female heads of households in their wake. In addition, women were victimized by rapes and other forms of aggression.

All these negative impacts of the conflict on the local population, and on women and children in particular, pushed civil society to mobilize in 1998, with the first workshop staged by the National Civil Society Consortium (CONGAD) in Ziguinchor. In 1999, the regional solidarity committee of women for peace in Casamance (USOFORAL) was founded. Thus, these structures enabled civil society, including USOFORAL, to take part in conflict resolution dialogues, notably a series of meetings in Banjul begun in 1999. In the wake of the upsurge of violence against civilians in 2008, civil society staged a demonstration in 2009 to call for non-violence and the resumption of negotiations between the MFDC and the Government of Senegal.

The conflict’s violence reached its climax between 2006 and 2011, and was marked by frequent military interventions, arrests of MFDC leaders, rivalries among MFDC factions following the demise of Father Diamacoune, the upsurge of violence against civilians, the start of the hostage-taking policy by MFDC, arms trafficking, etc. Furthermore, the spread of the conflict up to the outskirts of Ziguinchor – resulting in over 1,000 people being displaced from their villages to the city – as well as the resurgence of banditry on the Trans-Gambia road, and the military coup in 2009 in Guinea-Bissau have increased insecurities in cross-border areas.
With this intensification of the conflict, the women of Casamance understood the need to reorganize in order to face these multi-faceted challenges. As such, women’s associations in Casamance working for the resolution of the conflict and the return of peace decided to join their forces for collective action, culminating in the creation of the *La Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC)*. The idea for PFPC was born from an awareness of the need to group and unite the various women’s associations in Casamance in order to amplify women’s voices in the peacebuilding process. Women in Casamance have also seized political opportunities to develop advocacy strategies in the peacebuilding process and enhance their solidarity and unity. Furthermore, the normalizing of the political situation in Guinea-Bissau, and the fall of President Yaya Jammeh and the democratic transition in the Gambia, provided women with additional opportunities to press for more collaboration at sub-regional level. In 2017, the Women’s Forum for Senegal – the Gambia – Guinea-Bissau (hereafter called the “Women’s Forum”) came into being.

It was against this backdrop that the *Unaam Kayraay* Project was initiated, with the objectives to strengthen this collective action and form national, regional and international coalitions for peace in Casamance.

It is through holding public consultations in the cities of Kolda, Sedhiou and Ziguinchor; dialogues in Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau; village-level surveys; and the establishment of peace committees in cross-border areas, that the Consortium of implementing partners, principally PFPC, was able to draft this White Paper.

The White Paper reflects the local realities and major challenges engendered by the conflict for local populations (men, women, youth, and children) of Casamance and cross-border areas with the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau; and on the environment, the economy, and the sociocultural context. It also shines a light on the perspectives of civil society and women for a definitive resolution of the conflict and puts forth targeted recommendations collected from grassroots actors and stakeholders in the peace process.
The Conflict’s Impacts On Local Populations, Women And Youth

Socioeconomic and environmental impacts

a. A precarious socioeconomic situation at local level
An area rich and abundant in natural resources, and offering many economic opportunities owing to its geographic location, the region of Casamance is marked by a serious lack of socioeconomic infrastructure. Local populations face difficulties in accessing basic services and health care, not to mention the isolation that certain areas face due to the dilapidated state of bridges and other communications facilities. For example, a surgery unit in Bignona that was built and equipped hasn’t been operational for over a decade now.

b. Cattle rustling
Cattle theft is a recurrent phenomenon, mainly in cross-border areas. It presents a major challenge for herders who are victims of repeated violence related to their cattle. The wife of a livestock herder recounted instances of violence: “With the ropes they use to fetch water from the trough, some young shepherds have been tied around palm trees and my husband was killed over his cattle.” During the public consultations, many cases of suicide were reported among cattle herders following the loss of their herds. These challenges have fostered feelings of anger and discontent among pastoral populations, who view themselves as targets in the general context of the conflict.

c. Cross-border crime and trafficking
As a result of their geographic location, villages located near the border with the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau are more exposed to insecurity, thereby facing multiple challenges. The most exposed areas are the North-Eastern part of Oulampagne and Medina Yoro Foulah near the Gambian border, and the Djibanar area around the Bissau-Guinean border. Not only are these villages very isolated, they are also neglected of proper socioeconomic and communications infrastructure (e.g. roads, trails, connectivity) and health and education structures, all of which create a feeling of abandonment. Cross-border crime is on the rise, with cattle rustling, wood and human trafficking, the looting of natural resources, and drug smuggling as examples. Insecurity is also rife in the areas close to main roads.

d. Land conflicts, displacements and migration
The Casamance conflict and ensuing insecurity have led to the internal displacement of families to other villages. While some people flee from their villages and abandon their fields for security reasons; others, after a period of calm, return to their homes, only to find them occupied by strangers. Some are obliged to rent plots of land to grow crops and provide for their needs, as they cannot return to their land.

• “In Kanampar, our houses have been set aflame, leaving us with no food, clothes or cattle. Currently, we are still in Goudomp, and we are obliged to rent land to work and earn something to live on, as we cannot yet return back to our village.”

These displacements and migrations are sources of land disputes between indigenous communities and immigrants over housing and the occupation of fields. These land disputes can trigger many new types of inter-village conflicts that worsen the situation of crisis, creating resentments and fueling acts of revenge. Given their escalating numbers in communities, these disputes deserve special attention.
e. Out-of-school and idle youth

School dropouts and/or delayed access to education for children and youth due to displacements and/or the degradation of school facilities have been noted; the production and consumption of cannabis among young people is also on the rise. More and more, young people are leaving their villages and flocking to big cities, mainly the capital city, Dakar.

The above issues facing youth remain as topical as they did at the onset of the conflict: “Thus, the laudable aim to raise the level of education among the youth of Casamance encounters an obstacle: the lack of job opportunities in the region. In the absence of real development, and job creation prospects, will the youth of Casamance follow the footsteps of their elders and converge in Dakar, where the bulk of the investments in Senegal are concentrated?” (Memorandum of the delegation of senior executives of Casamance, 1984).

