



**Putting Women and Youth
at the Centre of Regional
PeaceBuilding.**

10th Anniversary of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region: An Opportunity to Rebuild the Social Contract by Placing Women and Youth at the Centre.

2023 marks an important year with the 10th Anniversary of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (PSC Framework), signed on 24 February 2013 at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

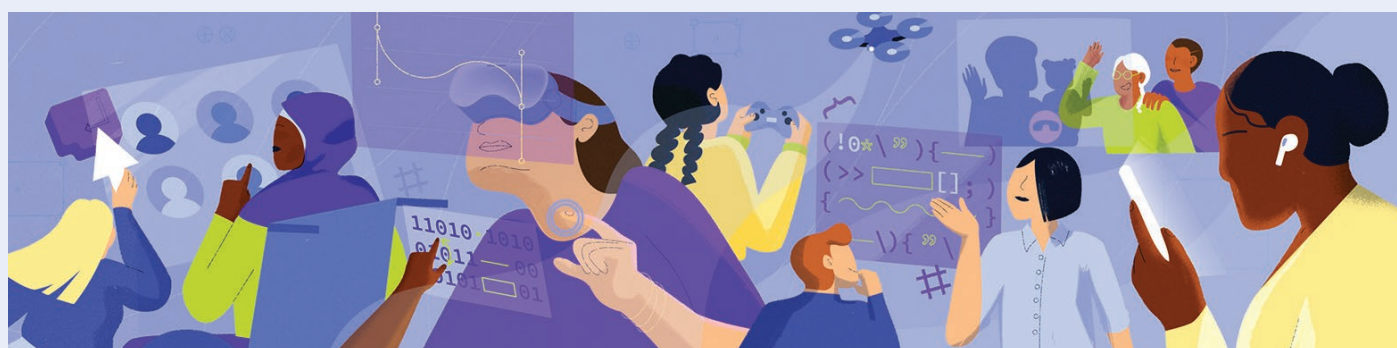
As of January 2022, women made up, on average, 30.73 per cent of members of parliament in the Region, an increase of 3 per cent compared to 2020. Women are now more often appointed to key positions in government. For example, in Kenya, seven women were elected governors in the August 2022 elections. In November 2022, for the first time, a woman, Aimee Laurentine Kanyana was elected head of the Office of the Ombudsman of Burundi. Mrs Mwangala Zaloumis was appointed chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Zambia On 23 November 2022. On February 2023, the plenary sitting of the Senate of Rwanda approved the appointment of Odda Gasinzigwa, President of the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda.

In addition, the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was revised and adopted by regional gender ministers in a bid to accelerate the implementation of regional and international commitments relating to the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and its relevant pillars on prevention, protection and women's effective participation in peacebuilding efforts, including relief and recovery.



Special Envoy of the United Nations
Secretary-General for the
Great Lakes Region of Africa,

Huang Xia



Despite the progress made, several challenges remain. These include the persistence of discriminatory measures against women, limited financial resources for the effective implementation of national and regional action plans, insecurity, girls' access to education, and forced displacement, which further increase the vulnerability of women and girls in the Great Lakes Region.

In addition, the persistence of inequalities, non-compliance with gender quotas in peace processes, and the lack of specific legislation to support the protection of women and girls against violence must be addressed collectively, as this would contribute to women assuming greater roles in the political, social and economic governance of the countries of the Great Lakes Region.

Appeal to Member States

We also appeal to Member States to carry through their new commitments to remove all barriers to women's participation and education. As we prepare to observe the International Women's Day on 8 March, under the theme "DigitALL: innovation and technology for gender equality", I wish to take this opportunity to encourage regional Member States to make new commitments to removing all barriers to women's participation and education in the digital age to ensure we reach the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Promoting youth engagement for peace

In the Great Lakes Region, young people continue to demonstrate, through their resilience, that they are key agents of change. Despite facing challenges such as unemployment and violence, especially against girls and young women, many young people are nevertheless striving to maintain their commitment to peace.

In this regard, we have to redefine the role of young people in conflict prevention and peacebuilding to ensure their involvement, and I, therefore, call for greater focus to be given to promoting youth engagement.

Our common agenda and the renewal of the social contract

Through this publication, I call for the effective implementation of commitments from the Declaration on the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, specifically placing women and girls at the centre of our focus, whilst also listening to and working with youth. In doing so, we contribute to giving these important stakeholders the place they deserve in the political, social and economic governance of the countries of the Great Lakes Region.

Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

Huang Xia

The women, peace and security agenda remains at the heart of the United Nations strategy for the Great Lakes Region to achieve, among others, Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of The Framework Agreement for Peace, Security And Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region

Introductory Statement

Since its inception, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) has been instrumental in contributing to the transformation of the region into a sphere of stability, security and development. I am pleased to be associated with this edition to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region, under the theme: “Promoting the regional agenda for peace, security, and economic cooperation through the empowerment of women and youth”.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Regional Member States, as well as the other Guarantor institutions (UN, AU, SADC) for their commitment to the process that has been ongoing for a decade now. The journey has not been an easy one, but we have stayed on course. This occasion calls for reflection on the progress, challenges and lessons learned.

ICGLR as a guarantor of the PSC-F has collaborated extensively with the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes (OESG-GL) and other UN agencies in many interventions including, the revitalisation of the Women, Youth and Civil Society Organisations Fora. As ICGLR, we will continue to coordinate regional efforts to promote peace and security in the region and it is our belief that a vibrant and diverse civil society and the empowerment of women and youth are critical to sustained peace and development across the Great Lakes region.



**Amb. João Samuel Caholo,
ICGLR Executive Secretary**

Building on the progress made over the last decade in promoting the participation and meaningful engagement of women and youth in peacebuilding processes, I call for the removal of impediments to the effective and meaningful participation of women and youth. We remain committed to supporting the implementation of activities to ensure peace consolidation, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution in the region with the intention of promoting inclusive, equitable, just, and resilient societies and institutions.

1 Women Peace and Security, Activity Report (Feb 2022 – Feb 2023)



Introduction

During the 10th Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) Summit of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region, held on 24 February 2022 in Kinshasa, the Heads of State and Government of the Framework's signatory countries reaffirmed their commitment to give priority to transformative measures, including the realization of women's equal rights, and to promote gender balance in political and peace processes by 2023 through the swift implementation of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and national action plans on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000).¹ They further committed to having each High-Level Meeting of the ROM be preceded by a review of progress achieved by the ICGLR Member States in the implementation of the RAP and the African Union's relevant instruments on gender.

Status of implementation of National and Regional Action Plans

Significant progress has been made in recent years in women's leadership across the Great Lakes region. This is evidenced by the number of women in political and strategic positions, as well as the percentage of women in legislative bodies, currently standing at 27 per cent, which is among the highest in Africa and globally.

Nine (9)² out of twelve (12) ICGLR Member States have a National Action Plan (NAP), while a revised ICGLR RAP was approved on 13 November 2021 by ICGLR Ministers responsible for gender equality. The ICGLR, in collaboration with the regional women, network on UNSCR 1325 (2000), conducted a regional workshop on WPS from 25 to 28 August 2022 in Bujumbura, Burundi, with the objective to evaluate the status of the implementation of NAPs and the RAP, identify gaps and address the way forward.

The ICGLR also established a Regional Network for Monitoring and Evaluation of the RAP implementation. The Terms of Reference of the Regional Network have been developed and the Member States have appointed members to the Network.

There have also been positive outcomes of electoral processes in 2022 as witnessed in Angola, Kenya, and the Central African Republic (CAR), which had relatively peaceful elections. Despite constraints to the full implementation of the two-thirds gender rule³, as enshrined in Article 27(8) of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, women performed relatively well in the 2022 Kenya elections compared to previous elections, with an increase in the number of women governors from 3 in 2017 to 7 in 2022.

¹ The signatory countries of the PSC Framework are: Angola · Burundi · Central African Republic · Republic of the Congo · Democratic Republic of the Congo · Kenya · Rwanda · Sudan · South Sudan · South Africa · Uganda · United Republic of Tanzania · Zambia.

² Tanzania is developing their first NAP and Zambia is yet to start development of its first NAP.

³ Affirmative action in Kenya aims to reduce gender imbalances in leadership positions by providing that no more than two-thirds of the members in any elective or appointive positions shall be of the same gender.

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Number of women governors in the 2022 Kenyan elections up from 3 in 2017

During the reporting period, UNWOMEN/Eastern and Southern Africa Region Office (ESARO), in collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region (O/SESG-GL), facilitated a regional workshop in Dar es Salam, Tanzania, from 21 to 23 September 2022 on best practices and experience sharing for 'Impactful New generations of National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS for the ESARO'. The workshop, which coincided with the International Day of Peace, presented a unique opportunity to bring together countries from the region and other stakeholders to share progress in the implementation of the WPS Agenda, as well as lessons learned and best practices in NAP development, implementation, and reporting.

