

Inaugural Grantee Convening of the Women's Platform of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

*Theme: Strengthening women's movements and capacities for advancing durable peace in the
Great Lakes Region*

13-15 May 2015, Hotel Cap Kivu, Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo

Key Conclusions

Introduction

From 13-15 May 2015, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in collaboration with the core implementing partners of the Women's Platform; the Global Fund for Women (GFW); Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises (FFC); Femme Africa Solidarite (FAS); the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflict; and with support from MONUSCO, organized the above meeting in Goma, DRC.

The meeting brought together sixty women leaders representing 42 grassroots organizations from Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda which received grants from O/SESG's Trust Fund under the Dutch and Irish Government contributions, including Oak Foundation and individual donors for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC-F). Participants deliberated on achieving a common agenda to deepen their knowledge of, and participation in, the peace processes in the Great Lakes region, including by exploring opportunities for synergy and collaboration between their respective organizations and the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum with the view to building stronger ties across borders. They endorsed the holding of annual Grantee Convening and called for additional donor support to the Women's Platform. Below are the key conclusions of the meeting structures along the broad themes of the Convening:

Enhancing understanding of the political context in the Great Lakes Region and the status of the implementation of the PSC-F.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, its regional action plan and benchmarks as well as the Office of the Special Road Map clearly demonstrate the linkages between the Women's Platform to the Framework. The Platform remains a unique tool for women's empowerment which builds on the momentum already generated by women's groups in the region for justice, peace, and security for all citizens in the Great Lakes region. The

implementation of the PSC-F has recorded incremental progress, however, several challenges remain that needed to be addressed by all parties. Participants recommended that:

- As a comprehensive agreement requiring the involvement of all stakeholders, the Special Envoy should continue efforts at multiple levels to ensure durable solutions are found through collective and collaborative approaches to achieve the objectives of the Framework in the region.
- Women especially those at the grassroots level should be represented at regional meetings of the PSC-F, for instance at the Technical Support Committee as well as UNSCR 1325.

Strengthen partnership and synergies for the implementation regional peace-building frameworks – the PSC-F and UNSCR 1325

Following views and perspectives on the PSC-F and the Regional Action Plan on 1325, grantees recommended that:

- Synergy and collaboration between the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum and the Womens' Platform should be enhanced at all levels in the Great Lakes Region.
- Women of the Great Lakes Region should strengthen their ability to create change in their communities and also explore new ways of building connections to create collective impact in advancing the goals of the Women's Platform for the PSC Framework.
- The Women's Platform should support more activities at the grass roots level on awareness raising of the PSC-F for its effective implementation and monitoring.
- The Special Envoy should continue his advocacy toward signatory countries of the PSC-F that have not developed a national action plan on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 to do so.

Linking grantee activities as interventions for transformative change in the region

Using indicators developed for the Women's Platform, participants presented key results and challenges on the implementation of activities in line with thematic areas of the Women's Platform. Recurrent challenges presented were insecurity and the continuous presence of armed groups that are hindering the implementation of activities in some localities. They recommended that:

- An extensive documentation should be undertaken on the experiences of grantees at the grass roots levels for lessons learning and sharing with policy makers as well as with potential donors.
- Grantees should regularly share information among themselves at the country level on ongoing and future activities, including harmonizing their work plans, undertaking joint activities and advocacy on the PSC-F and UNSCR 1325 as cross cutting activities.

Strengthening organizational capacities of women’s organizations to sustain their work and attract potential partners

The convening was structured and blended with information sharing and capacity building sessions, particularly on clean energy technologies for sustainable development, mobilizing women’s movements, communication and ICT, resource mobilization, and advocacy, in order to equip grantee partners with requisite skills for efficiency and effectiveness. Grantees recommended that:

- Opportunities for synergy and collaboration, on financial self-reliance, knowledge on social media in order to disseminate the activities of their respective organizations, conducting advocacy for the advancement of the PSC-F, the Women’s Platform agenda, UNSC resolution 1325 as well as the diversification of their donor database and mobilization of resources from the private sector should be encouraged at all levels.
- Increased resources should be allocated to the Women’s Platform and its activities, in order to support the broad objectives of the ICGLR Regional Women’s Forum, strengthen women’s movement in the region.
- Women organizations should work in synergy with their respective Ministries of Gender on women, peace and security issues while Gender Ministers should continuously advocate for women’s protection, leadership and empowerment.