



Voices United for Change: A Dynamic Exchange on Advancing Women, Peace, and Security Across Borders



2022
REPORT



Table of CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Background	1
Welcome Remarks	2
Key Note Address	2
Session 1: Engaging Regional Institutions in advancing the Women Peace and Security Agenda: Key opportunities and strategies for advancing the WPS Agenda	4
Session 2: Sharing experiences of implementing WPS at Country level JF partners: Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learned	7
Session 3: Wellness and Wellbeing for development practitioners	10
Session 4: Success stories in implementing the WPS agenda: highlighting initiatives, key interventions and activities	14
Session 5: Strengthening Women's representation and participation in peace processes and post conflict peace building at local level (Local administration and traditional leaders)	21
Session 6: Trends and emerging needs for new security issues to which the WPS framework should be applied	24
Session 7: Experience sharing for partners who have participated in the regional lobby activities on WPS: Learnings and opportunities	29
Session 8: Reflections: Lessons learned, emerging issues and way forward	34
Session 9: Joint lobby and advocacy to support the WPS agenda implementation: (Working groups)	36
Country Lobby and Advocacy Action Plans	36
Conclusion	42



Introduction

Background

A Learning and Networking Exchange for Just Future Partners on Women, Peace and Security was held from 8th to 11th August at Hotel Africana in Kampala, Uganda. **Women's International Peace Centre** (The Peace Centre), in partnership with Cordaid, brought together thirty partners from Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger and South Sudan to share experiences in implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda with a focus on lobbying and advocacy.

The objectives of this exchange programme were to provide linking opportunities and networking for Just Future Civil Society (CSO) partners focused on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and lobbying and advocacy; to provide a forum for knowledge exchange, learning of best practices that can be replicated in their home countries including exposure of participants to other successful WPS initiatives and to develop concrete actions for each country or region as well as internationally for the Just Future Alliance to include in the planning for 2023.

A diverse group of experts, scholars and practitioners in the international peace and security arena made rich presentations on the localization, funding, lobbying, emerging trends and other issues regarding the implementation of the WPS agenda. The CSOs at the frontlines of this work shared their experiences and lessons learned. The wellness and mental strength of frontline workers in often difficult and high risk working environments were also discussed.

The workshop culminated in the country groups developing lobby and advocacy plans based on the insights they had gleaned from the discussions and experience sharing. They are tasked with taking these drafts back to their countries and making concrete action steps that are feasible to implement.

This report is an analytical summary of the presentations and discussions in the nine sessions of the networking and learning exchange.

Welcome Remarks

The welcome remarks were delivered by **Juliet Were, the Deputy Executive Director of the Women's International Peace Centre** and **Heleen van der Beek, the Cordaid Regional Director for East and Southern Africa and Country Director for Uganda.**

Ms. Were provided an overview of the Peace Centre's work and emphasized the importance of strategic partnerships for achieving the objectives of the Just Future consortium. She highlighted the challenges faced in promoting peace and security at the community, national and international levels, but also noted that there are more opportunities for collaboration and synergies particularly at the regional level with the expansion of the East African Community.

Ms. Van der Beek expressed appreciation to the Civil Society partner Organisation who play a crucial role in advocating for the concerns of the most fragile and vulnerable communities especially in amplifying voices of women and girls who are often left out of peace and security discussions. She expressed optimism that the forum would facilitate rich exchanges of experiences and strengthen the link between programme planning and the realities on the ground.

Key Note Address

The main thrust of the key note Address by **Professor Cheryl Hendricks, the Executive Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)** was a call for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to reconsider how they implement the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Beginning by outlining the origins of the WPS agenda and its current institutionalization at the global level. Professor Hendricks noted that the progress made in integrating the agenda into the peace and security structure that were previously dominated by patriarchal attitudes. Many countries are now on the third and fourth generation of National Action Plans. This raises the question why is the translation of this progress so slow? Why do we still seem so far from achieving the WPS agenda?

To illustrate her point, Professor Hendricks highlighted several of areas where there are still deficiencies in implementing the agenda, such as unmet targets for women in peace keeping units and police forces which remain unattained. She also noted an increase in conflicts and associated gender based violence as well as a rise in conservatism, militia conflicts, conflict related to climate change, and rise in militarisation of our societies.

In the face of these challenges, Professor Hendricks decried the inadequacy of the existing conflict management systems which seem rather outdated and called for a transformation of the peace and security systems. The focus should be on the sustainability of the peace process incorporating the political, economic and psychological aspects addressing trauma and promote healing.

Professor Hendricks urged delegates to examine the status quo and consistently work towards sustaining advances in the WPS agenda. In regions like the Democratic Republic of Congo where sustainable peace has not been achieved, WPS actors must determine what additional steps need to be taken. To address the limitation of how progress in measured in our annual reports, there is need to develop more qualitative measures of the work being done. In implementing National Action Plans, CSOs should not wait for government action but should proactively tackle challenges head on and demand accountability and funding. CSOs need to have wider advocacy for the WPS agenda and get everyone to understand why it is important.

"Think creatively and be more innovative. Involve more youth to participate in the WPS agenda," she urged the participants.

Discussion

The Key Note address fired up the audience in the meeting, with many nodding in agreement with Professor Hendricks's points. A participant from the DRC said that those who have the power are the ones making war. Women are intentionally excluded from security discussions because they ask tough questions of those who perpetuate conflict. Another participant questioned why efforts by CSOs to increase representation of marginalized groups had not yielded the expected impact suggesting that these representatives did not have decision making power. It was proposed that CSOs need to find ways to demand for accountability from the women who are already participating in political processes.

Regarding Professor Hendricks's call for more relevant measures of effectiveness, it was suggested that CSOs needs a coherent strategy to evaluate progress of the WPS agenda in institutions and countries. There is need for quality data at the continental level. Can women participating in peace keeping missions compare notes and learn from each other? Can countries with advanced level NAPs assist those still at earlier stages of first and second generation NAP's? Collective strategizing by CSOs across different countries facing potential and experiencing actual conflict is important.

The call for more innovative solutions and a rethinking of the approach to WPS was echoed by those who decried the way things had been done the same way for such a long time and yet the deeper structural issues were not changing. Delegates urged each other to reconsider their approaches think creatively and seek a deeper understanding of why conflict actors are not changing their behaviour.

Several participants express frustration with government institutions lacking knowledge and understanding of UNSCR 1325, including ministries that are mandated to drive its national implementation.

There were calls for more advocacy and information dissemination local and community level was recommended. To this, Professor Hendricks reminded the CSOs of their duty to make everybody in society understand the WPS agenda. They are to blame when ministers, government departments, parliamentarians don't know about it. When it comes to localisation, the processes for popularising the agenda should be no different as that used for mobilising political parties:

use technology, root the agenda in communities. The pressure has to come from CSOs and they should find allies in government.

As some participants cited budget constraints and the lack of prioritization of WPS actions, others suggested that because they have more experience with community level mobilisation, women should be funded to implement the actions at the local level. CSOs should identify where women at the local level can use their experiences to effect change. Professor Hendricks's take on this was that while it is the duty of everyone to promote peace, at this point of time, women should be at the forefront. Budget constraints will always be there, and our countries have competing interests. There is need to find ways of integrating the WPS agenda into government department budgets, instead of having a separate budgeting process, and ensuring accountability for the funds.

Professor Hendricks's closing advice was to encourage CSOs to be proactive and utilise their capacity to develop M&E tools that are more appropriate for measuring the impact of their work. Getting governments to be more active in WPS agenda implementation will need robust advocacy, information sharing and a bold approach. CSOs must speak up! She reminded the participants of the existence of quite a number of collaborative platforms. These must be rebuilt, strengthened, used to share experiences and come up with concrete frameworks of action. She again urged the group stop doing the same things over again and expect any impact.

"Rethink the structures you are working with, think through what needs to change, be clear about what you want then figure out how to achieve it. What are the markers for peace, what does peace look like?" Professor Hendricks concluded.

Rethink the structures you are working with, think through what needs to change, be clear about what you want then figure out how to achieve it.

Professor Cheryl Hendricks

Session 1

Engaging Regional Institutions in advancing the Women Peace and Security Agenda: Key opportunities and strategies for advancing the WPS Agenda



Chaired by
Juliet Were,
the Deputy
Executive Director
of the WIPC

This session featured two panellists: **Canon Joyce Nima of FemWise-Africa** and **Rabab Baldo** the **Senior Gender Advisor for Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa.**



FemWise-Africa is the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. Canon Nima described the genesis of FemWise and its role in the implementation of regional commitments on the inclusion of women in WPS in Africa. As an African Union body, FemWise's mandate is to institutionalise inclusion of women in peace and mediation processes, build the capacity of professional women mediators at all levels, join panels, and facilitate the deployment of women-only mediators in cases where it is called for. It collaborates with networks in the other regions of the world, especially South to South networks.

Because FemWise is part of the AU architecture and peace structure, its chapters are not NGOs. This means that they cannot raise funds, a challenge that hampers their effectiveness. To get around this, they decided to register as a national forum which is registered separately, can raise resources and work at the pace of civil society. This innovative approach allowed them to think outside the box without breaking the law. Canon Nima mentioned the achievements of FemWise on the national, regional and global stage and the structures it has been able to put in place. Noting that in Uganda, women are spearheading the establishment of a national peace policy she asked participants how familiar they are with its work and consider how they can support its institutionalisation in their countries.



Rabab Baldo informed participants that IGAD is rolling out a new five-year gender strategy from 2021 and working with its eight member states to develop NAPs for UNSCR 1325. She outlined the opportunities for advancing the WPS agenda in the region; women represent almost 50% of mediators; IGAD has a mediation support unit mandated to build the capacity of member states. These efforts have produced significant impact, with the meaningful participation of female standby mediators in addressing communal violence and post peace agreement mediation processes.

Despite these advancements, Ms. Baldo highlighted several challenges, including the limited engagement of women with IGAD policy organs, insufficient regional solidarity among women compared to other regions; varying degrees of engagement among women mediators and inadequate stakeholders involvement hindering engagement, follow up and accountability.



Discussion

These panel presentations elicited several questions on how the two bodies operate, what their impact is on the ground and how CSOs can get their issues heard at the regional and continental level.