Some of the challenges identified that affected the successful implementation of NAPs were:

- Limited awareness of the WPS Agenda by political leaders and civil society organizations (CSOs),
- Insufficient allocation of funds for NAP implementation
- Low levels of data availability for NAP monitoring and reporting, ineffective monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and inadequate inclusion of CSOs in NAP development, monitoring, and implementation.

Nine (9) out of twelve (12) ICGLR Member States have a National Action Plan (NAP), with a revised ICGLR Regional Action Plan (RAP) ...

Some of the good practices identified in some ICGLR Member States included the integration of NAPs in national and district-level development plans, and the development of NAPs that included community stakeholders, such as traditional, clan, and religious leaders, youth groups, CSOs, women's organizations and the private sector.



The 3rd Africa Forum, convened by the office of the AU special envoy for the Women Peace and Security in Addis Ababa from 14 to 16 December 2022. It called for enforcement of the policy imperative for a minimum 30% quota system to ensure women's representation, and inclusion in conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy missions, peace negotiations, peace support operations and humanitarian missions.

Major Developments and Activities

While progress has been achieved in establishing institutional frameworks and adopting policy measures towards increased women's representation in elective and appointed offices⁴, there are concerns over the changing nature of conflict in parts of the Great Lakes region. This has manifested through:

- I. Increased mistrust.
- II. A volatile security situation in the eastern DRC.
- III. The continuing internal displacement of women, children, and other vulnerable people, including the elderly.
- IV. Inadequate representation of women in key processes of conflict prevention and dialogue processes and most importantly in security governance mechanisms.
- V. Limited financial resources for the effective implementation of the NAPs and RAP.

⁴ The progress is reported in the Situation Analysis Report prepared in 2022 by the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy and Good Governance (LMRC), a Think Tank of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Great Lakes Region.

Furthermore, there are gaps in the commitments to regional instruments, international treaties, and limited action on the ground, particularly in relation to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the domestication of the relevant regional protocols and instruments. Despite efforts by Member States to fast-track Sexual GBV (SGBV) cases, including utilizing a victim-centred approach, which has enhanced the potential for the prosecution of perpetrators, and improving access to justice, the training of judges on gender-sensitive measures for adducing evidence, and the holding of special court sessions to clear the backlog of cases, the region continues to register a high prevalence of GBV against women and girls. Perpetrators of crimes frequently go unpunished and there is slow progress on the enactment of relevant protection-related legislation, and in the adoption of regional draft instruments to address impunity for SGBV crimes, including implementing the draft model law for fast-tracking SGBV cases. Incidents of sexual violence against women, including in electoral and transitional contexts, continue to result in physical and psychological trauma.

WPS Agenda remains at the heart of the UN strategy for the Great Lakes Region.

Important progress was made in the General Assembly of the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum (RWF). The RWF held its third General Assembly from 18 to 20 May 2022 in Bujumbura, Burundi, in partnership with the O/SESG-GL, AU FemWise-Africa, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and UNWOMEN. The Assembly elected a new Bureau with Burundi as Chair, Angola as first Vice-Chair and South Sudan as second Vice-Chair. The Republic of Congo and Tanzania will serve as the first and second rapporteurs to the Bureau. Members reviewed the Accord establishing the RWF and noted the need to focus on the protection of persons with disabilities, to further address human security, gender, social equity, and climate change, as well as to reinforce actions that enhance women's participation in peacebuilding and security efforts in the region.

The Bureau of the RWF and the ICGLR Directorate for Gender, Women and Children, with support from UNFPA ESARO, undertook the strategic planning process on behalf of the RWF. In this regard, the ICGLR RWF Bureau and the Gender, Women and Children Directorate, in collaboration with UNFPA, the OSESG-GL and the Government of Uganda, organized a three-day retreat for the Steering Committee to discuss and review the first draft of the Regional ICGLR Women for a Strategic and Action Plans in Entebbe, Uganda from 12 to 14 October 2022. The Prime Minister of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja addressed the workshop and commended the ICGLR RWF on the important work they are doing to champion the role of women in the Great Lakes Region.



Promoting the Role of Women in Quiet Diplomacy and Dialogue Process.

On 26 April 2022, the Advisory Board, co-chaired by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region and the AU Special Envoy for WPS, issued a statement calling on Member States to intensify efforts to strengthen the rights of women and girls and to ensure that the gender dimensions be considered in the ongoing inter-Congolese dialogue (known as the Nairobi Process), facilitated by the Government of Kenya.

In a similar development, on 22 June 2022, **MONUSCO, in partnership with UNWOMEN, O/SESG-GL and RECs, AU FemWise-Africa and AWLN, facilitated a hybrid workshop with women and youth leaders in the DRC to discuss the inclusion of women in peace processes.** The discussions resulted in a series of recommendations, including scoping by a regional think tank on how women of the DRC and the Great Lakes region can work together and build alliances beyond their respective borders, as well as increase coordination efforts and initiatives to promote quiet diplomacy and the reinforcement of women's collective leadership.

On 8 July 2022, women representatives from civil society and the ICGLR RWF briefed the 31st Session of the Technical Support Committee (TSC) of the PSC Framework on the impact of armed groups' activities and broader conflict drivers on women and girls, as well as the current regional security situation. They expressed concern over the increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to the impact of the conflict in the eastern DRC as well as the closure of borders, the effect of which threatened the loss of livelihoods for women cross-border traders.

In accordance with the commitment made by regional leaders at the 10th ROM Summit to increase involvement and participation of CSOs and ICGLR fora in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the region, efforts continued to amplify the voice, spaces, and participation of women in the governance mechanisms of the PSC Framework. As such, from 12 to 15 July, a joint UN-AU-ICGLR advocacy mission, led by Madam Catherine Samba Panza, co-chair of AU FemWise-Africa and former President of the CAR, and facilitated by the O/SESG-GL, visited Kinshasa to support efforts in addressing the situation in the eastern DRC provinces, and to promote women's participation in the forthcoming electoral process. The delegation included women leaders of the ICGLR RWF, as well as women mediators trained with the support of the O/SESG-GL in 2021. The representatives of the DRC Government, namely Sama Lukonde, Prime Minister and, Professor Serge Tshibangu, Special Envoy of President Tshisekedi for the Nairobi Process, with whom the delegation interacted committed to supporting efforts to facilitate women's participation in the Nairobi Process.



Advisory Board Members for WPS in the Great Lakes Region, Madam Samba Panza, Co-chair Femwise and Madam Bintou Keita, SRSG /MONUSCO

Between 19 and 20 July in Lusaka, the O/SESG-GL and the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre (LMRC) for Democracy and Good Governance and Conference Secretariat of the ICGLR in collaboration with the AU, UNWOMEN and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), facilitated a peer-learning and experience-sharing workshop on women in electoral management bodies (EMBs).

The event resulted in the launch of a Network on Gender Equality in EMBs in ICGLR Member States. Participants included Rt. Hon. Ms. Nelly Butete Kashumba Mutti, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia (who launched the Regional Network), female Commissioners and Chief Executive Officers from EMBs as well as Chairpersons of Parliamentary Gender Committees from the following ICGLR Member States: Burundi, CAR, the DRC, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

In 2022

May

ICGLR Regional Women's Forum held in Burundi

July

Joint UN-AU-ICGLR Advocacy mission to the DRC

Launch of a Network on Gender Equality in EMB's

November

Challenges in the study were addressed

The establishment of the Regional Network was informed by a study⁵ to assess the situation, needs and capacity gaps of women in EMBs, which was carried out between September 2021 and July 2022 by the O/SESG-GL and LMRC. The findings of the study were validated by representatives of EMBs and members of Gender Committees of Parliaments in the ICGLR Member States from 19 to 20 July 2022 in Lusaka, Zambia.

The data indicates that six out of twelve ICGLR MS EMBs have exceeded the 30 per cent threshold that many countries in the region have set as a minimum requirement for women's representation in nominative positions, although others are still struggling to meet the target. Despite this relatively good numerical representation of women as commissioners, however, the study found that women are still frequently excluded from key leadership positions within EMBs. Zambia is the only ICGLR Member State where a woman is currently serving as Chair of the EMB, while six Member States (Burundi, the Central African Republic, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda,) have a woman as Vice-Chair of an EMB.



