



**OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
FOR THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

Subject: Minutes of the First Face -to -Face Meeting of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

Date: 29 January 2015

Venue: Elilly International Hotel, Addis Ababa

Chairperson: Special Envoy Said Djinnit

Advisory Board Participants:

- Special Envoy of AU Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security, **Mrs Bineta Diop**
- Assistant Secretary-General **Modibo Toure** (O-SESG-GL)
- UNDP Nairobi, **Nardos Bekele -Thomas**
- FANPRAN, South Africa -- **Lindiwe Sibanda**
- UN Women, Nairobi – **Jebber Foster**
- Ministry of Gender, Kinshasa, DRC- **Mme Bijou Mushitu Kat**
- Ministry of Gender, Kinshasa, DRC- **Mme Annie Kenda**
- Ministry of Gender, Bujumbura, Burundi, **Mme Donatienne Girukwishaka**
- Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises – **Julienne Lusenge**
- ICGLR Regional Women's Forum- **Dr. Attiat Halleem**
- Global Fund for Women, USA –**Muadi Mukenge**
- O-SESG-GL, Nairobi– **Miranda Tabifor**
- O-SESG-GL, Nairobi– **Said Conde**
- Femme Africa Solidarite (FAS), New York– **Harriette William Bright**

Other Participants:

- DPA Great Lakes Desk, New York, **Arnaud Huannou**
- UNOAU, Addis Ababa, **James Aji**
- Kinshasa, DRC – **Monique Kande**

Apologies

- Special Envoy of the UNSG on Climate Change, Mary Robinson
- UNEP Nairobi, Ibrahim Thiaw
- OSRSG-SVC, New York – **SRSRSG Zainab Bangura**

Note takers: Miranda Tabifor and Muadi Mukenge

Session 1: Welcome and Introductions

Special Envoy Said Djinnit welcomed members to the **First Face-to-Face Meeting of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform** which he noted demonstrates their personal commitment to the Women's Platform (WP) initiative and objectives.

He thanked the Global Fund for Women, the Secretariat of the Women's Platform, and colleagues in the O-SESG-GL for the organization of the meeting. The meeting was being held one year after the Women's Platform was launched in Addis Ababa by former Special Envoy Mary Robinson. Stressing the impact of the conflict in the region on women, Special Envoy Djinnit noted that women have been at the front line of the struggle for women rights in the region and have lost their lives, their livelihood and property due to conflict.

Supporting women's political leadership and empowerment with visible livelihood projects at the grassroots level will facilitate economic empowerment and independence for women who are key actors to meaningful solutions for durable peace and sustainable development in conflict affected communities in the DRC and the Great Lakes region.

Following introductions, the Minutes of the 13 November 2014 Conference Call, and the agenda were approved.

Session 2: Status of the implementation of the PSC-Framework

Special Envoy Djinnit briefed members of the Advisory Board on his key priorities to support the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region. He provided highlights on his extensive tour in the region to engage Heads of State and stakeholders. He noted the challenges to the full implementation of the Framework agreement, including among others the lack of full disarmament of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the continued existence of armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and the slow progress in the repatriation of the ex-M23, illicit trafficking of natural resources and mistrust in the region. The Special Envoy also seized the opportunity to introduce a Road Map, highlighting plans and proposed initiatives by his office, working with partners, to support the achievement of regional peace and prosperity, including confidence building, empowering civil society, especially women and youth, fighting impunity, and organizing a Private Sector Investment Conference to advance regional economic integration and development, where women have a key role to play, not only as beneficiaries but as contributors and agents of economic transformation. Also included in the road map is the plan for coordinated support for forthcoming elections in the region. He is currently working with MONUSCO, MENUB, the DRC and Burundi to ensure that elections in these countries are peaceful, inclusive and do not undermine the PSC Framework.

Special Envoy Said Djinnit reiterated his commitment to the vision of the Women's Platform which is to ensure a successful peace process in the DRC and the Great Lakes region, and where women play a significant role at all levels in line with Security Council Resolution S/Res/1325 (2000). He called on Advisory Board Members to critically reflect on strategies that will improve the resource base of the Women's Platform for desired results at the grassroots level.

