

**Global Open Days on Women, Peace and Security**

**31 January–2 February 2017**

**Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Report**

**8 March 2017**

Gender Team  
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General  
for the Great Lakes Region  
Nairobi  
Kenya

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

With a view to facilitating the effective implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region organized a Global Open Days<sup>1</sup> event on women's participation in political and peace processes in collaboration with the gender team of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The event, which was held in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 31 January to 2 February 2017, brought together 30 women leaders from five member countries of the Great Lakes region: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda. The objective of the Global Open Days event was to take stock of the participation of the region's women in the political and peace processes that are under way in their countries and to enable them to engage on the matter with national and regional political leaders in order to identify effective solutions. Activities focused on the five countries mentioned above, due to their political and security situations and on the need to further promote the participation of women in their countries' peace processes.

Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is undergoing a period of political transition, has enshrined parity in its Constitution, in particular its article 14, and passed a law on parity in 2015,<sup>2</sup> women's involvement and participation in the electoral process remains low, as was the case in the 2006 and 2011 elections, as well as in the political dialogue process initiated in 2016, during which women's participation rate was reported to be only 13 per cent.

Since April 2015, Burundi has been embroiled in a political and security crisis characterized by human rights violations, amongst other, against women. A significant number of women have been mobilized to take part in the internal and external dialogues<sup>3</sup> initiated to solve the crisis in the country, but their effective participation also remains very limited in this context.

Following almost five years of independence, South Sudan has been mired in a civil war since July 2016. The situation in the country is calmer at present, especially in Juba, but sporadic fighting continues inland, especially around Yei, Bentiu and Malakal.

One thing that the crises in the three countries have in common is the violation of human rights, including on the basis of gender. Recent reports from human rights organizations highlight the systematic rape of women and girls, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, and effective measures are lacking at the national level to promote women's participation in political processes and conflict resolution.

Owing to its geographical position, Uganda has been affected by the cross-border nature of conflicts, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, there are a considerable number of women and girls among the large refugee population in the country.

Participants in the Global Open Days event were given a number of examples of how women are participating in public affairs in Rwanda, which has become a global example in that regard in recent years.

## **2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Strengthen the leadership and advocacy capacity of participants in order to improve women's effective participation in the political and peace processes in the region;

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<sup>1</sup> The Global Open Days were created in 2010 as part of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security.

<sup>2</sup> Law No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015, laying down rules for the fulfilment of women's rights and of parity.

<sup>3</sup> The current external dialogue process is taking place under the auspices of the East African Community.

2. Provide a platform for women leaders to share their experiences of participation in order to identify challenges and best practices in the region;
3. Provide a forum enabling women leaders to have their views on participation heard and taken into consideration by key regional leaders and national decision makers attending the workshop.

The workshop used the following participatory methods:

Day 1:

- Presentation on the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and the Women's Platform.
- Presentation on leadership and advocacy techniques.
- Group work on women's participation: a group was established for each country to allow participants to share their national experiences, as well as good practices, challenges and potential solutions.
- Panel of experts on women's participation based on good practices.

Day 2:

- Group work to assess the implementation of the "participation" pillar of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level. Challenges, constraints, strategies and good practices were identified and analysed, and the results of the process were presented in plenary.
- Drafting recommendations: participants discussed and identified three recommendations related to the question "How can the region's leaders support and advance women's participation in political and peace processes?".

Day 3:

- Dialogue between women and key regional and national leaders on the participation assessment results by country and on the three regional recommendations. Regional leaders responded to comments and shared information on the measures implemented within their respective governments, provinces and organizations to promote women's political participation.

## **3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **3.1 DAY 1**

A number of good practices, challenges and opportunities to promote greater political participation of women were identified during the session on experience-sharing and lobbying and advocacy techniques.

Participants said that the interaction between gender-sensitive government members, both female and male, and civil society proved that, albeit slow, the process of increasing the involvement of women in decision-making processes was under way. Participants noted that more efforts were still needed to ensure the participation of women in political processes, including in electoral processes, and in political negotiations.

In terms of effective channels of advocacy, all the participants said that they had often appealed to the wives of heads of State or of opposition leaders to advocate for their cause, thereby ensuring the success of their initiatives.