Insider Mediation for DDR Experience Sharing Workshop

⁵ Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow in The Great Lakes Region 2022

Only Angola and Burundi have a female Chief Executive Officer, with women serving as Deputy Chief Executive Officers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. EMBs of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Uganda currently have no women holding director-level positions.

The low level of women's representation in EMBs in the ICGLR Member States is attributed to several factors, including gaps in the legislative and regulatory frameworks in the Member States on women's participation in EMBs; political challenges, notably electoral violence; the continued existence of patriarchy in society that continues to undermine efforts to promote women's participation in electoral processes; the lack of technical skills; and low self-confidence among women in the EMBs. To ensure a fairer and more effective representation of women in EMBs, the study recommends a multi-pronged approach focusing on creating an enabling legal and policy framework, as well as regional peer-learning/ capacity building focusing on key stakeholders, including the EMBs themselves, political parties, and parliamentarians.

To address these challenges, three consecutive Regional Peer Learning Workshops were held in Nairobi from 17 to 24 November 2022. The main aim of the workshops was to strengthen women's representation in EMBs in ICGLR Member States.



Regional Workshop for Political Parties on Gender.
Photo courtesy Ashton Alert

Enhancing the Skills of Political Parties and Reviewing Legislation

Between 17–18 November 2022, a Regional Peer-Learning Event and Workshop for Parliamentary Gender Committees of ICGLR Member States on Sharing Experiences and Enhancing Skills in Reviewing Legislation, Regulatory and Policy Frameworks on Women's Representation in EMBs was held. Nine of the twelve ICGLR Member States were represented: Angola, Burundi, Republic of Congo, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia, with the Kinshasa-based Regional Parliamentary Forum, regional civil society and women fora also participating. Workshop recommendations included, among others, a call for Member States to be held accountable for implementing their commitments to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in the EMBs.

On 24 November 2022, a workshop on Sharing Experiences and Enhancing the Skills of Political Parties in developing gender-responsive policies to strengthen women's representation in EMBs was held. Eight of the twelve ICGLR Member States were represented: Burundi, CAR, the Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia. A key recommendation from the workshop was that political parties, governments and CSOs should respect and implement legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. They further agreed to strengthen synergies between political parties and stakeholders, including the police, academia, civil society, media and private sector, youth, traditional leaders, and religious organizations to advance gender equality while also calling on political parties, relevant government authorities, and partners to allocate funds to support programs to enhance women's participation in EMBs and adopt gender-sensitive budgetary practices.



Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, Promoting the Role of Insider Mediators



UNDP in collaboration with ICGLR and the Clingendael Academy, held a three-day training from 7 to 9 September 2022 in Nairobi, on Insider Mediation for Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDR/RR). Participating in the training were 18 representatives, including women, from the ICGLR Regional Pool of Mediators and CSOs across the region.

O/SESG-GL and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) further enriched the training sessions by building the capacity of participants on interventions for insider mediation, and Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDR/RR) approaches to broader peacebuilding efforts in the region.

From 17 to 19 November 2022, ICGLR with support from UNDP, held a three-day in-person experience-sharing workshop in Nairobi on Insider Mediation for DDR that brought together 28 regional mediators, of which 18 were women representatives from FemWise Africa, the ICGLR Regional Pool of Mediators, and CSOs across the region. The regional mediators engaged in experience sharing and group exercises to deepen knowledge of insider mediation for DDR/RR through in-person exchanges and cross-learning. The workshop also benefitted from the expertise of the O/SESG-GL on DDR experiences in the region.

Need to Develop a Monitoring Framework to Assess Progress of the Implementation of Regional Guidelines for Gender Responsive Measures to Covid-19.



The Great Lakes region was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with some Member States’ health systems being more affected than others. Most Member States adhered to the AU guidelines for closing borders, which helped to curb the spread of the virus. The lockdowns imposed in some Member States affected local and regional trade leading to the closure of businesses and loss of livelihoods. The closure of schools and the curfews imposed by some Member States further increased the vulnerability of women and girls to GBV, with a surge in teenage pregnancies reported in countries. This had an adverse effect on girls’ education, violated the rights and dignity of women and girls, and inhibited women’s social and economic capabilities.

2022

UNWOMEN organized a one-day dialogue of experts in Gender Ministries

UNWOMEN organized a one-day dialogue of experts of Gender Ministries in Nairobi on 14 November 2022 to review the guidelines proposed by the AU Gender Ministers and adopt specific measures for the Great Lakes region. In addition to the proposal by the technical experts to adopt the AU Guidelines for a Gender-Responsive Framework, they proposed the development of a monitoring framework to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Framework and a bi-annual meeting to report on the progress.

Women's Economic Empowerment and Inclusion in Cross-border Trade Policies

From 23rd to 25th January 2023 OSESG-GL in line with the regional strategy pillar on strengthening trade and investment to support lasting peace and sustainable development participated, and provided technical and financial support to the mission, including by sponsoring five women entrepreneurs from Burundi, Tanzania, and DRC to partake and exhibit their products during the conference. Exploring trade and investment opportunities, deepening intra-regional trade as well as harnessing new trade opportunities presented by the AfCFTA, among others was the focus of the regional trade mission.

Recommendations to the Member States

On Participation

- Ensure the effective participation of women in all dialogue processes, and enable women's equal and meaningful representation from the early stages and at all levels of local, national and regional peace and political processes, including the ongoing Nairobi Process and Luanda Process.
- Revive and support the Regional Centre of Excellence for effective research and capacity building in mediation and preventive diplomacy.
- Support regional CSOs Forum to take a lead role in engaging universities in research, advice, and capacity building on women's issues.
- Promote and consolidate ongoing support for the local and regional capacities for peace.
- Facilitate constructive dialogue with women, youth and CSO's to build trust in the region.
- Review and reform the structure of security organs to align with women's participation and practice.
- Raise awareness and build capacity for political party leaders to support the meaningful participation of women.
- Review national political processes and political parties governing policies and laws to ensure women's meaningful participation.
- Support the development of a regional gender barometer as a comprehensive strategy to access and rank member states on their commitment to combat SGBV, promote gender equality and increase women's participation in the political process.
- Ensure the effective participation of women in all dialogue processes, and enable women's equal and meaningful representation from the early stages and at all levels of local, national and regional peace and political processes, including the ongoing Nairobi Process and Luanda Process.
- Continue to support the strengthening of the ICGLR RWF, and the implementation of its regional action plans, as an effective representative body for WPS in the Great Lakes Region.

On Accountability

- REMs/ RMs, working with member states to develop road maps for the rollout of the AU Continental Results Frameworks on WPS (AUCRF) to promote monitoring progress tracking and advanced accountability to the WPS agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS



On Prevention

- Encourage and support women's active roles and contributions to conflict prevention and early warning and response initiatives, including the prevention of hate speech and the promotion of a culture of peace.
- Recommit to fulfilling the commitments in the Kampala Declaration of 2011 and implement the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) to comprehensively address gender-based abuse and discrimination in the region
- Conduct awareness, advocacy and information sharing for the promotion of family and community cohesion and peaceful co-existence.
- Incorporate within the existing policies, laws and programs, the WPS Agenda.
- Identify African socio-cultural values that historically protected women and children, and promoted peace, harmony, shared work and responsibility, for incorporation into the WPS implementation framework.
- Conduct an assessment to identify gaps and build the capacity of policymakers and enforcers to support the implementation of the WPS Agenda.
- Incorporate the WPS Agenda in the curricula for Primary, Secondary Education and Training Colleges.

On Protection

- Adopt the Outcome Document of the AU and UNWOMEN-facilitated dialogue on the gender impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the monitoring framework for measuring progress and the biannual meeting of relevant bodies to report on progress.
- Identify and review laws and policies with respect to the protection of women and children from all forms of violence and discrimination.
- Build capacity for women's community and grassroots protection committees and community-based networks for the protection of women and children, inclusive of women and children with disability.
- Facilitate the establishment and capacitate Gender Desks in private sector organizations and private security companies.



On Economic Empowerment

- Strengthen the economic capacity of women and youth networks and improve their knowledge and awareness of existing legal and policy frameworks, including in cross-border settings and on the links between natural resources and conflict.
- Facilitate an annual dialogue between gender and trade ministers and members of GL-WEN to assess the situation of women entrepreneurs across the region and ensure that progressive legislation and policy are enacted to challenge cultural and economic barriers that inhibit women from conducting businesses e.g., laws guaranteeing women's ownership of assets.
- Roll out the AfCFTA in the Great Lakes region, and build the capacities of women, especially in cross-border trade so they can benefit from the AfCFTA.
- Enhance the capacity of the region's CSOs to enable them to map the effects of climate change on WPS, learn how to implement advocacy initiatives on the effects of climate change and how to identify and embrace adaptability and resilient agricultural and agribusiness practices.
- RECs/ RMs, working with AU Member States, to develop roadmaps for the Roll-Out of the AU Continental Results Framework on WPS (AU CRF) to promote monitoring, progress tracking and advance accountability to the WPS Agenda.
- OSESG and ICGLR Secretariat to take concrete steps with member states to roll out the Africa continental free trade agreement in the Great Lakes region and to educate Women, especially in cross-border trade on its application.

