



[Translation from French]

Final communiqué of the joint monitoring and solidarity mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

United Nations, African Union, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

Kinshasa, 12 June 2019

The Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, UN-Women, the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in partnership for a follow-up and advocacy mission for the promotion of women's issues, peace and security

Her Excellency Catherine Samba-Panza, former transitional head of state of the Central African Republic and co-chair of FemWise-Africa, undertook a joint solidarity and advocacy mission from 9 to 12 June 2019 for the promotion of issues relating to women, peace and security. She was accompanied by Ambassador Eliane Berthe Mokodopo, Programme Officer, Gender, Women and Children, at the Executive Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region; Awa Ndiaye Seck, UN-Women representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Nene Bah, Senior Gender Adviser, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in the Great Lakes region; Altiné Traoré, Senior Electoral and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Officer, Office of the African Union for Burundi and the Great Lakes region; and Lina Ekomo, Chair, Central African Republic Women's Leadership Network, and coordinator of a group of women leaders for peace.

The mission follows from the decision to monitor solidarity missions carried out in August 2018, made by the tenth meeting of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. It is also a reflection of the firm commitment of regional and international institutions to taking joint measures to promote women's political participation in decision-making bodies and in the peace consolidation process. The mission took place just after the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and was also timely in that it comes on the eve of the formation of the new Government. The mission was all the more timely because the assessment that it carried out together with the new authorities shows that the level of women's participation in politics has improved only slightly. Indeed, women's representation in the National Assembly is unchanged at 10 per cent, while it has risen somewhat in the Senate, from 4.6 per cent in 2006 to 19 per cent in 2018.

The mission also comes on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and presents an opportunity to raise awareness of the issues of inclusive participation, conflict prevention, and the protection and socioeconomic recovery of the female population.

While in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the delegation was received by the Minister for Gender,

Children and Family Affairs, who, by virtue of her position, was an integral part of the mission. The delegation also met with the acting representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; key women members of political and civil-society groups; civil-society delegations from the provinces of North and South Kivu; religious and traditional leaders; women members of national and provincial congress, senators, ministers, managers and leaders of public companies; heads of major political groups; members of the Regional Research and Documentation Centre for Women, Gender and Peace-Building in the Great Lakes region; the coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism; and the President of the National Assembly and the First Lady.

Before the mission ended, the delegation was received by the highest authority of the republic, President Felix Antoine Tshikenedi, with whom mission members discussed women's political participation to achieve the equality enshrined in the constitution. The President and his guests agreed on the need to take into account the target established to achieve equality and therefore parity, despite the legal barriers.

In that regard, the delegation welcomed the proposal of the President of the National Assembly to review legislative texts and laws to identify discriminatory provisions that should be changed. Particular emphasis was placed on the electoral law, which would require review to meet the need for the full and equal participation of all citizens, particularly women, in elections.

The issues of education for girls, health, empowerment and the fight against gender-based violence were at the forefront during discussions between the delegation and the First Lady. She expressed her commitment to contributing to advocacy efforts to enhance women's participation and promised to be an ambassador to the President and other authorities in the country.

In the presence of members of civil society from North and South Kivu and in the context of advocacy for peace, the delegation took stock of the various security concerns in the eastern part of the country that have ramifications for some neighbouring countries. Civil-society representatives called on mission members to be their interlocutors with national, regional and international authorities to ensure strict compliance with the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

The delegation of the joint mission also congratulated Congolese women for their mobilization, delivered a message of peace and solidarity, and raised awareness among its interlocutors of the need to involve women and youth in conflict prevention and resolution.

Regarding gender-based violence, the delegation urged State institutions to maintain standards of accountability in relation to sexual and gender-based violence and to strengthen the legal framework for the fight against impunity.

The delegation took note of the importance of promoting positive masculinity in the Great Lakes region and encouraged institutional actors to become champions of gender. The delegation also encouraged UN-Women, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the African Union and the Office of the Special Envoy to take measures to shift public opinion in that regard.

The delegation left Kinshasa satisfied with the assurances it had received from Congolese authorities.