This lack of economic opportunities factors into radicalization of youth as potential recruits for an armed rebellion.
With all these challenges, the populations of Casamance consider themselves as outcasts who are not taken into account in the Government's priorities. Women and youth likewise share this perception and frustration. “Do we belong to Senegal?” This feeling of exclusion was mentioned on several occasions during the public consultations in Bignona and Velingara. As such, it deserves the Government’s attention, being an aggravating factor of the current conflict. These perceptions can worsen the situation and trigger many other types of conflict, which are themselves the seeds of impediments to peace, if not of an upsurge of violence. The factors contributing to the feelings of exclusion and marginalization are summed up as follows (comments and perceptions collected during the consultations in the departments):

- **Low rates of recruitment by the military and low access to employment opportunities**: Many youth people in Casamance feel that they are discriminated against during recruitment for military service, and for jobs.

- **Inadequate investments and infrastructure**: Comments collected during consultations: “It is the Government that adds fuel to fire by not being fair and equitable. Why elsewhere and not here? Casamance receives nothing from what is given elsewhere. Investments and infrastructure projects are diverted under the pretext of the conflict and the armed rebellion.”

- **Lang grabs by non-natives of Casamance**: The allocation of land to “foreigners” to the detriment of natives is adversely perceived by local populations, viewing it as an “imposed decision of the authorities at the highest level; through the land law on the state-owned land (loi sur le domaine national)” and in total contradiction of Act 3 of Decentralization.

- **Land conflicts and disputes**: Land management issues spark conflicts in various forms, being caused by, inter alia, the availability of land and favorable weather conditions, both of which attract the interest of “foreign” populations seeking easy access to agricultural land. As an illustration, some people spoke of an open conflict in Casamance and a mini-war in Medina Yoro Foulah, from 1990 to 2000. Instances of land conflicts have also been observed in many communities, notably in the Pakour.

- **Orientation of high school graduates from Casamance to virtual universities**: The majority of high-school graduates from Casamance are scammed into attending virtual universities, without prior, sufficient computer training. However, this a problem throughout all of Senegal.

- **Violations of sacred forests**: Local populations are outraged by cases of violations of the sacred forests by both the Army and the MFDC. The profaning of place of worship and spirituality only fuels anger and the contempt towards the actors in the conflict, and Casamance people’s perception that their people and beliefs are disrespected.
• **Ambiguous position of the Government**: Perceptions linked to the ambiguous position of the Government, in addition to its “not delivering on its promises”, are that the Government does not always play a role in the equitable redistribution of resources; images on TV of other, more “prosperous” areas in the country influence this perception. The Government even tends to limit its programs, or to direct its priorities to other localities. Successive administrations have not managed to build on previous gains and opportunities, creating a lack of continuity, disruptions and inconsistent management of the Casamance issue. As such, local populations have the impression that there is a “Divide and Conquer” or “Delaying” policy that is used to derail the process.
As underlined in the strategic document on women’s voices in peacebuilding in Casamance from June 2014, “In Casamance, women have suffered from the conflict at three levels: first, they have been victims of the same violations as those suffered by men (kidnappings, imprisonment, torture, executions); second, they have suffered serious assaults based on their status as women (rapes, harassments, humiliations, forced abortions, etc.); and lastly, they represent the majority of “indirect” victims as mothers, spouses, daughters or relatives of detained, murdered or missing men”, page 8. In many villages, women have become heads of households, being obliged to provide for the needs of their families as their husbands have either been killed or joined the armed rebellion or exiled to neighboring countries or abroad. Both the MFDC and military have committed exactions and acts of violence against the populations, mainly women. The following testimonies were collected during public consultations:

**Sexual, physical and emotional violence**

a) “When they heard that I had been appointed as the treasurer of the peace committee, they came to ask for the money. When I affirmed having no money, they turned my house upside down and whatever was useful was taken away (new clothes, a few belongings and even the supplies that my husband had just bought for the children’ academic year). Then, at gunpoint, they took me to the health hut and got hold of the FCFA 175,000 then available in the cashbox;”

b) “With the insecurity rife in the area, 2 young girls were raped on the way from Koussy 1 School to Koussy 2 School.” Cases of sexual violence/aggression against women and girls are numerous and need to be documented and quantified, with accompanying measures and remedial actions.

**Constrained access to livelihoods**

c) The majority of farm production zones (paddy fields, growing fields) and/or non-timber forestry areas (PFNL) are inaccessible as a result of threats from individuals who purportedly belong to the MFDC, in addition to bans from the military. Women, who are often the most active in PFNLs, face challenges to sell their products due to impassible roads, insecurity in harvest areas, taxes and harassments at checkpoints. “We no longer have access to the resource-providing forest, nor to the paddy fields.” Declaration of a woman collected during a public consultation in Niaguis.
Kidnappings

d) “Too many things to recount, impossible to say it all in one day! I was kidnapped for a whole day by a rebel that took me around the forest on foot. I was eventually found by a soldier thanks to the reporting done by my friends, who could not find me in the fields. The soldier traded gunshots with the rebel; the bullets flew over me as I was laying down, with my belly on the ground, to avoid being hit”. Testimony of a woman from the public consultations in Niagis.

Militarization

e) The military are also accused in some zones, particularly in Nyassia, Kaguit and Oussouye, of committing acts of violence against women (sexual violence, abuse, aggressions, etc.). Women are demanding sanctions and urge the Government to undertake necessary measures and responses. These acts tarnish the image of the State and jeopardize relations between the Government and citizens. “Soldiers are disrespectful when talking to the population, mainly women.” Declarations collected during the public consultation in Vélingara.

A permanent insecurity

All of these challenges contribute to a degraded climate of trust between local populations, the Government and MFDC, with a feeling of insecurity exacerbated by the lack of any guarantee from peacebuilding actors. Various factors imperil the climate of peace, including a lack of transparency, difficulty accessing information (status of the peace process, state of demobilizations, etc.), and a general atmosphere of mistrust amongst involved stakeholders, all of which cause adverse effects on the dynamics of peace and reconstruction. The emergence of new conflicts related to land and natural resource management, in addition to cattle thefts and low-level, intra- and inter-village conflicts, among other issues, can potentially endanger stability in Casamance, and the entire sub-region.

Challenges specific to local communities, with an emphasis on women's and young people's needs, must be taken into consideration in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding process and in the design/implementation of development projects/programs in Casamance.