Participants from the DRC wondered how their membership of the African Union benefits them when they do not see an AU organ like FemWise helping them to deal with the rape crisis in the East, and bringing the neighbouring countries to account for their role in fermenting insecurity. One of the DRC participants was intrigued by the concept of Wise Women, noting that in their country, they have similar groups but they are usually comprised of men only and it is not clear if they have received training on mediation. CSOs have been advocating for groups of wise women to be involved in mediating inter-tribal conflicts.

The participants from West Africa questioned if organizations like FEMWISE consider the new types of conflict in their region and the geographical dynamics involved. They felt that the meeting organisers should have included perspectives from West Africa where the rise of extremist violence needs deep analysis and innovative strategies. To this concern, The Peace Centre clarified that they had invited a representative from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to participate in the discussion but they had unfortunately passed away and a replacement had not been nominated. Canon Nima also clarified that ECOWAS had actually been involved in the establishment of FemWise and there are women from Mali and Niger who have been trained in mediation. Likewise, she urged the CSOs from all the countries represented to get in touch with the FemWise trained mediators whose contacts she would share. This was seconded by Ms. Baldo who as a FemWise member herself had helped to set up chapters of the body in various countries. She would share the database of trained women.

There was a concern about working with women in decision making positions who are sometimes limited by their political party mandates, the risk of monitoring mechanisms set up by women being perceived as only women's issues rather than community concerns.

In the interest of experience sharing, participants urged for bringing together mediators from SADC, ECOWAS, IGAD, EAC. Some CSOs were concerned that when events are organized by AU, the government ministry is in charge of nominating participants and often CSO representatives get very few places on the national delegations. Another challenge was that even peace missions by global and regional organizations are hampered by their mandates which undermines the effectiveness of missions which are just observers but cannot act when communities face violent conflict.

Nikki de Zwaan the Cordaid expert on security and justice acknowledged that what regional or international actors can do is often limited, while their mandates may seem amazing they often have small offices. To work around this, CSOs should identify which actors to work with, identify allies, and call out what is not being done well. To move forward, they need find ways to work with the peace and security actors. There are indeed many initiatives, it is up to the CSOs to make a decision who to work with because they are the experts.

In conclusion, Canon Nima's concluding advised CSO's to leverage on infrastructure FemWise to advocate from within government structures, ensuring that grassroots women's voice are heard at the AU through the CSO representation. She shared the experience of Ugandan CSOs lobbying to become part of the national steering committee on small arms, and joining conflict early warning peace committees. They then gained an understanding of how government works, diplomatic approaches for lobbying, and how to influence policy making processes.

CSOs need to gain an understanding of how government works, diplomatic approaches for lobbying, and how to influence policy

Canon Joyce Nima



Session

2

Sharing experiences of implementing WPS at Country level JF partners: Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Chaired by
Sarah Abeja,
WIPC Country
Coordinator for
South Sudan.

The session featured presentations from the country teams of Burundi, DRC, Mali, Niger and South Sudan who were forthright about the challenges of implementing the WPS agenda but also shared important lessons and areas where progress had been made. These presentations included recommended strategies for moving forward and ideas for the necessary support to achieve breakthroughs.



The achievements varied among the counties. In Mali, gender has been integrated into the mechanism for the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR) had received a significant number of statements tendered by women. In South Sudan, even though the peace accords not ending the conflict, women are actively engaged in local peace processes. In the DRC, efforts were being made to update the National Justice Reform Plan, which includes legal clinics for women's access to justice. There is also an ongoing process to establish a compensation fund for victims of mass crimes and sexual violence related to conflicts with some provinces setting up provincial steering committees for UNSCR 1325.

The most cited issue by the country groups was the challenge with implementation of the National Action Plans (NAP) due to resource constraints, lack of coordination between stakeholders, and inadequate commitment by the responsible government agencies. For example in DRC, the lack of government funding means that the first and second generation NAP have not been implemented. Additionally, data is not regularly updated and the government appropriates that collected by civil society organizations. There is weak technical and financial support for alternative mechanisms for conflict resolution, and transitional Justice. The perpetrators of violence are rarely prosecuted.



The presentation of lessons learned by the country teams were informed by their contexts and the challenges they have faced in working on WPS initiatives. Burundi emphasized the need to ensure that advocacy is done both upstream and downstream, with identification of allies and lobbying at the national level. They have embarked on extensive training and coaching of women and young leaders to push for inclusive participation. A national advocacy plan has been developed with clearly identified objectives and specific messages, and this has been followed by the development of 41 municipal advocacy plans. In South Sudan, CSOs have learned the importance of engaging with the military justice system, so that when the women report sexual offences, they can lobby top army commanders in the pursuit of justice.

Discussion

Overall the session provided valuable insights into the progress and challenges of implementing the WPS agenda in various countries. Participants were eager to learn more about the ideas that their colleagues had come up with to solve the often intractable challenges they faced. A participant from DRC noted that lessons could be learned from how the Mali team was dealing with the problem of jihadists and the influence of global powers was impacting the women in rural areas. Perhaps the CSOs in DRC and South Sudan could draw lessons to help their women caught up in the endless conflicts fuelled by national and transnational fights for power and economic exploitation.

The Mali team was frank about there being no easy solutions for a rapidly evolving and complex situation. With the majority of the population living in rural areas, women have been especially hard hit by the disruption to economic activity. Because it is CSOs that used to provide access to most social services in the rural areas, they have had to adjust their approaches to programming. For

example, they send mobile money to help women start up businesses where they have relocated. They integrate security issues in their programme planning, and find ways to build the resilience of women who now take on roles that they did not have before.

With the talk of International Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in Mali, attention turned to the situation in South Sudan with FemWise's Canon Nima noting that she had not been surprised when conflict arose between locals and refugee communities in Adjumani. The country had gotten independence without resolving the conflicts between communities. CSOs were urged to empower displaced, refugee women to participate and influence peace talks and exert their influence to stop tribal conflict.

Many participants raised the issue of conflict being caused by fights over money and natural resources, yet at the community level, women were concerned about access to social services and markets. The Burundi approach of bringing together and

empowering grassroots women to discuss and lobby over the issues that affect them was lauded as the way to go. In South Sudan, it was noted that many times peace processes ended up as negotiations for control of money and resources, protection of cartel business and looting. When the parties disagreed on how to share these, there was more conflict. It is urgent that CSOs are at the forefront to issues rather than reacting to events, showing the communities the linkage between local interests and national interests. They can develop a cohort of women mediators with diverse ethnic backgrounds that interact with each other to push for common interests.

CSOs have a role in mobilizing the community to hold politicians accountable by asking them to first address why the previous peace efforts have failed and use these lessons to mitigate against future conflict. Just like religious leaders in the region can be lobbied to confront the warring parties, CSOs too can form a strong network to put pressure on each other's countries to engage in sustainable peace building.

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The majority of voters are usually women and yet they are not adequately represented at decision making levels. Only 8% of village heads are women and yet it is at this level that community change is most effective.

BURUNDI

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Many times, peace processes focus on division of resources amongst warring parties. When they disagree they create more conflict. Citizens need to be empowered to link local interests to what is happening at the national level.

SUDAN

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Partnership between the State and CSOs make challenges easier to overcome. CSOs are able to reach far flung areas of the country. They can also document the important roles of women in local conflict resolution. Their participation is rarely highlighted.

MALI



Session

3

Wellness and Wellbeing for development practitioners



Chaired by
Sharon Eryenyu,
the Peace Centre's
Communications
Officer

The session featured the facilitators from **Resolve and Impact Hub**, a company that works with organizations to build high performing cultures with wellbeing at their core. They are a team of psychotherapists and coaches, to support mental health and wellbeing in organizations, so that teams can serve from a place of fulfilment and satisfaction.



The presentation by **Sam Kirya, a Counselling Psychologist and Director of Mental Health Services** and **Patricia A. Murumba, a Life coach and Counsellor** focused on the mental health of those who bring healing to other people. A lot of healers are wounded and yet have to go out and help others to deal with their own challenges. Stigma about sexual abuse has left many victims with lingering trauma that affects their mental health. Some of the people who do mental health work are battling their own wounds which they have told no one about. Also, there are some people who are predisposed to mental illness or have a history of family mental health challenges. Some people have better resilience and coping skills when faced with the challenges of life. Many times, cultural and religious influences prevent people from seeking help.

In direct relation to the audience at the meeting, the Counsellors noted that many organizations send people to work in environments that trigger their trauma, vicarious trauma, and it is important to ensure that their mental health is cared for. Some environments lack sanitation, decent housing, communication, health care and some employees' relationships suffer from living away from their partners and other support systems.



How can organizations enhance the mental health of their workers in such circumstances? There is need to come up with strategies to help them cope with these challenges and the stress they cause. It is common to find workers helping vulnerable communities showing signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from what they have been exposed to in their field of work.

The counsellors called on participants to seek mental health help when they face challenges. If they do not, they will start to suffer from physical ailments linked to stress. As workers in the helping professions, they need to be mindful and be sensitive, and accept what they cannot control. If we are sensitive to our co-workers emotional state we will be able to support them to perform better. When necessary recommend colleagues to seek help. Managers should be cognizant of the traumatic and challenging environments that their workers go through and create support mechanisms for them.





Discussion

The participants' were unanimously in agreement with the Counselling team about the mental health challenges caused by their work. The discussion of how women are held up to unrealistic and overwhelming expectations in the workplace, at home and in communities especially resonated with many of the female participants. The described personal experiences of physical and mental burnout they had suffered in a bid to prove their worth at work while taking care of family responsibilities.

The participants cited several ways in which the mental health and wellbeing of NGO and CSO workers tended to be neglected. One from DRC said that NGO recruitment adverts usually called for applicants who are able to work under stress and pressure. He thought his was a dangerous practice as some employers abused this and pushed workers too far. Others chimed in saying how it was hard to be granted leave from work because of constant emergencies. This was often due to understaffing and yet project timelines were tight. Sometimes the extreme pressure came from the toll of serving women in communities undergoing a lot of hardship.