Participants also identified several challenges related to women's political participation at the national level. For example, they expressed concern regarding the invisibility of peace-building initiatives led by Burundian women, whether in exile or in Burundi. Although peace efforts had not yet come to a successful conclusion, women were striving to have a positive impact on the country's peace process, albeit individually and with the limited human and financial resources at their disposal.

Participants also deplored the continued negative role of ethnicity in the region's leadership, and recommended that women engage in soul searching and consider only those factors that would enable them to participate effectively in the peace process as women, regardless of their ethnic origin.

Participants also raised the question of whether women leaders in the region were truly in favour of peace being restored in their countries (especially in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, which are currently experiencing crises). Indeed, according to participants, negative forces often use women to undermine peace efforts undertaken by other women. Furthermore, several women have been threatened and in some cases forced into exile to safeguard their lives. Participants also emphasized the messages of peace that women, as educators, must give to their children, noting the importance of instilling peace in children from an early age. Lastly, they recommended that the communication system, including that of women's rights organizations in the region, be improved to ensure the visibility of their actions at the national and regional levels and have a real impact on other women, especially in remote areas.

Finally, participants stressed the importance of promoting education, especially civic education for girls, and of mobilizing men as champions in efforts to promote women's participation in political and peace processes. In addition to "positive masculinity" strategies,<sup>4</sup> they also recommended the creation of platforms for the exchange of good practices and experiences among countries in the region in order to increase the opportunities for action at the local level.

## **3.2 DAY 2**

### **Assessment of the implementation of the "participation" pillar of resolution 1325**

Five groups were formed according to participants' countries of origin, which made it possible to analyse women's participation in political and peace processes on the one hand, and to analyse related challenges and identify the strategies required to overcome them on the other. National solutions were identified that could also be applied at the regional level.

#### **BURUNDI**

The contribution of the Burundian women focused on their participation in the pre- and post-election peace processes, especially during the signing on 28 August 2000 of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, facilitated by Nelson Mandela. Their participation focused on three areas: mobilization, lobbying and, above all, advocacy with male political leaders to enable the women present in Arusha to take part in the peace talks. Women's involvement allowed for the specific problems faced by women to be taken into account. They stressed that their efforts had contributed to the achievement of positive results in the framework of the agreement.

However, during the meeting the Burundian participants also explained that women leaders had been exploited during the recent crisis, which began in 2015 as a result of the current President of the Republic being sworn in for a third term. They pointed out that the crisis had further divided the population, especially women. They recommended the implementation of capacity-building measures for women, as well as safeguards to create an enabling environment so that they could all take part in their national peace process, including increased financial support to implement activities that would ensure their effective inclusion in the dialogue process.

#### **UGANDA**

In Uganda, women's participation in political and peace processes had been marked by the establishment of the Women's Council and the adoption of a gender-sensitive national budget. Although it could not be said that women's participation in the political process had been effective to date, Uganda's representatives noted that those two actions were a good starting point for women's participation in their country's political and peace processes.

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<sup>4</sup> Strategy for the implementation of awareness-raising and support programmes that take into account cultural and identity dynamics and help men to understand the root causes of a negative masculinity that causes violence and offer positive alternative means of asserting their masculine identity.

However, there were also a number of challenges in ensuring women's efficient and effective participation, such as political manipulation, a lack of funding for the Women's Council, a failure to systematically address the representation of women in political parties and, lastly, the fact that, for some women who were present in decision-making bodies and could help further the cause of women, female participation in political and peace processes was not a priority.

The Ugandan participants recommended that the electoral law be revisited and demanded greater political participation of women in accordance with the international instruments signed and ratified by their country. Finally, they recommended a grassroots-based civic education.

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

The Congolese women who took part lamented the lack of participation of women in the political process in their country, providing examples regarding the talks organized to resolve the ongoing crisis resulting from the failure to hold elections within the constitutional time frame:

- Only 13 per cent of participants in the dialogue organized by the African Union from September to December 2016 were women;
- Only 3 of the 32 participants in the dialogue of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo were women.

In addition to the problem of women's non-participation in the ongoing political process, the Congolese women complained that information was not widely shared among women leaders, that some of those leaders had personal agendas and that women leaders were not connected to their political base. Finally, they lamented the fact that Security Council resolution 1325 and article 14 of their country's Constitution, on women's political participation, were not being respected.