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**Strategies and perspectives from civil society**

In spite of the multiple challenges, various actors' interventions vis-à-vis social, cultural, economic and political development have improved peace dynamics. The current Government is also in the process of finding solutions with MFDC. Yet, these ongoing dialogues and negotiations have not yet come to fruition for various reasons, including divisions within MFDC, which are undoubtedly a contributing factor. Other actors, besides the Government of Senegal and its bodies or representatives, have also taken action in the conflict management/resolution process in Casamance.

For its part, civil society has directly or indirectly been involved in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding process by working for the peaceful end of the conflict through nonviolent methods, dialogue, mediation and the launch of development activities. However, the need to build civil society's capacities in mechanisms, tools and procedures related to mediation, and conflict management and resolution, has been identified. Furthermore, there is a need to harmonize and streamline interventions from different civil society actors and other players in the peace process in order to curb the adverse effects of “competition” among NGOs and/or the overlapping/duplication of their projects and programs. Coalitions within civil society and enhanced synergy are of paramount importance in pooling efforts, knowledge, skills and resources.
For civil society actors, this section will focus on community-based organizations (CBOs), national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs), women's groupings and networks, human rights groups, youth associations, religious and customary authorities, grassroots populations, opinion leaders, researchers, and local presenters on community radio stations, etc. However, it is worth noting that natives of Casamance and some civil society entities based abroad are also involved in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding process, either directly and indirectly.

**Community-based organizations (CBOs):** these generally include, inter alia, women's organizations, women's promotion groups, youth groups or sports and cultural associations, and village development associations. They provide support to local populations and their members through social mobilization and sensitizations around the management of peace and the development of income-generating activities (IGAs).

**Women's associations and networks:** many women's associations - whose status is either as an association or NGO - have formed to support the resolution of the conflict and the continuing quest for peace. Women's organizations at the grassroots level have joined their forces through the establishment of the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC). There is also the Women's Forum for Senegal – the Gambia – Guinea-Bissau, which aims to contribute to stronger peace and stability in Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau. Several NGOs defending women's rights, such as Femme Africa Solidarité (FAS), play a key role in the peace process.

**Community-based peace management committees:** demonstrate local communities' capacities to roll out actions geared towards social cohesion.

**Non-governmental organizations (NGOs):** active in the process of enhancing social peace by implementing programs on specific, peace-centered themes. They develop or implement projects/programs for participatory citizen monitoring and oversight, and also invest in capacity building for communities, CBOs and women's groups.

**International organizations (IOs):** financially and technically support the peace process via various interventions centered on awareness-raising and improving living conditions in areas affected by the conflict (e.g. drilling wells, sanitation or food support, among others), such as through capacity building programs, the provision of inputs for IGAs and/or reconstruction of homes for returnees. IOs also organize capacity building activities intended for communities, and engage in monitoring and evaluation, etc.
a. Need for a permanent, transparent and inclusive national dialogue

One of the key elements in building a sustainable peace would be to readdress the conflict’s substantive issues and discuss them in a national debate, thereby facilitating exchanges on various issues related to the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of the conflict.

“If a national debate had, at the time, raised and thoroughly discussed the issues, […] to which are added other concerns including land issues […], we certainly would not have to face this situation. The lack of a forum for key issues partly explains the resorting to other means of expression that are, unfortunately, often violent.” Comments recorded during an interview with a community leader.

“If after speaking for this long ... the time has come to address them [i.e the problems in Casamance] honestly, frankly and objectively. It’s about identifying them as thoroughly and accurately as possible”. Memorandum of the delegation of senior executives of Casamance, page 8, April 1984.

b. Revitalize the local economy!

To address the much-lamented economic challenges, it is important that the Government invest in the revitalization of the local economy, which can be done at various levels:

• The development of production and communication facilities to help open up villages and foster better security, upgrade agricultural products and produce, improve mobility for people and facilitate the return of the populations back to abandoned villages;
• The promotion of self-employment, particularly amongst the youth and women;
• The enhancement of basic social services (water, energy, health, education, etc.);
• The involvement of professional and senior executives from Casamance to provide inputs in terms of knowledge, technical and financial means, depending on their competencies;
• Access for youth and women to funding opportunities;
• The realization of PUDC goals to boost the economy and enhance the level of rural investment.

c. Management of land-related conflicts

It is important to find solutions for the management of land disputes/conflicts, with the view to mitigating conflicts between populations and between villages, both in Casamance and in other cross-border areas. This can be accomplished through an attitude of vigilance and maintenance of a culture of dialogue and consultation among communities; and the furtherance of multi-sectoral assistance efforts intended for local populations and communities. As part of the decentralization process, communal and municipal councilors must be involved in the resolution of land disputes, as per their legal mandates.
d. Inclusive security management at cross-border areas

There are many cross-border challenges between Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, particularly with regards to the trafficking of resources, people and weapons and cattle rustling, thus requiring a collaborative approach from each respective government and CSOs. It is essential to organize dialogues amongst members of civil society, the security sector and local populations in cross-border areas. For instance, feedback from a village chief of Bignano who participated in a dialogue session organized by PWA-S in Ziguinchor speaks volumes on the importance of multi-actor dialogues on these issues: "I have never had the opportunity to exchange views directly with the security and defense forces as a village head. I handle various land-related disputes. I have contacted the police and the gendarmerie on several occasions without any follow-up. Today, you gave me the opportunity to speak not only with the gendarmerie, but also with the police, the army, the forestry services and customs at the same time."

Peace committees

Peace committees, composed of three to seven members (men and women), are mechanisms established at community level to prevent and peacefully resolve conflicts. Its members are democratically-elected by the community and subsequently trained by Tostan in conflict management and resolution techniques. The conflict prevention actions conducted by peace committees include sketches, discussions, meetings and debates, the aim of which are to raise communities’ awareness of peace and security. For example, before the rainy season, the committees sensitize community members on the effects of free grazing that often trigger conflicts between farmers and livestock herders. The themes generally addressed therein are the importance of inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogues, the importance of peace for people's well-being, the need to develop empathy as
part of better mutual understanding, the importance of respecting human rights, and/or the understanding of conflicts (trigger factor, types, evolution, etc.).

Peace committees offer a platform of ongoing dialogue, mediation and conflict resolution at local level. They also contribute to the promotion and strengthening of inter- and intra-village and cross-border consultations. This approach is innovative as it is premised on local institutions and capacity building for community-based organizations, as well as their sustainability.