On Relief and Recovery

- Provide psychosocial support services to victims of disasters.
- Train community organizations/stakeholders through religious and traditional leaders on relief and recovery during and after a disaster.
- Increase the allocation of resources to meet the specific needs of women and children during and after natural and man-made disasters.

Technical Dialogue Of Women, Youth And Civil Society On The Occasion Of The 10th Anniversary Of The Psc Framework

At the initiative of OSESG and ICGLR, a technical dialogue of women, youth and civil society organizations (CSOs) was held virtually on Friday 24th February 2023.

The objective of the dialogue was to accord a platform to share and exchange perspectives and aspirations for the region within the context of the 10th anniversary of the Peace Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC-Framework). The forum commenced with welcome remarks by United Nations (UN) OSESG Chief of Staff, Marco Kalbusch; International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Deputy Executive Secretary Yasir Mohamed; Representative of the African Union (AU) Office of the Special Envoy for WPS, Catherine Njeru; and, Chair of the Regional Women Forum, Dr.Sabine Ntakarutima. This was followed by Amb. Liberata Mulamula, a senior member of the Women, Peace & Security (WPS) Advisory Board, who lauded the initiative as an opportunity to improve existing approaches and strategies for the PSC-Framework by bringing new ideas and approaches, and widening creativity and innovation towards peace-building processes.



Contributors and Participants included the following:

- UN: OSESG-GL, UNWOMEN, UNFPA, UNOCA, MONUSCO.
- AU.
- ICGLR.
- Representatives from the Regional Women Forum (RWF), Regional Youth Forum (RYF) and Regional Training Facility (RTF).
- Regional Civil Society and Grassroot Organizations including: Women International Peace Centre, Care International, Pole Institute, La concertation des Collectifs des Associations Féminines de la région des Grands Lacs (COCAFEM), Living in Peace Institute, Julius Nyerere Foundation.
- Central African Youth and Women Coalitions including; ECCAS Youth Programme, Central Africa Network of Women Mediators (REFEMAC), Coalition Jeunes Paix et sécurité en Afrique centrale (CJPAC) and Réseau des Plateformes Nationales d'ONG d'Afrique Centrale (REPONGAC).
- Consultants and WPS Experts from academia and research institutions.

Key Recommendations

- **Encourage** continuous dialogue to engage diverse categories of women and youth, including survivors, refugees, and other vulnerable groups, in constructive conversations to identify root causes of conflict, exchange experiences and build trust;
- **Foster** greater involvement of women in ongoing peace talks and negotiations, by including women in both local and formal peace committees, in addition to utilizing the trained women mediators and negotiators from the region;
- **Enhance** capacity building, mentorship and nurturing of locally-organised and grassroots women and youth coalitions and organisations, to undertake advocacy initiatives that encourage local ownership of PSC-Framework implementation;
- **Integrate** economic empowerment as a broader strategy to achieving peace and security, including promoting women's participation in market value chains and cross-border trade, economic reintegration of refugees and displaced women; and involvement of women and youth in the exploitation and management of natural resources;
- **Deepen** awareness creation on the PSC-Framework for political leaders to prioritize National Action Plans (NAPs) on the WPS agenda and to mainstream women's full and equal representation and participation in all levels of political and peace processes;
- **Reinforce** accountability on WPS within the implementation of the PSC framework using the already agreed tools such as the AU Continental Results Framework (CRF);
- **Strengthen** collaboration with Research Institutions, Universities and Centers of Excellence to provide important data and evidence for WPS advocacy, deepen innovation in peace-building approaches, and provide frameworks for monitoring and evaluation of ongoing peace initiatives; and,
- **Improve** collaboration with CSOs to promote the Peace Agenda incorporation of programmes for mental health, psychosocial and trauma support for victims, as well as education continuity of displaced girls.

Percentage of the Gender Gap Closed in Political Empowerment, Selected ICGLR Member States and Other African Countries, 2021

Country	African ranking (39 African countries)	Global ranking (155 countries)	ICGLR Member State change in global ranking between 2016 and 2021	Speaker
2016 and 2021	Percentage of gender gap closed	No data	30	0
Rwanda	1	6	-2	56.3
Mozambique	2	13		49.4
South Africa	3	14		49.3
Namibia	4	19		46.3
Ethiopia	5	28		38.2
Burundi	6	36	-8	34.5
Senegal	7	38		32.7
Uganda	8	48	-11	29.6
Liberia	9	55		25.5
Angola	10	59		24.5
Tanzania	11	63	-30	23.5
Global average				22.0
Tunisia	12	69		21.2
Zimbabwe	13	71		21.0
Africa average				20.5
Cameroon	14	74		20.2
Madagascar	15	76		20.0
Egypt	16	78		19.6
Kenya	17	79	15	19.3
Togo	18	81		18.5

Table (i) : Situation Analysis Needs and Capacity Gaps Assessment of Women Administration in Electoral Management Bodies in the Great Lakes Region

Country	African ranking (39 African countries)	Global ranking (155 countries)	ICGLR Member State change in global ranking between 2016 and 2021	Speaker
Zambia	19	84		18.0
Lesotho	20	91		16.5
Malawi	21	93		16.4
Guinea	22	96		15.7
Niger	23	97		15.5
Cape Verde	24	99		15.2
Algeria	25	100		15.1
Mauritania	26	101		14.7
Eswatini	27	102		14.7
Mauritius	28	105		14.4
Ghana	29	110		13.5
Morocco	30	113		12.6
Gambia	31	125		11.2
Democratic Republic of the Congo	32	130		9.9
Benin	33	131		9.3
Botswana	34	135		8.4
Sierra Leone	35	136		8.3
Côte d'Ivoire	36	139		7.6
Burkina Faso	37	146		6.6
Nigeria	38	149		4.9
Papua New Guinea	39	155		0

Table (ii): Situation Analysis Needs and Capacity Gaps Assessment of Women Administration in Electoral Management Bodies in the Great Lakes Region

Number and Percentage of Women in High-Level Political Institutions, ICGLR Member States, 2021

Member State	Head of State	Percentage of members of cabinet	Percentage of members of Parliament	Speaker
Angola ⁶	0	No data	30	0
Burundi	0	37.5	36.4	0
Central African Republic	0	20.7	8.6	0
Congo	0	21.2	11.3	0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0	17.2	12.8	0
Kenya	0	30.4	21.	0
Rwanda	0	54.6	61.3	1
South Sudan	0	20	27	1
Sudan	0	20	No parliament	No parliament
Tanzania	1	36	37	1
Uganda	0	32	34.9	1
Zambia	0	32.3	11.8	1

Table (iii): Situation Analysis Needs and Capacity Gaps Assessment of Women Administration in Electoral Management Bodies in the Great Lakes Region

⁶ In 2022, Angola elected its first female Vice President and first female Head of Parliament”.

2

Role of the Advisory Board for Women Peace and Security



The ‘Advisory Board of the Women’s Platform for the Peace, Security & Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region’ was established in 2014 to enhance the participation of women in leadership and political decision-making in support of peace-building efforts.

It broadened its mandate and membership in 2019, to include the African Union Network for Conflict Prevention and Mediation (AU FemWise-Africa), ICGLR Women & Youth Fora, regional Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Academia, and changed its name to the ‘Advisory Board for Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in the Great Lakes Region’. Building on the objectives of the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development for 2030 and the AU Agenda 2063, the Advisory Board focuses on empowering women’s organisations and women leaders to actively contribute to the implementation of the PSC Framework and the ICGLR Pact.



2014

Year the Advisory Board of the Women’s Platform for the Peace, Security & Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region was established

2018

Year the ‘Advisory Board increased its political advocacy

2019

Year the ‘Advisory Board broadened its mandate membership

The Advisory Board under the leadership of the UN Special Envoy engages on the following Strands:

1. **Advocacy.** Undertake solidarity missions to raise awareness of the need for women's participation in democratic processes and socio-economic development. Strengthen women's coalitions and support their meaningful participation in all aspects of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions, including promoting the role of CSOs, (women and youth) and regional fora in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding: Through inclusive peace building efforts, broadening constituencies to increase the potential to identify and address the root causes of conflict and meet the needs of those it affects.
2. **Women's participation in electoral and political processes.** Increase women's effective participation in political, electoral and peace processes, including compliance through the introduction of legislation to achieve the minimum quota of 30% women's representation.
3. **Protection and Prevention to address conflict-related sexual violence.** Bring attention to the issues of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and abuse against women, and the need for accountability and measures to address human rights violations. This includes consultations with local women and CSOs around addressing issues relating to transitional justice and reparation, advancing women's livelihoods and property rights.
4. **Programmatic.** Ensuring gender mainstreaming in all projects through fund allocation.

