

Technical meeting of the Advisory Board meeting
21 February 2018

CONCLUSIONS OF DELIBERATIONS

1. The technical team in preparation of the ninth Advisory Board meeting co-chaired by the UN and ICGLR met in Nairobi, Kenya on 21 February 2018. The team included experts from the African Union Office for the Great Lakes Region, the office of the Special Envoy of the AU, the ICGLR, UN Women, UNDP, DPA, UNFPA, grantees of the Women’s Platform and Global Fund for Women.
2. Participants noted the timely convening of the Advisory Board meeting and commended the Special Envoy for his initiatives to engage stakeholders to take stock on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda for the Great Lakes region.
3. They noted that the region was going through political transitions, and that a shrinking political space for women participation, insecurity, instability, and violence continue to affect millions of people in the region, including on women.
4. Participants highlighted the need to ensure that, whilst focus remains on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Women’s Platform also pays greater attention on other crisis-affected countries in the region, including the Central African Republic and South Sudan.
5. The technical team called on the Advisory Board to actively engage leaders of the region to take decisive measures to advance Women Peace and Security, notably in the context of the upcoming 5th anniversary of the PSC Framework. They agreed to propose concrete recommendations to inform the Peace and Security agenda going forward and the vision of the UN Secretary-General, as per Security Council Resolution 2389 (2017). It emphasized the need to focus efforts on ensuring women participate in all relevant decision-making instances, take active part in decision making, and their contribution to implementing decisions to advance peace and security in the region.
6. The team noted the limited progress in implementing several commitments on Women Peace and Security and called upon the members of the Advisory Board and the SESG to mobilize greater political engagement by all relevant parties and put in place measures to ensure accountability by regional leaders.
7. In this regard, and to advance the agenda more broadly, it encouraged the senior leadership to engage more effectively with women and youth organisations, as well as with the private sector. It was recommended to include youth and women business leaders in the Advisory Board of the Women’s Platform. The team also recommended disseminating key commitments and resolutions, including those specific to Women Peace and Security and Security Council Resolution 2389 (2017) in an effort to ensure those are “owned” by both political leaders and by the citizens.

8. The need for more effective, regular, and harmonized monitoring of the implementation of the commitments on Women, Peace and Security was also reiterated. The technical team also noted the need to ensure national institutions in charge of promoting women, peace and security and national plans are integrated into national budgets.

9. The technical team commended several on-going political, policy and programmatic initiatives to promote the Women Peace and Security agenda in the region, including by the African Union, the ICGLR, UN Women, DPA, and UNDP. It recognized the timeliness of the UN Great Lakes Strategic Framework, encouraged its timely implementation, and the involvement of country level stakeholders. It also highlighted the importance to better align political and programmatic initiatives.

10. Participants discussed the Regional Plan of Action to implement the UNSCR 1325 and expressed appreciation to the Office of the Special Envoy for its support to ICGLR. It was noted that further consultation is required to finalize the Plan of Action and ensure its alignment to national plans. It called on the Office of the Special Envoy to support to ICGLR to complete this work.

11. The technical team also welcomed the initiative of the Office of the Special Envoy to develop a Regional Strategy on Women Peace and Security, as requested by the 8th Regional Oversight Mechanism, in Brazzaville in October 2017. It agreed on a focus on political engagement and recommended that the mechanism for implementation be led by UN WOMEN with the support of ICGLR and in collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region. A suggestion was made to consider a Memorandum of Understanding between UN WOMEN and OSESG in this regard. The technical meeting also recommended greater synergy between the Regional Women Forum and the Women's Platform in order to ensure convergence on their vision, objectives, and approach on Women Peace and Security.

12. Participants recommended that the terms of reference of the Advisory Board be reviewed to reflect a greater political advocacy role for the UN Special Envoy, AU Special Envoy for WPS, FEM-WISE, the African Women Leaders Network and the ICGLR. They further encouraged UN WOMEN, AU/Great Lakes and ICGLR to strengthen partnership and ensure the implementation of a robust monitoring framework, taking into account the set of global indicators adopted by the UN Secretary Council in 2010 to also enable comparison between achievements at the regional and global level.

13. In terms of financial resources allocation, participants upheld the Secretary-General's recommendation in his seven-point Action Plan on Women's participation in peacebuilding, to allocate a minimum of 15 percent of programmatic funding to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. It called upon the SESG to promote accountability by the UN in the Great Lakes region on this commitment.

14. They noted that numerous initiatives are on-going including the AU-UN solidarity missions, FEM-WISE initiatives and the African Women Leaders Network to enhance the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa.

15. Participants encouraged the Advisory Board members to consider solidarity missions to Burundi; the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan to promote conflict prevention and advocacy for women participation. They also recommended that the Office of the Special Envoy, with ICGLR and the AU Great Lakes supports FEM-WISE and the African Women Leadership Network to develop messaging in support for the proposed solidarity mission.

16. Lastly, the technical team acknowledged the presence of the grantees of the Women's Platform, expressed appreciation to the Global Fund for Women's work in support to grass-root organizations, and called for greater collaboration between the grantees and the members of the Women's Platform.