**Actions and approaches**

To help address the above and other enormous challenges, civil society actors and women’s organizations - in particular, PFPC - must devise and adopt an appropriate strategy. This strategy should make it possible to identify ways and means to facilitate civil society’s greater participation in resolving the conflict in Casamance. The approaches and strategies are diverse and can be summed up as follows:

- **The mobilization of civil society for a sincere dialogue between the Government and the MFDC** would consolidate a climate of sustainable peace and have a ripple effort on economic revitalization through improving access to villages and the exploitation and recovery of resources;

- **Capacity building for CSOs on mediation, and conflict management and resolution**;

- **The promotion of a consultation framework amongst civil society stakeholders** in order to build a broad-based consensus and synergy around interventions to deal with conflict-related issues and share information. The synergy thus created would make it possible to speak in one voice and sit together at the negotiation table, with conflict resolution proposals based on citizens’ views. This synergy could also be strengthened on a programmatic basis, by taking into account the levels and/or domains of intervention of umbrella entities and grassroots organizations;

- **An ongoing mobilization of women from all regions of Senegal, and Casamance, in particular**;

- **Enhanced sustainability for initiatives serving local populations**. For instance, skills transfers to local stakeholders and the strengthening of dialogue and conflict management instruments and mechanisms. Moreover, the tightening of border security and improved mobility and access must be assured.

- **The design and implementation of a large-scale, multi-sectoral program** to enable various players from civil society, each one in their level of intervention (micro, meso and/or macro) and areas of expertise, to address the priority needs of communities vis-à-vis the resolution of the conflict;

- **A consensus on intervention methods**. It is important to reach a consensus to regain the involvement of civil society and women’s organizations in the peace
process, and in order to 1) better target potential actors; and 2) identify the measures to be taken in this regard.

• **A combination of community (village), collective (groupings) and individual (leaders) approaches** aimed at reaching the maximum number of people and women, both in rural and urban areas, and at micro, meso and macro levels. However, the value-add of such a program would consist of supporting each area in relation to its specific needs for capacity building, according to the selected type of intervention. Thus, the emphasis would be laid on setting up links between intervention sites and stakeholders active at different levels.

  a) **The community approach** makes it possible to carry-out pilot activities that reach the greatest number of beneficiaries possible, and that simultaneously serve as demonstrative models;

  b) **The collective approach** translates into the voluntary grouping of individuals (leaders) in order to replicate the approach on a more formalized basis and with performance and results-based objectives, thereby making it possible to measure impacts;

  c) **The individual approach** corresponds to the stage in which a community member, based on the returns of a collective activity, decides to become autonomous and self-sufficient. This third level is the ultimate outcome of the approach and will allow for more equitable access to opportunities for the entire community, the burden being on each individual, as part of a fair and open competition, to promote him/herself. At the same time, this approach would also have the advantage of bringing direct support to some individuals who are sufficiently integrated into the process, by helping to remove barriers to their own development and empowerment.

• **Adoption of a programmatic approach with the implementation of pilot projects.** This speaks to developing and budgeting for a multi-phased program, which would include both pilot projects in various sectors targeting local populations' general needs, and specifically women and/or youth. It is also important to take advantage of the private sector and/or civil society stakeholders who have relevant expertise to implement pilot projects and bring them to scale.
As part of efforts aimed at fostering the effective participation in the peace process of civil society, including women and youth, and the economic development of their region, the following conditions should be met:

• Sensitize various stakeholders on accounting for women’s specific needs;

• Differentiate between activities to be conducted prior to negotiations and those to be carried out thereafter (i.e. after an agreement is reached);

• Expand opportunities for entrepreneurship for women and youth in Casamance through the enhancement and diversification of technical trainings;

• Create specific microcredit services for entrepreneurship dedicated to women and the youth, and promote free access to these services for beneficiaries;

• Provide women and youth with services and technologies that enable them to work autonomously and become competitive on the labor market;

• Envisage the creation of specific funds for local business development, specifically set-up for residents of the Casamance, including women and young people;

• Bring together local populations of Casamance, including women and the youth, to develop policies and programs serving them.

These conditions are likewise valid in the areas of training and capacity building. However, the emphasis should be placed on necessary prevention for a peaceful future.
Women’s participation in peace processes

During interviews and public consultations, women affirmed having little information about the ongoing peace process and feeling isolated from the strategic negotiations between the Government and MFDC. “We do not know the terms of reference of the conflict management/resolution process, and only a small number of us are informed,” a woman leader concurred.

The women of Casamance have, since the outbreak of the conflict, demonstrated a strong willpower and commitment to being involved both in their communities and in the national and wider peace process. At community level, women have followed a strategy of integrating modern conflict management mechanisms and techniques into traditional mediation practices. To be successful, the national peacebuilding process for Casamance must consider the effective and equitable participation of women as equal partners and full-fledged actors.

Throughout the Casamance’s history, women’s organizations, particularly those in the sacred forests, have played a key role during major sociocultural events in communities. Their role in social mediation and the resolution of conflicts to preserve social cohesion is renowned. Therefore, it would be relevant to build on existing and effective sociocultural practices at community-level and involve women leaders and women’s organizations in relaying important messages and awareness-raising, developing of socioeconomic activities, or simply for advocacy at community- and political-level.

Alongside from the recognition of women’s traditional mediation role in society, Senegal has adhered to the principles of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (hereafter referred to as “UN Resolution 1325). This Resolution not only recognizes the specific impact of conflicts on women, but also the need to consider the women as key stakeholders in conflict prevention and resolution. Senegal is among the countries that have adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325. It is essential that the country fulfil its obligations under the Resolution through the active involvement of the women from the Casamance in the peacebuilding process, as well as also establish mechanisms and means to alleviate the conflict’s adverse impacts on women.
On the 10th anniversary of the adoption of UN Resolution 1325 in Dakar, two major associations – Kabonketor and USOFORAL – came together to raise awareness of the need to unite and regroup various women's associations of the Casamance in a bid to include women's voice in the peacebuilding process. This action was the founding event, in September 2010, of the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC).

Initially designed as an informal consultation and dialogue platform, PFPC rapidly became a vital organization in the peacebuilding process in Casamance. Today, it brings together today some 210 women's associations and organizations, with around 25,000 members scattered throughout Casamance (e.g. Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sedhiou). PFPC's mission is to pool the energies, skills and expertise of each of its member associations, and to propose concrete and relevant solutions to put an end to the crisis in Casamance.

