

Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region of Africa

A Regional Convening Report



Acknowledgements

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A Regional Convening Report

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1.0

INTRODUCTION

Regional Convening on Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region

Burundi, Central African Republic,
South Sudan, Rwanda,
Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda.

#FeministPeace



The approaching end of 2019, presents a well-timed, strategic opportunity for women's rights advocates seeking to accelerate implementation of the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda in the Great Lakes region to collectively reflect, look ahead, and prepare to take fruitful action.

In 2020, the African Women's Decade (2010-2020), a period dedicated to ensuring greater results in fulfilling continental commitments to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment by the African Union, comes to an end. The same year marks 25 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, where governments committed to take bold action for gender equality and the empowerment of women in critical areas of concern, including women and armed conflict. The year 2020 will also be the 20th anniversary of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325, on women, peace, and security that affirmed the critical role of women

in conflict resolution and peace building, as well as the importance of ensuring their full and equal participation in decision-making regarding conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and the promotion of peace and security.

Within the Great Lakes Region, women's rights organisations have been monitoring progress and advocating for the implementation of diverse regional and national instruments such as the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Kampala Declaration on Sexual and Gender-based Violence, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the region, and the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability, and Development for the Great Lakes region. While there has been some progress, a significant implementation gap remains and the women, peace, and security agenda is yet to be achieved.

For over a decade, Global Fund for Women has supported and partnered with women's rights organizations in the Great Lakes region of Africa who are promoting women's leadership in conflict resolution and peacebuilding and ensuring survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) obtain justice and holistic services. From 2014 through 2018, Global Fund for Women partnered with the UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, UN Women, and the Congolese Women's Fund to implement the Women's Platform of the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes Region. During this time, Global Fund for Women co-organized two convenings with its partners to engage in strategic conversations around the role of women's rights organizations in peacebuilding and build synergy across borders. Since 1993, Women's International Peace Centre (The Peace Centre, formerly Isis-WICCE) has mobilized grassroots women's movements for peace in the Great Lakes region, documented women's experiences in conflict, and promoted feminist peacebuilding strategies.

It is in this context that Global Fund for Women and the Women's International Peace Centre co-created this space and convened 48 women human rights activists and organizations from Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda working to build peace, end sexual and gender-based violence, and combat the negative impact of the extractive industry on peace and women's rights. In the space, we assessed the progress and gaps in the women, peace, and security agenda in the region and defined a creative common vision and agenda for feminist peacebuilding. We also involved representatives of key regional mechanisms, such as the ICGLR Regional Training Facility and Women's Forum, the African Union FemWise-African Network of Women

Mediators, Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, and UN Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes in order to build connections between actors from the local to international level and explore opportunities for collaboration. Prior to the convening, we conducted a survey to gather participants' feedback on the proposed convening sessions and capacity-building needs.

This convening was an opportunity to engage in key conversations and exchanges around the means through which we could strengthen our collective capacity to promote women's leadership in peacebuilding and reconstruction, address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and address the impact of the mining and extractive industry on women and girls' rights and lasting peace in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Sessions at the convening were dedicated to building the capacity of women's rights organizations to assure the safety and integrated security of women human rights defenders, activists, and organizations; promote the well-being of their staff and networks; and implement feminist peace-building strategies. In addition, women's rights activists assessed progress - including what is and is not working - in achieving the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda at regional and national levels and in the implementation of diverse national and regional instruments, and the gaps and key obstacles in order to define common strategies/efforts for accountability and accelerated fulfilment of commitments, engaged with practical regional mechanisms including ICGLR-Regional Training Facility and FemWise - the African Network of Women Mediators, and identified opportunities and priorities for collective action, solidarity, and advocacy amongst women's rights organizations and other key regional actors both nationally and across borders.

1.1

OPENING REMARKS



Ms. Helen Kezie-Nwoha, Executive Director, Women's International Peace Centre welcoming participants into the space.

Ms Helen-Kezie Nwoha, Executive Director of the Women's International Peace Centre (The Peace Centre) welcomed the Women leaders to the convening and acknowledged the importance of reflective spaces as a learning and review process. Lisa Block, Program Officer for Freedom from

Violence (Global Fund for Women) appreciated the contributions made by the women-led organizations in mobilizing women, advocacy, fighting against SGBV and peace building and in ensuring that women have access to services, natural resources and can hold their governments accountable.

2.0

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION: FEMINIST APPROACH

Feminists and women's organizations have what is needed to create and promote meaningful peace. It is not a lack of frameworks or instruments, it is a lack of implementation.

Helen Kezie-Nwoha



The period 2010 - 2020 was a decade for women in which addressing women's concerns and silencing guns was a priority. Within this decade, the African Union came up with 5 regional instruments promoting peace and security in Africa: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), East African Community (EAC), and International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). In addition, institutions like UN Women, Urgent Action Fund and Global Fund for Women prioritized resources for 'Women, Peace and Security'.

But when women talk about peace and security, the key emphasis is mostly UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that refers to women's participation in dialogue and negotiation, in conflict prevention and the protection of specific women issues.

However, despite the widely known UNSCR 1325, and the fact that women have been networking and conducting advocacy for years holding governments accountable, they are still struggling and lobbying to have women offered a seat at tables of dialogue. Hence, one conclusion of this decade can be that it is not enough to only advocate for women to be included in negotiations.

Women's bodies are still the battleground of violence despite UNSCR 1325. Meanwhile, new forms of violence have become more prominent such as fundamentalism, violent extremism, and violence related to migration. Once again, women are the main victims of these outbursts of violence all over the world. Thus, it is upon the women's organisations in the field of Women Peace's and Security (WPS) to ask ourselves: What can we do? How can we adapt to these new and diversified forms of violence? It has become clear that there is a need for new answers.

Peace is when there is no conflict related to systems and structures.

Women are facing the violence of masculine power, at community and national level which undermines their participation in peace processes.

Women are also confronted with structural violence which is caused by a lack of access to basic social services, institutionalised sexism; and gender injustice caused by increased militarisation. Although deployed to increase security, the reality

in many countries of the Great Lakes Region is that armed security forces often pose a threat to women in terms of limited civic space and Sexual and/or Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Furthermore, despite an increased militarization, military forces fail to decrease the number of committed SGBV crimes, hence, they do not effectively protect women from getting hurt.

Proposals for improving women's situation in conflict and post-conflict include increasing access for women to mental health services especially for women who have experienced sexual violence; and a more profound investigation system of SGBV in the region through conducting research. And if women want to effectively be actors of change, they cannot do their work without taking care of themselves.

2.1

WOMEN MEDIATING CONFLICTS IN GREAT LAKES REGION: BURUNDI, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND RWANDA



i) Burundi

Presented by the Association DUSHIREHAMWE and ABAREMESHAMAHORO

a. Women Peace Mediators “Abakanguriramahoro”, represented by Gorette Ndacyisaba

Dushirehamwe (DH) was founded just after the 1993 conflict in Burundi. The same crisis is still negatively affecting the country because of its deep roots and consequences identified in the Arusha Agreement which have still not been resolved. DH participated in Arusha Peace Process where women advocated

for women's participation in decision-making processes. As a result, the 2005 Burundi Constitution adopted most of the issues highlighted in the Peace Agreement. In terms of affirmative action, a minimum quota of 30% of women's representation in parliament and government was introduced.



Ms. Gorette Ndacyisaba presenting the work of Women Peace Mediators “Abakanguriramahoro”

Since then, DH has also participated in the development of the first National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 in collaboration with the government. This constituted an important space for engagement between the Burundi government and the civil society given that the collaboration had progressively deteriorated prior to that. One of the key challenges is that the National Women Forum is entirely made up by women from the ruling party which deprives the inclusion of voices of other women from different walks of life.

Women Network of Mediators Abakanguriramahoro

The Women Network of Mediators commenced its work in 2014 as a platform connecting women from the rural areas to national level and use the bottom-up approach. Burundi is made up of 18 provinces, 119 communes and 2910 collines¹. There are 16,000 mediators at colline level, 660 at commune level of which 144 are women, and 18 focal points at province level. The national coordination of these mediators is by Association DUSHIREHAMWE. The women mediators are volunteers organized in 220 women's associations and groups which work across six sectors: protection, leadership, dialogue for peace, community mediation, networking and advocacy. Their main task is a 24/7 availability to listen and respond to women and girls who have been affected by domestic violence. They also engage in economic empowerment as part of their service provision in order to encourage their clients become independent from their male family members.

Every month, there is a meeting at colline level to share the cases of conflicts identified or facilitated. Dialogue is held at commune level involving the

We have to bring these women to understand that it is their responsibility to not only represent their party or only women from their party but for all of the Burundi women. It's a big challenge! Women's voices aren't heard because the institutions that we have don't understand the role of a woman, they don't consider that women need to build a critical mass to create change. We have to fight!