Session 3: Stock taking of priority activities of the Women's Platform

Status on the implementation of priority activities for November 2014- January 2015: GFW informed the meeting on the following:

- That all tasks regarding the disbursements of first 14 grants under the Dutch contribution had been completed including drafting contracts for grantees, wire payments to grantees, project summaries written for grantees supported under the Irish contribution. Furthermore, it has developed tracking system for Dutch grant expenditures, drafted jointly with OSESG a fundraising paper for the WP, and the first progress report on the Dutch grant had been submitted to OSESG on January 16.
- ***A new grant in support of the Women's Platform was received from Oak Foundation on 14 January 2015, which includes approximately US\$ 194,000 for direct grants in Year 1. This amount will award additional 12 grants and support some of the Secretariat's operating costs. The total amount of the grant from the Oak Foundation is \$750,000 over 3 years (\$250,000 per year).***

Priorities for next 3 months February-April 2015: GFW informed the meeting of the following:

- GFW had just received funds from OSESG for support under the Irish contribution on 12 January 2015. GFW is currently preparing contracts for 18 identified grantees groups for which payment should be completed by mid-February.
- focus will also be placed on the planning of the 1st grantee convening for the 32 groups that have received support (14 under the Dutch support and 18 under the Irish support). The meeting is tentatively planned to take place in April or May 2015. The convening aims to ensure grantees have a deeper understanding of the PSC-F, the Women's Platform goals as well as Regional Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.
- Advisory Board should to take on active role in fundraising to complement the fundraising efforts of GFW and OSESG.
- OSESG also informed the meeting of a potential new funding support from Norway to its Trust Fund for which some amount will be earmarked to support the Women's Platform.

Consideration of the Resource Mobilization Paper for the Women's Platform by Advisory Board Members

- Advisory Board members were encouraged to make use of the 2-page fund raising paper of the Women's Platform. GFW (Amelia Wu) and OSESG (Miranda Tabifor) focal persons are contacts for further dialogue with potential donors. All funds received from Donors go to the GFW-Secretariat for disbursement of grants to women's groups. There was suggestion to elevate the role of FFC with stakeholders, as a women's fund located in the region. Suggestions were made on different approaches to support the Women's Platform especially when funds cannot be channeled through GFW Secretariat. In this

regard, it was recommended that potential donors could support the activities of grantees directly.

- SESG Djinnit and Special Envoy Bineta Diop committed to discuss with World Bank (WB) on the possibility of committing resources to support the Women's Platform. To date WB supports, among other initiatives, the Kampala SGBV Regional Training Facility, the ICGLR Secretariat, Heal Africa, Panzi Hospital and the governments of Burundi, DR Congo and Rwanda. It was suggested that given its vast investment in the Great Lakes region on conflict prevention and women's empowerment issues, and the potential to support the WP, WB should be invited to join the Advisory Board. Members were encouraged to use all avenues to advocate for funding for the WP. SESG committed to use every opportunity to advocate and fundraise for the UN Trust for which a portion will be directed to support the Women's Platform.
- Potential new partners and other ideas were encouraged to scale-up funding for the WP, however members were cautioned to prioritize these new ideas given budget constraints and additional roles and responsibilities by GFW and OSESG.
- **Session IV: Wrap - up and closing**

Briefing by Core Implementing partner- Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS) and Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises (FFC) on their activities

- FAS noted that Burundi, Rwanda and DRC have adopted the Regional Action Plan (RAP) of 1325 for which the indicators align with PSC-Framework benchmarks. Challenges to implementation include funding and lack of political support. FAS informed the meeting it had received a Women's Platform grant to convene a meeting of the Steering committee of RAP, and has also acted as fiscal sponsor for a Women's Platform grant to RWF-ICGLR for their project to undertake a solidarity mission in Central Africa Republic.
- FFC noted that its ongoing work entailed grant-making, movement-building, monitoring of grants, capacity-building of grantees, awareness-raising on the Women's Platform, training of female candidates for local elections, community advocacy about peaceful elections.
- During discussions, it was stressed that the Women's Platform is intended to be a big movement for transformation of the Great Lakes Region. The Advisory Board is a strategic and policy making body and should not really focus on the micro operations and grant making of the Women's Platform. Its ToRs should be reviewed to take this into consideration. Strong partnership, synergy in action and coordination between OSESG-GL, ICGLR RWF and GFW is encouraged.
- Emphasis was put on the need to capitalize on the use of existing mechanisms such as the ICGLR RWF to support the activities of the Women's Platform through its national focal points. The SESG informed the meeting of his prior engagement with the ICGLR