PFPC's intervention strategy is articulated around three pillars: 1) restart the dialogue between the Government and MFDC to promote the resumption of large-scale and inclusive negotiations for a definitive return of peace to the region; 2) fight against all forms of violence against the civilian populations by the belligerents; 3) strengthen PFPC's institutional and organizational capacities to make it a dynamic, civil society player for gender equality in the peacebuilding process.

Since its creation, PFPC has conducted several actions for peace: prayer nights; demonstrations in Ziguinchor; a 2012 petition campaign for peace in Casamance, which recorded over 50,000 signatures; audiences with presidential candidates; information and donation collection campaign; dialogues with religious and customary leaders; community meetings; mobilization and advocacy days; and meetings with military officials and MFDC leaders (for more information, refer to Annex #2)
Guided by the strong conviction that the resolution of the conflict in Casamance cannot be successful without sub-regional collaboration between Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, PFPC decided to combine civil society's efforts, notably women's organizations, through the creation of the Women's Forum for Senegal – the Gambia – Guinea-Bissau.

The Women's Forum was established in September 2017, with a mission to restore and protect peace and stability in the three countries. The main objectives of the Forum are: 1) defend human rights, particularly those of women, for gender equity and equality in the three countries; 2) support and facilitate all initiatives that support good governance and democracy, social cohesion, and gender-sensitize policies with competent government authorities; 3) promote women's participation in decision-making bodies; the management, resolution and transformation of conflicts; and peacebuilding and mediation as part of the three nations' interest in peace and security.

The Forum is non-political, non-sectarian, non-discriminatory and non-profit making. It brings together three major organizations of the three countries, without any discrimination based on ethnicity, language, origin or religion. The member organizations are: PFPC of Senegal, the Women's political platform of Guinea-Bissau and the African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (CADEDH) of the Gambia.

The Women's Forum members seek to bring forth a joint response, in a coordinated and efficient manner, to the security threats and political instability looming in the Senegal – the Gambia – Guinea-Bissau sub-region.
The conflict in Casamance is first and foremost a national concern, requiring the involvement of all Senegalese citizens. In this regard, Partners West Africa – Senegal (PWA-S) has been staging dialogue sessions between women of Casamance and women leaders of associations from other regions of the country, with women from the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau in attendance.

Stereotyping of different ethnic groups in Senegal and variable socioeconomic situations have inhibited the organization of constructive dialogues, particularly between women’s groups and networks, that facilitate a collective appropriation of the Casamance issue by women leaders from Casamance and other regions. These dialogue sessions, however, have started to breakdown existing stereotypes, reduce false perception that regions have of one another and identify common problems in a bid to strengthen mutual trust.

Reinvigorated support for advocacy efforts for a definitive peace in Casamance from women throughout Senegal is essential, especially considering the national character of the conflict.
Recommendations for a definitive & sustainable peace in Casamance

Mostly formulated during public consultations by local populations and women in particular, these recommendations are geared towards the Government, MFDC and to civil society:

1. **Recommendations common to the Government and MFDC:**

   - Formalize a ceasefire through an accord signed by all parties.
   - Reconsider the Casamance issue at different levels (political, social, economic and cultural);
   - Establish an inclusive approach, conducive for the active participation of women in peace negotiations to defend their specific concerns and the broader perspectives of local populations in Casamance;
   - Initiate a negotiation dynamic that rebuilds social peace in Casamance and reinvigorates the local economy.
   - Include, in peace agreements and as specific points, the prohibition of all forms of gender-based violence, the recognition of violence committed against women during the conflict, and plans for concrete measures to prevent and sanction violence;
   - Support the resumption of humanitarian demining;
   - Collaborate in demining efforts and the peaceful return of displaced persons and returnees to their areas of origin.

2. **Recommendations to the Government**

   - The Government of Senegal must ensure, as part of peacebuilding efforts in Casamance, the effective implementation of national laws and international conventions ratified with regards to peace and security, notably UN Resolution 1325 on women’s participation, and incorporate gender perspectives in peace processes and conflict resolution;
   - Strengthen the dialogue strategy already begun with the MFDC and invite their members to unite and speak in one voice for constructive negotiations towards a definitive peace;
   - Adopt an inclusive approach to the peacebuilding process, with the effective participation of local populations from Casamance, women, the youth and civil society in the decision-making process. This would help to restore a climate of mutual trust;
   - Strengthen and ensure the effective implementation of existing economic development programs, including the Emergency Program for Economic Development (PUDC) and the Emergency Program for the Modernization of Roads and Border Areas (PUMA), as part of the quest for solutions to socioeconomic problems, particularly youth unemployment, the reintegration of former rebels, and the rational use of natural resources;
• Develop programs aimed at supporting women who are victimized by violence and trauma from the conflict, empowering women and promoting women's entrepreneurship;

• Accelerate access to isolated areas as a complement to development efforts through the construction of road infrastructure and the rehabilitation of the Emile Badiane Bridge connecting Ziguinchor to Tobor village. This would likewise contribute to infrastructure project initiated by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), namely the Farafenni Bridge that connects Senegal and the Gambia;

• Strengthen local populations’ livelihoods through investment and capacity building;

• Resume dialogue sessions by going back to the table of negotiations - end “no war, no peace” – in order to prevent any resurgence of violence and define major project- based investments;

• In all the public projects and programs for the revitalization of development in Casamance, the Government should identify populations' specific needs and, more specifically, those of women, and bring about concrete and sustainable solutions;

• In all initiatives for peace and reconstruction in Casamance, the Government must implement a human rights-based approach and mainstream social inclusion and gender, as part of improving prospects for reconciliation and forgiveness;

• Improve people's living conditions by enhancing economic development at local level, including through infrastructure, and by promoting a more equitable access to basic social and energy services;

• Open up the communications process around the conflict, which tends to adopt a rather stereotyped format. The Casamance conflict is only spoken of during the President's New Year Eve address or, at best, on the eve of April 3rd (the day before Senegal's Independence Day); or during tragic events in the region. Moreover, the conflict is mainly remembered by the damage caused by a landmine or another unfortunate incident. More proactive communication from the Government around major issues related to the conflict in Casamance would prevent the situation from worsening;

• Perform a precise targeting of the most deprived and imperiled areas in need of PUDC intervention.