Several strategies were suggested by the participants and the facilitators to support the mental health and

wellbeing of CSO and NGO workers. An example of a good practice was given by a participant whose employer had realised the mental health toll of caring for traumatised communities and made it a policy for every staff returning from field work to undergo therapy before they can go to their homes. It was suggested that NGOs can include this in their programming.

It was also recommended that leaders create relationships with the workers, which will lead to more emotionally intelligent decision making that results in the wellbeing of the staff. For the staff, they are encouraged to be authentic with their feelings and not play to the gallery at the cost of their health. Begin with your sphere of influence and change attitudes to wellness. Even when serving others, acknowledge your humanity without getting overwhelmed, practice regulation.

Some participants suggested that they be equipped with ways of applying mass therapy so they can help their communities. Others called for the adoption healing justice and culturally affirming healing practices. For example in South Sudan, CSOs had come up with healing circles where women activists come together to hold space for each other. Communities have age old healing practices; CSOs need to see how to adopt them in their work.

When writing grant proposals, find a way to incorporate healing justice and also include collective care for the team; include this in the log frame. Especially where there are opportunities for unrestricted funding, organizations can come up with solutions that make sense for the community they serve.

The session concluded with participants being taken through a tool for living a balanced life, the "Wheel of Life" with which they can create goals and actions in different categories of personal development. The Peace Centre also gave participants a copy of their publication on "Healing Through Rituals: A Guide for Sustaining Wellbeing and Activism." Developed in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the guide focuses on the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and relational or intimate wellbeing both at the individual and organizational levels.

Managers, create relationships with your staff, which will lead to more emotionally intelligent decision making that results in the wellbeing of the staff.

Communities have age old healing practices; CSOs need to see how to adopt them in their work.

Every staff returning from field work is required to undergo therapy before they can go to their homes.

When writing grant proposals, find a way to incorporate healing justice and also include collective care for the team; include this in the log frame.



Session 4

Success stories in implementing the WPS agenda: Highlighting initiatives, key interventions and activities



Chaired by
Kola Togo,
from Cordaid Mali

Chaired by **Kola Togo, from Cordaid Mali**, the panel was composed of **Cecilia Lazara from the Global Network for Women Peace builders (GNWP)**, **Claire Hawkins, a WPS Specialist at UN Women, Uganda**, **Martha Tukahirwa, a Gender Expert at Prospera International Network of Women's Funds**, and **Tatiana Mukanire from the Mukwege Foundation / SEMA Network**.



According to **Cecilia Lazara**, localisation is a critical instrument for institutionalizing WPS on the ground even where there are no NAPs. She informed the delegates that the Global Network for Women Peace builders (GNWP) localization strategy has been tested and proven in 18 countries including the many milestones achieved in Uganda, one of them being police reporting of GBV. Localisation has brought local women's voices to global spaces, which enables them to inform and influence policy and get support for their initiatives. They also end up contributing to shaping global norms and standards. Noting the importance of exchanges in promoting the sharing of experiences and lessons learned, Ms. Lazara pointed to the Young Women Leaders for Peace network which has members in 80 countries.

Even when local women are usually first responders in emergencies they are not included in decision making regarding humanitarian responses. WPS is an instrument for promoting feminist, localized humanitarian action and crisis response. Ms. Lazara called for synergy between the intersecting initiatives responding to humanitarian crises and the establishment of global mechanisms for coordination of WPS implementation, like the Cooperation framework between Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict.



Claire Hawkins' presentation was focused on the strategies that UN Women had used to achieve success in the implementation of the NAP in Uganda. Uganda has implemented its NAP since 2008, the second country in Africa to do so but paused for a few years to evaluate and plan the way forward for more effectiveness. The third NAP in 2018/19 drew lessons from the evaluation, identified several challenges, especially the lack of involvement of key ministries and stakeholders in the implementation. The subsequent NAP was therefore based on a participatory approach, with key actors involved in the writing and implementation. In 2021 the third NAP was launched, and it was heralded as a success story all over the world, with other countries using it as a blueprint for theirs.

Ms. Hawkins shared the following as key strategies for success of the NAP process in Uganda:

- 1.** Establishment of a coordination mechanism for the NAP: There was a Secretariat with a team in Ministry of Gender; a National Technical Committee comprising of relevant government ministries, agencies like that of Defence, Police, Electoral commission, donors, media, CSOs. Within the technical committee there are two groups: CSOs and Monitoring and Evaluation. This arrangement was intended to ensure ownership and sustained engagement based on established mechanisms. Resourcing of the coordination mechanism ensures its sustainability.
- 2.** Development of operational plans by ministries, departments and agencies: For example, the Ministry of Defence adopts the NAP and develops an operational plan pertaining to that sector. Eight other agencies have developed and budgeted operational plans and some have secured funding from their operational budgets. The monitoring is linked to the national plan which makes reporting smooth. Key roles are well defined.
- 3.** Localization: since the NAP has been adopted, 12 local action plans have been launched in 12 districts which is one of the key strategies for the NAP. There is commitment from donors to support another 15 local action plans. Districts have also allocated 50% funds for the plans, which shows what a priority they are.
- 4.** Having a costed plan: the NAP has a very detailed budget of USD 25 million and is clear about which funds are to be mobilised from donors, local partners and from the national budget. Coordination is through the national steering committee which also assigns where non-earmarked funding is spent and identifies funding priorities and gaps. Analysis of the funding shows 70% achievement of funding. However most of it is earmarked and UN women is lobbying for more funding to fill the resource gaps.
- 5.** Communications and Advocacy Plan: Before, there was limited knowledge about the NAPs. It is critical to create awareness of its impact. This time, a popularised version of the NAP has been created by the Coalition for Action on 1325, and it depicts the key themes in pictures. This has been used as a resource tool for wide scale national and regional dissemination.
- 6.** Success in identifying emerging issues through the lifetime of the NAP: These include climate change, insecurity, violent extremism, refugee influx and conflicts with locals, epidemics. The NAP was able to quickly adapt to the issue of the pandemic and how it was affecting security of women and girls. The ability to make dynamic responses to critical emerging issues is a key aspect of the NAP, and it includes the provision for a midterm evaluation to continue to assess these types of issues in Uganda.

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The NAP was able to quickly adapt to the issue of the pandemic and how it was affecting security of women and girls. The ability to make dynamic responses to critical emerging issues is a key aspect of the NAP

Claire Hawkins

Martha Tukahirwa introduced her presentation on success stories around the region by affirming that Africa has been the vanguard for normative developments in WPS. Local initiatives are what have taken us to the next level. Local groups are able to look at peace building through an intersectional approach and take into consideration the diverse factors that affect WPS.

1.

Strengthening local sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) networks: first responder networks - doctors, nurses, paralegals, and counsellors - all needed to combat SGBV at the local level. Some countries have refused to recognise rape as a weapon of war. Training of Family Protection Units has increased the number of reported cases. Formation of legal aid clinics, manned by paralegals who have knowledge of local culture and context and are able to create safe spaces.

2.

Constructing inter-communal peace collective initiatives: For example in Hargesia, Somaliland, women street vendors experienced a lot of crime; the peace collectives addressed these cases. Some of the collectives have influenced regional and global level policy because of documentation and knowledge sharing.

3.

The Mabanga Peace Accord: Between elders of three communities, Babukusu, Iteso and Sabaot in the Mt Elgon region. This was a culmination of three year journey of negotiations to resolve a conflict of many years. It involved several community dialogues, church leaders, youth, media, and peace NGOs. However, women were not included at the negotiation table so they organized themselves and drew up an addendum to the agreement that included women's issues.

4.

Collective of Women Journalists in DRC: These came together to document violations in all forms, identifying the perpetrators, the impact of violations, etc. This is information that can be used by future tribunals. They are still documenting violations, even though there is a challenge with storing the information securely.

5.

The Sixth Clan: In Somalia there are five main male dominated clans. Somali women have created a sixth clan which has been responsible for many achievements in the women's movement e.g. drafting of the Sexual Offences bill.

6.

Campaigning in Abyei, Misseriya and Dinka: a union of women found interesting and creative ways to advocate for peace building in communities including open space rallies that use political campaigning tools. The union has women from all walks and classes. Called the "No for War, Yes for Peace" the campaign has been running with the support UN Women in Abyei, in collaboration with local leaders.

” It is important to document the success stories to help others learn. There is need to ensure there is wide access to the information by translating the stories

Martha Tukahirwa

Ms. Tukahirwa concluded her presentation by advocating for politicised strategies to promote the WPS agenda and support women at the grassroots to push for this political space. It is important to document the success stories to help others learn and ensure there is access to the information e.g. through translation.

Tatiana Mukanire's presentation had two aspects: she talked about the work of the SEMA Network of which she is a founding member, and about her work with the Mukwege Foundation. The SEMA network was created in 2017 with the goal of ending wartime violence. It is a Global Network of Victims and Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence and brings survivors of sexual violence together. The Mukwege Foundation connects survivors worldwide and supports national survivor networks in several countries.

Ms. Mukanire is the national coordinator of the survivor network in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The National Movement for War Violence Survivors has 5,000 members, including some men, and works in seven provinces that are most affected by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). A member is one who has had an experience of sexual violence and wants to join the fight against it. They have a 25 staff coordination office, and survivor women who work as advisors. They create space for survivors to join the push against violence and participate in peace building.



They train their members in advocacy and mobilisation and equip them with communication and media skills so that they can ably articulate their issues. They are also given security training as the country still grapples with violent conflict. The network carries out family visits and mediation in communities where survivors have been rejected and stigmatised.

The network carries out sensitisation about sexual violation in various settings including churches, schools, village saving groups, mining camps. In communities they create spaces for group psychotherapy, where they share challenges and release stress. Even though their planned one-stop centre for SGBV has not taken off, they are working with what they have. Being sensitive to the needs of victims takes into consideration of where to meet them; in offices or from their own homes. The victim has a family which is also traumatized and sometimes family therapy is required. This can include therapeutic music and dance.



The network also works on issues of justice and reparations with advocacy at the international level, e.g. they contributed to the peer review of DRC in New York and have presented at international forums. At the national level, this advocacy is not easy, and can be quite dangerous, but they have managed to reach the President's office, with the First Lady's office even organising a conference on conflict related SGBV.