The Congolese women recommended that the Government use resolution 1325, article 14 of the Constitution and the law on fulfilling women's rights and achieving gender parity as a basis for establishing women's political representation at all levels. They called for the United Nations and the African Union to apply the principle of zero tolerance to any national political process in their country that did not take into account women's representation as stipulated in resolution 1325 and the country's constitution.

## **RWANDA**

With regard to the political participation of women in peace processes, the Rwandan women emphasized that their country had gained international recognition in terms of women's participation in political bodies. However, they expressed concern regarding the lack of mapping of women's competencies at the national level, which would make it possible to maximize women's participation in decision-making bodies. They also lamented that there was no mediator pool at the national level, when it had been proven that, where they had been used, mediators had been effective and had helped to resolve conflicts in the long term.

They recommended that a national database of women's competencies be established and that a plan for mediation capacity-building, including a monitoring and evaluation tool, be developed and implemented.

## **SOUTH SUDAN**

The women of South Sudan welcomed the affirmative action undertaken in their country, including the significant participation of women in the last national dialogue, held in August 2015, as well as the legal provision requiring that women make up at least 25 per cent of the membership of decision-making bodies at all levels.

However, they lamented the slow progress that had been made with regard to the full implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, and the application of the legal provision of 25 per cent representation by women in decision-making bodies at all levels.

They recommended that an inclusive dialogue be organized with all stakeholders to discuss all the issues concerning women's participation in political and peace processes as a means, among other things, of achieving sustainable peace in South Sudan.

They then recommended active participation by women in the dialogue on resolution 1325, and that the National Commission for Dialogue be recomposed to increase the effective participation of women.

### **Recommendations prepared by women leaders**

The 30 women leaders present made the following three regional recommendations for high-level leaders in the Great Lakes region.

#### **To the signatories of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework agreement**

1. Provide financial and technical support to the Regional Women's Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the implementation of its strategic plan for 2017–2018, and ensure the participation of women in the meetings of the technical support committee and the regional monitoring mechanism of the framework agreement.

#### **To ministers and regional and international organizations**

2. Mobilize and allocate more technical and financial resources to strengthen women's technical capacity to enable their effective participation in the political and peace process.

#### **To the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community and member countries**

3. Implement regional and continental policies (Maputo Protocol, Gender Policy of the African Union, regional action plan for Security Council resolution 1325, etc.,) to ensure the effective and efficient participation of women in mediation, negotiation and conflict management processes by setting up a policy monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

### **3.3 DAY 3**

Women leaders presented the results of the women's participation assessment by country, as well as the three regional recommendations to the panel of regional high-level decision-makers. Taking part in the dialogue were the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General to MONUSCO, ICGLR, the African Union, the region's gender ministers and their representatives, and a few representatives of other United Nations agencies. The dialogue was co-chaired by the Special Envoy and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to MONUSCO. Following the presentations made by the women, the panellists introduced their organizations' policies and actions in support of women's political participation. Panel members then endorsed the women leaders' three recommendations.

At the end of the workshop, the three United Nations partners prepared a communiqué that was disseminated to the media and their networks (see annex 4).

## **4. EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS**

In general, participants found the event to be useful and necessary, particularly in a regional context marked by political and transitional processes in several countries. Similarly, they described exchanges as having been thought-provoking and practical. The participatory approach used and the input of resource persons contributed to knowledge-sharing and a deeper understanding of the issue of women's political participation in the Great Lakes region.

However, participants would have liked the training session on political and peace participation to be more structured and longer to achieve a better understanding of certain concepts, in particular those relating to effective leadership techniques. In addition, women noted the lack of clarity in the implementation strategy of the three recommendations emanating from the meeting and recommended that, for possible future similar meetings, a road map be developed in parallel to the formulation of recommendations.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The Global Open Days event responded in part to the needs expressed by women leaders in the Great Lakes region in October 2016 during the regional tour of the Gender Team of the Office of the Special Envoy for

the Great Lakes Region. Specifically, it responded to the requests by women to be able to meet each other with a view of sharing experiences and providing mutual support on the issue of women's participation in political and peace processes, and speak directly to regional and national leaders and decision makers.