This dynamic should alleviate the populations’ frustrations against the Government and foster better relations with local populations and users of public services.

3. Recommendations to the MFDC

• Harmonize its positions and come together at the negotiation table with the government with legitimate and unified interlocutors, as part of more substantive participation in the peace process;

• Establish and put in place internal policies that respect UN Resolution 1325 through assuring women's participation in peace processes in Casamance and develop policies and mechanisms for addressing negative impacts of the conflict on women;
Recommendations for a definitive & sustainable peace in Casamance

• Recognize women as key interlocutors by giving them a leadership role in the negotiations, and involving them in the decision-making process and in negotiations;

• Include in negotiation points some means of redress for the heavy toll paid by women in the conflict and take into account the concerns of women, youth and communities impacted by the conflict.

4. Recommendations to other actors in the peace process, including civil society

• Harmonize its positions and come together at the negotiation table with the government with legitimate and unified interlocutors, as part of more substantive participation in the peace process;

• Develop a common vision for an alternative to the current situation and an attitude of watchdog and vigilance of the negative effects of the conflict within communities, and strengthen local stakeholders’ intervention capacities to encourage self-regulation;

• Elevate civil society’s advocacy efforts to a national level;

• Highlight CSOs’ legitimacy and role in the conflict resolution process, notably through their playing a mediation role within the MFDC and between the MFDC and the Government;

• Promote women’s economic empowerment;

• Support the resumption of humanitarian demining;

• Strengthen social dialogue between different actors;

• Enhance feelings of unity amongst civil society actors;

• Have specific measures targeting the youth;

• Perform a mapping of all stakeholders in order to harmonize actions and prevent the duplication and fragmentation of efforts.

5. Recommendations to women’s organizations (to PFPC in particular)

• Enact perseverance and vigilance in a bid to undertake measures that ensure the application and implementation of instruments under UN Resolution 1325;

• Implement specific programs for the development of skills in mediation and negotiation, on the one hand, and towards an optimal involvement in the resolution of the conflict in Casamance on the one hand, and the promotion of entrepreneurship in various fields of sustainable development, on the other hand;

• Ensure women’s involvement in the development of projects and programs concerning them;

• Establish links with women’s groups from other regions of Senegal and with those in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau to reinforce advocacy efforts at national and regional levels.
6. Recommendations to municipal authorities, communities and civil society

- Consider the psychological dimension of rebuilding communities, for instance by emphasizing the need to have access to official documents (e.g. Birth certificate);

- Exercise strong involvement in the design of appropriate mechanisms, such as through involvement in sensitization activities;

- Invest in resolving land-related conflicts, including between cross-border communities;

- Support village leaders in their role of “first responders” within communities.

7. General recommendations to technical and financial partners in their capacity to exert pressure and influence

*Based on the concerns raised during the public consultations, other recommendations have been formulated, mainly on the following points:*

- Develop facilities and technologies adapted to women and youth, notably in productive activities within important value chains;

- Review the funding/grant system/mechanism and the granting of tax incentives adapted for the socioeconomic development of Casamance;

- Implement specific programs for the creation/enhancement of an entrepreneurial culture for the populations of Casamance. These programs, based on the potentialities of the region, would aim to empower women and youth at organizational, managerial, technical, social and politico-institutional levels;

- Harmonize technical and financial partners’ various interventions to avoid duplication and promote synergy in the peace process and other areas.

8. Recommendations to the Governments of Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau

- Engage, on a greater scale, in the effective resolution of conflicts in cross-border areas through emphasizing inclusive dialogue and involving civil society;

- Create a platform of dialogue (forum or joint committee) for the three countries, with the inclusion of civil society and women, to ensure better border security; enhance the role of the Senegal-Gambia Secretariat (SSG) in the resolution of the conflict involving, to the extent possible, Guinea-Bissau in the SSG portfolio; and review the mission of this body to incorporate peace and security issues at borders;

- Hold periodic meetings that bring together stakeholders from the three countries to develop and plan common strategies.


Foucher, V. (2014), «Femmes, paix et reconstruction: rapport de la mission de réalisation d’un document stratégique sur la voix des femmes dans la construction de la paix en Casamance».


Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (Juin 2014), « Document stratégique sur la voix des femmes dans la construction de la paix en Casamance ». with the support of USOFORAL, women’s regional solidarity committee for peace in Casamance, and its strategic partner, WFD Weltfriedensdiënst