Goretti Ndacyisaba



police, the juridical system and other actors of the civil society. The national coordination team of mediators holds a meeting at which different stakeholders on peace and security including the Ministry of Home Affairs participate to evaluate progress. This provides a great opportunity to advocate for issues of peace and justice.

Approximately 47% of conflicts handled by the women facilitators on a monthly basis are domestic conflicts or conflicts over land and resources. Another 37% are related to violent male behaviour which is often triggered by a lack of family cohesion and land issues within the families. Yet another 4% are related to politics in the sense that women encounter violence for openly voicing their own political opinions. This particularly inhibits political progress on women's issues because due to the levels of violence, women fear to speak out and voice their opinions. Some of the mediators have also been subject to violence by political party members.

1. Collines are small administrative sub divisions in Burundi.

Association DUSHIREHAMWE posed these questions: Are we talking about peace if we're not including marginalized and vulnerable groups like returnees or people living with disability? Hence, the matter of intersectionalism is yet to become more prominent on the WPS Agenda. Secondly, are women represented enough at tables of dialogue

for peace and security? How do we connect women mediators to the appropriate secondary institutions like the judiciary or the police? Is social cohesion a priority for male representatives at the moment? And lastly, is the Kampala Declaration on SGBV really referred to enough as an instrument?

b. Abaremeshamahoro Association, represented by Agnes Ntahompagaze

“Abaremeshamahoro” means those who animate peace. This organization is involved in peace consolidation in Burundi and works with returnees who had fled the country during the 1993 conflict. It is active in the Kirundo province in the North of Burundi. Abaremeshamahoro created “Amahoro Centers” which are public places where all ethnic groups can gather. Each Center currently employs 10 people in each colline of which 3 are male. The centers offer different trainings to women and young men with the aim of preventing them from falling prey to political manipulation. To prevent a

widening ethnic division, the participants are taught to appreciate ethnic diversity. Furthermore, trainings target the problem of polygamy which often ends in the man chasing away the second wife. The Centers also offer trainings for women of the Batwa ethnic group, a historically marginalized ethnic group, who are working as Ubaremeshamahoro. By boosting the women's self-esteem, they are motivated to join a platform for women mediators. Abaremeshamahoro also facilitates their activism by providing the women with bicycles to make them more mobile and increase their outreach.



Agnes Ntahompagaze shares the work of Abaremeshamahoro Association



ii) Rwanda

Presented by Rwanda Women Network (RWN)

Muteteri Betty thanked the Government of Rwanda for prioritizing women's inclusion and participation in all facets of life. As a result, more than 50% legislators in Parliament are women. She outlined the strategies utilized by Rwandan women's rights organizations and human rights defenders to promote the Women Peace and Security agenda.

Safe Spaces: Twenty eight safe spaces for women have been set up across the country for women to meet and exchange ideas. The spaces employ 20 facilitators who offer counseling and referral for survivors of SGBV. Evening dialogues are held for those working during the day.

At the national level, feminist dialogues are organized and the relevancy of traditional socio-cultural norms is discussed. For example, a current hot debate is the relevance of dowry. The feminist dialogue is also a space where conflicts are mediated. Due to

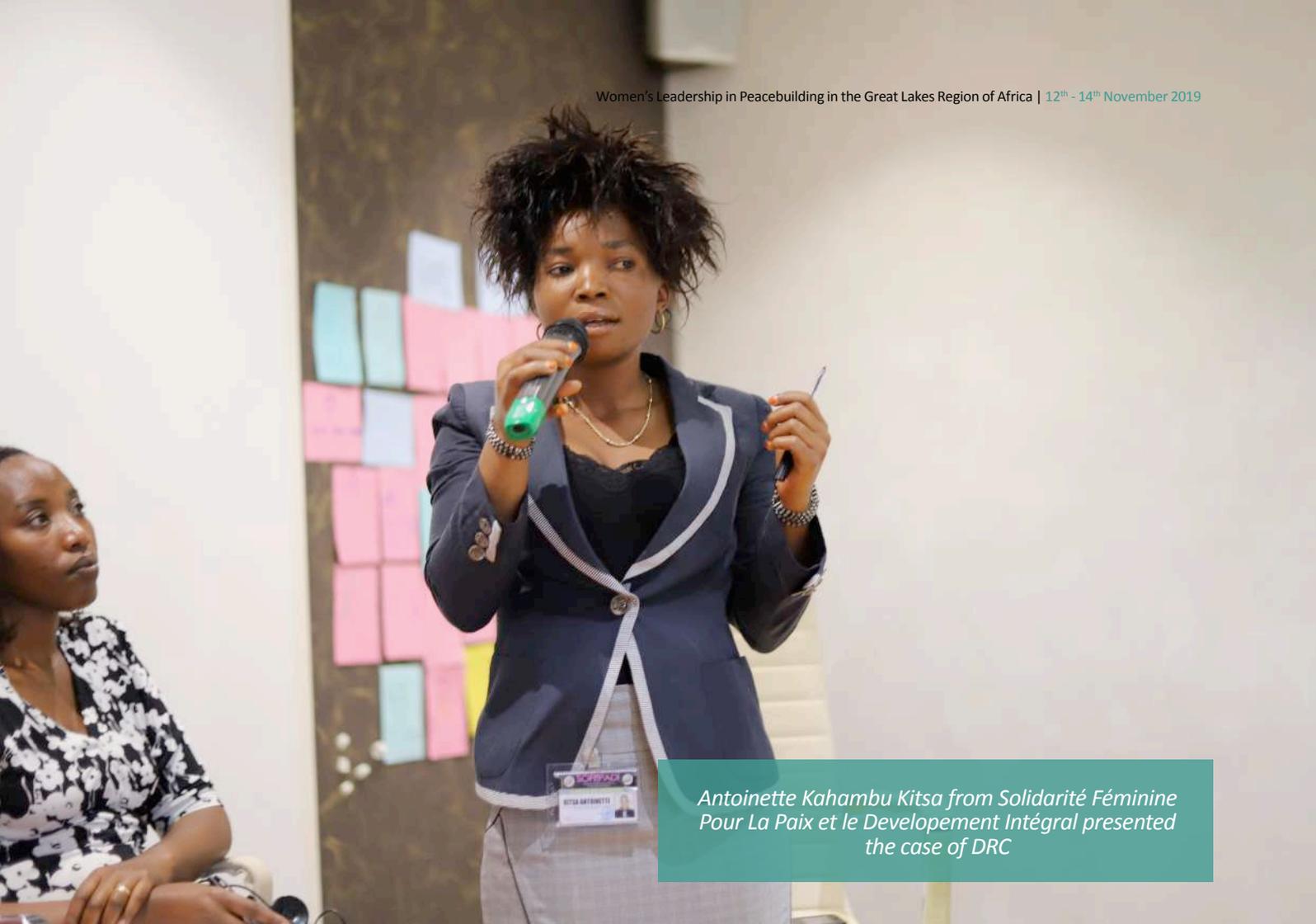
the rising problem of early pregnancy in Rwanda, an intergenerational dialogue has also been organized. In addition, the annual women's leadership training is an opportunity for women at the grassroots level to learn about transformative leadership, and advocacy to hold the government accountable and localising the feminist agenda.

For Sexual and Gender Based Violence, Rwanda Women Network ensured that the "imihigo" - which is the performance contract for local elected leaders - includes SGBV as one of the parameters to be reported on.

Rwanda Women Network translated the African Feminist Charter into local languages, thereby making it possible for more people to participate on the discussions about what feminism is.



Muteteri Betty of RWN



Antoinette Kahambu Kitsa from Solidarité Féminine Pour La Paix et le Développement Intégral presented the case of DRC

iii) Democratic Republic of Congo

Presented by Antoinette Kahambu Kitsa

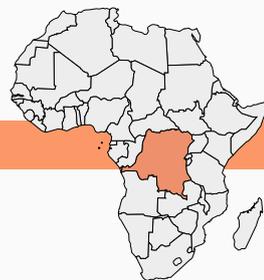
Antoinette Kahambu Kitsa from Solidarité Féminine Pour La Paix et le Développement Intégral (SOFEPADI) presented the case of Democratic Republic of Congo.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, some of the strategies used are counseling, economic development through savings and loaning, and networking. SOFEPADI has a well-equipped listening room where survivors of SGBV and trauma come to be counseled. The objective is to fight against SGBV so that women can talk about their issues in a safe space and girls can move freely to school, or to fetch water.

A platform called “Movement Rien Sans les femmes”, (‘Nothing without the women-movement) sensitizes women about their security and mobilizes them

to take care of themselves. Young people come together to talk about peace and security, meet fellow women and also reach out to sensitise more women in the markets. They also engage authorities to advocate for peace.

Women have also mobilized in savings and loans groups as a buffer of generating income in their households. This is enabling women to build houses, pay school fees and escape from poverty. Lastly, there are peace groups which target young people to talk about peace and security. If there is a case of insecurity, they are actively involved in managing the case and decreasing the insecurity.



Participants Reflections

Participants reflected on the good practices shared and were all in agreement that there is need for more solidarity amongst women in the region.

