



Strengthening the partnership between ombudsman (mediator) institutions in the Great Lakes Region and the Advisory Board for Women, Peace and Security of the Great Lakes Region to incorporate women's priorities for mediation and peacebuilding

1. Background

The Great Lakes Region of Africa is undergoing various institutional, structural and organizational changes. There is proven, significant and ongoing progress in dialogue and confidence-building among States and peoples.

The solidarity among African women in general, and those of the region in particular, is an illustration of these trends. This solidarity also exists with other institutions, including the Ombudsman of Burundi and member of the Executive Committee of the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA). During the solidarity mission of the Advisory Board to Burundi, the Ombudsman of Burundi promised to support women as they sought to achieve their priorities, including political participation to reinforce gender equality, peace-building and security.

The Great Lakes Region has ombudsman and mediator institutions and national human rights institutions that are similar to independent mediation institutions. Forty-seven countries in Africa have ombudsman and/or mediator institutions; of these, 44 are members of AOMA.

Women in the Great Lakes region still face challenges to their participation because traditions do not match the pace of legal and institutional reforms. There is an urgent need to realize the full potential offered by the arsenal of institutional and legal reforms and to highlight the potential of women leaders in the region, but also to bring to fruition the potential contribution of ombudsman institutions to women's participation.

The participation (on 29 and 30 July 2021) of ombudsmen and mediators in this workshop will not only build the capacity of FemWise-Africa, but also identify the commitments of ombudsmen and mediators and incorporate them into its programme of action, to advance the advocacy message on women's priorities. The ombudsmen and mediators will contribute by making presentations during

the workshop plenary. These presentations will then fuel discussions and exchanges.

The paper(s) will be presented by the ombudsman and President of AOMA or by any other designated ombudsman or mediator. The ombudsmen and mediators will join the members of Fem Wise-Africa for the last two days of the workshop, on 29 and 30 July. The rapporteurs and facilitators will be those already covering the entire workshop.

The participation of ombudsmen and mediators in this workshop is an opportunity to realize the commitments that the Ombudsman of Burundi made during the solidarity mission for the women of Burundi in March 2020. The Ombudsman had expressed the wish to support all women as they worked for women's involvement in politics, to give effect to the equality enshrined in the Constitution, take more account of the priorities of women and consider their perspective in governance, among other things.

The participation of ombudsmen and mediators is also an opportunity to establish a framework for cooperation between ombudsman and mediation institutions and women leaders, to define a platform for advocacy for women both in terms of mediation and political participation and of electoral processes. This should make it possible to incorporate women's priorities in advocacy led by these institutions at every opportunity at the national, regional and global levels.

Lastly, their participation in the FemWise-Africa training workshop will make it possible to showcase their various roles; to identify opportunities, challenges and perspectives; to make commitments; and to formulate relevant recommendations. It will also make it possible to establish the framework for ongoing dialogue among various partners involved in mediation, human rights promotion and participation in mediation frameworks.

In general, the regional workshop is an opportunity to achieve the following:

- Mark the importance of the regional cooperation of ombudsmen and mediators with women's organizations for mediation and promotion of peace and women's rights in the Great Lakes Region.
- Highlight the actual and potential role of ombudsmen and mediators in helping women's organizations for mediation and the promotion of peace and women's rights in the Great Lakes Region.
- Establish forums for sharing best practices of ombudsmen and mediators and women's organizations for mediation and promotion of participation in the Great Lakes Region and identify common projects.
- Encourage the President of AOMA to promote the establishment of decentralized structures in ombudsman and mediator institutions, so as to

bring them closer to local women mediators for active synergies, with a view to consolidating peace and social cohesion at the community and intermediate levels, but also to share experience.

Accordingly, the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, on behalf of the Advisory Council on Women, Peace and Security for the Great Lakes Region, in collaboration with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, UN Women and the Institution of the Ombudsman of Burundi, working with AOMA, seeks to secure the contribution of ombudsmen and mediators to the FemWise regional workshop for women on mediation in the Great Lakes Region.

2. General objectives and expected results

The general objective is to incorporate women's priorities in terms of mediation, women's rights and participation in peace and security initiatives into the work programme of ombudsmen and mediators and to establish a framework for cooperation between these institutions and women leaders involved in these areas in order to consolidate peace and social cohesion in the Great Lakes Region.

2.1 Specific objectives

SO1: Follow up on the implementation of the commitment of the Ombudsman of Burundi and member of the AOMA Executive Committee, and on other commitments made during the regional solidarity mission of women leaders to women of certain countries of the Great Lakes Region, in terms of participation.

SO2: Incorporate women's issues/priorities into the work programme of ombudsmen and mediators of the Great Lakes Region.

SO3: Create a framework/platform for cooperation between the ombudsmen and FemWise-Africa and other organizations of women mediators and leaders involved in peace-building and social cohesion.

Expected results

R1: The priorities of women in the Great Lakes Region in terms of mediation, participation, peace, security and elections are incorporated into the work programme of ombudsmen and mediators.

R2: A framework/platform for cooperation among the ombudsmen and mediators, FemWise-Africa and other organizations of women mediators

and leaders involved in electoral processes for the consolidation of peace and social cohesion is established.






R3: The ombudsmen and mediators are committed to conducting advocacy at the national, regional and global levels on the priorities of women mediators and women involved in peace and security initiatives and in electoral processes.

3. Workshop methodology and logistics

3.1 Methodology

- ✓ participant identification;
- ✓ preparation of organizational notes;
- ✓ preparation of working documents;
- ✓ setting up a technical preparation and organization team;
- ✓ identification of topics and resource persons to facilitate them;
- ✓ drafting of opening and closing speeches;
- ✓ preparing meeting reports;
- ✓ drafting of the final commitment document; and
- ✓ communication design.

2.2 Logistics

-  dispatching of invitations;
-  interpretation;
-  DSA;
-  tickets; and
-  fees for resource persons (facilitation and reporting).