



Final communiqué of the joint monitoring and solidarity mission in the Republic of Burundi

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

Bujumbura, 7 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

The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, UN-Women, the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, acting on behalf of the Advisory Committee of the Women's Platform and through a delegation comprising members of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation of the African Union (FemWise-Africa), the Executive Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and UN-Women undertook a follow-up and advocacy mission in the Republic of Burundi from 5 to 8 June 2019.

The mission follows from the decision to monitor solidarity missions carried out in 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 take joint measures to promote women's political participation in decision-making bodies and in the electoral process that will take place in 2020, as well as in the peace consolidation process. The mission 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.

The mission was led by Her Excellency Catherine Samba-Panza, former transitional head of state of the Central African Republic and co-chair of FemWise-Africa. She was accompanied by Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, former executive secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Both women are members of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform of the Framework Agreement.

During the visit to Burundi, the delegation was received by the First Lady, Denise Nkurunziza. The delegation also met with the ministers for foreign affairs, education, youth and sports, and gender and human rights, as well as the President of the National Assembly, the President of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, representatives of FemWise-Africa and leaders of women's organizations. The delegation also met with the acting coordinator of the United Nations system.

The initiative of the joint mission was welcomed by all as an excellent opportunity to advocate for the status of women in Burundi, in particular for their full participation in the electoral process, in decision-making mechanisms and in the consolidation of peace and security at both the national and community levels.

The joint mission also delivered a message of peace and solidarity and raised awareness among its interlocutors of the importance of involving women and youth in conflict prevention and resolution.

With respect to the 2020 electoral process, the mission delegation welcomed recent developments, including the ongoing legal reforms to promote women's effective participation. In that regard, it encouraged the Government to ensure the effective implementation of the reforms, with the aim of guaranteeing the constitutional minimum quota of 30 per cent women's representation at all levels. It also encouraged the various authorities with whose representatives it met to integrate the priorities of women and girls in current and future public programmes and policies, especially in relation to education and community development projects.

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 expressed its appreciation to the Burundian authorities, the Office of the Special Envoy, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and UN-Women for their considerable support to the delegation and for the fruitful exchanges with various public figures.