I have noted that SGBV has many causes including structural and cultural systems. In Uganda the legal system is still a blockage and there is a long struggle ahead of us. I liked how Rwanda engaged in intergeneration dialogues; we also need to integrate that approach in order to talk about sexual reproductive health.

Ugandan Participant

”

I would like to encourage women to work in synergy. I call upon The Peace Centre to reinforce the collective work for better results, and using the media more to promote women's roles. We have Mama Radio in DRC as a tool. I also suggest that we involve men in our work.

Congolese Participant

”

In Burundi, a new conflict erupted in 2015 that has caused forced displacement. We have an upcoming election in 2020. I would like to call for solidarity because if nothing is done, the escalation of violence can happen anytime.

Burundian Participant

”

We, in DRC have participated in peace dialogues such as the one in Sun City. We have also participated in the drafting of the R1325 NAP II and its localization in North Kivu. Women from civil society have contributed to ensuring that 50/50 representation is enshrined in the DRC Constitution.

Congolese Participant

”

I am intrigued by the Rwandan experience. In South Sudan, women can't talk loudly, they are marginalized.

South Sudanese Participant

”

I call upon all women in the Great Lakes and Africa to support the women of the Central African Republic. Help us advocate for legal improvement. In 2020, there will be elections and the women are not prepared. Do we have strategies to help women engage in politics to reach 35% quota?

Central African Participant

”

I come from North Kivu where many armed groups exist. We work with child soldiers to reintegrate them socially. I was in prison for 6 months. I was arrested on my way to work on allegation that I support rebels in the bush. I thank all Congolese women who advocated for my release

DRC Participant

”

In Uganda, we witness how women are tortured just because they were talking about women's rights

Ugandan Participant



Economic empowerment of girls is key to prevent violence against women

Burundian Participant



Point of Learning

Feminist language

- Don't say "prostitutes", say "sex workers".
- Don't say "old women", say "elderly women".
- Don't say "victim of SGBV", say "survivor of SGBV".
- Learn to appreciate other women, if they are beautiful, well dressed, tell them!



2.2

FEMWISE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION WITH GRASSROOTS WOMEN MEDIATORS

Presented by Ms. Elizabeth Lwanga, representative of FemWise-Africa Secretariat

FEMWISE is a newly created Africa women's network established by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State (AU Summit) on 4th July 2017 within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It is a subsidiary mechanism of the Panel of the Wise.

FEMWISE's objectives include;

- Addressing the continuous marginalization of the role and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, mediation, peace processes and post conflict peace building on the continent.
- Professionalizing the role of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation at Tracks 1,2, and 3 levels.
- Ensuring a channel for women's meaningful and effective participation in peace processes, including as heads of official high-level mediation missions.
- Bridging the gap between Tracks 1, 2 and 3 mediation and synergizing efforts towards inclusive peace processes with sustainable outcomes.
- Strengthening the mediation interventions through Quick Impact Projects for local and national peace infrastructures as foundations and launch pads for initiatives that will ensure stability and development.
- Ensuring a network of partners of technical and financial support for increased roles for women in peace building.



Ms. Elizabeth Lwanga, Board Chair of The Peace Centre and a representative of FemWise-Africa Secretariat presents the progress, challenges, and future plans in regards to Women Peace and Security

Governance and Management

Femwise's structure includes:

- The Assembly of members of the Network which meets annually to approve the annual work plan and share lessons and best practices.
- The Steering Committee supports and provides oversight to the Secretariat.
- A Board of Advisors provides strategic guidance to the Network.
- A Secretariat of the Panel of the Wise providing management and program support for FemWise-Africa Network and Pan African Network of the Wise (PANWISE).

FEMWISE's achievements

Capacity building

- Enrolment: 152 members have been inducted into the Network; introduced to African Union; trained in understanding conflict, prevention, analysis, early warning and early response; preventive diplomacy, mediation and multi-track mediation; gender and inclusivity in mediation processes
- Training: 20 members trained at Clingendael Institute in The Hague on Negotiation and Mediation as an instrument for Conflict Resolution at a two-week course in June 2019.

Deployment for

- Election Observation Missions in 8 African countries
- Implementation of Political Agreements in 2 countries
- High-level Track 1 Mediation in 8 countries
- Long-term deployments in 3 countries

FemWise's additional approaches include collaborations to push politics to listen to women; put in place small, quick grants and strengthen infrastructures; establish linkages to local mediators; solidarity visits and support in case of conflict in any country. Ms Lwanga concluded her speech by inviting women and young women to apply for membership. FemWise plans to begin recruiting grassroots African women mediators at the local level in early 2020. The Peace Centre is committed to sharing the application with convening participants.

2.3

DOMESTICATING THE ICGLR KAMPALA DECLARATION ON SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (2011)

Presented by Nathan Byamukama, Regional Director of the ICGLR Regional Training Facility

Definition and Overview of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence as articulated in the ICGLR protocol refers to “rape, sexual assault, grievous bodily harm, mutilation of female reproductive organs; sexual slavery; enforced pregnancy; enforced sterilization; sexual exploitation or coercion; trafficking in or smuggling of women and children for sexual slavery, enslavement, forced abortions or forced pregnancies; domestic violence against women; child, early and forced marriage; infection of women

and children with sexually transmitted diseases; or any other act of comparable gravity” (Art 1 of the ICGLR Protocol on Sexual Violence). It also includes gender-based violence “when directed towards women just because they are women” (Art. 1 (6) of the ICGLR Protocol on Sexual Violence).

These crimes are committed in all the ICGLR countries and communities; be it in peace or in war. The only difference being in nature and extent of the same crime in the two situations and in levels of impunity. More than 60% cases handled by the judiciary are SGBV-related in Uganda.

General Challenges

The major challenges are to ensure that those who commit crimes of SGBV are not granted safe haven anywhere in the world; that penalties are effective, and that impunity is not allowed.

i) Laws

A lack of legal frameworks is not the issue. There are enough international instruments (i.e. United Nations instruments), regional instruments (i.e. by the African Union, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and others in Regional Economic Commissions) and national laws and policies. The ICGLR instruments on SGBV cover punishment and rehabilitation; prevention decisions; ending impunity and providing support.

The “Kampala Declaration” of the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the ICGLR on SGBV has 19 resolutions covering the following four categories of decisions:

- Prevention (6 Resolutions)
- Ending impunity (3 Resolutions)
- Providing Support to Victims/Survivors of SGBV (3 Resolutions)
- General resolutions/decisions (7 Resolutions)

ii) Implementation of ICGLR Instruments

All of the ICGLR member states have set up national structures to fight SGBV. These include gender focal points across ministries, committees that coordinate joint work with CSOs and have put in place specific or combined laws on punishing SGBV with other legislation and policies to reinforce gender equality and freedom from discrimination. Recovery centers have been set up to support survivors. Though not equally effective, most countries have gender desks. However, none of the member states has developed a comprehensive data base which collects data on SGBV cases and makes it transparent to the public. A few states like Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo have made reference to payment of fines to compensate survivors of SGBV while Uganda and Kenya are still working on that.



Nathan Byamukama, Regional Director of the ICGLR Regional Training Facility

iii) The domestication

The domestication of the ICGLR Pact including the SGBV Protocol still has a long way to go. Some practical examples:

- **Uganda:** Parliament passed an omnibus bill (awaiting President's signature) that domesticates the entire Pact including the Protocol on SGBV;
- **Uganda:** Sexual Offences Bill was submitted to parliament in 2015, however, it has not been passed to date
- **Sudan:** The definition of rape was amended in 2015 to clarify the difference between rape and the crime of Zina (sex outside of marriage). Before, rape was a type of Zina and a reporting woman was at risk of being accused of zina which was punishable with death by stoning.

Mr. Byamukama emphasized the need to stop war and conflict; improve data collection; keep improving the legal framework; intensify public awareness campaign; allocate adequate financial resources and speed up trainings.

He emphasized the need for fast-tracking of cases, so that survivors access justice and do not relive the trauma years later.

Mr. Byamukama shared that there are resolutions in the protocol focusing on eradicating negative forces and providing a time frame, domesticating fully the protocols, increasing technical and financial support to judiciary and security sector, having national level institutions/structures, special courts, and media strategy, and he suggested that women's rights organizations focus their advocacy on these resolutions. He recommended advocating for the implementation of progressive resolutions in the protocol.

Participants Comments and Questions

What is the cause of the lack of implementation?

It's a struggle. It is not lack of a political will but of lack of bureaucratic will. Presidents had showed their will, but the bureaucracy and us as civil society have not been pro-active. Go and target professionals, tell them that you are holding them accountable, invite media and they will act.

Is there a mechanism which constrains those countries from ratifying and implementing? Are there possibilities to constrain multinational companies that cause war in our region?

We have to fight against instability. The problem is impunity, so we have to break the cycle of impunity. We as civil society have to bring those people in charge to come and tell us what they are doing.