“Strengthen women's coalitions and support their meaningful participation in all aspects of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions...”

3

Voices of Women Peacebuilders from the Great Lakes Region



Insider Mediation for DDR Experience Sharing
Workshop Photo 1 & 2 courtesy of chams Media tv



Irene Esambo Diata,

The Minister in charge of
Disabled and other Vulnerable
People.

"People affected by disability also need to be involved in advocacy missions for their voices to be heard and to give prominence to UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2475 (2019) on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Conflict and to build linkages with SCR 1325 (2000) on WPS. The lack of data, particularly regarding disabled people affected by violence remains a challenge. This often turns them into the 'silent victims of war'."

Speaking during the visit of the regional WPS Advisory Board to Kinshasa.



Thérèse Mujinga

Project manager,

Democratic Republic of
Congo, (DRC)

"Today more than ever the communities need sustainable peace through their inclusion at all levels of peace processes and peacebuilding. No effort should be underestimated because anyone can be affected by the consequences of instability.

Women and girls continue to be vulnerable, subsequently fear and mistrust have become a daily struggle for communities.

We were born during the war and are ageing in war and the concept of peace is only known through reading.

Today we are coming to you as the leaders of the region, to offer our competencies and skills so that together we walk this Journey to find lasting solutions to peace and stability. Let us work together to address the sources of conflict, if we do so, we can achieve a lot. I appeal to you to implement the relevant recommendations on WPS. Everyone has a right to security."

Speaking at the 31st session of the Technical Support Meeting



Rose Kahambu Tuombeane

Good Governance
Coordinator, DYFEGOU

Founding Member of
the Collective of Women
Journalists, CFJ – DRC

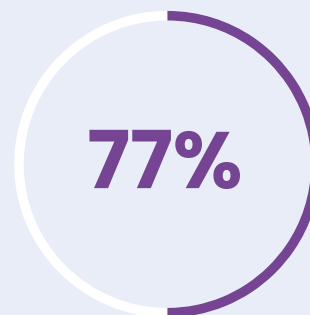
"We should always bear in mind that we are dealing with a protracted situation that has caused thousands of victims. The issue of displaced people should retain our attention. As of May 2022, Ituri province alone has registered 154,450 displaced people, 97,146 are women and 50,619 children according to a survey conducted by the Dynamique des Femmes pour la Bonne Gouvernance.

92% of the children within IDP camps do not attend school and 77% are affected by malnutrition. Girls continue to be disproportionately affected by conflict and gender based violence. Some women among displaced communities have been forcefully involved in armed conflicts. Strategies should be strengthened through the involvement of community representatives, women and youth organisations. Let us agree to build peace based on truth and justice, with the involvement of the People."

Speaking at the 31st session of the Technical Support Meeting



**of the children
within IDP camps do
not attend school**



**of them are affected
by malnutrition**



Liberata Rubumba Buratwa

President, Women's
Community Action
Programme for Integrated
Development - DRC

"As we mark the 10th anniversary, I would first like to commend the efforts made by the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region which has been instrumental in providing training and capacity-building to women as part of the effort to include women in peacebuilding processes. I look forward to greater opportunities to expand the message of peace to women and girls living in rural and remote areas in order to increase awareness and build their capacity to be messengers of peace. My aspiration is to see greater involvement of women in peacebuilding processes and in finding solutions to the root causes of conflict, taking into account the lived realities of women and girls at the grassroots level. We would like to participate in fora that will enable us to exchange experiences and best practices with other women in the region; particularly women who spearheaded conflict resolution in their countries."



**Hon. Dora Christine
Kanabahita Byamukama**
Advocate, Human Rights,

Women Peace and Security;
and Gender Expert President,
(DRC)

"As we mark the 10th Anniversary, I would like to highlight that research points to the fact that women continue to be denied the dividends of the Women's Peace and Security Agenda. This will continue to be the case unless factors which hinder its implementation are addressed. One major obstacle is the inadequacy of monitoring systems and strong bodies to hold governments to account. Research also reveals that ICGLR Member States are not systematically monitoring the progress, achievements and weaknesses in terms of the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Regular Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning utilizing the Barometer will also make it possible to identify and document good practices and implementation gaps such as institutional leadership, political will, and financing at all levels, which when enhanced can contribute to the realization of the WPS Agenda goals. Local support and ownership of the Barometer, which should be secured, provides a critical avenue for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes Region to emphatically infuse a spirit of renewed commitment as it marks its 10th Anniversary".

4

Youth, Peace and Security



Introduction

The global Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) landscape has transformed in remarkable and irreversible ways during the past decade, especially following the adoption of landmark resolutions and decisions by key global, continental and regional organisations, and also by a growing number of countries. These transformations have been prompted by the growing awareness that a growing youth population on the fringes of society, with limited access to subsidised socio-economic and political opportunities, is a direct threat to peace, security and development.

There is a rich- and growing- number of official documents and publications by the UN, AU and many multilateral institutions relevant to YPS-related themes including UNSC Resolutions 2419 (2018) affirming the important role that youth and youth-led CSOs can play in peacebuilding and sustaining peace; UNSC Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security, and 'The Missing Peace: independent progress study on youth and peace and security adopted by the UNSC and General Assembly in 2018. Finally, in March 2020, the UNSG presented the first report on the issue of YPS.

The adoption of the African Youth Charter (AYC) in June 2006 opened a floodgate for several initiatives and activities around youth and YPS issues in Africa, in general, and within the AU, in particular. In 2008, the AU Assembly declared 2009-2018 as the African Youth Decade and endorsed the African Youth Decade Plan of Action to provide a road map for the implementation of the AYC. In 2017, the Assembly again dedicated its annual theme to 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investment in Youth' while making adequate provision for this also in Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063. On several occasions during the past five years, the AU Peace and Security Council has pronounced itself on YPS issues and adopted the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and its accompanying 10-Year Implementation Plan (2020-2029).

It outlined key activities, made projections on targets by 2024 and 2029, and identified lead

entities for different components. Significantly, the Continental Framework identified key priorities (which aligns with AYC and UNSC Resolutions above) in YPS to include:

- Participation.
- Prevention.
- Protection.
- Partnership and coordination.
- Disengagement and reintegration.

Overall, these documents are pivotal to the current assignment because the YPS initiative that the RYF ICGLR is currently implementing can only be better served when it aligns with global and continental norms and frameworks.

Challenges Pertaining to Youth in the Great Lakes Region

The ICGLR firmly acknowledges the critical role of youth in advancing peace and security in the region and recognizes the inextricable link between security and other development-related issues and has taken several laudable efforts in this regard. A major milestone was the establishment of the ICGLR Multifunctional Youth Forum (RMYF) in 2014 and the adoption of the Declaration with 36 Resolutions to address youth unemployment. Others include the 2017 meeting of Ministers on Youth Affairs to facilitate the 2014 Declaration to fight against Youth Unemployment through Infrastructure Development and Investment Promotion in line with the AU Assembly's theme on 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth'. The centrepiece of the RMYF is to avail young men and women in the region the platform to engage and play a meaningful role in all the ICGLR agenda, especially on peace, security and development. The RMYF, with the buy-in of and support from Member States of the ICGLR, is the focal body and bridge between the youth in the region and the ICGLR Secretariat.

In April 2018, the “Accord Establishing the Regional Youth Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes (ICGLR RYF) was adopted which acknowledged that “... the youth play a major role and contribute significantly to the reinforcement of peace, security, stability, poverty eradication, mutual understanding and friendship between African populations, solidarity, fraternity and good relations between States in the Great Lakes Region.”

The Accord provided a veritable entry point to kickstart and sustain the fledgling momentum for YPS in the Great Lakes.

However, it's to be noted that despite its establishment, the ICGLR Multifunctional Youth Forum (RMYF) has suffered from a lack of technical and monetary capacity to mobilize the national forums and their constituencies. As a result, its engagement was random not following strategic directions which as a result was not able to address the critical needs of the youth in the region. The lack of political space to engage in key decision-making processes was also another challenge that the RMYF faced since its establishment.