According to Ms. Mukanire, the strategies they use include advocacy and presentation of petitions, with seven petitions presented directly to the public, demanding for reparations and not just monetary but also psychological help and justice. They participate in public functions where victims of rape demonstrate in the streets. They publish their stories and speak out whenever they can get an audience. The survivors' network also participate in court processes and get the victims of mass rape like those in prison get their stories heard.

The tools the network uses for sensitisation include brochures with demands for justice, books of testimonies with the stories of survivors, the SEMA film in French, English Lingala and Swahili, a Healing film acted by 60 survivors and some of their children. They also organise radio shows and take advantage of the internet to participate in a virtual network. Their advocacy work includes membership on the committee for reparations of victims by government. They are also active in Medicine du Monde committees to report rape cases and are members of the Strategic Alliance on GBV. Because they are not an NGO, the

network partners with other organizations to fund their activities, relying on their values of credibility and integrity to work as a team and represent all the victims of sexual violence.

The main challenges this network of survivors is facing includes their limited funding which does not allow them to help as much as they would like to. Their members are also face the risk of retaliation from those they have identified as perpetrators of sexual violence, who are usually powerful people. Their advocacy can also cause trouble for them in their communities. The psychological stress and trauma from working with fellow victims is

"At the national level, this advocacy is not easy, and can be quite dangerous, but we have managed to reach the President's office, with the First Lady's office even organising a conference on conflict related SGBV."

Tatiana Mukanire

also a concern. It is painful when their claims for reparations are not successful. At the end of the day, though, they are determined to continue with their mission of "changing pain into power."



Discussion

The panellists' presentation elicited a variety of responses, some were queries for clarification and more information, while others shared their own country experiences of the WPS agenda. There were calls to re-examine the status quo as per the keynote speech's premise, and also admiration of the courage of those working on behalf of victims of war.

In Mali, survivors of sexual violence are given shelter in Maisons des Femmes (Women's Houses) where they receive counselling and holistic support. CSOs partner with the state to cover short falls in funding. They too work with schools, churches, mosques, to sensitise communities about SBGV, and make them aware of the availability of counselling for victims. The psychosocial support includes artistic expression which has been found to be quite helpful.

The South Sudan participants were frank about the risk of taking the approach of the SEMA Network towards reparations and perpetrators; it would get them shot. They however resolved to adapt the approach to support for survivors; currently there are no structures in place and CSO workers sometimes end up sheltering them in their own homes.

In the cases of mass crimes and sexual violence, many times the State covers up these incidences, or there are mass graves which make it hard to identify the victims. It was suggested that governments should not only stop at giving money as reparations but cater for children

who have lost parents, or people who have been maimed. Victims need support to escape from the places where they were violated.

With regards to the whole concept of National Action Plans, a question was posed about NAPs being primarily the responsibility of governments yet it is usually them that are involved in violating women rights and human rights in general. Under such circumstances, should CSOs work with governments to pursue the WPS agenda? What are the alternatives? Should the role of NAPs be a platform to bring together existing initiatives rather than creating a whole new structure which sometimes causes the diversion of funds from already existing work on WPS?

South Sudan shared their experience with the second NAP which floundered under a lot of challenges. Government had taken over its implementation from CSOs but they failed to fund it, and have now returned to civil society. The CSOs are taking a bottom approach and creating awareness of the NAP at the grassroots level.

With regards to refugee women, there was a concern that refugees and internally displace persons (IDPs) are sometimes not involved in activities/ networks of survivors. Policy is usually focused on those in-country and not those who have fled the country. While the Peace Centre has always included refugees in peace building activities, it was wondered whether NAPs have provision for refugees and

IDPs, and how to support their daily lives. Ms. Mukanire's feedback was that SEMA Network has members in South Sudan but many are refugees in other countries. The network is following up on issues of violence in refugee camps, despite challenges of lack of support from some of the camp administrators. Ms. Hawkins added that the Ugandan NAP has an outcome on women refugees and CSOs are a good entry point to ensure that they are integrated in the NAP. PWDs have been included in the planning and are also part of the coordination structure.

On localisation of the NAPs, participants saw this as an opportunity for the grassroots CSOs to draw plans with local leaders and evaluate their progress. Ms. Hawkins explained that in Uganda's case, at first civil society had been heavily involved in the implementation but not in the planning. The CSOs lobbied the government and other actors and provided evidence that supported their inclusion. CSOs also have a powerful role in evaluating the implementation of NAPs at all levels. Even as there are different contexts in participants' countries, CSOs can still work with districts to develop local action plans even if they are not involved at the national level.

Funding for Uganda's NAP is coordinated by UN Women and comes from Norway and other development partners, from the government of Uganda and the private sector as well. There are also plans to approach other African countries for funding.



Session

5

Strengthening Women's representation and participation in peace processes and post conflict peace building at local level (Local administration and traditional leaders)

Chaired by **Gasper Amule**, the Just Future representative from South Sudan and a member of the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS)

Gasper Amule, the Just Future representative from South Sudan and a member of the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS) chaired this session which had two panellists from South Africa; **Thenjiwe Tshabalala**, a founding member of the Dorcas Page Foundation and **Thokozile Nkgadima** a Programme Officer with ACCORD, as well as **Diana Oroma**, a Project Officer with The Peace Centre.

Thokozile Nkgadima described ACCORD's role in supporting women's leadership all over Africa adding that the organization was a key facilitator in the setup of FemWise. Working on WPS has allowed ACCORD to look at the complex nexus between gender and conflict. When South Africa recently experienced violent social unrest, leading to loss of life and economic losses, it was a manifestation of inequality and unemployment. The poor and the most vulnerable found themselves caught up in big men fights. The floods in KwaZulu-Natal exacerbated the situation. In all this, women acted as frontline responders, making calls to end the looting and violence. To reinforce the role of young women and women in general in WPS at local level, ACCORD provides support to CSOs on early warning mechanisms, training on leadership and accountability, how to apply for funding and how to implement interventions.

Thenjiwe Tshabalala's presentation focused on how the Dorcas Page Foundation is working to support the empowerment of young girls and women in local communities in South Africa. As a community based organization, they have used different strategies to build the capacity of grassroots women in leadership, peace building and understanding issues of conflict. Based on analysis of the root causes of conflict, they decided to work on the mind set of women at local level, ensure they understand the role they need to play in their communities and facilitate their participation in community dialogue. The Foundation's work also includes the empowerment of women to advocate for better service delivery, engage in entrepreneurship, and improve public health.

"Based on analysis of the root causes of conflict, they decided to work on the mind set of women at local level, ensure they understand the role they need to play in their communities and facilitate their participation in community dialogue."

Thenjiwe Tshabalala



The Foundation has initiatives to groom young girls for leadership. This training is based on values and behaviour change as a means of reducing community conflict. The community policing forums report that there has been an improvement in behaviour among the girls. Ms. Tshabalala attributed the success of these initiatives to the Foundation's collaboration with other CSOs and government institutions like the department of Justice, as well as ACCORD's capacity building for peace building at local level.

Diana Oromo's presentation described in detail how the WIPC has created a framework for strengthening peace building by facilitating linkages from the community level, to the districts level and then to the national level. From a status quo which excluded women from formal and informal peace building structures, there is now women representation at all the levels. Issues that cannot be addressed at one level are tabled to the next level.

"The Peace Centre Is equipping women in local communities to participate more and even take leadership in peace processes by training them on leadership, peace building and conflict transformation."

diana oroma

At community level the Peace Centre established and strengthened peace mediators' networks who are frontline peace builders at the local level. They established and strengthened District Peace Committees that coordinate peace initiatives at the district level. The Peace Centre launched the National level steering committee that coordinates peace initiatives in the country. Ms. Oromo described the role of the different committees at each level, giving examples of their work in the Karamoja region which suffers from cattle rustling climate related conflict, food insecurity, as well as the West Nile regional districts of Yumbe and Adjumani, which experiences conflict between refugees and host communities.



The results of these efforts include: committees that are more inclusive of women's issues, and a less militarised approach to peace building rather than a singular focus on security issues; women representation is up from 1% to 20%; there is more intra-district dialogue to resolve conflict between communities over land, cattle rustling, water sources, grazing land; there is more inter-district dialogue to address cattle rustling, border conflicts between districts; district peace committees are more proactive about resolving conflicts among refugee and hosts communities, there is more peaceful coexistence and cost sharing. The Peace Centre is equipping women in local communities to participate more and even take leadership in peace processes by training them on leadership, peace building and conflict transformation. They are equipped with skills on mediation, negotiation, monitoring, analysis, wellness, and safety and protection for women peace builders.



Discussion:

The issue of women representation in the peace building formal and informal structures had some participants concerned about women merely participating and not having any decision making power and real influence over peace processes. It was pointed out that politicians have tended to call women to their meetings but in reality nothing was changed nor were their interests attended to. Furthermore, in South Sudan, when the women come for community meetings, they are told to just listen and not participate.

The response to this was that gender transformation is indeed the end goal, and the Peace Centre approach does emphasise meaningful participation not just representation. However, because there is already an imbalance in representation, addressing this is a priority. Women need to be empowered first so that they can advocate for their issues.

With informal institutions usually being the first responders when there is a conflict, to what extent have religious and cultural leaders, who are often deeply rooted in negative gender norms, been dealt with? This was a question that was posed from different angles, with another wondering how the Peace Centre has dealt with cultural norms that prevent women from participating in peace building.

The response to this was that women in heavily patriarchal communities have found various strategies of exerting their influence

in community forums. For example, in Karamoja, not all men participate in the traditional gatherings locally known as “Akiriket” they have to be ordained. Recently, the wives of the men who are members have joined hands with those men who are excluded from the Akiriket in other community forums where they then get informed about women issues. In addition, the Peace Centre also organises trainings for the cultural and religious leaders, invite them to take part in community forums and remind them of their mandate when there is a conflict.

How is gender being used to analyse and address issues, especially those which perpetuate some of the conflicts? The Peace Centre uses the SASA! Together methodology which is a tool for preventing violence against women. SASA is an acronym for Start, Awareness, Support, Action. SASA! Together includes four core components: a gender-power analysis, four phases of change, holistic community engagement, and

benefits-based activism. Activists are nominated by the community and trained to implement the approach.