Representatives of the ICGLR Regional Training Facility and FemWise, the African Network of Women Mediators participated and engaged with the women leaders to explore opportunities for deepening engagement and collaborations between regional mechanisms and networks, women's rights organizations, and grassroots women mediators.

3.0

SELF-AUDIT AND REFLECTION FOR FUTURE REGIONAL ADVOCACY

Participants worked in country groups and reflected on good practices and strategies in addressing sexual and gender based violence and promoting women's participation in peacebuilding. They also identified lessons that can inform future regional advocacy.

Rwanda

Good Practices And Strategies

- **28 women safe spaces:** There is one safe space per sector (but not in every sector); 20 facilitators have been trained to support and take care of survivors. The facilitators are volunteers, they get little money for transport. The facilitators do not solve the problem but help survivors to find solutions themselves.
- **Involvement of service providers:** Services providers like the police and medical staff are engaged.
- **Evening dialogue:** The platform gives women an opportunity to talk about gender issues. This helps women to have collective voice and increases the chances for women's issues to be appreciated and considered by leaders.
- **One Stop Centers for GBV victims** where all the required services are provided and it is funded by the government.

Lessons

- Experts in mental health should be integrated in service provision.

Uganda

Good Practices And Strategies

- **Services for SGBV survivors:** Women NGOs are the most common SGBV service providers. Governments are responsible of service provision and NGOs should only be subsidiary contributors whilst governmental institutions should be our referrals.

Lessons

- Need to advocate for the government to take over more responsibility.
- Need to care for care givers.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Good Practices And Strategies

- Have trained women to do family mediation.
- Spaces for dialogue for women including survivors and spaces for dialogue for male spouses of survivors have been instituted
- Village savings and loan associations (VSLA)

Lessons

- Engage in **collective advocacy** for Fizi, Ituri and Bukavu (Panzi hospital). SGBV cases are overwhelming, even the PEP kits are not sufficient (Fizi), no resources, a lot of cases of rape due to armed groups
- **Coordination and holistic approaches** in Ituri should be prioritized.

Burundi

Good Practices And Strategies

- Community mediation by women
- Economic empowerment of women involved in community mediation
- Counseling of SGBV survivors and women in sex work
- Community women's networks to fight SGBV. e.g., if a man marries a second wife, women go there to uphold the law and women's rights. It is important to ensure that the second wife, who is also a victim of abuse of her rights, does not get left in a bad situation either.

Lessons

- To take care of ourselves
- To involve more girls in intergenerational dialogues

4.0

ACCELERATING PROGRESS: EFFORTS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS, BEST PRACTICES, GAPS, OBSTACLES AND PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

Participants worked in 3 groups; i) Promoting women's leadership in conflict resolution and Peacebuilding; ii) Addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings and iii) Addressing women's access to and control of natural resources.

They reflected on the following: What has worked well? Where are the gaps? What are the obstacles? What are the best practices and successful strategies? What are the opportunities for collective action and advocacy

SGBV: Addressing SGBV in conflict and post-conflict settings

What has worked	Gaps	Obstacles in our work	Best practices	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth engagement in Music Dance and Drama (MDD) SGBV awareness activities Economic empowerment for female cross-border traders. Training in key trade activities such as taxation, customs and border laws, to engage in economic activities and to prevent more risky and harmful paths to trade Identification, referral to SGBV points and follow-up. Whistle-blowing on perpetrators Development of IEC materials in local languages on referral pathways for SGBV Coordination of stakeholders to discuss and strategise on mechanisms of addressing challenges faced by survivors of GBV. Documentation of identified SGBV cases. Mental health and psychosocial support for survivors. Legal support to survivors who may need their rights defended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation gaps: Laws and structures exist but fail to be implemented due to patriarchal domination in service stations (e.g. in the police) Uneducated staff Victim blaming by service providers Lack of family and child protection units in police stations at refugee settlements Limited livelihood support for survivors Limited support for healthcare workers and other service providers Limited material support (e.g. clothes) for survivors in shelters as shelters are underfunded No light at water-fetching points, communal latrines and this poses risks to women and girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited follow-up on cases by the police due to lack of resources. Limited funding of SGBV activities. Donor dependency² Lobbying for government support is very intensive Some government officials participate in activities motivated by incentives (e.g. transport refund) rather than interest in the topic Unpaid care workers Lack of self-care amongst service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering women to speak up (e.g. reporting, not suffering in silence) Empowering local and national partners to respond to GBV issues (e.g. capacity building, awareness raising) Research-based, evidence-based lobbying and advocacy Training of female leaders / politicians on women's rights and issues of SGBV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold governments accountable Governments to act proactively in service delivery for survivors. Collect data and documentation (for Integrated Management System on GBV) Active liaison with partners to ensure that SGBV is mainstreamed into all humanitarian response and development interventions

2. key lessons: need to find ways of becoming self-dependent, also focus on ownership and sustainability of the participants in the program

Key results in addressing SGBV	Gaps	Obstacles in our work	Best practices	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection houses/safe houses. • Women's centers. • Training on women's rights & sexual and reproductive health. • Inclusiveness: Training for women with disabilities and service providers. • Targeting musicians, comedians, media personalities • Use of SASA methodology in community work • Male involvement i.e. male champions • Capacity building for refugees and service providers working with refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear trade policies which makes women's cross-border trade difficult • Female entrepreneurs lack information on taxation, trade policies etc. • Women lack information on international instruments (not translated into local languages, difficult to understand) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering women to speak up (e.g. reporting, not suffering in silence) • Empowering local and national partners to respond to GBV issues (e.g. capacity building, awareness raising) • Research-based, evidence-based lobbying and advocacy • Training of female leaders / politicians on women's rights and issues of SGBV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change conversation from victim-based to perpetrator-based • Empower women to engage in leadership • Develop an advocacy plan to engage government on SGBV together with survivors • Develop clear cross-border trade policies • Advocate for recognition of unpaid care work

Natural Resources

What has worked	Gaps	Obstacles to our work	Best practices	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on agrology, business enterprises and income generating activities • Economic empowerment; economic participation and opportunity for women to assume their economic rights and focus on alternative livelihood, legal aid support, savings groups/ cooperatives • Community sensitization on women's rights to natural resources using different methodologies like drama, legal instruments like declaration of human rights, constitutions/laws of the country • Land clinics providing legal advice and support • Community Barraza's on women land rights; engaging with the duty bearers/leaders. • Documentation of rights violations against women in the mining sites/extractives areas e. g. through videos on issues like prostitution of young girls, pregnant women working in the mining sites • International peace day: Theme on environment and climate change. Used the opportunity to pass messages on women and natural resources. Biggest percentage of workers in agriculture are women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The law is silent on rights of women/succession. • Parallel laws/contradiction between the two systems; customary principles and statutory laws need to be harmonized. • Limited funding • Violation/abuse of article 26 of the constitution of the republic of Uganda. • Women do not have mining permits and it is hard for women to acquire mining permits. • Implementation of laws is a challenge • Law enforcement • Presence of armed groups impeding their work; causing massive displacement. • Destruction of the environment through mining. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to involve men to push for women issues. Target the oppressors to cause change of attitude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRC mining law which is harmonized with ICGLR Protocol on protection of resources • Need to involve men as well to push for women issues. Target the oppressors to cause change of attitude. • Importance of using evidence-based advocacy 	

Leadership and Peace Building

What has worked	Gaps	Obstacles to our work	Best practices	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed women's grassroots organizations to provide a platform to participate and raise awareness through creative activities. Group talks with young ladies and women about their rights. Advocacy on issues undermining women's participation in leadership. Recognition of the need for women to be leaders at different levels and thus engaging women in groups, households and in both political and non-political positions in organizations Training and coaching of women leaders. Women's skills are developed depending on their interests. This has improved their creativity and increased their independence The South Sudan Women Coalition engaged and contributed to the signing of the revitalized peace agreement which mandates 35% quota for women. Eve organization in South Sudan runs the Incubator and the volunteer program which is a training area for leadership. Young women are trained to transform conflict and become change makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The burden of unpaid care work Some women leaders do not advocate for women's issues once they are in a leadership position Some women leaders don't have the capacity to engage meaningfully Funding for women's organizations Poor cultural / traditional mindsets regarding women leadership Language barrier: lack of translated laws, limited information-sharing among women Monetisation of politics, e.g. money for forms and campaigns Low levels of education among women at grassroot level Educated women don't want to participate in women leadership Fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited funding for women leadership projects Some donors have different and contradicting ideas of women leadership, e.g. Korea, Japan Human resource capacity gaps Priorities of governments Lack of political will Limiting laws Scramble for funds Security: political environment is not favorable to women Lack of strategic plans Lack of institutional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration between the government and civil society (e.g. in Rwanda male engagement approach) Strengthening women leadership forums Encouraging education of the girl child Mediation Group formation for women Media engagement Collaboration/ partnership with authorities Ownership by beneficiaries Positive masculinity approach Using media Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for waiver of mandatory campaign registration fees to create more space for women to engage in leadership (Uganda) Capacity building and massive awareness on laws and policies in support of women rights and women leadership Regional networks Regional meetings Social networks that ease the sharing of information