In general, in most countries in the ICGLR, youth remain in the periphery of governance and decision-making rather than actively engaged and becoming catalysts in nation-building and helping to address issues of climate change, violent extremism, natural resource governance, etc. all of which induce conflict. Given the relatively large population of those under-35 in the region, their under-representation in governance has the potential of diminishing trust, accountability and inclusion.

Youth are also greatly affected by different forms of violence including sexual and gender-based violence, political violence, violence perpetrated by state and non-state institutions/personnel, and land/resource-based violence.

At the same time, they are largely excluded from peace and security reform processes in active and post-conflict societies. In the ICGLR, youth face greater human security challenge which constitutes the root causes of conflict. Lack of access to basic human needs and protection especially for women, PWD and displaced young men and women are the major driver of agitations and conflict.



Major Developments and Achievements

Under the leadership of the ICGLR secretariat and the Regional Multifunctional Youth Forum Executive Committee in partnership with OSESG-GL and other UN agencies, major steps were taken towards the revitalization of the regional youth-led peace-building movements. The participatory capacity-building interventions and the rigorous online consultation processes held with the former Executive Committee and the ICGLR secretariat have placed the foundation

One of the key achievements in 2022 is the Bujumbura Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security in Africa which was adopted on 25 April 2022 by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, with the support of UNDP. This marked a considerable milestone for the continent, particularly for the Great Lakes region. The declaration captures the recommendations of youth-led organisations and young peacebuilders from across the continent regarding their role as positive agents of change that emerged from the continental dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security in Africa, held in Bujumbura Burundi on 23 April 2022, under the auspices of the Government of Burundi. More than 350 young women and men from across Africa participated in the Continental Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security, which created a space for the participants to connect by sharing practices and innovative ideas for the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda, both in Burundi and in Africa.

The key objective of the dialogue was to promote meaningful engagement and active participation of youth in peacebuilding processes and in the formulation of peace and security policy and action plans at the national, regional, and continental levels. The fact that the dialogue was co-facilitated by 4 AU Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAP) and the AU Youth Envoy has provided the youth in the region valuable insights from among the youth leaders which was inspirational for the participants to do more. The dialogue culminated with a declaration asking member States and gatekeepers to engage youth in peacebuilding under the five pillars of UNSCR 2250.

Another key milestone was the capacity-building workshop that was organized by the Office of the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region (OSESG-GL) and UNFPA in partnership with the ICGLR Secretariat and the AU Youth 4Peace.

The workshop was aiming to mobilize young peacebuilders in the Great Lakes Region to explore their potential and assess the bottlenecks facing youth-led peacebuilding initiatives. Key stakeholders such as the EU, AU, OSESG-GL, ICGLR secretariat, the AU Youth Envoy, and UN agencies mainly UNFPA have engaged in conversations with the youth leaders convened from 16 countries. The workshop created opportunities to further promote the role of youth in sustaining peace at the national peace processes and also at the community level, by analysing the systematic and structural barriers, local mechanisms and capacities. It lifted the regional level discussions and promoted an enabling environment at the national level for shifting the discourse and opening up opportunities for youth to effectively participate in peacebuilding processes. It was also used as a forum to consult and brainstorm on the strategic areas for regional youth-led peacebuilding initiatives to go forward. The inputs compiled from this consultation have informed the 5 years strategic plan for the regional multifunctional youth forum.

In reference to key regional commitments and the findings of consecutive consultations with youth leaders and key stakeholders, the ICGLR Secretariat and the RMYF with technical support of UNFPA developed a five years strategic plan that was endorsed and disseminated for the use of the RMYF.

Key stakeholders such as the EU, AU, OSESG-GL, ICGLR secretariat, the AU Youth Envoy, UN agencies mainly UNFPA and UNDP have engaged in conversations with the youth leaders convened from 16 countries.

The Strategic Plan relied on extensive consultations with different categories of stakeholders. The consultations included virtual and on-site meetings with a wide range of youth leaders in the ICGLR and a Technical Working Committee comprising staff of the ICGLR Secretariat, mediation experts, representatives of youth organisations, and consultations with the staff of major UN entities such as OSESG-GL, UNFPA and UNDP with the financial support of European Union.



In particular, the consultation included interactions with participants that attended two major events:

1. Capacity building workshop on youth peace and security to youth-led in the Great Lakes Region, 17-20 October 2022.
2. Regional Youth Forum General Assembly, 1-3 November 2022.

The consultations provided rich insights/data that supported the development of the strategic plan, plan of action and insights into the best pathways for the operationalisation of the RYF Secretariat. The youth leaders had a heated discussion and prioritised four out of nearly 10 strategic areas that were identified in the draft document presented for discussion.

The General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Regional Youth Multifunctional Forum. A General Assembly was held in 2016. Holding a General Assembly has been identified as a priority action to support the functioning of the Forum. As a follow-up to this, the last General Assembly is organized by the Regional Youth Forum, in collaboration with the ICGLR

Secretariat, Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, and the East and Southern Africa Regional Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) from 1-3 November 2022. The overall objective of the General Assembly was to support the effective, efficient and sustainable functioning of the Regional Youth Forum, including its active participation in the ICGLR consultative processes.

Through the newly elected national fora representatives from the 12 member states, the general assembly was able to strengthen and engage the national level of the Forum; considered activities undertaken by the Forum; reviewed and adopted a regional action plan (addressing for example partnership, resource mobilization, monitoring and accountability and secretariat functionalities); and identified capacity building needs that are incorporated in the five years strategic plan. The general assembly culminated with the elections of the executive committee of the fora which followed a democratic process as per the Accord and identified youth leaders delegated from each member state based on criteria adopted by the assembly mainly which considered the age bracket to give chance to emerging youth leaders.



Hon. Ababu Namwamba



Cabinet Secretary, Ministry Of, Youth and Gender Affairs, Sports And Arts For The Republic Of Kenya During The Opening Ceremony Of The International Conference On Great Lakes Region Youth Forum General Assembly Meeting Held At Movenpick Hotel Nairobi,

1st – 4th November 2022.

The fact that the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Youth and General Affairs, Sports and Arts for the Republic of Kenya,, Hon. Ababu Namwamba took the initiative to host the general assembly and his commitment addressed through his remarks was a remarkable spot in the general assembly. Above all, the Minister has pledged to host the secretariat for two years as well as its expenses. This was a huge move from one of the member states that showed their commitment to acknowledge the critical role of youth in regional and countries' overall development and peacebuilding in particular.

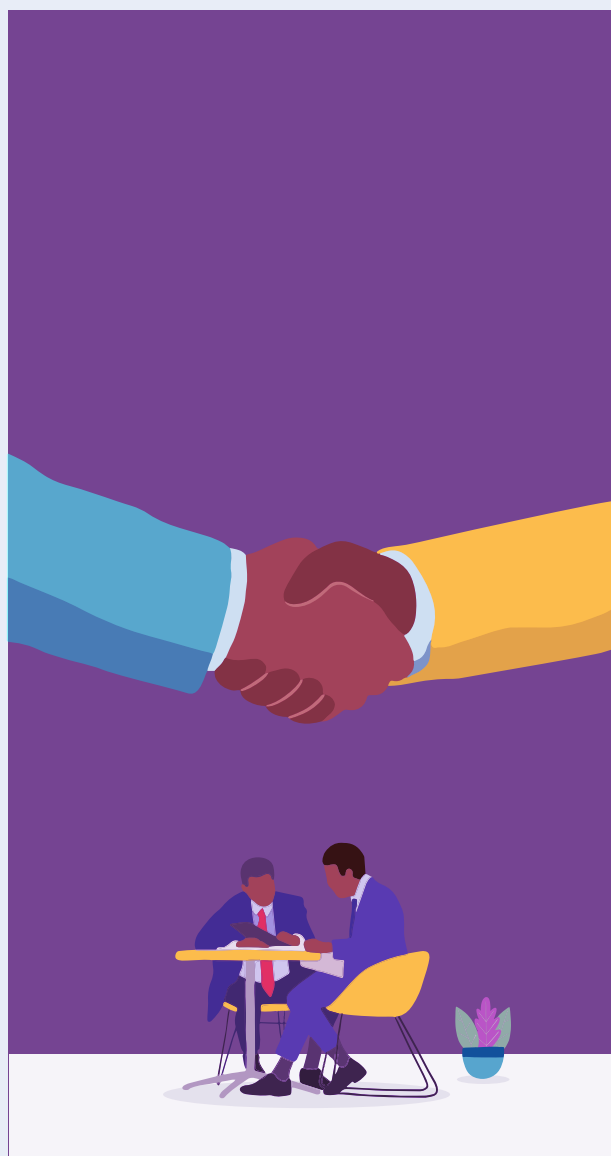
In addition, in consultation with the ICGLR secretariat, the programme managed to facilitate the participation of women and youth leaders in the election monitoring missions of the elections that took place in Kenya and Angola in 2022. This shows the progress towards opening up political platforms to the involvement of women and youth.