A participant from South Sudan, where disarmament remains a tough challenge, was curious about whether it is carried out by the government or communities. It was explained that while it is the national army that is mandated to carry out disarmament women play a key role because they know where the guns are, who has them and can lobby warriors to surrender their arms.

The presentation on the South African experience of increasing representation of women at the local level and having a good number of ministers at the provincial level drew questions about the strategies used to achieve this. It was explained that affirmative action in South Africa has opened up these spaces by prioritising women candidates for leadership. South Africans have realized that most change has been driven by women so they now win more leadership positions.



Session 6

Trends and emerging needs for new security issues to which the WPS framework should be applied

Chaired by
Juliet Were,
the Women's
International Peace
Centre Deputy
Executive Director.

This session's panellists were **Dr. Ashad Sentongo**, the Director of African Programs at the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) and working with the Africa Union Commission to build the African Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention, as well as **Karishma Rajoo**, the General Manager Programmes at African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD).



Dr. Ashad Sentongo began his presentation examining the concept of security. There is a tendency for most actors to restrict their understanding of security to police, military and their roles as the forces that are deployed when there is insecurity. Dr. Sentongo finds that this view of security is a rather narrow one. Instead, we should understand security as a condition where the satisfaction of basic human needs is stable and enduringly predictable. Security exists when it is there. Everything that goes on in that condition must feed into human needs of shelter, food, right to life, etc. Being enduringly predictable means that there is confidence that the prevailing stability will be the same for the next decade or two. This approach to security makes for a more comprehensive peace and security framework. This understanding of security ought to be central in discussion of security issues especially in the great lakes region.

In Africa, especially in the Great Lakes region, the last fifty years have not had a day without a conflict or war, communal violence, civil war, etc. This region has a population of 300 million with a majority under 40 years old; 75% of this population has experienced violence for all their lifetime. Their perception is that it is those who fight and win that will have an improvement in their condition, by overthrowing governments and changing regimes. There is need to terminate that cycle. However, terminating this cycle requires a paradigm shift. Dr. Sentongo quoted Thomas Koon who said that when anomalies appear in a paradigm it is time to retool. There is need to find new tools to correct the anomalies in the paradigm in the Great Lakes region.

It has been proposed that the solution to state failure in Africa and the recycling of violence is to detribalise ethnic communities and de-ethnicise the State. In Dr. Sentongo's opinion, it is correct to de-ethnicise the State, but the problem is that detribalisation of native people is not possible. He sees no problem with being tribalistic; the problem is when tribalism or ethnicity is used to deny opportunities to people. Identities are

not the problem except when they are used to exclude and deny.

Dr. Sentongo pointed out that to be effective, the security framework must be cognisant of these issues, and consideration made for participation, inclusion, and meaningful representation. This is the way to terminate the cycles of violence. Terrorism is now seen as an emerging security issue,

"Terrorism is now seen as an emerging security issue, but extremism, terrorism, and radicalisation are all outcomes of exclusion."

Dr. Ashad Sentongo

but extremism, terrorism, and radicalisation are all outcomes of exclusion. There is need to examine the context of these issues and address the causes. For example, the Arab Spring was tied to structural violence in the Arab world.

Some strategies to deal with exclusion include the reimagining of affirmative action programs; these should promote responsibility more than just participation and representation. Often, opportunities are dominated by a few women and the benefits go to just a few. Also, benefitting from affirmative action should be on the condition that they are accountable to create benefit others. Dr. Sentongo argued that while the issues of integrating gender perspectives in the security framework are valid, it is important to look at the fundamentals of what security entails and where insecurity stems from.

Karishma Rajoo pointed out that while the WPS agenda promotes inclusion and full participation of women in peace building, today there are new trends and threats to contend with and yet some of the elements of the WPS agenda have not yet been fully implemented nor incorporated in policy. Some of these new trends are based on old drivers of conflict; election related conflicts, political hegemony, and access to land, food, education, employment. Ms. Rajoo called for a renewed focus on



women led and women focused initiatives. Women's representation and participation in decision making should be emphasised in addressing the root causes of conflict, as well as in post conflict relief, recovery and reconstruction.

One of the issues that is fuelling insecurity is the inability of economies to transform from subsistence to commercial agriculture. Population growth, and increased urbanisation should not be challenges in Africa since it has abundant land and resources, yet lack of food security remains an issue. Where there is poverty, it affects women more. Other trends include human, arms and drugs trafficking. The Covid-19 global pandemic created a health and economic crisis, and exacerbated the already existing security and humanitarian crises. The impact of this was dire because government resources were already over stretched.

Another issue is climate change which is a threat to international peace and security especially in unstable or fragile contexts. Women and children tend to suffer the most from this and are forced to flee. Because there is no violence associated with climate change- there is no high body count - it is often not considered a security threat to international peace and security and it is one of the root causes of insecurity. The WPS agenda can respond to this by finding a way to frame climate change issues as a security concern; rather than thinking of them as natural disasters that affect women, reframe the issue as an immediate or future security risk.



Another issue that can be included on the WPS agenda is the issue of cyber violence. During the Covid-19 lockdowns, there was an increase in online harassment, radicalisation, campaigns against minorities, and disinformation. There is currently limited female participation in task forces on cyber security, and it is important to identify particular needs of women. In addition, the digital divide is gendered and algorithms can be used to disadvantage women politicians.

Radicalised terrorism is not included in WPS mechanisms. Human, drugs and arms trafficking is gendered yet not always addressed in WPS or gender policies. The effects of

organized crime are not included in WPS in policy, research and NAPs. The WPS agenda should shift to include the intersection of new threats like the rapid growth of private militia and security companies which are competing for space and influence. Some of them exploit the gender divide and the gaps within the national security instruments.

According to Ms. Rajoo, with external powers competing to solve African challenges, it is not surprising to see more military coups. As the earth grapples with a climate crisis and with the rise in xenophobia across the world, there is need for a new world order based not on our destruction but our development. Women in all

"There is need for a new world order based not on our destruction but our development. Women in all their diversity must remain on the development trajectory and push decision makers to make policies that take into consideration how people live today."

Karishma Rajoo

their diversity must remain on the development trajectory and push decision makers to make policies that take into consideration how people live today.



Discussion



The discussion on exclusion as a root cause of conflict in Africa brought forth some dissenting views. A participant from Mali, where terrorism and radical extremism is rampant, wondered how exclusion can be a cause of conflict when 90% of the population share the Muslim identity. For another participant from South Sudan, he took issue with the premise that tribalism is not the problem. While he agreed that discontent in communities breeds insecurity, and that it has been a culture in African to take power and enjoy the spoils while excluding others, he thinks that if a leader is a tribalist, his community will perceive the government as theirs and not accountable to the norms of good governance. Rather, a different ideology may be better for African countries. There should

be a constitution that has been put together by all tribes in the country.

In response Dr. Sentongo acknowledged at first, he too had felt the same way about tribalism but he realized that identity matters, and it is not the cause of conflict. Conflict comes about when that identity is manipulated to deny and exclude others. African countries attach a lot of importance to ethnic representation yet it has not translated into meeting the basic human needs of the people. The argument for Africans to detribalize is moot because the tribal identity is existential.

What Africa needs is a mechanism to manage the space where all people can access opportunities and meet their basic needs. When tribalism is used to differentiate

insiders and outsiders, it should be resisted. Dr. Sentongo shared that researchers have tried to detach identity from its manipulation. He suggested that the tribalism conversation has to be at the centre; maybe nation building in Africa should have been an identity management exercise. He confirmed his belief that de-ethnicising the State is possible but de-tribalization is difficult to do because it is existential.

Dr. Sentongo noted that the issues that Ms. Rajoo had presented are outcomes of a process; the WPS framework can adapt elements that de-emphasize tribalism and promote common interests. The untapped authority, influence and approaches to problem solving of women should be harnessed. Effort should be made to mainstream all

the agendas; women must take up leadership and provide the type of leadership we have missed.

He referred to his publication “Why They Don’t Fight! Experiences and Responses of the Youth in Uganda to discrimination, injustice and exclusion?” which asked why with all the civil wars, it is only 5% who perpetrate violence, be it as it may that the means of violence have become increasingly lethal and have far reaching consequences. How do those who don’t perpetrate violence fight exclusion and injustice? Lessons need to be learned from women, who are usually the victims of exclusion and injustice, to tap into their resilience, learn from their coping mechanisms and mainstream them. Even though it may not be possible to see drastic change, this

can be a useful entry point for peace building.

Participants agreed with this idea, noting that women have always been victims of different injustices in our countries, however they do not participate in terrorism and rebellions. It is men that resort to armed conflict when excluded from social political spheres. Some have even become professional rebels, perpetrating violence over decades and recycling it in different groups.

It was suggested that because there seems to be a link between multinational companies (MNCs) and strife women should be trained to negotiate with these companies, instead of just meeting with each other, and advocate for the MNCs to stop exploiting natural resources to

the detriment of communities.

According to another participant from Mali, the issue of terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel region was identified as a factor in the increased marginalisation of women. Any work to progress women’s empowerment has been put aside because the focus is on dealing with insecurity. Ms. Rajoo’s suggestion is that policies that empower women should take into consideration the impact of violent extremism on women. Inclusive frameworks should deal with the root causes of this type of violence, create strategies for localization of the pillars of peace building and deal with the realities of the critical challenges of poor funding, and resources for this localization.



Session

7

Experience sharing for partners who have participated in the regional lobby activities on WPS: Learnings and opportunities

Chaired by **Winnie Tshilobo Matanda**, the Gender, Integrity and Protection Advisor at Cordaid in the DRC

This session was chaired by **Winnie Tshilobo Matanda**, the Gender, Integrity and Protection Advisor at Cordaid in the DRC, with presentations from **Sandra Tumwesigye**, the Advocacy and Partnerships Manager at Women's International Peace Centre, **Claudine Tsongo**, the founder and coordinator of **Dynamique des Femmes Juristes (DFJ) in the DRC's North Kivu province** and **Bahati Rubango**, an advocacy advisor for justice and security Sector Reform at **SOS Information Juridique Multisectorielle (SOS IJM) in the DRC**.