What has worked	Gaps	Obstacles to our work	Best practices	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women have become mediators of the peace agreement in South Sudan. • Refugee Law Program with funding from UN women lobbied for women to contest for elective positions and then trained those who had been elected. RLP advocated for the change in the female refugee representation from 30/70 to 50/50 and this has been documented. The women have taken up these positions after civic education. This resulted into 52/48 representation with women leading. • Male engagement in Uganda. Patriarchal norms on the perceptions and attitudes of women are changing. Dialogues on women leadership are held and men are now supporting women leaders, they campaign for the women and vote for them as well. WORUDET uses the role model approach where men engage fellow men on behalf of women's issues • Capacity building and awareness creation on women's rights as human rights. This has created room for attitude change and the women testify that their husbands are changing. The women also stand up for their rights in front of their partners. • Women are being empowered with reading, speaking and writing skills that enable them express themselves in public (language advancement). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low inclusion of girls in leadership activities • Lack of continuity in cooperation with authorities • Lack of funds • Negative behaviour and attitude • Low female participation in decision making • Amendment of individual and family Code. • Electoral Code is not gender-sensitive • Single mothers often do not have access to resources and are excluded from inheritance • Disarmament and reintegration of child soldiers • Collaboration with security sector forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited funding for women leadership projects • Some donors have different and contradicting ideas of women leadership, e.g. Korea, Japan • Human resource capacity gaps • Priorities of governments • Lack of political will • Limiting laws • Scramble for funds • Security: political environment is not favorable to women • Lack of strategic plans • Lack of institutional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associating community leaders (religious, private sector) • Dialogue between elected women and the women at the grassroots level. • Mentorship • Sharing experiences with women entrepreneurs • Participation in parliament's commissions • Meeting with refugee women and diaspora 	

What has worked	Gaps	Obstacles to our work	Best practices	Key opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are women support groups who advocate for women's rights. They have been trained on conflict sensitivity, peace building, and conflict management. They offer psychosocial support to women. For example, they have advocated for clean water • Therapeutic counseling of SGBV victims • Law amendment • Intergenerational dialogue • Popularisation of law and advocacy • Capacity building on leadership • Involvement of men and youth in SGBV programs • Participation of women in decision making • Conflict prevention and mediation • Community dialogue • Radio programs on women 				

Commonalities

These are the cross-cutting issues from the group presentations

Opportunities

1. Collective actions regionally (Great Lakes Region) & intergenerationally
2. Healing justice for Human Rights Defenders/ Activists
3. Collective advocacy to challenge the status quo
4. Women should own peace processes
5. Availability of Legal instruments for peace and security such as the Kampala Declaration
6. Training modules were developed cohesively
7. Challenges with implementation by government
8. Importance of self and collective care to be able to help others
9. Women are yearning to create leadership spaces but they lack the opportunity

Peace and Security Strategies

1. Funding from governments for Sustainability
2. Domestication of laws on peace and security
3. Enforcement of SGBV legislation
4. Delayed justice for SGBV survivors

Leadership

1. Regional networks
2. Political will in some countries
3. Regular regional meetings
4. Social networks
5. Annual publication of achievements
6. Holding governments accountable through ministerial regional meetings
7. Capacity building on national and international instruments such as UNSCR 1325

Obstacles

1. Lack of funds
2. Lack of institutional support for a better implementation
3. Lack of implementation of laws
4. Shrinking civic spaces due to instability, conflicts and wars
5. Harsh customary practices and laws
6. High level of rape in conflict zones

Funding Opportunities

One of the key emerging issues affecting progress was lack of funds. Global Fund for Women (GFW) informed participants of the available funding opportunities and procedures for navigating the online funding portal. They were encouraged to open their organizational profiles. Urgent Action Fund-Africa is also another opportunity of funding women's organisations in case of emergencies related to women's rights. UAF also funds organisations working on women's wellness.

UN Women also shared their upcoming Request for Proposals for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to do evidence-based advocacy for the need for governments to create special mechanisms for SGBV cases (i.e. fast-track special courts) to address impunity. This was an important opportunity for convening participants to submit a collective proposal for joint advocacy that was identified.

5.0

WELLNESS, SELF-CARE, SAFETY AND INTEGRATED SECURITY FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS AND WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS



This session was facilitated by Ms Susan Asio from Urgent Action Fund-Africa.

In a very participative way, she led participants to identify what they like or used to like, and if they were still pursuing what they liked or not. Through an exercise, women leaders were able to realize that many of them do not spare time for self-care and their hobbies anymore. Due to the high workload and dedication to activism, they prioritised their work over free time, self-care, health care and quality time with family and friends.

Ms Asio appealed to the participants' consciousness that if they did not take time off to care for themselves, the stress and its consequences on health could quickly lead to a burnout. To illustrate this, she shared a letter (appendix 3) written by Hope Chigudu to activists to highlight the importance of self care to women human rights defenders.

Advice to fellow activists

So what advice can I offer you dear activists? Do not stop working hard and smart but stop carrying the whole world on your shoulders. Stay rounded and grounded, engage passionately in activism but take care of your heart, mind and body". If you burn out or tumble into depression, you will become no good to anyone, especially yourself. Do not allow yourself to sink into jargon and boredom or routine. When you are in this state, nothing seems to be worthwhile and there is nothing to look forward to.

”

It is honourable to work to change the world, but do it in balance with other things. You can explore and embrace the things you love to do and you will be energetic, enthusiastic, about your work. Don't drop hobbies or enjoyments. Ensure you dance and sing. Keeping your spirit alive and healthy is fundamental if you are to keep going. Work with others to establish your own sanctuary.

”

In this fiery world of feminists, be a channel of transformative leadership; be open to it, drink it, and pass it on to the other sisters easily, effortlessly, willingly and joyfully. If you do this, power returns to you and to the movement, silently, charging to expand again, to yet more activities and movements. A smile returns to your lips, your body is at peace with the transformation it has created and you return to gently breathing-in and out, and out and in!

”

She informed participants about the African women platform (Feminist Republik) that promotes **holistic security, safety, wellbeing, and collective care; healing justice; and documentation and knowledge generation.**



Participants break away in country groups to discuss their selfcare practices.

6.0 ADVOCACY MAPPING

In 2020, it will be 20 years since UNSCR 1325 was passed and 25 of the Beijing Platform of Action. Still, women face limitations and discrimination in many parts of public and private life. Country-based groups were formed to define a common vision and collective action to advance the WPS Agenda in the Great Lakes Region in 2020 and beyond.

Working in country groups, participants identified 3 key issues, actions, and methodology to guide engagement for upcoming windows for advocacy in 2020 and beyond.

I. Rwanda

Issues	Actions	Methodology	Available Window
1. Teenage pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community dialogues on Sexual Reproductive Health (and ensure that teenagers & men are engaged in the dialogues) • The judicial courts should persecute and punish the perpetrators timely • Create youth-friendly spaces in each village and initiate youth dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved partnerships and collaboration with government, CSOs and private sector • Incorporate the key issues in district performance contracts (Imihigo) • Reinforce monitoring systems by the gender monitoring office and have offices in the district for close monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from the government through Rwanda governance board to implement the successful models • Alliance building with women leaders at higher levels • Existing women forums for support • Regional integration mechanisms like the EAC • Participation in regional meetings & forums to discuss common issues for advocacy and learning
2. Lack of sufficient budgets for gender and GBV actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a tangible budget for gender & GBV issues in district performance contracts (Imihigo) • National Women Council representatives from national to grassroots level need to be trained on gender budget statement and get a budget for their planned actions 		
3. Limited agricultural harvest for women in agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved agricultural methods of farming (use of machines) • Access to information & technological technics 		

II. Uganda

Issues	Actions	Methodology	Available Window
1. Effective implementation of policies and laws on women's rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localization of laws and policies • Awareness-raising on laws and policies • Translation of laws and policies into local languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Media engagement • One-on-one dialogues with influential people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the existing structures at local and national level • Basket funding • Kampala Declaration
2. Unequal power relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting positive masculinity • Petition the constitutional court to pronounce or declare that the discretionary provisions of appointment into ministerial/chief administrative positions are discriminatory and therefore it should be limited by law to enable equal participation. • Awareness-raising on power relations and gender relations • Deliberate targeting of the existing social structures by engaging religious leaders, cultural leaders • Capacity building for women on transformative leadership • Keep girl children in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petition • Mobilising and organising citizens and CSOs • Deliberate male engagement • Feminized civic education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maputo Protocol • CEDAW • Domestic Violence Act • National Policy on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence • Reading research and reports from other organizations
3. Limited participation of women in leadership roles and in decision making in peace building spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudinal change • Deliberate targeting of the existing social structures that are maintained by religion and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach • Feminized civic education • Awareness raising • Capacity building and strengthening existing structures • Collective action by CSOs, governments and development partners to create an enabling environment for women's participation 	