An analysis of the results of the event led to the identification of the following key actions for monitoring the implementation of the three recommendations that emerged from the workshop:

1. The Office of the Special Envoy will ensure that certain elements are incorporated in the strategic framework of the Women's Platform – for example, providing technical support to the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum for mobilizing financial resources for the implementation of the strategic plan and capacity-building for the region's women leaders, and entering into dialogue with regional and national organizations in order to implement policies on women, peace and security.
2. An item on the Goma Declaration of July 2016 and the implementation of the three recommendations will be placed on the agenda of the meeting of the region's gender ministers scheduled for May 2017, to be organized jointly by the Office of the Special Envoy and ICGLR.
3. It was proposed that the three recommendations be incorporated into the regional plan of action on resolution 1325 (2000), to be developed by ICGLR and the Regional Women's Forum with the support of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.

## **ANNEX 1 – PROGRAMME**

### **Day 1: 31 January 2017**

8.30–8.45 a.m.	Arrival and registration of participants
8.45–9.15 a.m.	Welcome and presentation of objectives
9.15–10 a.m.	Presentation of participants
10–10.30 a.m.	Presentation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region and the Women’s Platform
10.30–10.45 a.m.	Coffee break
10.45–11.15 a.m.	Session 1: Leadership, advocacy and political participation
11.15–11.30 a.m.	Questions and answers
11.30 a.m.–1 p.m.	Session 2: Group work
1–2 p.m.	Lunch
2–3 p.m.	Plenary
3–4.30 p.m.	Session 3: Panel discussions: women’s political participation – challenges and good practices
4.30–4.45 p.m.	Coffee break
4.45–5 p.m.	Questions and answers
5–6.30 p.m.	Cocktail

### **Day 2: 1 February 2017**

8.30–9 a.m.	Arrival and registration of participants
9–9.15 a.m.	Summary of the work of day 1
9.15–11.15 a.m.	Session 4: Evaluation of the implementation of resolution 1325 by country (participation pillar)
11.15–11.30 a.m.	Coffee break (during group work)
11.30–12.30 p.m.	Plenary
12.30–1.30 p.m.	Lunch break
1.30–3 p.m.	Session 5: Preparation of recommendations
3–3.15 p.m.	Coffee break
3.15–4 p.m.	Summary of recommendations in plenary
4–6 p.m.	Finalization of recommendations and preparation for the dialogue on the following day

### **Day 3: 2 February 2017**

10–11 a.m.	Session 6: High-level dialogue
11 a.m.–12 noon	Session 7: Reactions to the recommendations by high-level panellists
12 noon–12.15 p.m.	Closure of the meeting
12.15–1 p.m.	Meeting between the Special Envoy, representatives of ministers and guarantors of the framework agreement
	Evaluation by participants
1–2 p.m.	Lunch

## **ANNEX 2 - List of participants**

### **South Sudan**

- 1 Mme. Esther Ikere Eluzai Ladu, Government Undersecretary, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare
- 2 Mme. Zeinab Yassin Hagelsafi, South Sudan Women General Association, Chairperson
- 3 Mme. Agnes Wasuk Sarafino, South Sudan Council of Churches, National Women Programme, Coordinator

### **Democratic Republic of Congo**

- 4 Mme. Solange Lwashiga, Rien Sans les Femmes & Caucus des Femmes Congolaises pour la Paix, Porte-parole, Goma
- 5 Mme. Claudine Tsongo, Réseau des associations des femmes juristes des Grands-lacs ROFEJ-GL, Directrice, Kivu
- 6 Mme. Nelly Mbangu, Sauti Ya Mama, Directrice, Goma
- 7 Mme. Lisette Mavungu, Cadre Permanent de Concertation des Femmes Congolaises CAFCO, Kinshasa
- 8 Mme. Fifi Mule Baka, Réseau genre et droits de la femme, GEDROFE, Kinshasa
- 9 Mme. Gege Katana Bukuru, Solidarité des Femmes Activistes pour la Défense des Droits Humains SOFAD, Coordinatrice, Uvira
- 10 Mme. Florence Mularika Boloko, Forum national des femmes de la CIRGL Coordonnatrice, Kinshasa
- 11 Mme. Albertine Mambo Zawadi, Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et Le Développement Intégral SOFEPADI et Rien sans les Femmes/RSLF, Coordonnatrice, Beni
- 12 Mme. Samy Kyakimwa Valyaghe, CAFED, North Kivu
- 13 Mme. Shomberwa Ntamwenge Marina, Federation of the Protestant Women, Church of Christ in Congo ECC, Presidente, North Kivu