While strengthening the regional youth platforms is a critical step, the outcomes of the regional forums confirmed the fact that the same efforts should be exerted to strengthen and mobilize national youth forums through direct support of member states and country-focused stakeholders. With this intention, UNDP and UNFPA embarked on a new initiative that focused on strengthening and working with national actors mainly youth networks to initiate and strengthen initiatives toward developing and implementing national action plans. Accordingly, national dialogues were conducted in DRC, Burundi and Rwanda to inform national-level youth peace and security initiatives.

" The Heads of States and Governments of The Great Lakes Region have always emphasized during their summits the need to have all youth in the region regardless of race, creed or circumstance achieve their full potential. Our mission as a member state hosting the secretariat is to provide practical assistance in this endeavour..."

On 14-15 December 2022, a community and intergenerational dialogue at cross-border areas with young women and men was held in the province of Bujumbura Rurale, commune Mutimbuzi (Gatumba zone). The dialogue gathered 52 youth (including 13 women) and local mediation/conflict prevention/resolution mechanisms. During the two-day dialogue, the participants were informed about the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, and the UN Security Council Resolution 2250. This activity was organized by UNDP and UNFPA, in collaboration with the National Youth Council of Burundi (CNJB) and the youth empowerment and leadership initiative (YELI).

Among the recommendations made by youth include the need for awareness raising of youth on conflict prevention and conflict management, the need for capacity building and education to the culture of peace, mobilizing religious leaders, the dissemination of values, including patriotism, the creation of peace clubs and cultural clubs in secondary schools, the use of radio broadcasts to raise awareness on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the creation of safe spaces and civil society organizations enabling greater youth participation and social cohesion, the training of elected officials of the National Youth Council of Burundi (CNJB) on conflict prevention and peacebuilding to ensure they become ambassadors in their communities, and the use of youth centres to raise awareness of young people on peacebuilding and conflict prevention.



In addition, the following recommendations were made to government counterparts, under the 5 pillars of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda:

1. **Protection:** Increase efforts to prevent and punish any act related to sexual and gender-based violence and promote the policy of zero tolerance and fight against impunity for any criminal act related to sexual violence.
2. **Prevention:** Capacity building for youth to encourage them to make extensive use of ICT, strengthen the culture of entrepreneurship and job creation for young people to prevent them from being manipulated and from participating in conflicts.
3. **Reintegration and disengagement:** Set up counselling structures and reinforce mental health support for youth affected by conflict; organize awareness campaigns on the harmful psychological and physical impact of involvement in the conflict.
4. **Partnership:** expand or decentralize institutions promoting youth participation, set up a coalition of youth associations or initiatives, and promote the Youth, Peace and Security agenda at the community level; Build capacities of youth for social cohesion and the culture of peace.

On 19-20 December 2022, a workshop took place in Bujumbura (Hotel Royal Palace), with the following objectives:

1. Inform as many young people as possible on the theme of youth, peace and security.
2. Develop a methodological draft of a roadmap on youth engagement in peace capitalization in Burundi, that will serve as a basis for the development of the national strategy on youth, peace and security in Burundi.

The workshop was attended by staff members of UNDP and UNFPA in Burundi, the executives of the Ministry of Youth including the Assistant to the Minister and representatives of civil society organizations (CNJB, REJA, YELI) that were involved in the previous activity. The participants elaborated a draft roadmap including the chapters, the activities to be carried out, a timeline covering up to May 2023, key actors with roles and responsibilities and general observations.

The activity was initially a request from the Ministry in charge of Youth. Prior to the workshop, UNDP and UNFPA conducted various working sessions with the Ministry, and with youth representatives.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the process of appropriation and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250, on the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, culminating with the establishment of the National Technical Secretariat on the implementation of UNSCR 2250 in DRC (STN2250), as well as with the adoption of the National Action Plan (NAP) on YPS on 12 August 2022. One key action remained to ensure ownership of the national action plan at the provincial level, by youth organizations, and at the local and community levels, as well as in cross-border areas that are more exposed to the risk of conflicts, such as the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu. Given the security situation at the time of implementation (November 2022), the activities could not take place in North Kivu and were relocated to the province of South Kivu. The following activities were conducted with the facilitation of UNDP and the financial support of UNFPA.

On 23 November 2022, a dialogue with 36 university students (22 males, 14 females) was hosted at Université Catholique de Bukavu, Bugabo Campus. A participatory approach was used for this dialogue. The dialogue was co-moderated by the Bureau des représentants des étudiants de l'UCB and by Youth for Peace- DRC, with the support of UNDP. The dialogue covered challenges related to youth participation in the peacebuilding process in the Great Lakes region. - On 23 November 2022, the community radio programme "Vijana kwa amani" (Youth for Peace in Swahili), was launched with the support of UNDP, at community radio Svein, located in Bukavu, South Kivu. The radio broadcast consisted of a programme of 4 episodes of 45mn each, on the topic of Youth, Peace and Security.

The radio programme was prepared by Youth for Peace DRC, and 2 to 3 young peacebuilders were invited every week until 21 December. It is estimated that the audience for each broadcast reached approximately 20,000 people in the province of South Kivu.

On 24 November 2022, a one-day provincial workshop was organized at Elizabeth Hotel in Bukavu, South Kivu, with 49 representatives of civil society organizations in South Kivu and provincial authorities. The key objective of the provincial workshop was to share the recommendations made by youth during the dialogues with the provincial authorities and to develop concrete actions for the implementation of the NAP on SCR2250 in South Kivu. The provincial workshop was moderated by the Chef de division de la jeunesse du Nord Kivu, with the support of UNDP and Youth for Peace – DRC. At the end of the workshop, proposals were made and submitted to the authorities, with regard to increased participation of young people in peacebuilding.



Kenya

Kenya Coalition on Youth Peace and Security has celebrated virtually the 7th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), on Friday 9 December. This virtual event will be the opportunity to unveil the Kenya Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security. The establishment of the national coalition on YPS builds on the Bujumbura declaration on YPS in Africa (April 2022), “emphasized the need for transparent engagement in partnership and coordination and conducive structures that promote youth partnership”.

The Kenya YPS coalition aims at:

1. Supporting policy and programmatic efforts in the field of youth, peace and security in Kenya.
2. Enabling partnerships between youth, governmental and civil society actors in Kenya.
3. Generating collective knowledge on youth, peace and security.
4. Monitoring progress and measuring the impact of the implementation of UN SCR 2250 in Kenya.
5. Advocating for youth's meaningful and inclusive participation in policy-making in Kenya.

The seventh Anniversary of UNSCR 2250 provided a unique opportunity to unveil the Kenya Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security to build momentum for effective, youth-led implementation of the YPS Agenda in Kenya. With the support of UNDP and other partners, the Coalition organized a 7-day-long social media campaign that culminate on 9 December 2022 on the day of the 2250 Anniversary to celebrate and take stock of the implementation of the YPS Agenda in Kenya. During the 7-day-long social media campaign, youth peacebuilders showcased their work including; stories of change; innovative peacebuilding practices; aspirations for the YPS Agenda in Kenya; and key Advocacy Messages to Global, National and Local Leaders.

The objectives of the event were to unveil the Kenya Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security and Civil Society and create a platform for sustained communication and coordination with key stakeholders that highlighted the efforts by youth peacebuilders in Kenya and shared recommendations for youth-led, effective implementation of the YPS resolutions in Kenya.

Rwanda

On 7-8 December 2022, a two-day youth community dialogue took place in Southern Province, Huye District (act. 2.3). The first day was dedicated to training sessions on peacebuilding and conflict resolution and the dialogue took place on the second day, with the participation of local authorities, discussing challenges and providing recommendations to improve the peace and security of youth in the region. As a result of the dialogue, 39 youth (19 females and 20 males, including 2 Persons with Disabilities), aged 18 to 37, increased their knowledge and understanding on: concepts of peace, non-violence, security, safety; conflict resolution mechanisms; in addition to their understanding of peace and reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda; the importance of UNSC Resolutions 2250, 2535 and 2419 (i.e., components, and how they generate responsibilities on governments); the role of youth in the implementation of UNSCR resolutions; they also learned about the role of the African Union and how it promotes peace and security for the youth in the region.