III. Burundi

Issues	Actions	Methodology	Available Window
<p>1. Reduction of SGBV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early marriage • Unwanted pregnancy • Impunity • Corruption • Erosion of positive social values • Lack of proof of rape for justice • Negative masculinity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for the one-stop centers • Reinforce the resilience of influential groups in the community on early warning, prevention, and protection of women's rights (Women brigade etc.) • Raising awareness amongst women and girls • Involving men in the community dialogues on gender and complementarity or positive masculinity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of actors • Collect evidence • Exchange between women's allies • Lobbying • Using Media • Production of advocacy tools • Production of dialogue facilitation guide • Translation of key laws • Follow-up of commitment • Networking with other organizations like COCAFEM • Sharing information with the technical and financial partners. 	
<p>2. Negative masculinity as challenge to the civic and political participation of women and girls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and reinforce feminist leadership for young women • Involve men in the community dialogues on gender and positive masculinity 		
<p>3. Lack of economic empowerment of women and girls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational trainings • Exchange between women and youth on Sexual Reproductive Health (intergenerational dialogue) 		

IV. South Sudan

Issues	Actions	Methodology	Available Window
1. Domestication and implementation of Regional and International Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness on laws and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy Capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking with other women
2. Affirmative action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening women leadership 		
3. Peaceful environment to raise awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an enabling environment for women to participate in peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives 		

V. Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic

Issues	Actions	Methodology	Available Window
1. Women's participation in decision-making (parity as stated in the Constitution)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening women's leadership (prepare women to take the 35% or the 50% quota in leadership) Sharing experiences with other women in the region Promote self-esteem and solidarity amongst women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy at all levels Mobilization of women Documentation of best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking with other women
2. Increase of SGBV due to armed conflict and lack of funds for service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen capacity in fundraising and in advocacy 		
3. Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitization for disarmament and reintegration of armed children Protection of women and girls in the conflict zone 		

Following the presentations, participants engaged on areas for clarity.

Uganda

We often meet Ugandan women who excel in their careers. Could you tell us how you did that? Are there any good practices that we can learn from you?

Here in Uganda, we have a very strong women movement, so when the movement reaches a decision on an issue, everybody joins in and supports that decision. We include young leaders and deliberately train future leaders. Government supports women empowerment in Uganda through

promotion of girl child education and the education system itself. People reach university knowing what they need. Concerning implementation and domestication, we stopped that hard fight and now have gained knowledge to negotiate. Affirmative action has worked from the village to national level. We build the capacity of those women

The youth in Uganda is in general not as empowered as the women, i.e; the youth movement is not as strong and well organized as the women's movement.

Rwanda

How do women in Rwanda collaborate with other women's groups from the region?

There are regional platforms like COCAFEM (Concertation des Collectifs des Associations Feminines) which brings together members from Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda and is an opportunity for advocacy. Unfortunately, DRC is not yet in the East African Community and the CPGL (Communaute des Pays des Grands Lacs/ Community of Great Lakes Countries).

Concerning the monitoring systems in Rwanda, how do you ensure that the juridical system promptly handles crimes of SGBV?

We have a gender monitoring system at national level but we need to localize it. ProFemmes Twese Hamwe, is a channel for women for increasing advocacy, they have the fund for it. In terms of justice, people who make young girls pregnant are not young themselves. It's about power dynamic. In the intergenerational dialogue, we discuss positive parenting, positive masculinity, and how to support pregnant girls. There are a lot of cases of teenage pregnancy and there is research on the causes of early pregnancy. During community dialogues, we include men and cultural leaders to discuss topics like power and masculinity.

We empower girls who are affected by teenage pregnancy by involving and supporting them in income-generating activities because poverty is one of the principal problems.

Cross-Cutting Issues for Regional Advocacy

- 1. Government needs to take responsibility and fund service provisions for SGBV survivors**
- 2. Campaign for domestication and implementation of:**
 - Legal agreements and frameworks that have been ratified by the countries of the Great Lakes Region
- 3. Holding governments accountable**
- 4. Ensuring that women contest for leadership positions, participate in elections and get voted.**

7.0

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

A press conference was organised with media coverage from international media outlets (including BBC, Deutsch Welle, Radio France International, VOA) and national media (including New vision. Daily monitor. NTV. NBSTV. BBSTC. Radio one. CBS. KFM and Sanyu FM). Robinet Lucille (Reseau pour le Leadership de la Femme en Centrafrique), Sourire Muhgirwa (Association des Femmes des Medias (AFEM), Joan Bazilika Lado (Eve Organisation for Women Development), Agnes Ntahompagaze

(Abaremeshamahoro), and Achiro Mercy (Refugee Law Project) represented their countries. Country representatives had an engagement with the press that it was in English, French, and Kiswahili.

In addition, using The Peace Centre social media platforms, tweets shared key messages, recommendations and calls to action which earned 34,700 gaining 31,916 impressions, 863 engagement, 144 retweets and 249 likes on Twitter.

8.0

REVIEW OF THE CONVENING

Participants evaluated the convening (Appendix 5) and in addition reflected on the positive aspects of the convening in plenary.

1. I have learnt a lot! We have to own the WPS Agenda.
2. I would like to thank the organizers of this convening. I liked the sessions on the healing of survivors, the self-care and wellness. We have to take care of ourselves if we are to do our work well.
3. I realized that we have so many laws at national, regional and international level.

4. This was a special space where we had the opportunity to talk about feminism and its challenges. Every constraint called for our action. I am going back very committed to working collectively.
5. I liked the one-stop-center for cases of SGBV, the self-therapy and living in the feminist world in which we take care of each other.
6. There are many initiatives but we still need to create peace spaces. There is a lot of potential yet to be explored. Furthermore, I learnt about the importance of regional networks.

7. I got information on potential partners.
8. I was impressed by the work of the grassroots women in Burundi and Rwanda, they are doing a good job to advance women's rights.
9. Dear sisters, wherever we are, whoever we are, let us be in solidarity to eradicate SGBV.
10. As for me, I liked this meeting because it was so interactive. I was interested in the work of FemWise and in the session on self-care.
11. I liked the community mediation by women in Burundi. We have to work in solidarity to foster social cohesion, and peace and security;
12. We are dealing with a complex problem. We have to develop new media strategies that can even heal survivors. Community outreach is costly but we need to use it as a way to deal with negative aspects of culture.

Participants also shared what they would do differently given a chance to organise a similar event;

- Developing leadership capacities for young women and girls.
- Minimally, invite at least three representatives from each country.
- Improve on the per-diem
- Do a mapping of partners to know who can help and who can coach.
- Include youth who are often victims of gender based violence and the vulnerable groups.

9.0 CLOSING REMARKS

Lisa Block, the *Program Officer, Freedom from Violence*, Global Fund for Women thanked The Peace Centre for a great and fruitful collaborative partnership, UAF for the self-care, all the women leaders for the commitment and appreciated the solidarity and inclusivity that she experienced in the space. She committed to follow up on the emerging issues.

Ms Helen Kezie-Nwoha, the Executive Director of The Peace Centre, acknowledged everyone's contribution to the convening and particularly Global Fund for Women for its support and for the mutual respect and empowering partnership.

She recognized that the discussions were fruitful and that they were a vivid representation of how networking is growing and becoming more powerful. She encouraged everybody to open up the space and give more opportunities to young women.

Lisa Block
Program Officer, Freedom from Violence
Global Fund for Women





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4



5



7

-3-

DR/- Dialogue

- Médiation familiale
- L'implication des femmes comme alliés dans nos GPs
- La somme des OMs
- La collaboration avec les autres leaders

BSR/- La création de la plateforme régionale.





