

**CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE MEETING OF WOMEN AND YOUTH CIVIL  
SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND REGIONAL FORA IN PREPARATION FOR  
THE TECHNICAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE AND HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENTS OF  
THE REGIONAL OVERSIGHT MECHANISM OF THE PEACE, SECURITY AND  
COOPERATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE  
CONGO AND THE REGION**

**Context and Rationale**

Over the past two decades, the African Great Lakes Region (GLR) has been the scene of severe and recurrent political and security crises. Since the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC Framework) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region in 2013, regional and international institutions have made efforts to involve civil society in the search for lasting peace in the GLR. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) has been critical in the process. Such efforts by the ICGLR include: (i) the establishment of the Civil Society Forum to structure various interest groups and give them a voice in the decision-making process; (ii) the work undertaken by the ICGLR centres in Kampala and Lusaka on research, training, monitoring and advocacy in the areas of human rights and sexual and gender-based violence through ICGLR's centres in Kampala and Lusaka; and (iii) the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

The Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the GLR (OESG-GL) was established in 2013 with the mandate to support peace and stability in the region. The OESG-GL organizes regular national consultations with civil society focal points, United Nations partners on the ground and ICGLR as part of the follow-up missions by the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform and during the Special Envoy's official missions. The aim of the consultations is to invite civil society to take greater interest in and ownership of the PSC Framework. Furthermore, the Security Council encouraged the Special Envoy to "lead a comprehensive political process that includes all relevant stakeholders to address the underlying root causes of the conflict" in the African GLR.

It is in this regard that during their meeting of Nairobi in May 2019, Ministers for Justice committed themselves to promoting women's rights. This include in particular adopting, ratifying and transposing into their national legislation the international and regional instruments designed to end discrimination and violence against women. The commitment also implies implementing the ICGLR Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children (2006), including the provision of sufficient funds to combat violence against women.

Under the initiative of two civil society platforms, the Fund for Congolese Women (FFC) and the Concertation des Collectifs des Associations Féminines dans la Région des Grands Lacs (COCAFEM-GL), women region's civil society was able to exchange views on the changing position and status of women.

They proposed appropriate strategies that contribute to accelerating the implementation of the commitments made by the Member States of the Great Lakes region with regard to women's participation and representation in decision-making bodies, and to ending impunity for crimes of violence against women.

In accordance with its mandate and in close collaboration with institutional partners – *members of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform for the PSC Framework (United Nations, African Union and ICGLR), the civil society partners (FFC and COCAFEM-GL) and other United Nations agencies (UNWOMEN and United Nations Population Fund)* – The OSESG-GL intends to organize a high-level dialogue for the members of the Regional Women's Forum, the Regional Youth Forum and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the GLR. Also expected to the dialogue are the Guarantors of the PSC Framework. The aim of the dialogue is to build on previous efforts to create a political environment that enables the representation and effective participation of women in decision-making processes for peace, security and development in the GLR, as provided for by the UNSCR 1325 and other relevant instruments such as the ICGLR Protocol on Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children.

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Technical Support Committee of the PSC Framework, held in Nairobi on 16 and 17 July 2019, welcomed and encouraged the initiative of bringing together CSOs and Fora in a consultation. The dialogue is expected to contribute to and inform the work of the High-Level Regional Oversight Mechanism, scheduled to take place in October 2019 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **Overall objective of the meeting**

The consultative meetings aim is to promote representation and participation of women and girls in decision-making bodies and processes and to ensure their protection and the prevention of violence against them in the GLR.

### **Specific objectives**

More specifically, the meetings aim to achieve the following objectives:

- To create a framework for work, reflection and exchanges for the members of the Regional Women's Forum, the Regional Youth Forum and CSOs that work in the area of women's leadership and political participation, as well as to evaluate their contributions with regard to supporting peace and security and combating violence against women and girls;
- To analyse data and set the priority issues on which the stakeholders should engage in order to accelerate and improve effective implementation of international, regional and national instruments for the protection of the rights of women and girls, including the end of impunity for crimes of violence against them;
- To harmonize various forums' views on the advocacy content to be submitted to policymakers (Technical Support Committee, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, First Ladies Forum and High-Level ROM) on questions pertaining to representation and participation of women and girls in decision-making bodies and processes with regard to their protection and the prevention of all forms of violence against them;

- To develop appropriate strategies for formulating an advocacy message;
- To build an alliance with the CSOs, women, youth and Fora with a view to advocating with the Member States to effectively implement the decisions of the various regional and international decision-making bodies and instruments; and
- To develop a periodic monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that the identified strategies and adopted resolutions are implemented.

### **Expected outcomes**

- A comprehensive and context-based analysis of the level of representation and participation of women and youth in decision-making bodies and processes in the GLR is conducted.
- A strategic document on the implementation of the resolutions relating to women's representation and participation is drafted for presentation at the dialogue;
- Strategies and advocacy content and approaches are identified, agreed upon and harmonized;
- A draft advocacy document/declaration is drafted for presentation to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs in the margins of the High-Level ROM and a First Ladies Forum;
- A network of CSOs, women and youth working on women representation and participation in decision-making processes as well as prevention of and protection of women and girls from violence is established; and
- A framework of periodic monitoring and review mechanism is developed and accepted by all the fora.

### **Participants**

- 1) Regional and sub regional organizations working on women's issues, including FFC, COCAFEM-GL, Akina Mama wa Africa, AWDF, ISIS WICCE and FAS;
- 2) Five (5) ICGLR forums: Regional Women's Forum, Forum of Parliaments, Private Sector Forum, Regional Youth Forum and Civil Society Forum;
- 3) Office of the National Oversight Mechanism of the DRC;
- 4) Women leaders on the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform;
- 5) Office of the Special Envoy of the Chair of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security;
- 6) Office of the AU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region;
- 7) Office of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security;
- 8) Executive Secretariat of the ICGLR;
- 9) SADC Secretariat;
- 10) Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region;
- 11) UN-Women, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and
- 12) Technical and financial partners: CARE International, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and Norway.

## **Programme of activity**

Please see attached program

## **Date and Venue**

The technical meeting will take place on 8 and 9 September 2019, in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya followed by a presentation to the Technical Support Committee of the Framework Agreement on 11 September in Nairobi.

## **Organizers and partners**

OSESG, African Union, ICGLR, Government of the DRC (upcoming Chair of the ROM); Femwise COCAFEM-GL, FFC, UNWomen, United Nations Population Fund; UNWomen; the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, CARE International.

## **Contacts**

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