### **Rwanda**

- 14 Mme. Immaculee Ingabire, ICGLR Regional Women Forum, Coordinator, Kigali
- 15 Mme. Jeanne D'Arc Kanakuze, Pro Femmes Twese Hamwe, Chairperson, Kigali
- 16 Mr. Claude Kabutware, Concertation des Collectifs des Associations Féminines de la région des Grands Lacs COCAFEM-GL, Secrétaire Exécutif, Kigali

### **Burundi**

- 17 Mme. Marie Goretti Muhitira, CIRGL, Press Attaché, Bujumbura
- 18 Mme. Catherine Mabobori, Solidarite Femmes parlementaires
- 19 Mme. Marie Gorette Ndacayisaba, DUSHIREHAMWE
- 20 Mme. Pascasie Barampama, Reseau Femmes et paix
- 21 Mme. Mathilde Nkwirikiye, Interfaith Women Network, Member

### **Uganda**

- 22 Hon. Betty Ocan Aol, ICGLR Women's Forum, Uganda, Member of Parliament,
- 23 Mme. Helen Ekene Kezie-Nwoha, ISIS-Women International Cross-Cultural Exchange (ISIS-WICCE), Executive Director a.i., Uganda

### **Kenya**

- 24 Mme. Elizabeth Zimba Kisiigha, Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa, Executive Director, Kenya
- 25 Mme. Wasye Musyoni, Norwegian Church Aid, Programme Manager, Regional Peace Programme, Kenya

## **High Level Panel**

- 26 Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region
- 27 Mr. Maman Sidikou MONUSCO, Special Representative of the Secretary General
- 28 Mr. Mamadou Diallo MONUSCO, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Humanitarian, Kinshasa
- 29 Mr. David Gressly MONUSCO Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Operations and the Rule of Law, Goma
- 30 Mr. Taib Diallo, MONUSCO Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General – RHC, Kinshasa
- 31 Mme. Altiné Traoré, African Union, Electoral & Post Conflict Reconstruction & Development Officer, Peace and Security, Addis Ababa
- 32 Amb. Vicente Muanda, ICGLR, Deputy Executive Secretary, Burundi

## **Ministers of Gender**

- 33 Mme. Batete Redempter, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, Director of Gender Promotion, Rwanda
- 34 Mme. Mariette Kavalami, Ministère du Genre, Famille et Enfant, Conseillère en charge du partenariat, DRC
- 35 S.E. Mme. Janviere Ndirahisha, Ministère des Droits de la Personne Humaine, des Affaires Sociales et du Genre, Ministre, Burundi
- 36 S.E. Mme. Adèle Bazizane Maheshe, Ministre provinciale du Genre et de l'Education du Nord-Kivu
- 37 S.E. M. Mwanza Nangunia Nash, Ministre de la Santé, du genre, de la famille, de l'enfant, des affaires humanitaires et chargé des relations avec l'assemblée provinciale.

## **Other Partners**

- 38 Mme. Lydia Gachoya, ICGLR Regional Women Forum, Vice President, Kenya
- 39 Mr. Eliwo Akoto, DRC/UNFPA, Head of Office, Goma
- 40 Mme. Alessia Polidoro, International Alert, DRC Interim Country Director, Goma
- 41 Mme. Clara Magarino Manero, International Alert, Chef de projet, Goma
- 42 Mr. Alfred Marie Andriantianasolo, UN Women, Humanitarian Expert, Kinshasa
- 43 Mr. Michel Limbutu Kabamba, UN Women, Coordonateur de projet, Kinshasa
- 44 Mme. Anne Marie Nabintu, UN Women, Conseillère Genre et Humanitaire, Nord-Kivu, Goma
- 45 Mme. Jamila Seftaoui , MONUSCO Gender Affairs Section, Senior Gender Adviser, Office of the SRSG, Kinshasa
- 46 Mme. Jobe Fatou, MONUSCO Gender Affairs Section, Communication and Gender Officer, Goma
- 47 Mme. Furaha Mulindahabi, MONUSCO Gender Affairs Section, Administrative Assistant, Goma
- 48 Mme. Nouran Ridling, MONUSCO/PAS, Goma
- 49 Mme. Almaz Gebru, UNDP, Country Director, Uganda
- 50 Mme. Lucy Ndungu, UNDP, Peace and Development Advisor, Uganda

