



**OPENING REMARKS FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
ICGLR,**

AMB. ZACHARY MUBURI-MUITA,

**DURING THE MINISTERS OF GENDER MEETING,
23RD NOVEMBER, 2018**

ENTEBBE, UGANDA

It is indeed a great honor for me to address this august assembly of gender ministers from our region today, at the opening ceremony of the High Level Consultation on Implementation and monitoring commitments on Women, Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region.

At the outset, allow me to express my deep gratitude to the Ugandan authorities for once again accepting to host this meeting and for the warm reception that we received since our arrival in this beautiful city of Entebbe.

This meeting is jointly organized by us at the ICGLR Secretariat and the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General. I also wish to thank the Office of the Special Envoy for availing these facilities that will enable the smooth running of our meeting.

**Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The whole world adopted the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on October 30, 2000, which is the first normative framework that advocates for the effective participation of women in all processes of prevention, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction.

Indeed, this instrument invites States to ensure that women participate fully and on an equal footing with men in all efforts to maintain peace and security.

Since the adoption of the resolution, the governments of the region have undertaken numerous initiatives to address issues relating to the protection of women's rights, their participation in conflict prevention and management, as well as the promotion of peace.

In order to operationalize the Resolution, the ICGLR Member States have adopted a gradual and inclusive approach to gender mainstreaming, and the Heads of State and Government were justified in November 2004 in Dar-es-Salaam resolved to adopt proactive policies and mechanisms to promote gender equality at all levels and in all areas at both national and regional levels, in line with the different legal instruments which promote the rights of women and the girl child.

Our member states have acceded to it and, for illustrative purposes, ten of them have drawn up their National Action Plans. These include Angola, Burundi, CAR, Congo, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan. Tanzania and Zambia, are the only countries which do not have their National Action plans. In this regard, I call upon our partners to support these two Member States in the development of their Action plans.

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude in advance to those who will support the development of these plans. Our partners, here present, please receive my sincere gratitude.

The existence of these action plans did not, however, allow the states to achieve the desired objectives. Indeed, the implementation of national plans has been slow because many challenges still remain: insecurity, violence

against women and children, socio-cultural burdens, non-implementation of the provisions contained therein, lack of political will.

Regional wide also the issue of early pregnancy and marriage and even school harassment for girls continue being a big scourge that need to be faught.

So how can we accelerate this implementation at the regional level?

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

ICGLR looks forward to the successful completion of the Regional Action Plan process and thanks the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region for its substantial support to consultants who have worked on the realization of this Plan.

The resolution 1325, which has been at the center of discussions for two days, advocates the need to attract the attention of all actors, governments, parliaments, civil society organizations, development partners, international institutions, the youth, women, the media, the role of women in prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

It urges national political actors to increase women's participation and to take into account parity in all peace and security issues and offers women a clear opportunity, in terms of participation, in structuring peace, and post-conflict architecture in their country.

Prior to today's meeting, our experts had two working days in which they exchanged views, made contributions and proposed best practices in the implementation of national action plans and agreed on strategic choices, in line with the four pillars of Resolution 1325, in order to enrich the draft ICGLR Regional Action Plan which was submitted to them.

From what has emerged from the different debates, taking into account the major concerns and challenges faced by women and girls with regard to their protection, their participation in the prevention of possible crises and their empowerment must be taken into account.

For example, the Office of the Special Envoy and the ICGLR Secretariat undertook solidarity and advocacy missions to Burundi, the Central African Republic, the DRC and South Sudan to advocate with the authorities to increase participation of women in all peace and democratization processes in their country.

Indeed, in this recurring region of Africa, the voice of women must be heard more and more and their rights respected in times of peace than in times of conflict.

Women's voices must count and they must be counted more and more as they are now recognized as essential actors of peace and development.

That is why reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts in some of our states can only produce tangible results for our people, our communities and our families, if women are involved. Otherwise, peace and security,

development would be futile without the involvement of the latter, which is undoubtedly half the population of the region.

**Excellency Madam Minister,
Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Secretariat will ensure that the ICGLR Resolution 1325 Regional Action Plan you have just approved will be translated into action, with the support of our Member States and a responsible and supportive partnership, as the project is vast and it would require all stakeholders in the region from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, to create a synergy of actions leading to lasting peace, security and stability, to build a prosperous and peaceful Great Lakes region, where citizens are a force for development.

The most ardent wish of the ICGLR Secretariat is that:

1. Countries will not only have 30% representation of women in decision-making bodies by 2020, but will dare to move towards parity, i.e. 50%;
2. The Region can return to the path of peace with the participation of all its sons and daughters on an equal footing;
3. Gender mainstreaming in peace and security initiatives as well as the full implementation of Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, so that the actions that will be taken will advocate for all women of the sub

region in general and more particularly those of the countries in conflict which, as donors of life, want to build a coherent, more just and balanced society, where their rights and those of their children, especially girls, are respected, where women hold decision-making positions and participate in negotiations, peace agreements and dialogues, as required by Resolution 1325.

As I conclude, I would like to thank the partners notably the Swiss Cooperation, Care International Burundi, CARE International DRC, CARE International Rwanda, COCAFEM-GL and the World Bank, who the participation of the experts from 8 member countries as well as the members of the Steering Committee of the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum.

Long live Women!

And May God help them to live in a conflict-free Great Lakes region!

Thank you

Merci Beaucoup

Muito Obrigado

Shukran

Asante