



**Statement by the Chief of Staff,
Ms. Jennifer Chiriga on the Occasion of
the Launch of the AU Solidarity Campaign with
Women and Girls of South Sudan**

13 October 2016

Programme Director

**HE Mme Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the
Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media

Colleagues and Friends

The message from the Chairperson is very clear, that women across the continent and all peace-loving Africans are outraged about the violence being inflicted on the women, girls and other children of South Sudan.

Africa's youngest nation needs peace. Its people, men and women, young and old, need peace. Its women and girls need to have their dignity respected.

As we draw towards the end of the African Year of Women's Rights with particular focus on women, the launch of this Solidarity campaign is long overdue.

Whilst the campaign seeks to focus on the women and girls of South Sudan, we will also use it to highlight our ongoing rejection of sexual violence as a weapon of war - wherever it occurs on the continent

As HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma said during the 2014 Global Summit on Sexual Violence in Conflicts held in London:

Gender-based violence during conflicts and war is the extreme version of what we experience in society during peacetime.

Violence against women is perhaps the most widespread and socially tolerated of human rights violations, cutting across borders, race, class, ethnicity and religion.

Women's subordinate status to men... coupled with a general acceptance of interpersonal violence as a means of resolving conflict, renders them disproportionately vulnerable to violence from all levels of society."

As we therefore launch this Solidarity campaign with South Sudan women and girls, we must continue to intensify our work to ensure the safety and security in peace times and during conflicts, and to remind us of our collective pledge to work together to silence guns on the continent.

I thank you