3



6

Photo Gallery

1. Participants are paired in twos to introduce their neighbour with a drawing of their faces.
2. Wall of faces.
3. (L-R) Robinet Lucille (*Reseau pour le Leadership de la Femme en Centrafrique*), Sourire Muhigirwa (*Association des Femmes des Medias (AFEM)*), Joan Bazilika Lado (*Eve Organisation for Women Development*), Agnes Ntahompagaze (*Abaremeshamahoro*), and Achiro Mercy (*Refugee Law Project*) represent the women in their respective countries at the press conference
4. During the wellness session, participants are given mandalas to colour.
5. Coloured Mandalas.
6. Panel discussions and plenary on women mediating conflict in the Great Lakes Region.
7. Group presentations and discussions
8. The Women Peacebuilders pose for a group photo



8

Appendix 1
PROGRAMME

Day 1	12th November 2019	
8.00- 8.30	Arrival, Registration	
8.30- 9.00	Introductions	Helen Kezie-Nwoha <i>Women's International Peace Centre</i>
9.00- 9.20	Opening Remarks	Lisa Block <i>Global Fund for Women</i>
		Juliet Were <i>The Peace Centre</i>
9.20- 9.50	Keynote address: Women, Peace, and Security in the Great Lakes region	Dr Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala <i>Makerere University Peace and Conflict Studies Centre</i>
9.50- 10.20	Discussions	
10.20- 10.50	Health Break	
10.50- 11.50	Women Mediating Conflict in the Great Lakes	Goretti Ndacyiyisaba <i>Association Dushirehamwe</i>
	Women mediators networks in Burundi	Agnes Ntahompagaze <i>Abaremeshamaharo</i>
	The work of FemWise-Africa and Opportunities for collaboration with grassroots women mediators	Elizabeth Lwanga <i>Panel of the Wise & FemWise-Africa Secretariat</i>
11.50- 12.50	Discussions	
12.50- 13.50	Lunch	
13.50- 14.50	Domesticating the ICGLR Kampala Declaration on Sexual and Gender-based Violence	Nathan Byamukama <i>ICGLR Regional Training Facility</i>
	Progress, best practices and successful strategies	All
	Discussions	All
14.50- 15.40	Self-audit and reflection for future regional advocacy and action: focus on good practices and strategies	All
15.40- 16.00	Health break	
16.00- 17.00	Feminist peacebuilding strategies	Helen Kezie-Nwoha <i>Women's International Peace Centre</i>

Day 2	13th November 2019	
8.00- 9.00	Reflections on Day 1	Helen Kezie-Nwoha <i>Women's International Peace Centre</i>
9.00- 11.00	Accelerating Progress: Efforts of Women's Rights Organisations, Best Practices, Gaps, Obstacles and Proposed Way Forward for:	
	Promoting women's leadership in conflict resolution and Peacebuilding; localisation of UNSCR 1325; migration and refugee response	Group 1
	Addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict settings	Group 2
	Addressing women's access to and control of natural resources and the impact of the mining and extractive industries on women and girls' rights and lasting peace	Group 3
11.00- 11.30	Health break	
11.30- 12.30	Presentation to plenary	
12.30- 13.30	Lunch	
13.30- 14.30	Emerging Security Threats and Implications for WPS work	All
14.30- 16.30	Wellness, self-care, safety, and integrated security for WROs and WHRDs	Susan Asio <i>Urgent Action Fund-Africa</i>
16.30- 17.00	Review of Day 3 Programme	
Day 3	14th November 2019	
8.00- 9.00	Reflections on Day 2	Juliet Were <i>Women's International Peace Centre</i>
9.00- 10.30	Defining a common vision and collective action to advance the WPS Agenda in the Great Lakes in 2020 and beyond.	Juliet Were <i>Women's International Peace Centre</i>
	Plenary and Country Group discussions	
10.30- 11.00	Health break	

11.00- 12.00	Country group discussions	
12.00- 13.00	Lunch	
13.00- 14.00	Country group presentations	
	Defining a Collective Roadmap	
14.00- 15.00	Recap of key action points and reflections on the convening	
15.00- 16.00	Closing session	<i>Global Fund for Women Women's International Peace Centre</i>

Appendix 2 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Name	Organisation
1	Lyse Gatore	Mouvement des Femmes et Filles pour la Paix et la Sécurité
2	Agnes Ntahompagaze	Abaremeshamahoro
3	Goretti Ndacayisaba	Association Dushirehamwe
4	Ndayizeye Riziki	Association Dushirehamwe
5	Alice Mukandanga	Association des mamans célibataires pour la paix et le développement
6	Leslie Gwladys Alimana	Association pour la Promotion de la Fille Burundaise
7	Immaculee Ruhatana	AMC Rwanda
8	Robinet Lucille	Reseau pour le Leadership de la Femme en Centrafrique
9	Antoinette Kahambu Kitsa	Solidarité Féminine Pour La Paix et le Developpement Intégral
10	Justine Masika	Synergie des Femmes pour les Victimes des Violences Sexuelles
11	Bisungwa Furaha Francine	Solidarité des Femmes de Fizi pour le Bien-Etre Familial
12	Rosine Budza Ndagjoy	Programme Amkeni Wamama
13	Liberata Rubumba	Programme d'action communautaire des femmes pour le développement intégré (PACOFEDI)
14	Tsimba Matondo Clarisse	Karibu Jeunesse Nouvelle (KJN)
15	Sourire Muhigirwa	Association des Femmes des Medias (AFEM)
16	Bazilika Joan Lado	Eve Organisation for Women Development
17	Awate Mary Moris	Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice

	Name	Organisation
18	Muteteri Betty	Rwanda Women's Network
19	Angélique Umulisa	Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe
20	Mukasarasi Godelieve	Solidarité pour l'Epanouissement des Veuves et des Orphelins Visant le Travail et l'Autopromotion
21	Achiro Mercy	Refugee Law Project (RLP)
22	Claire Atuhairwe	SEAMA Consults
23	Lisa Block	Global Fund for Women
24	Agatha Tumwiine	SEAMA Consults
25	Patience Ashemeire	EASSI
26	Rita Aciro	Uganda Women's Network (UWONET)
27	Akot Brenda	WORUDET
28	Susan Asio	UAF-Africa
29	Achola Leah	Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA)
30	Lilliane Adriko	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U)
31	Chipo Bangira	Akina Mama Wa Afrika
32	Khaoya Annet Irene	National Association for Women's Action in Development
33	Mutsindu Butaitirwa Faulestine	Femmes Unies pour le Progrès Social (FUPROS)
34	Grace Asimwe	Oxfam
35	Safi Douce Heri	Actions des Femmes pour les Droits et le Développement (AFD)
36	Helen Kezie-Nwoha	Women's International Peace Centre
37	Perpetue Kanyange	Rapporteur
38	Sandra Tumwesigye	Women's International Peace Centre
39	Sharon Eryenyu	Women's International Peace Centre
40	Juliet Were	Women's International Peace Centre
41	Nina Sauvage	Women's International Peace Centre
42	Emily Wegner	Women's International Peace Centre
43	Jonathan Seel	Women's International Peace Centre
44	Juan Rachael	Women's International Peace Centre
45	Tom Tumwebaze	

Appendix 3

A LETTER TO FEMINIST ACTIVISTS

What today looks like

It's been two years since we last met, I would like to update you on my own situation even though I know that words, too many and too few, cannot capture the state of my mind. Today is another strange day for me and it's difficult to know which way to go. Things have been strange for 8 months or more. I am no longer the activist you met two years ago. I don't know what I am. My mind is in a fog - I can't think very clearly. Making my bed takes a long time - I have to concentrate on every step along the way, and I am moving very slowly and deliberately. I am stunned, fragmented and spaced out most of the time.

I have been spending lots of time in bed, mostly sleeping, dozing, even though I dream of being out there, working alongside other activists, fighting for our rights. It feels like my mind has melted down, I am told that it comes back once the depression lifts. Whenever that is. For some people it seems to be months, for others years, and others never get out of it.

But I am writing to you about activism, not the frightening impacts of depression. Diane, the great energy efficiency guru, once called me a Hyper-Activist. I guess that's what I was. I lived, breathed, and focused on activism. It kept me thinking, inspired, interested, and alive. Every time someone said something unfaltering about feminism, I reached for their throat.

My life was about activism; movement building, supporting sisters, and being at the centre of any change. I was busy, and ignored other things in life that now, suddenly I realise I never developed. I did not stop to fuel; I drove and drove. I never stopped to anchor myself, to connect with my roots, my body, my soul, the home of my dance. I did not stop to feel the stillness, solidity, and clarity, to 'grounding out' the stresses of everyday activism and to increase the vitality of my basic life force, even though I

knew that my inner security had been eroded by constant harassment by our government using the 'power over' of their security officers. Control of my health and well-being was put in the hands of endless proposals and report writing, strategic plans, theories of change, and meetings upon meetings and yet, I was the same person that talked about empowerment; empowerment of women but not my own empowerment.

In Retrospect I used to enjoy cooking but stopped. I always liked hiking but never really thought about taking the time to do so. I never stopped to enjoy the sacred rivers of my body, the sun, moon and all pilgrimage places of my soul. Changing the world was more important and true many things changed for me and for other women but I should also have thought about self, organisational and movement nurturance. I should have developed a deeper kinship with my family and with people around me. I had no time. Don't get me wrong - I had lots of friends and acquaintances in the activist world.

But they were not deep friends of the heart. I neglected my heart, and how I was feeling about things, about people and about situations. Now that I'm in crisis, I don't really have the language to connect with people. Silence is easier than trying to explain what I'm going through, or to relate to other people's issues or problems. I didn't develop my mind in a broad way, learning about music and art and theatre and poetry, for example. I never really thought about a career - I was living my life, not worrying about the trappings and credentials of the boring, status quo world. I never wanted to be normal; normal got us into the mess we're in. I don't remember ever including organisational well-being in the proposals that I wrote.