*Symposium sur le conflit en Casamance* (2014), au CICES à Dakar-Sénégal;
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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
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<tr>
<td>1982 26 December</td>
<td>Suppression of MFDC demonstration by the military</td>
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<td>1983 6 December</td>
<td>Election of President Abdou Diouf; Indictment of the main MFDC leaders; Creation of ATIK, the armed wing of MFDC</td>
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<td>1984/1989</td>
<td>Relative calm</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>Beginning of MFDC's armed offensive; Arrest of purported MFDC leaders and members;</td>
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<td>1991 29 March 29 March 28 May 31 May</td>
<td>Some PDS leaders meet MFDC leaders for peace negotiations; Ceasefire agreement between MFDC and the Government of Senegal in Toubacouta; Liberation of political detainees arrested under the detention warrant of 24 April 1988, including Father Diamacoune; Cacheu Agreements, made possible thanks to the clergy; Withdrawal of Sidy Badji, Conflict with Abbot Diamacoune; Beginning of divisions within MFDC</td>
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<td>1992 12 August</td>
<td>Father Diamacoune joins the South Front; Upsurge of violence/ exactions;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993 8 July</td>
<td>2nd ceasefire agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Military coup in the Gambia, Yahya Jammeh seizes power; Salif Sadio takes over from Leopold Sagna at the South Front;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Resurgence of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Failure of the Saint Edigio peace initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Planting of landmines; The armed rebellion gains ground; About 30 soldiers gunned down in Mandina Mankagne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1988 7 June</td>
<td>30 villagers massacred by the army in Djifangor; Discovery of arms trafficking by the MFDC; Military uprising in Bissau;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>President Nino Vieira toppled by the Junta; Creation of women’s regional solidarity committee for peace in Casamance (USOFORAL) Beginning of Banjul meetings, with civil society (including USOFORAL) attending for the first time; Meeting between Father Diamacoune and President Abdou Diouf; MFDC internal meeting in Banjul, agreement for the cessation of hostilities between the Government of Senegal and MFDC in Banjul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Election of Me Abdoulaye Wade as President of the Republic of Senegal; Change of policy – 100 days – and beginning of the circulation of money cases; Kumba Yalla becomes President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Seizure of Cassolol by Leopold Sagna; Leopold Sagna and his lieutenants gunned down by Salif Sadio who moves to the Northern Front; Cesar Atoute Badiate takes over from Leopold Sagna; Banjul: MFDC internal meeting;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 24 mars</td>
<td>Military offensive by Guinea-Bissau against Salif Sadio; President Wade receives Abbot Diamacoune; Shuffle in MFDC leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001/2007</td>
<td>Fragmentation of the separatist movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Demise of MFDC Secretary General Sidy Badji</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Clashes between Salif Sadio and the military; MFDC internal meeting; Amnesty law in favor of MFDC;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 December</td>
<td>Peace agreement between MFDC and the Government of Senegal in Ziguinchor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Nino Vieira elected president against Kumba Yalla Tagme Na Wai becomes army chief of staff in Guinea-Bissau; Meeting between MFDC and the Government of Senegal in Foundiougne; Father Diamacoune appoints Ansoumana Badji as MFDC Secretary General; Father Diamacoune excludes Abdou Elinkine Diatta from MFDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Military attack against Salif Sadio, attempted coup in Guinea-Bissau and suspicions of Senegal’s involvement; Ansourmane Badji dismissed as Secretary General; Mayne Dieme and Cesar Badiate attack Salif Sadio in the South; Assassination of Oumar Lamine Badji, President of the Regional Council of Ziguinchor; Mayne Dieme, charismatic figure of Diakaye, arrested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Rivalries among MFDC factions following the death of Father Diamacoune; Demining operations carried out by Morocco; Cassolol armed retaliation;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Upsurge of violence against civilians; Beginning of consultations between the factions of Cassolol and Diakaye</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau: Double assassination of Tayme Na Wai and Nino Vieira; Induto becomes Chief of staff in Guinea-Bissau, with Indjai as a deputy; Demonstration: civil society calls for nonviolence, and negotiations resume between the MFDC and the Government of Senegal;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Beginning of the hostage taking policy by MFDC; Escalation of the conflict towards the outskirts of Ziguinchor; More than 1,000 people displaced from villages to Ziguinchor; Military sweep operation towards Lower Casamance; Banjul-bound weapons seized in Nigeria, connection with MFDC suspected; Resurgence of carjacking on the Trans-Gambia road; <strong>Creation of the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Gambia: weapons from Iran bound for the Gambia: linkage with MFDC; Attack on the military barracks by MFDC; Massification of the military presence; Retaliation of the armed groups against the populations; Increased magnitude of landmines in the North of Sindian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td><strong>Audition of presidential candidates by PFPC;</strong> Election of Macky Sall as President of the Republic of Senegal; Reconciliation of the groups led by Cesar Attoute Badiate and Ousmane Niantang with the support of MKM/DDCC; The Government of Senegal gives PFPC a mandate for peacebuilding; Declaration for negotiations by President Macky Sall, Salif Sadio, Cesar, and the faction led by Ousmane Niantang, under the mediation of Sant Egidio; Liberation of Senegalese soldiers; Creation of GRPC;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Hostage taking and liberation of 12 mine-cleaners; Sant Egidio meeting between Salif Sadio and representatives of the Government of Senegal; The Gambia: Yahya Jammeh offers facilitation services for the various MFDC factions; Respite and promise of negotiations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Période</td>
<td>Évènement</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>President Yaya Jammeh toppled; President Adama Barrow elected Gambian President</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Establishment of the Women’s forum for Senegal – the Gambia – Guinea-Bissau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Killing of 14 wood cutters in Bofa Bayotte forest; Audition of presidential candidates by PFPC (President Macky Sall did not show up); Military sweep operation; Resurgence of tensions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(i) The night of prayer and the landmark demonstration for peace in 2011
Upon its creation, the first strong and symbolic step taken by PFPC in the process was the organizing of a night of prayers followed by a landmark demonstration for peace on 12 January 2011 in Ziguinchor. About 5,000 people, from all religions (Muslim, Christian and traditional) took part in this mobilization in favor of peace.

(ii) Petition drive for peace in Casamance
The petition launched in 2012 by the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC) recorded over 50,000 signatures throughout the region of Casamance. The petition urged the Government and MFDC to stop the hostilities and hold direct, frank and sincere negotiations for the restoration of peace in Casamance.
(iii) Signing of a Memorandum for peace in Casamance
The presidential election of 2012 was marked by an audacious operation by the members of the Women's Platform for Peace in Casamance. By challenging the presidential candidates on the situation rife in the natural region of Casamance, they left their mark in the peace process and attracted the attention of the national and international public opinion.
(iv) The “SOS Fogany” Campaign

Between January 2011 and February 2012, the laying of landmines and the persistence of clashes between the army and MFDC in the district of Sindian compelled the populations, even the most daring ones, to flee from areas of insecurity. In reaction to this dramatic situation, PFPC decided to launch a communication campaign and a call for donations in favor of the populations in distress in the Sindian area in April 2012.

• Audition of the 2 challengers in the second round of the presidential election

Between the two rounds of the election of 2012, the women invited the two opposing candidates – Macky Sall and Abdoulaye Wade – to go public on their project for Casamance and undertake to involve women in the conflict resolution process, as per the UN Resolution 1325.