## **Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region**

- 51 Mme. Carole Doucet, Senior Gender Adviser
- 52 Mme. Danae Bougas, Political Affairs Officer
- 53 Mme. Ludmila Azo, Associate Programme Officer
- 54 Mme. Dinah Karimi, Administrative Assistant

## **Annex 3: Report of the high-level dialogue on women's participation in political and peace processes in the Great Lakes region**

### **Introduction**

The open days culminated in a high-level dialogue (on 2 February 2017) attended by ministers and officials responsible for gender issues; the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Saïd Djinnit; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Maman Sidikou; the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Mamadou Diallo; and representatives of the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

The goal was to establish a forum for direct dialogue and consultation between women leaders at the regional level and key regional leaders on the issue of women's participation in political and peace processes.

### **Outcomes**

The high-level session facilitated by the Special Envoy and the Special Representative of MONUSCO featured individual presentations by participating countries on women's participation in political and peace processes. The session also offered panel members, including gender ministers and their representatives, the opportunity to present recent advances in women's political participation at the national level, and possible avenues for action at the national and/or regional levels to advance that agenda.

Participants then presented high-level panel members with the three key recommendations arising from their work over the previous two days. The three recommendations were welcomed by the panel, which pledged to follow up on their implementation.

At the end of the session marking the end of the Global Open Days event, a side meeting was convened by the Special Envoy, Mr. Saïd Djinnit, with ministers responsible for gender issues and representatives of the participating countries and the guarantors of the framework agreement, including the African Union, the United Nations and ICGLR. Participants discussed the implementation of the three above-mentioned recommendations and recommended that a meeting of gender ministers from the framework agreement signatory countries be held to find effective solutions to the challenges faced by women in the region in their efforts to promote peace and security.

### **Proceedings**

In his welcoming speech, the Special Envoy, Mr. Saïd Djinnit, thanking participants for taking part in the dialogue, asked for a minute's silence to be observed following the death on 1 February 2017 of Mr. Etienne Tshisekedi, a political figure who had played a major role in the reconciliation and peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Special Envoy then highlighted the persistence of two key factors limiting the effective participation of women in peace processes, namely the lack of political will to ensure the presence and participation of women at negotiating and decision-making tables, and the lack of financial resources allocated to the cause. He informed the meeting of the efforts undertaken by his office through the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region. Particular emphasis was placed on the allocation of financial subsidies to women's groups and organizations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, and the endorsement by the heads of State of the region of the Goma Declaration made by women in the region at the Women's Platform meeting held in July 2016. The Special Envoy, through his office, also supported the Regional Women's Forum and seized every opportunity in 2016 to advocate in favour of the inclusion of women in the political process of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Referring to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Special Representative, Mr. Maman Sidikou, highlighted the critical role of Congolese women in promoting a peaceful, cohesive and prosperous society. He called on the Congolese Government, political actors and civil society to ensure the meaningful representation and participation of women leaders in the ongoing transitional governance processes and beyond in order to facilitate the adequate representation of Congolese women in the future. He stated that

MONUSCO would continue to support those actors in that noble endeavour, in particular by continuing to build the capacity of women leaders; to support the implementation of resolution 1325; to involve women in peace and security processes and in mediation and conflict resolution at all levels, including in the electoral process; and to facilitate voter registration with an emphasis on women.

Welcoming remarks were followed by country presentations on women's participation in political and peace processes. Capitalizing on the presence of regional leaders and especially of gender ministers or their representatives, presentations focused on challenges, key measures put in place by women to address them and recommendations at the national level.

Each of the high-level panel members reacted to the women's presentations. Gender ministers and their representatives and representatives of the African Union and ICGLR expressed their views on national and institutional efforts, related or continuing challenges and possible avenues for action at the national or regional levels.

The high-level panel then welcomed the following recommendations made by the women leaders:

- To the signatories of the framework agreement: provide financial and technical support to the Regional Women's Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the implementation of its strategic plan for 2017–2018, and ensure the participation of women in the meetings of the technical support committee and the regional monitoring mechanism of the framework agreement.
- To ministers and regional and international organizations: mobilize and allocate more technical and financial resources to strengthen women's technical capacity to enable their effective participation in the political and peace process.
- To the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and member countries: implement regional and continental policies (Maputo Protocol, Gender Policy of the African Union, regional action plan for Security Council resolution 1325, etc.,) to ensure the effective and efficient participation of women in mediation, negotiation and conflict management processes by setting up a policy monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

The high-level dialogue was followed by a side meeting convened by Special Envoy Saïd Djinnit with gender ministers and representatives of the participating countries and the guarantors of the framework agreement, including the African Union, the United Nations and ICGLR. Participants discussed the implementation of the three recommendations and the promotion of women's participation in political and peace processes in the region. In this context, participants recommended that a meeting of gender ministers from the framework agreement signatory countries be held in the near future to find effective solutions to the challenges faced by women in the region in their efforts to promote peace and security.