Sandra Tumwesigye's presentation began with an overview of the Peace Centre's approach to lobbying and advocacy, an approach based on the drive to claim space for women to participate at all levels of peace processes. As a member of the Just Future, the Peace Centre's work supports the objective of ensuring that regional actors support implementation of the WPS agenda represented by the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans in Burundi and DRC and the gender elements of the revitalised peace agreement in South Sudan. To this end, Ms. Tumwesigye presented several examples of the ways in which the Peace Centre had facilitated and participated in regional lobby activities on WPS.

The first approach is engaging the AU Peace and Security Council, Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department. This is done by providing briefs and sharing information and analysis to support gender mainstreaming of technical officers within PAPS and with AU Liaison Offices, as well as partnering with the AU Gender Peace and Security Programme (GPSP).

The second approach is influencing around the Heads of State and Government Assembly and the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting of the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). This includes participation in the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Network, a policy input generation platform

mandated to support the work of AU Women, Gender, Development and Youth Directorate (WGYD) at AU and Member State level.

The third approach is the holding of lobby meetings with regional actors with the goal of facilitating the access and participation of women peace builders and CSOs to contribute to the analysis, influence the discussions, outcomes and follow up on specific commitments. It is also useful for keeping key messages on the agenda, and for relationship building which is often done on the margins of the summit or pre-summit meetings. The fourth approach is collaborating with the regional WPS networks of excellence on regional lobby and advocacy efforts including

efforts to support Member States and RECs to accelerate delivery on WPS commitments. There are plans to partner on research, including a focus on emerging and under addressed WPS issues e.g. environmental peace/climate change-related security.

The fifth approach revolves around policy monitoring, reporting and accountability where the JF consortium provides information on

"Relationship building is often done on the margins of the summit or pre-summit meetings."

sandra tumwesigye



UNSCR 13 25 NAP implementation to inform key messages and recommendations to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security (OSE) for inclusion in the annual WPS report assessing Member States.

Having elaborated on specific examples of results from regional lobbying and advocacy, Ms. Tumwesigye concluded by urging participants to use the current Regional Networking & Learning Exchange as an opportunity to reflect on how they would like to collaborate and engage at regional level; identify key regional actors and processes they would like to inform or influence; and think of ways to ensure that regional actors support implementation of their countries' WPS agenda.

Claudine Tsongo described her organization, the DFJ which is based in North Kivu in the DRC. Working in partnership with Cordaid through the JF project, DFJ facilitates women's participation in peace building and

advocating for their rights. One of their approaches is to work with men in communities to change their mind set towards women's participation. Since 2021, they have undertaken activities to support victims of mass crimes, a project supported by JF that has proven to be very effective. This includes documentation of what the victims have gone through, including loss of life and property. They have also carried out analysis of the factors that lead to conflict in the North Kivu area, which include latent conflict between different communities, tribal tensions and other social cultural factors.

Having developed a database of mass crimes, the organization is involved in coordination at provincial, sub regional, regional and national level to open cases that bring perpetrators to account. Committees in different communities mobilise other victims and identify other locations where mass crimes have taken place. Ms. Tsongo would like to see crimes being carried out at the DRC borders to also be documented

and addressed at the regional level, and her organization is working on this as part of its project activities.

Bahati Rubango shared how his organization SOS IJM has been working on WPS issues since 2010 including access to justice, advocacy, defending human rights with a focus on women defenders and alternative mechanisms for conflict resolution through legal clinics. Their experience with regional advocacy and lobbying is through documentation of the stories of mass atrocities at local and provincial level then presenting them at the national, continental and international level.

Because of the organization's work with human rights defenders, they were selected as NGO observers during the 2021 68th session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, where they made a presentation. The organization was also part of an NGO that forum brought together activists

"Learning from each other in regional forums enables CSOs to diversify their approaches to WPS in their countries."

Bahati Rubango

on human rights that presented a report on the appalling conditions faced by incarcerated women which resulting in a resolution that urged the DRC to improve conditions. The SOS IJM submitted a report to the African Commission that resulted in Head of States pressing the DRC to



make commitments adhere to resolutions on closing detention centres and holding the police accountable for atrocities.

In relation to Ms. Tumwesigye's presentation, where she detailed how the Peace Centre had facilitated the participation of five partner organizations from Burundi, South Sudan, DRC in the 4th GIMAC Strategic engagement with the AU and RECs, SOS IJM made panel presentations making specific recommendations for RECS and the AU. The GIMAC is an opportunity for CSOs to engage with the special envoy from the AU and other country teams. SOS IJM participated in the GIMAC periodic review and at the peer review with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. However, Mr. Rubango noted that the while they had been able to carry out high level advocacy between 2017 and 2020 and drawn recommendations from other countries with regards to DRC, the Covid-19 pandemic

had interrupted the periodic review meetings. However, they continued to submit reports and carry out advocacy at the national level.

With regards to the lessons and opportunities from these regional lobby activities, Mr. Rubango touted the benefits of sharing experiences with actors from national and international NGOs. He gave an example of adopting the Ugandan approach to establish legal clinics within universities; training students to resolve conflicts in the communities they come from and engage in peace processes. Learning from each other in regional forums enables CSOs to diversity their approaches to WPS in their countries.

Regional engagements also help to create visibility for the activities of CSO programmes, and show their impact. Participating in engagements with large networks such as GIMAC creates opportunities for CSOs to have their recommendations go up

to presidential level and authorities will be obliged to comply with continental level resolutions. In the February 2022 meeting, the SOS IJM report was used by GIMAC to get the AU to pay more attention to the DRC atrocities. Presenting at such forums also opens up opportunities for partners to identify areas for funding CSO programmes. The meetings also present opportunities to engage with special envoys and update them on their work on the ground. For example, at the GIMAC meeting in Lusaka, DRC's SOS IJM, along with delegates from Uganda, Burundi and South Sudan, met with the AU special envoy for WPS.

Mr. Rubango called on CSOs to advocate that all countries are heard at such regional forums as it is not easy to gain an opportunity to present their issues. It is also important to update other country teams in the region on what they are doing.

Discussion

The point was raised that one of the approaches of Just Future Alliance is to carry out evidence based advocacy; as partners have been called upon to do things differently, have the DRC partners considered doing an assessment or evaluation in the area of mass crimes against women? Is there an independent report besides what the international organizations and the UN does? Do the CSOs in DRC have alternative reports? If this type of analysis has been done, what challenges have been identified in the area of access to justice so that we channel advocacy in this area? The panellists were also asked if they have had opportunities at the national or regional level which the rest of the country teams could emulate in terms of reparations for injustices against women.

In response, Mr. Rubango noted that Just Future has helped SOS IJM to develop approaches that help them reach out to victims of mass crimes. They have facilitated the creation of associations by the victims and this will help reparations be given to the right beneficiaries. He reported that a study was made by independent consultants who identified victims, trained them and built their capacity for advocacy. In December, victims of mass crimes were given opportunity to give their testimonies during a public hearing in Bukavu that was attended by MPs, Ministers, Army representatives, artists and



musicians. A fund is being created to support the victims.

Mr. Rubango however acknowledged that access to justice is still faced with many challenges because mass crimes were also committed by parties outside the DRC; DRC may not be able to solve this alone.

Also, some perpetrators are part of the government or army and may obstruct justice. It is hoped that the Mukwege Foundation will have the opportunity to present these issues to the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken when he arrives in Kinshasa on his three-nation tour of Africa.

A concern was raised the different number of institutions to which national organizations have to report; this may lead to CSO getting lost in different approaches as different bodies adopt the WPS agenda in various ways. The Peace Centre's Ms. Tumwesigye pointed out that

CSOs in South Sudan had come together to generate on report on the WPS agenda and present it to all the regional and global organizations. Agreement was reached on what will be tracked on the global level and what to improve by the next reporting cycle.

It was suggested that Just Future and the Peace Centre should establish a hierarchy of organizations that CSOs need to report to. For example, identify in the sub region who amongst the East African Community (EAC) the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) who are the most strategic partners, so that partnerships are not just created because of funding.

A participant from the Burundi noted that while the AU is close to Heads

of State, it is far from the people. He advised colleagues from the DRC that the EAC is closer, and they are likely to see more results if they carry out advocacy with the EAC. As new members of the EAC, they can travel to Kampala, Kenya and Sudan without a visa. However, the DRC participants pointed out that they need support to access EAC organs, especially as challenges with cross border conflict limit the freedom of movement. The JF alliance should have a role in facilitating this type of regional advocacy. In response, Ms. Tumwesigye pointed out that it is the task of CSOs to close that gap between the AU and the people, and replicate what has been achieved with regards to the EAC's impact on its member citizens.

A call was made by one of the participants for CSOs to invest in community structures that support leadership for women and youth because reliance on outside funding is not sustainable. Effort should be put into supporting the networking of CSOs. This was agreed with by Mr. Rubango who noted that youth should be involved in engaging with the regional mechanisms.

Participants were reminded by Cordaid's Nikki de Zwaan that Just Future is a lobbying program. Apart from national partners, they also have

international partners including research partners. For example, and upcoming partnership with Impunity Watch is going to collect data severe violations of

human rights and use it for advocacy. The suggestion from the Burundi team to the DRC colleagues to liaise with the EAC is a good one and should be followed up with concrete action. Similarly, the Peace Centre has been doing significant work with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and there are opportunities for interesting connections for Mali and Niger, not only to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) but also to the GIMAC campaign.

Fidel Andera, a participant from the DRC made a submission on justice for victims. He noted that in DRC participant impunity for perpetrators of mass crimes is also caused by the breakdown of institutions. Judges work for months without pay and sometimes work under the command of the very soldiers who have committed those crimes. Judicial institutional protection is difficult; who would have the guts to investigate areas which are under rebel control. Witness and victim protection is also lacking. He supposed that South Sudan and Mali may be facing the same issue of evidence preservation; in DRC after thirty years of atrocities, it is difficult to obtain evidence of killings where there are mass graves, especially if the areas are now under the leadership of the perpetrators.

