



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

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Women's Participation in Political and Peace Processes in the Great Lakes Region

Goma, 2 February 2017 – The Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General for the Great Lakes region organized the Global Open Days on Women, Peace and Security in Goma, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), from 31 January to 2 February 2017, with support from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and UN Women. The event brought together 30 women leaders from five countries in the Great Lakes region (Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda), Ministers and their representatives in charge of gender from the concerned countries as well as high level representatives of the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

These Global Open Days, organized through the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and the region, had a threefold objective: (1) to reinforce women leaders' capacity in leadership, lobbying and participation in political and peace processes, (2) to provide a platform for women leaders and peacemakers to share their experiences, including the challenges encountered in the promotion of peace and security in the Great Lakes region and (3) to assess the implementation of the participation pillar of UN Resolution 1325 (2000) in their respective countries.

In his opening remarks, the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes region, Saïd Djinnit, underscored the important role that national and regional institutions play in terms of advancing women's effective participation in political and peace processes.

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“Through events like the one gathering us here today, we aim to engage not only with women leaders and advocates on the issue of participation, but also national Governments and their institutions as well as regional partners like the African Union, ICGLR and SADC on the effective and meaningful involvement of women in political and peace processes. Real progress on women’s participation in political and peace processes will only happen if there is sufficient political will and resources allocated from these crucial stakeholders”.

Following their two-day deliberations, women leaders developed the following recommendations for decision makers of countries and organisations of the region:

- **To Signatories of the PSC Framework:** provide financial and technical support to the ICGLR Regional Women’s Forum and to the implementation of its 2017-2018 strategic plan, and guarantee women’s participation in the meetings of the Technical Support Committee and the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the PSC Framework.
- **To Ministries in charge of gender and to regional and international organisations:** mobilise and allocate additional technical and financial resources in order to strengthen women’s capacities to effectively participate in political and peace processes, including in mediation and advocacy efforts.
- **To the AU, ICGLR, SADC and Signatory Countries of the PSC Framework:** work towards the effective implementation of regional and continental policies, including the action plan of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), the Maputo Protocol, the AU Gender Policy, in order to ensure effective women’s participation in mediation, negotiation and conflict management processes, including through the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

The Global Open Days concluded on 2 February with a high-level dialogue attended by Ministers and their representatives in charge of gender, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes region, Mr. Saïd Djinnit, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the DRC, Mr. Maman Sidikou, the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the DRC and Resident Coordinator of the UN Country Team, Mr. Mamadou Diallo, and representatives of the AU and ICGLR. They discussed the national and regional-level recommendations emanating from the deliberations of women leaders. The session also allowed Ministers and their representatives in charge of gender to present recent progress on women’s political participation at the national level.

Reflecting on the situation in the DRC, SRSG Maman Sidikou emphasized the essential role Congolese women have to play in securing a peaceful, cohesive and prosperous society.

“No society can afford to manage political dynamics and crises successfully without including women. I urge the DRC Government, political forces and civil society alike to guarantee a significant representation and participation of female leaders in current transitional governance processes and beyond, in order to facilitate an adequate

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representation of Congolese women in the future. On our side, MONUSCO reiterates its commitment to continue to support this noble endeavour”.

This dialogue session was followed by a side-meeting convened by Special Envoy Saïd Djinnit with Ministers and their representatives in charge of gender from the concerned countries and representatives of the PSC Framework Guarantors including the AU, the UN and ICGLR. The meeting discussed ways forward in the implementation of the three aforementioned recommendations, and in advancing women participation in political and peace processes in the region. In this respect, participants recommended to hold a meeting of Ministers of gender of signatory countries of the PSC Framework in order to find effective solutions to the challenges encountered by women in the region, in their efforts to promote peace and security.

The Women’s Platform for the PSC Framework was established by the Office of the Special Envoy in January 2014 to empower and support women in the region as leaders and peacemakers. Building on the recommendations made at the Global Open Days on Women, Peace and Security, it will continue its efforts to ensure that voices of women from the Great Lakes region are effectively heard, heeded and included in political and peace processes in the region.

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