Executive Secretary to strengthen collaboration and synergies in action and not duplicate efforts.

- In response to the observation that Ministries of Gender are under-resourced and women's rights initiatives lack funding, SESG proposed that he will explore the possibility to bring together Ministers of Gender and Finance to table these concerns with view to ensure that resources are allocated to address women rights issues in the region.

Exchange of views on the frequency of Advisory Board Meetings and Any other Business:

Members of the Advisory endorsed they would hold a conference call every four months and meet in person (Face- to -Face) once a year on the margins of the AU Summit as most members have business in Ethiopia during AU Summit. Nevertheless, the venue should be cost-effective and within the available project budget. Other interactions at different fora where few members attend (UNGA, CSW etc...) were encouraged. In this regard, members should feel free to communicate and inform everyone.

Summary of action points:

1. GFW to circulate the list of grantees who have received funding under the Dutch contribution
2. The Women's Platform should be made visible and transparent, with increase flow and sharing of information among members. In this regard, a dedicated webpage should be created on OSESG-GL website with linkages to other relevant websites as appropriate, including to the UNESCO Documentation Center in Kinshasa in order to strengthen the documentation and research skills of grantees under the Women's Platform.
3. FAS to communicate the dates of the holding of the Steering Committee of the Regional Action Plan of UNSCR 1325 with Advisory Board Members
4. OSESG to hold a joint donor round table on gender equality and women empowerment initiatives in the region in Nairobi. The content should be informed by UNSCR 1325, Women's Platform initiative, ICGLR Gender Action Plan and AUC Special Envoy Plan on women, peace and security – (partners – OSESG-GL, ICGLR RWF, FAS, Gender Ministers of the 4 core countries (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda), Advisory Board Members, Special Envoy of the AUC on women, peace and security and UN Women.
5. SESG to convene a meeting of Gender Ministers of the 4 core countries (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda), on the gender issues as they related to PSC-F and the Women's Platform
6. OSESG-GL and GFW to review the Fund Raising Paper to reflect suggested recommendations
7. With the view to expand the membership of the Advisory Board, SESG to invite the World Bank to join the Advisory Board, including other relevant partners and individuals
8. GFW Secretariat and OSESG-GL to prepare a calendar of events for the year and circulate among Advisory Board Members

Closing remarks and date of next Advisory Board Meeting by UN Special Envoy:

SESG Djinnit noted that national political dynamics in the Great Lakes can be very tense but women have shown they can collaborate across political lines for the good of the countries of the region. Thus, the PSC-F is opportunity to show that Great Lakes can emerge from tragedies.

Mrs Diop indicated that during the Gender is My Agenda (GIMAC)2015 meeting held in Addis Ababa, the thematic issue of peace was identified as a key priority. In this regard, the PSC-F remains a relevant instrument for the Africa region. Mrs Bineta also noted that the AU is developing a Women, Peace and Security Framework and the Women's Platform Initiative could fall under the Framework, including to be used as a key benchmark for the AU Year of Women's Empowerment . Furthermore, the AUC Mme Zuma has asked Mrs Diop to support the PSC-F and Women's Platform.

It was also suggested that an evaluation of how Women's Platform is progressing be done using October 2014 as benchmark since that is when funds were first received and when activities took momentum.

SESG thanked everyone for their participation and valuable contributions to the successful holding of the meeting. On the basis of the agreed frequency of the holding of the meetings, he indicated the next Advisory Board Meeting will be via conference call in May 2015 and members will be notified of the exact date accordingly. He wished everyone a safe journey back to their respective countries.