Africa has seen many victims of conflict go undocumented. In Richuru, eight public building were built on top of mass graves. With Just Future support, CSOs have started identifying where these mass graves are located, and even if the buildings are not brought down, the people will know. Fidel applauded the bravery of Ms. Mukanire of the Mukwege Foundation; despite the risks, she has led the courageous women who have chosen to speak up against powerful perpetrators. He wondered whether in Mali it is known how many people were kidnapped by jihadists and if Uganda has an inventory of Kony's child soldiers. This data is important as a tool for advocacy and governments should have an inventory of victims. It is hoped that the JF will facilitate advocacy for the Security Council to create an international criminal court in DRC.



Session 8

Reflections:

Lessons learned, emerging issues and way forward



Chaired by
Sandra Tumwesigye,
the Advocacy
and Partnerships
Manager at Women's
International Peace
Centre

Sandra Tumwesigye the Advocacy and Partnerships Manager at Women's International Peace Centre chaired this session and led the participants in an exercise on identifying the lessons they had learned from the experience sharing, which country they had picked the lessons from and think of ways to apply it to their work in lobbying and advocacy for advancing the WPS agenda. The application could include the gathering of further information on the strategy or issue.

Country team	Strategy/Issue learned	From which country/partner	How to apply learning to your work
Burundi	Work with regional mechanisms that have offices in Burundi	South Sudan	
	Beyond representation of women and numbers, focus on gender transformation.	Prof Cheryl Hendricks, IJR	Organize activities to work with women in decision making positions, and help them be accountable
	Having different levels of influence	Sandra Tumwesigye The Peace Centre	Have a regional workshop, look for opportunities to organize parallel engagements when there are regional engagements
	Localisation, province and district level, community development groups	Claire Hawkins, UN Women	Have at least one pillar of 1325 implemented at community/ level. Budget for it at local level.
DRC	Localisation of NAP	Different presentations of DRC	
	Mobilise victims of mass crimes	DRC, Mali and Niger	
	Funding for 3rd generation of NAP	UN Women	
Mali and Niger	Research issues (evidence) on peace and security to inform advocacy.	Dynamique des Femmes Juriste (DFJ) Claire Hawkins, UN Women	Strengthening data collection and production of advocacy materials.
	Popularizing NAP in local languages	Prof Cheryl Hendricks, IJR	Integrating this dimension into the NAPs.
	Localisation of the WPS agenda	Cecilia GNWP	Plan the localisation with the technical coordination units.
	NAP Monitoring and Coordination Mechanism	Claire Hawkins, UN Women	Support for the operationalization of the mechanisms put in place.
	Welfare and health for development professionals	Resolve and Impact Hub	Integration into programs

Country team	Strategy/Issue learned	From which country/partner	How to apply learning to your work
South Sudan	FemWise approach	Canon Joyce Nima, FemWise	Contact with women in our countries
	Advocacy to regional institutions	Sandra Tumwesigye The Peace Centre	Through regional coalitions and synergies.
	Documentation (database) of victims/evidence for victims for possibility of redress	DRC (Fidèle)	Setting up a working group
	Network for victims of GBV	Tatiana Mukanire, Mukwege Foundation	Facilitate the connection of ECP actors to promote networking among survivors. Enhance exchanges with SEMA/DRC
	Focus on WPS in the 2023 programming		
	Consideration of new emerging conflicts in the Sahel		
	Consistent tracking of Key influencing events at regional level	Bahati Rubanga, DRC	
	Strengthening women participation and inclusion in peace and security at local levels	DRC and South Africa	
	Establish FemWise chapter	Canon Joyce Nima, FemWise	

Nikki de Zwaan, Cordaid's expert on security and justice at Cordaid

gave the teams feedback on their presentations, noting with interest that all the groups were thinking about different strategies for working with women at the local level, and that they had learned a lot from other colleagues about the HOW. The groups had also identified opportunities for working with other partners, and multi stakeholder platforms, and showed an interest in using regional mechanisms to work with regional level actors.

She recommended that teams should make very concrete action plans for working with the regional

mechanisms and specify who they will partner with and on which specific issue. She reminded participants that a NAP is an instrument not a goal, and she liked the approach some groups had taken of taking an aspect on the WPS agenda and integrating it in the local planning process. She further advised the Mali team that since they have local development committees, they can consider integrating one or two elements in the existing planning process rather than having a separate local action plan.

Ms. de Zwaan reminded the teams that since their countries have already developed a lobby strategy, they can just do what was already planned

or make improvements to it. They should think about what is relevant in their own local context, for example with financing for the NAP – what will actually work in their country, how they ensure that funding is just not on paper. In the next phase of the planning, they were urged to be more concrete and identify specific actions from the plan.

This session was a foundation for the last session of the networking exchange in which the country teams developed lobbying and advocacy plans, based on the lessons learned from the workshop as well as any other ideas the teams had developed.

Session 9

Joint lobby and advocacy to support the WPS agenda implementation: (Working groups)

Led by
session chair
Nikki de Zwaan,
the expert on
security and justice
at CordaidPeace
Centre

Led by session chair **Nikki de Zwaan** the **expert on security and justice at Cordaid** participants developed country specific lobby and advocacy plans, identifying specific actions, how they would implement them, what actors would be responsible for implementation and who they would need to partner with.

Country Lobby and Advocacy Action Plans

ACTIONS	HOW: STRATEGIES	LEVEL AND ACTORS	WITH WHOM: PARTNERS
MALI			
Advocate for the inclusion of at least 30% of women in the bodies promoting reconciliation (National Reconciliation Support Mission and its regional teams; local reconciliation committees; communal justice, truth and reconciliation committees), with the support from International partners and local leaders.	Round table	National, regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Platforms of women leaders ▪ Women's umbrella organizations ▪ Technical and Financial Partners (PTF) ▪ Media
Advocacy for the inclusion of the WPS in the processes of drafting and updating of development plans at the local level	Advocacy meeting	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local women and youth organizations ▪ Local leaders ▪ Media
Work on the implementation of FemWise in Mali	Identify contact persons, brainstorming session	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Platforms of women leaders ▪ Women's umbrella organizations

ACTIONS	HOW: STRATEGIES	LEVEL AND ACTORS	WITH WHOM: PARTNERS
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BURUNDI

Integration of the WPS agenda into community planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of an inter-provincial strategic conference and 7 provincial conferences (in 7 pilot provinces) Bringing together key planning actors 	<p>Local: The elected members of parliament of these 7 Provinces, the high provincial authorities, provincial women and youth leaders, religious leaders, gender champions, those in charge of planning at provincial level, leaders of political parties at provincial level, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cordaid The Peace Centre Ministry of Gender Ministry of Interior
Sharing of experiences on gender transformation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify women elected at different levels (MPs, senators, women elected at commune and Village level) Involve women leaders from civil society, the private sector and male gender champions; Involve women from political party leagues 	<p>National: Women deputies and senators, women elected at commune and hill level, women leaders in civil society, those in the private sector, male gender champions, women in political party leagues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cordaid The Peace Centre UN-Women
Integration of the WPS agenda into the EAC gender policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise a regional conference on the opportunities, challenges and strategies for mainstreaming the WPS agenda into EAC gender policy 	<p>Regional: The EAC secretariat, ICGLR, UN WOMEN, Office of the Special Envoy/UNSG, Cordaid Regional Office, Regional Women's Forum etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Peace Centre Cordaid JF partners in the EAC

NIGER

Support for the operationalization of the regional coordination of the Permanent Secretariat of the WPS Agenda NAP 2 in the 8 regions of Niger	Establish a permanent working framework with WPS stakeholders in Niger	<p>National and regional</p> <p>NAP Coordination Unit, National Observatory for Gender Promotion and the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Child Protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Women Just Future Alliance OXFAM COUNTER-PART DRC CARE International PLAN Save the Children
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ACTIONS	HOW: STRATEGIES	LEVEL AND ACTORS	WITH WHOM: PARTNERS
<p>Support for the integration of the NAP 2 Permanent Coordination Secretariats of the WPS agenda into the Security Councils from the national to the regional and departmental levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the level of representation of women in the different councils; Institutionalization of a quota for women in the different councils 	<p>National, regional and departmental</p> <p>Office of the President, Prime Minister's Office, Parliament, National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, Ministry of Defence, FDS Chief of Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Women Just Future Alliance OXFAM COUNTERPART DRC CARE International PLAN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Save the Children National and local CSOs, etc.
<p>Support for the implementation of a 15% quota of women in the various peace committees set up by state institutions (HACP and MI) and partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the level of representation of women in the different Peace Committees Institutionalization of a quota for women in the different Peace Committees 	<p>Departments and Communes</p> <p>High Authority for Peace building (HACP), Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, Ministry of Defence, FDS Chiefs of Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Women Just Future Alliance OXFAM COUNTERPART DRC CARE International PLAN Save the Children National and local CSOs, etc.

SOUTH SUDAN

<p>Consistently track key influencing events at regional level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular tracking of AU calendar by monitoring Africa Union Website, liaise with AU Women and Youth Directorate to share upcoming events Develop advocacy messages by organizing workshops at country South Sudan to update on the context and develop advocacy messages that are specific for each event to address issues affecting women such as low representation and involvement in peace and security, conflict related sexual violence etc. Organize regular online meetings with WIPC, ACCORD and FEMWISE to channel the advocacy messages Organize lobby meetings alongside these key events through face to face meetings and online.
<p>Strengthen women participation and representation in local mechanism for peace and security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn more from colleagues in South Africa and Congo on details of the strategies Conduct context analysis and needs assessment to identify capacity gaps Conduct needs' tailored capacity strengthening activities Integrate monitoring, evaluation and learning to learn lessons and improve
<p>Promote women participation in elections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize law review sessions with women lawyers to review the electoral laws and develop recommendations to ensure that the electoral laws are fair and enable women to participate in election Lobby and Advocate for amendment of the electoral laws Create awareness on elections and women participation Training of women at local level on participation in election Facilitate forums for women dialogue and with stakeholders on elections Training of female parliamentarians at national and state levels

ACTIONS	HOW: STRATEGIES	LEVEL AND ACTORS	WITH WHOM: PARTNERS
Establish FemWise chapter to promote women participation and representation in peace and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaise with AU representative in South Sudan ▪ Create awareness on the importance of FemWise chapter ▪ Organize meeting in September 2022 to discuss the formation of the FemWise South Sudan Chapter ▪ Conduct lobby meetings with AU in October to expedite the establishment of the FemWise chapter South Sudan. 		