The youth also participated in practical sessions allowing them to reflect on what their roles and responsibilities could be in advancing and implementing the above-mentioned UN resolutions. The training sessions also allowed the youth to reflect on the current regional situation and its impact on peacebuilding efforts and the role of the youth in building a culture of peace and nonviolence. The youth also put this knowledge into practice during the second day of the dialogue, as they worked in groups to note down challenges affecting the youth in peace and security in Rwanda and drafted actions plans/commitments to advance peace, as well as recommendations addressed to the government and civil society respectively, that were discussed with district officials participating to the dialogue.

As a result, the participating youth have enhanced their capacities and engagement in peacebuilding processes and mechanisms as key agents of peace and social cohesion.

On 12-13 December 2022, a two-day youth community dialogue (act. 2.3) took place in Eastern Province, Nyagatare District, in the same format as the one mentioned above. The first day was dedicated to training sessions on peacebuilding and conflict resolution and the dialogue took place on the second day, with the participation of local authorities, discussing challenges and providing recommendations to improve the peace and security of youth in the region. 38 youths (12 females and 26 males) participated in the dialogue in Nyagatare.

A Glimpse of Youth-Led Initiatives in the Great Lakes Region

With support from Cordaid Global Office and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) International Secretariat, UNOY members in Burundi, DRC and Uganda were able to implement a youth-led research "Youth in the Peripheries" that targets to extend the evidence based on youth contributions to Peace and Security in the borderlands of the GLR precisely Burundi – DRC and Uganda. The findings were gathered by young researchers from 3 UNOY member organisations (one per country): YELI Burundi, Youth Social Advocacy Team in Uganda, and Peacebuilding Team in the DRC. By going beyond the internationally recognised avenues of the implementation of the YPS agenda, such as the participation in decision-making and political processes, this research focused on the creation of formal and informal peacebuilding spaces by young people across the borderlands of the mentioned countries. The borderlands offer a unique perspective for this research as they offer access to social fabrics and understandings of different cross-border contexts not found in traditional or institutional settings.

In addition, the Youth Peace Forum (YPF) is the flagship event of the United Network of young Peacebuilders (UNOY) that gathers young peacebuilders from across the globe. This initiative aims to create a unique space for young peacebuilders to develop peer-to-peer cooperation around conflict transformation, and build concrete and meaningful partnerships for peace. While the forum did not take place in the past few years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2019 Young Peacebuilders' Forum was held in Bogotá (Colombia), gathering over 60 young people, forging 20 formal partnerships among participants, and supporting three forum initiatives with micro-grants, where five media outlets covered the event.



Recommendations for Member States

This Report Would Like to Reiterate the Recommendations of the Bujumbura Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security in Africa

On Protection:

- Emphasized the need for capacity building and more awareness-raising programmes for youth with regard to the instruments and national laws which provide protection to youth, with a view to facilitating youth's engagements in advocating and promoting protection with their respective governments.
- Underscored the need to create forums for youth's interaction on conflict prevention which will promote their involvement in conflict prevention; in this regard, encouraged youth across the continent to establish youth groups focusing on conflict prevention.
- Appealed to the AU Member States and the AU Commission to establish educational programmes in universities or institutions focusing on providing education on prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, in order to empower youth on peace and security matters in the Continent; in this regard, underscored the need for governments to provide youth education scholarships in peace and security matters.
- Governments of AU Member States to establish structures that allow smooth engagement and participation of youth in the national agendas and promote the visions and role of youth.
- Underscored the critical role the private sector plays in supporting youth development projects which empower and protect youth, increasing opportunities for employment as well as sharpening youth's creativity.
- The development of a Youth Peace and Security agenda within the AU, a tool that promotes participation and engagement of youth at the continental level, between and among the regions, has to continue providing platforms of inter and intra-states dialogues among African States.
- Stressed the need for Governments to establish laws that protect youth's development projects such as businesses, ideas and innovations, including copyrights and remunerations for selling out youth's ideas or creativity.
- Encouraged youth to wisely use social media platforms such as searching for opportunities, promoting peace and mobilizing youth participation in national agendas, as well as for innovation of and collaboration on their ideas.

On Prevention:

- Acknowledged that the African continent has developed sufficient tools which facilitate the engagement of youth in the prevention of conflict and called for its effective application and development of awareness programmes for youth on the use of the existing tools.
- Requested the AU Commission to include the participation of youth in the promotion of ratification and signing, as well as the implementation of the AU Youth Charter, in order to provide an opportunity for youth to participate and engage with Member States from the ratification, signing and implementation of the Charter.
- Emphasized how knowledge and information are powerful for the development of youth. In this regard, there was an emphasis on the need for Member States to promote and provide access to knowledge, information and communication for youth, including ensuring the availability of internet access in all communities.



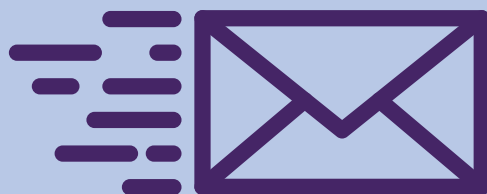
On Partnership and Coordination:

- Underscored the need for more partnerships and coordination to advance the Youth, Peace and Security agenda at community, national, regional, continental and global level particularly among the youth, and in this regard encourages Regional Youth Multifunctional Fora, Youth for Peace (Y4P) and other networks at the different levels as a platform to provide more visibility of the role of youth, engage in experience sharing and experiential learning, as well as increase the impact of youth participation in different sectors/areas.
- Underscored that partnership and coordination enhance socio-economic opportunities, such as employment, entrepreneurship and market for business and emphasized the need for transparent processes on partnerships and protection against exploitation and abuse of the youth.
- Recognized the essential role the governments and their institutions alongside youth and their networks play to advance the development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Youth, Peace and Security; and, encouraged Member States to adopt the AU model of appointing youth ambassadors at the national level, as a means to galvanize youth representation and participation in different sectors of their respective national agenda, as well as coordinating with youth institutions at regional and continental levels.
- Emphasized the need for transparent engagement in partnership and coordination and create conducive structures that promote youth partnership; Disengagement and reintegration.
- Called for rehabilitation of centres for youth who have been affected and traumatized by conflicts and engage them in the reintegration process.
- Highlighted the need for voluntary and professional programmes for youth to be able to develop socially, including the provision of psychosocial support, and to facilitate their engagements in cooperative activities.
- Underscored the importance of the AU and UN involvement in the disengagement and reintegration programmes which require technical expertise.

5

Common Appeal to Regional Heads of State and Governments





Letter to the Regional Heads of States

Your Excellencies,

We, the Women united around the Women, Peace and Security Agenda of our Great Lakes region respectfully take this initiative as we are aware of the potential for conflict between brother countries and their respective populations, thus jeopardizing the stability and sustainable development of the region, as we have often observed in our Great Lakes region.

When you met in Nairobi, on 15 December 2006, you signed the Pact for Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes region, pledging to guarantee lasting peace and security across the entire region, ensuring security at common borders: to promote, maintain and strengthen cooperation in the areas of peace, conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes; to promote interstate cooperation in the area of security to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons; to prevent and fight against transnational organised crime and terrorism.

This was further reinforced through the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Agreement Framework for the DRC and the region agreement on February 24th 2013 with a national and regional commitment to address the root causes of the conflict and so bring an end to the recurring cycle of violence.

Your Excellencies,

As women, mothers and daughters in our region, we call upon you to continue on the path of agreement and cohesion and to do everything possible to put an end to violence in the Great Lakes region.

We, the women of the Great Lakes Region, are strongly committed to working with you to ensure cohesion and peaceful coexistence between our People and to ensure that the long-desired peace and sustainable development finally become a reality in our region.

Please accept, Your Excellencies, the expression of our highest consideration.

June 2022

Importance of the Common Agenda – A Call to Action:



During the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in 2020 member states agreed that our challenges are interconnected, across borders and all other divides. These challenges can only be addressed by an equally interconnected response, through reinvigorated multilateralism and the United Nations at the centre of our efforts. They also pledged to strengthen global governance for the sake of present and coming generations.

That is why Our Common Agenda is, above all, an agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals. In this respect, Our Common Agenda outlined twelve potential areas for promoting peace and preventing conflict (Agenda 3) and Placing women and girls at the centre (Agenda 5).

As quoted by Secretary General UN - Antonio Guterres "Now is the time to renew the social contract between Governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. People need to see results reflected in their daily lives. This must include the active and equal participation of women and girls, without whom no meaningful social contract is possible. It should also include updated governance arrangements to deliver better public goods and usher in a new era of universal social protection, health coverage, education, skills, decent work and housing, as well as universal access to the Internet by 2030 as a basic human right. I invite all countries to conduct inclusive and meaningful national listening consultations so all citizens have a say in envisioning their countries' futures".



DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality

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