## **Annex 4 - Final Communiqué**

### **Women's participation in political and peace processes in the Great Lakes region**

#### **PRESS RELEASE**

**Goma, 2 February 2017** – The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region organized the Global Open Days on Security Council resolution 1325, held in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 31 January to 2 February 2017, with the support of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and UN-Women. The event was attended by 30 women leaders from five countries in the Great Lakes region: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda, as well as ministers and officials responsible for gender issues in those countries and representatives of the United Nations, the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

The open days, organized within the framework of the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (framework agreement), had a threefold objective: to strengthen participants' capacities for leadership, advocacy and participation in political and peace processes; to provide women leaders and peacemakers with a platform to share their experiences, including the challenges they face in their efforts to promote peace and security in the Great Lakes region; and to assess the implementation of the "participation" pillar of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the countries participating in the event.

In his opening speech, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Saïd Djinnit, highlighted the important role of national and regional institutions in advancing the effective participation of women in political and economic processes:

"Through events such as the one that brings us together today, we want to involve not only women leaders, but also the Governments of the region and their institutions, as well as regional partners, such as the African Union, ICGLR and SADC, in the issue of real and effective involvement of women in political and peace processes. Only political will and adequate allocation of resources by stakeholders will ensure real progress in women's participation in political and peace processes."

Women participants made the following recommendations for leaders of countries and organizations in the region:

- **To the signatories of the framework agreement:** provide financial and technical support to the Regional Women's Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the implementation of its strategic plan for 2017–2018, and ensure the participation of women in the meetings of the technical support committee and the regional monitoring mechanism of the framework agreement.
- **To gender ministers and regional and international organizations:** mobilize and allocate more technical and financial resources to strengthen women's technical capacity to enable their effective participation in the political and peace process.
- **To the African Union, ICGLR, SADC and the countries having signed the framework agreement:** implement regional and continental policies (Maputo Protocol, Gender Policy of the African Union, regional action plan for Security Council resolution 1325, etc.,) to ensure the effective and efficient participation of women in mediation, negotiation and conflict management processes by setting up a policy monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

The Global Open Days event culminated in a high-level dialogue on 2 February 2017 attended by ministers and officials responsible for gender issues; Special Envoy Mr. Saïd Djinnit; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Maman Sidikou; the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Mamadou Diallo; and representatives of the African Union and ICGLR. Discussions at the high-level session focused on the national and regional recommendations presented by participants. The session also provided an opportunity

for panel members, including gender ministers and their representatives, to present recent advances in women's political participation at the national level.

Referring to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Special Representative Mr. Maman Sidikou highlighted the critical role that Congolese women should play in promoting a peaceful, cohesive and prosperous society.

"No society can successfully manage political dynamics and crisis without the active participation of women. I call on the Congolese Government, political actors and civil society to ensure the meaningful representation and participation of women leaders in the ongoing transitional governance processes and beyond, in order to facilitate the adequate representation of Congolese women in the future. For our part, MONUSCO is ready to continue supporting them in this noble endeavour."

The dialogue was followed by a parallel meeting convened by Special Envoy Mr. Saïd Djinnit with gender ministers and representatives of the participating countries and the guarantors of the framework agreement, including the African Union, the United Nations and ICGLR. Participants discussed the implementation of the three recommendations and the promotion of women's participation in political and peace processes in the region. In this context, participants recommended that a meeting of gender ministers of the framework agreement signatory countries be held to seek effective solutions to the challenges faced by women in the region in their efforts to promote peace and security.

The Women's Platform for the Framework Agreement was established by the Office of the Special Envoy in January 2014 to empower women in the region as leaders and peacemakers. Building on the recommendations made at the Global Open Days on women, peace and security, the Platform will continue to ensure that the voices of women in the Great Lakes region are heard and taken into account in political and peace processes.