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Elections

Advocacy with political parties for the alignment of women on the electoral list on the basis of the new electoral law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify political parties and women in the various political parties ▪ Commitment of political party leaders ▪ Follow-up on the commitments of the leaders of the political parties and groups 	Provincial and national: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kinshasa ▪ North Kivu ▪ Ituri ▪ South Kivu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leaders of political parties and groups ▪ National organizations, partners in the Just Future program ▪ Cordaid ▪ WIPC ▪ Women's movements
Join and support existing women's alliances for elections capacity building and synergistic actions of women candidates and potential candidates for elections	Identify existing alliances and harmonise with them on supporting women	Provincial and national: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kinshasa ▪ North Kivu ▪ Ituri ▪ South Kivu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cordaid ▪ WIPC ▪ National JF partner organizations

Just Future Trajectory: Justice

Establish Just Future commissions and other stakeholders to compile a directory of victims and their communities that will be validated at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stakeholder identification workshop and key actions documented ▪ Data collection (listings) at local level ▪ Put in place local committees to collect data ▪ Compile data and clean it up ▪ Validation of data 	Provincial and national: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kinshasa ▪ North Kivu ▪ Ituri ▪ South Kivu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFJ ▪ SOS IJM ▪ Survivors' Movement ▪ Cordaid ▪ The Peace Centre ▪ Impunity Watch Etc
Advocacy with the ministries of human rights and the presidency (lead in consultations to identify victims of mass crimes) so that the real victims are part of these different consultations (especially women)	Set up a committee with a workbook and all the evidence	Kinshasa Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations Joint Office for Human Rights (BCNDH) ▪ Ministry of Human Rights ▪ Presidency

ACTIONS	HOW: STRATEGIES	LEVEL AND ACTORS	WITH WHOM: PARTNERS
Advocacy with the Ministry of Human Rights for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; to be headed by a majority of women (at least 75%)	Approach the Ministry of Human Rights	Kinshasa Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BCNDH ▪ Ministry of Human Rights ▪ Presidency ▪ Caucus of Deputies
Just Future Trajectory: Security			
Advocacy for security sector reform with a WPS dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organise a strategic meeting with sectoral defence and security ministries on UNSCR 1325 and inclusion in the Action plan ▪ Follow-up on the action plan 	Kinshasa Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Gender ▪ Ministry of Human Rights ▪ Ministry of the Interior ▪ Ministry of Social Affairs and Other Vulnerable Persons ▪ Ministry of Defence and Security ▪ UN-WOMEN
Put in place mechanisms for monitoring the commitments made by the government	Set up a monitoring committee with civil society organizations	Provincial and national: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kinshasa ▪ North Kivu ▪ Ituri ▪ South Kivu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CSOs, Just Future partners ▪ Cordaid ▪ The Peace Centre
Just Future Trajectory: Peace			
Strengthen the group work of the sectoral plans at provincial level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify sectoral action plans in the 4 provinces where Just Future programmes are implemented ▪ Organise sectoral meetings in the provinces ▪ Support these sectoral action plans basing on identified priorities 	Provincial and national: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kinshasa ▪ North Kivu ▪ Ituri ▪ South Kivu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Gender ▪ Provincial Gender Divisions ▪ Local WPS Councils - at the territory level
Regional Advocacy Strategic Alliance			
Work on a strategy to strengthen coordination around the implementation of UNSCR 1325: FemWise	Identify women members of this network in the DRC	Kinshasa and regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Peace Centre ▪ Cordaid ▪ FemWise ▪ UN WOMEN
Support women's participation and consider advocacy on WPS in upcoming peace negotiations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be updated on upcoming peace negotiations ▪ Propose recommendations that should be carried by women to the peace negotiations 	Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Peace Centre ▪ Cordaid ▪ UN WOMEN, etc

Discussion

The session chair gave feedback on each of the plans. Commending the Mali team, she noted that what they had put together would be a good start for their upcoming planning workshop. For Burundi, Ms. de Zwaan appreciated their focus on localisation and the clarity of their plan for its implementation and how activities would move from local, to regional and up to national.

Ms. de Zwaan Nicki reminded the teams that they each have a theory of change for their countries. They should make an analysis of the process of community planning, the timeline, at what point they can influence the planning. They were also advised to reflect on what elements from the WPS agenda they want to see in the plans; it is not necessarily to include all aspects of the WPS agenda. The number of actors listed by the Burundi team was a lot: they were urged to prioritise. The team however noted that during their planning workshop there would be many actors from different provinces and they would use this forum to prioritise and select those relevant to each province.

With regards to the action plan for Niger, the team noted that they will need allies because Just Future cannot work in all eight regions; they work in only three and so will need partners. Ms. de Zwaan noted that their third activity was quite specific and acknowledged their geographical reach. However, for the third activity, the team needs to reflect some more whether it is realistic to do that on all levels, maybe prioritise the first one. She also asked why they want to have a regional coordination mechanism. Reminding them of the discussion from the Key Note Speech on day one, there are already too many structures in place; in their planning meeting, the Niger team should identify exactly what this mechanism is supposed to achieve.

For the South Sudan team, Ms. de Zwaan's advice was that when they go into their country planning, they should identify what they want IGAD or the AU to do. They need to be clear on what change they want to see, and what to ask from stakeholders. For the second action point, the suggestion was to consider the timeline for elections and formulate an overall objective with regards to the elections; identify what result they want to see. It should be specific and concrete. For the third action point, on setting up a regional structure, what do they want FemWise to do once they are there- mediating local level conflicts? Bring powerful women from across Africa to talk to leaders? Train other women to mediate?

The DRC team was advised to include in their planning provision for sign language interpreters for the hearing impaired. It was also suggested that some of the activities might be integrated in outcome one and two. The three are interconnected; it is good to reflect on that. While Ms. de Zwaan appreciated their action plan, she was concerned that it will be a lot of work for the programme by itself. She advised the team to consider selecting a priority action. She also advised the group of participants as a whole to continue discussing what the different countries can learn from each other with regards to election preparation.



Conclusion

As this section of the programme drew to a conclusion, **Nikki de Zwaan, Cordaid's expert on security and justice at Cordaid** expressed her desire to see more exchange and learning amongst the participants after this forum. She went on to facilitate a discussion on what are some of the things that they can do to continue working together.



Calendar of Key networking events:

Some participants suggested that communication of events should be done in a timely manner so that the appropriate people are able to participate. Forward planning is key. The Peace Centre team informed them that the key regional events have set dates which are widely known – AU, GMAC, Media Coordination Meeting of AU and RECS, Open Debate on WPS. They were advised to put these dates on the calendar during their country planning exercise. In addition, every three months there is a meeting when particular countries are discussed in the AU and at the UN, in the months before that there will be interest in what CSOs have to say. Everyone should prioritise WPS week. Because the email group has not been working well, it was suggested that a WhatsApp group would work better.

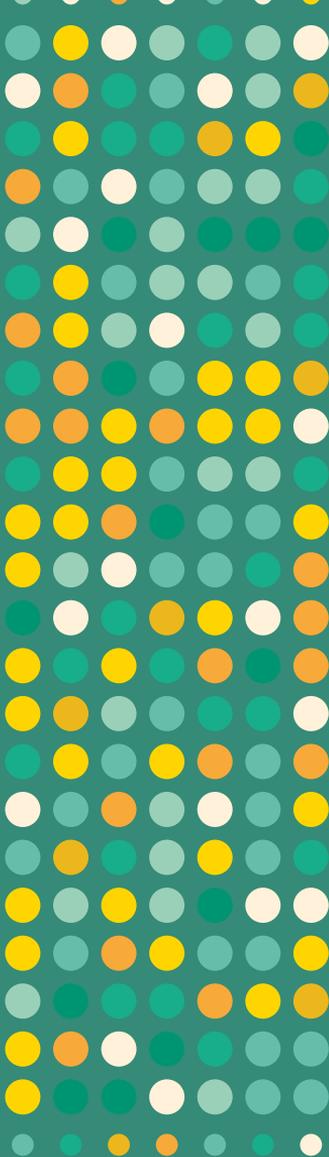
Advocacy Note: It was suggested that key points from the exchange meeting be identified and used to develop an advocacy note so that participants can send policy briefs on different issues, e.g. identification of victims of mass violence, etc.

Balanced representation: While the participants were happy to finally be able to convene physically, after a lot of online interaction, it was suggested that there should be an improvement in the balance of representation of different regions. In this meeting, the Sahel region was less represented and those who attended were staff of Cordaid; there should be more CSO and government agency representatives. Ms. de Zwaan advised the teams to include provision for these representatives in their country level budgets because this is what determined how many people can travel. She urged them to prioritise partners to attend such forums, and in fact other countries did not send Cordaid coordinators as the organisers did not ask for them. She also noted that the discussion is different when government agencies are in the room, it may more sense when they participate at the country level or the Peace Centre can invite them to international level meetings.

Evaluation and follow up to have joint regional advocacy: As all the teams have included the Peace Centre and Cordaid as partners in implementing their activity plans, these organizations should also include in their planning whatever the country teams have proposed.

Continental advocacy: As part of national level planning, it was suggested that the Peace Centre facilitates the development of a continental strategy for advocacy.

The meeting part of the Learning and Networking Exchange on Women, Peace and Security ended at this point, with the delegates continuing more informal networking and wellness on day four of the programme. The Peace Centre organized for them an excursion to Jinja, Uganda's district with several nature attractions including the source of the Nile.



**Women's
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Amplifying Women's Voice and Power

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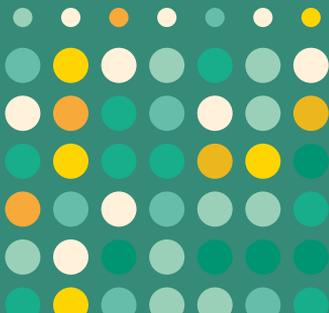
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