• Meetings and dialogues with religious and customary authorities

The influence of religious and customary leaders is undeniable in the natural region of Casamance. Ruling them out of the peace process would be a serious mistake that PFPC wants to avoid. Thus, the Platform held talks with these local leaders including Monseigneur Paul Abel Mamba, Imam Fansoun Bodian, the King of Oussouye and the King of Calobone to unveil its approach, secure their support and compile their proposals.
(v) Audiences with President Macky Sall
On two occasions, PFPC has been received by President Macky Sall. First on 27 June in 2012, on the sidelines of the third decentralized council of ministers held in Ziguinchor, and then on 17 March 2014, during the launch of the development center for Casamance. During these meetings, PFPC sought to remind the President of his commitments towards women, notably the respect of UN Resolution 1325, his undertaking to prioritize dialogue, etc. PFPC then obtained the assurance of the Head of State that women would gain a spot in the future framework to be put in place for the negotiations.
(vi) Community meetings
Some community gatherings were held from October to November 2012 at the initiative of PFPC. Members of the leadership met with women from the inland areas of the region to collect the perspectives of those who have borne the brunt of this war. This approach made it possible to take stock of the consequences of the conflict and formulate proposals for the reconstruction of Casamance. In all, 24 rural communities and communes were visited by PFPC officials, with over 2,500 rural women reached.
(vii) The silent demonstration for the liberation of mine-clearers
During the abduction of the 12 mine-clearers of MECHEM, the Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC) spoke up to demand their liberation and the furtherance of humanitarian demining operations, by organizing a silent demonstration in the streets of Ziguinchor on 22 May 2013. Three women among the 12 mine-clearers were later released after the protest, followed a few weeks later by the men.
• **The national day of mobilization and advocacy for peace in Casamance**
This important event held in CICES Dakar was aimed at inciting the commitment of citizens from other regions of Senegal. There has long been the sense that only the populations of Casamance were involved in peacebuilding, which would be an impediment to a definitive peace. This is why PFPC found it necessary to invite all members of the Senegalese nation to rise up and demand the end of the conflict in Casamance. An exceptional mobilization of women’s organizations, associations, resource persons, and personalities of Senegalese civil society relayed a strong message of solidarity to the people of Casamance.

• **Social mobilization and advocacy days for peace**
The days of social mobilization and advocacy for peace were held on 9 February 2013 in Ziguinchor, on 22 February in Sedhiou and on 2 March in Kolda. They served as an occasion for women to get together; take stock of their responsibilities in the search for peace; and issue a distress call to the populations, to MFDC and Senegalese authorities, urging them to say “ENOUGH” of the war in Casamance. The resounding success of this activity then enabled PFPC to step up its positioning as a player of the peacebuilding process in Casamance.

• **Meetings with military officials**
In close collaboration with World Education, PFPC has initiated several meetings with military officials to share the concerns and sufferings of the people of Casamance that have been in the throes of the armed conflict.

• **Meetings and dialogues with MFDC political leaders**
As per its mission, PFPC endeavors to contact all stakeholders engaged in the conflict, though this has been rendered difficult due to current divisions within MFDC, specifically the multiple factions that are difficult to locate and identify; and the fracture between the political and military wings of the movement, and its home and abroad-based representations. After a long process of identifying appropriate interlocutors, PFPC has now started meeting with the most accessible representatives of the MFDC. These meetings provided the occasion to present PFPC’s approach and listen to the positions of everyone, with the view to formulating proposals for future peace negotiations.
Focus groups (women) during the public consultations
Focus groups (men) during the public consultations

Debriefing session in plenary
i Unaam Kayraay translates to “Together for peace” in the Diola language.

ii PartnersGlobal is an international NGO, established in 1989 and based in Washington, D.C. USA. Its mission is to work with local change leaders to transform conflicts, strengthen democratic institutions, and achieve sustainable development. For more information, see its website www.partnersglobal.org

iii Tostan is an NGO created in 1991 in Senegal, with its headquarters based in Dakar. Its mission is to build communities’ capacities in Africa for sustainable development and a positive social transformation vis-à-vis the respect of human rights. Tostan is active in six West African countries: The Gambia, Republic of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. Its programs and approaches focus on: capacity building for communities, peace and security, the strengthening of parental practices, capacity building for detainees, the creation of community networks and the Tostan Training Center (TTC), an education and knowledge sharing center. For more information on Tostan, please visit its website www.tostan.org

iv Partners West Africa — Senegal is a local NGO based in Senegal and encouraging dialogue, transparency, good governance and the inclusive participation of women and youth in regional, national and local development processes. PWA-S is active in the West African, francophone region, with initiatives in Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Niger, and networks covering the entire sub-region, with a unique capacity to bring together unlikely partners. PWA-S focuses mainly on citizen security, preventing and countering violence extremism and the promotion of an inclusive approach of the security sector in West Africa. For more information, please visit its website www.partnerswestafrica.org

v The Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (PFPC) is an organization/network grouping 210 women's organizations, with some 25,000 members scattered through the region of Casamance, mainly in the departments of Ziguinchor, Sedhiou and Kolda. It was created in 2010 to gather and unite the various women's associations of the natural region of Casamance, with the view to including women's voice in the peacebuilding process. The main objectives of PFPC are: 1) Mobilize women around the Platform for the construction of peace in Casamance; 2) Position itself as a fully-fledged player in negotiations, as per UN Resolution 1325; 3) Push the Government of Senegal and MFDC to incorporate gender perspectives; 4) Develop advocacy strategies for the promotion of peace and reconciliation; 5) Work against all forms of violence, discrimination and injustice against women and children; 6) Develop programs in support of vulnerable sections of the population; 7) Contribute to the revitalization of economic activities of the region. For more information about PFPC, visit the web site www.sunupfpc.org

vi La Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance translates to the Women’s Platform for Peace in Casamance in English. This document uses the organization's official name of La Plateforme des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance, however.

vii Casamance is located in the South-Western part of Senegal, with a surface area of 29,000 square km and a population estimated at 1.9 million inhabitants, according to the census 2018 of the National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD). Owing to its geographic location, Casamance is an economic, political and strategic region. It is the most forested region of Senegal, hence its designation as “natural region” that makes it a region with a high potential in agricultural and tourism. It is bordered in the West by the Atlantic Ocean; in the North by the Gambia, separating it from the rest of Senegal; and in the South by Guinea Bissau and the Republic of Guinea.

viii Upon his arrival in power in 2000, President Abdoulaye Wade officially declared his ambition to resolve the conflict in 100 days, which progressively became more and more unrealistic due to the complexity of the conflict.

ix Toubacouta is a village in Senegal located in the Sine-Saloum area, about 40 km South of Foundiougne, halfway between Sokone and Post Karang.

x Liberation of MFDC detainees, including Abbot Diamacoune, arrested under a detention warrant of 24 April 1988

xi The most striking event was the killing of about 30 soldiers in the Madina Mankagne area in 1997

xii Created in 1982, CONGAD groups together several national and international NGOs. For more information, please visit the web site http://www.congad.org
White Paper for a Sustainable Peace in Casamance

*Perspectives from Women and Local Populations*