Today, I realise somewhat wryly, somewhat bitterly but somewhat realistically, that money too remains a constraint and truth in my life and I guess the lives of many other activists, it constitutes a real gravitational force pulling us towards the centre of despair.

As I write, my mind is as clouded as it has been for a month. It could be a physiological response to too much coffee, sugar, stress, and smog. Maybe I've burnt out my adrenal glands. Maybe my brain is poisoned from too much thinking about tragic ecological issues, pondering bad air, and getting frustrated at the slow rate of improvement and the rapid destruction of the world.

Change your own world - the real world

So what advice can I offer you dear activist?

Do not stop working hard and smart but stop carrying the whole world on your shoulders. Stay rounded and grounded, engage passionately in activism, but take care of your heart, mind and body. If you burn out, or tumble into depression, you'll become no good to anyone, especially yourself. Do not allow yourself to sink into jargon or boredom or routine; when you're in this state, nothing seems worthwhile, and there's nothing to look forward to. It's honourable to work to change the world, but do it in balance with other things.

For example, explore and embrace the things you love to do, and you'll be energetic and enthusiastic about your work. Don't drop hobbies or enjoyments. Be sure to hike, dance and sing. Keeping your spirit alive and healthy is fundamental if you are to keep going.

Work with others to establish your own sanctuary. In this fiery world of feminists, be a channel of transformative leadership; be open to it, drink it, and pass it on to the other sisters easily, effortlessly, willingly and joyfully.

If you do this, power returns to you and to the movement, silently, charging, ready to expand again, to yet more activities and movements. A smile returns to your lips, your body is at peace with the transformation it has created and you return to gently breathing- in and out, and out and in.

So be aware and take this warning seriously. If you start slipping into the hole of depression and you notice yourself losing enthusiasm and becoming deeply disenchanted, take a break, talk with a friend about it and seek help. Don't ignore it. The world needs all the concerned people it can get. If you can stay in the struggle for the long haul you can make a real positive contribution, and live to witness the next victory!

Remember, the future is not something we plan for and then operationalise; the quality of doing in the present will become the future that we inhabit.

In solidarity,

Hope

This letter was written by Hope Chigudu as a reflection of the reality of African women's human rights defenders and a stern call to embrace the politics of self and collective care. Hope is an African feminist activist with decades of experience in feminist movement strengthening and feminist organisational and leadership development.

Appendix 4 PRESS STATEMENT

PRESS BRIEFING NOTE

Key Messages of the Convening on Women's Leadership in Peace Building in the Great Lakes region of Africa

14th November 2019
Kampala, Uganda

Forty women leaders from Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda gathered in Kampala over the past 3 days to discuss important issues of peace and security in the Great Lakes region. We reflected on the realities of the region, which continues to be faced with intractable conflicts and on the situations in our countries. Our primary focus is on the roles of women in building peace and in reconstruction; on addressing sexual violence, during and after conflict; as well as the impact of the mining and extractive industry on women and girls' rights and lasting peace in the Great Lakes region

In the conflict-affected countries of the region, we note that there are strong national and regional laws, policy instruments and government structures to address sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, including the Kampala Declaration of the International Conference of the Great Lakes region on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. However these laws are not being fully implemented and we continue to witness alarming rates of sexual violence ranging from rape to sex trafficking to domestic violence, with great impunity for those who commit these crimes and little support or justice for survivors.

As a result, efforts to prevent sexual violence are inadequate and we find that those who provide services to survivors of sexual violence such as the police, judicial and health workers are ill equipped to provide the required support and end impunity. In certain contexts such as within refugee settlements, police stations often lack family and child protection units and structural factors increase women and girls risk of sexual violence such as the lack of light at water-fetching points and communal latrines. Initiatives that address the challenges of SGBV such as recovery centres or one-stop shelters are underfunded and unable to address survivors' material needs such as clothes or sanitary pads. Women interested in cross-border business face additional huddles due to a lack of clear trade policies, limited access to information on taxation or direct support to women's entrepreneurship efforts. Overall, there is limited support for survivors of sexual violence to reintegrate into the community, receive psychosocial support and earn a sustainable living.

We therefore call on governments to prioritise funding and implementation of progressive national policies on sexual and gender-based violence. We also stress the importance of a holistic 360 degree approach to supporting survivors of sexual violence that address their wellbeing mentally, economically, physically and in accessing justice.

It is widely acknowledged that women's leadership is central to building peace in the home, in the community and within the larger society. Women have taken part in local and national peace processes in Burundi, DRC, South Sudan and Uganda to ensure an inclusive and sustainable peace. Governments of the region have also acknowledged women's critical role in peace building and post-conflict recovery through national, regional and international laws and policies on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. However, progress in ensuring women's critical role in peace processes and security governance is slow. This is often constrained further by women's exclusion from spaces and processes that are viewed as the preserve of men such as national peace talks or mediation processes. This is made even worse by limited support for local women's groups and women-led organisations that are important in humanitarian settings as women are often the first responders in times of emergency. We therefore call on governments and development partners to include women leaders in key decision-making processes, increase support for women's roles in peace and security as well as directly support the work of local women's groups in conflict and crisis-affected settings.

With the expansion of the mining and extractive industry in the region and the increasing acquisition of land for the same, the rights of women and girls as well as lasting peace, are at risk. There are

growing reports of compulsory land acquisition by governments with minimal say of its occupants and women tend to have no say at all. The compensation is often inadequate and not equivalent to the value of the assets on land. This also focuses on ownership of land under customary tenure where men have custody and ignores women's land user rights despite their critical roles in agriculture, feeding households and earning their livelihoods off land.

We call on governments to ensure free prior informed consent whenever acquiring land for the mining industry or agribusinesses so communities including women are fully engaged and involved in decision-making on these matters. Governments should ensure that in addition to companies conducting environmental impact assessments they assess the social impact of companies' acquisition of land and what it means for women's access to livelihoods, water and other resources as well as the impact on sustained peace.

Appendix 5

EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS

The evaluation forms were filled by 27 participants, who hoped to achieve the following;

- share with other women on how to be guardians of women's rights (promotion of women's rights)
- Share personal experiences and those of their organizations on the issue of women, peace and security and Inter-regional networking
- Share country's experience on women's leadership and exchange successes
- To listen to lived experiences of women leaders involved in peace building in the great lakes region.
- Practical approaches to peace building strategies.
- Experience on how other countries are dealing with sgbv issues and how they are empowering women in peace building activities through advocacy work
- Being equipped with feminist peace strategies to advance organizational work
- Hoping to share and learn real experiences from great lakes region

The average overall rating of your experience



The justifications ranging from:

- Learning about possibilities of collaborating with women mediators at the local level
- The joy of inclusion especially for women from grass root levels
- Training on self-care
- Realization through the training that together we can solve our problems and overcome the challenges that women face.
- Commendation of great coverage of the agenda and use of good methodology which was practical
- Having expectations met and acquiring more knowledge
- The themes of the convening were very enriching from the experiences shared of women in peace mediation and the strategies employed. All the topics of the discussion had lessons for the participants
- Experience sharing was great with take homes, the group work was quite informative even though time was limiting and self-care was rushed.
- I have benefitted a lot and I plan to replicate it in my own organization such as FEMISE, self-care, advocating for women rights and peace building, addressing gbv issues.

To what extent did the services provided during the conference contribute to the attainment of your objectives?

	Very small extent	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent
Hotel services			20%	67%	13%
Bilingual interpretations	7%	20%	26%	47%	
Training materials (bag, writing pad, pen, programme, reading materials)		7%	60%	33%	
Meeting room			7%	47%	26%

To what extent was the session on the UN secretary council resolutions helpful to you?

	Very small extent	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent
Women having a mediation role in conflict resolution in the Great Lakes Region			8%	67%	25%
Domestication of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Instruments- Kampala Declaration on Sexual and Gender based violence			11%	52%	37%
Internal audit and reflection on future advocacy and actions :focus on best practices and strategies			15%	48%	37%
Feminist strategies on peace building			12%	44%	44%
Group work Accelerating progress: Efforts made by Women's Organizations, Best practices Gaps, obstacles and suggestions on how to improve			18%	41%	41%

	Very small extent	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent	Very large extent
Wellness, self-care, integrated safety and security for Women's Organizations and WHRDs			12%	35%	53%
Defining a common vision and collective actions to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Great Lakes Region for the year 2020 and beyond			4%	59%	37%
Social event/cocktail		4%	21%	47%	28%

Participants shared what they would do differently as the following;

- Developing leadership capacities for young women and girls.
- Minimally, invite at least three representatives from each country.
- Participate actively in different discussions
- Improve on the per-diem

The general or specific comments about the conference included recommendations for the conventions to include youths who are often victims of gender based violence and the vulnerable groups so that they can also participate in such rich conferences.

The suggestion to multiply more of such activities in order to perfect our strategies and enhance our interventions regarding the GBV scourge was another general comment.

One of the participants commented on how conventions tend forget some silent groups of women like the disabled, LGBTQ community.



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