

Meeting of Ministers of Women's Affairs of the Great Lakes Region
Kinshasa, 24-25 July 2008

**Declaration of Kinshasa concerning the impact of gender
on peace and development in the Great Lakes Region**

**We, Ministers with responsibility for women and gender issues in
the Great Lakes Region,**

**Gathered in Kinshasa, 24 and 25 July 2008, under the auspices of
UNESCO;**

Recalling the resolutions, declarations, conventions and recommendations of the United Nations system and specialized institutions which seek to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality between women and men as is called for in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and regional documents such as the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region (2004), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2005), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (entered into force October 21, 1986) and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (2006);

Notes with concern that adherence to a number of international legal instruments on the part of countries in the Great Lakes Region has failed to translate into tangible results in the lives of women, and that women continue to experience violations of their human rights including with respect to education and political participation;

Noting that despite an increased presence of women in legislative bodies, generally women remain under-represented in the majority of power and decision making structures, and that their interests and concerns are not fully taken into account in post-conflict reconstruction;

Preoccupied by the difficult situation of human rights in our countries, by the use of rape as a weapon of war, as well as by the human and social consequences caused by armed conflicts and which impact notably women, children, the aged, physically challenged, and youth;

Conscious of the fact that violence against women is widespread, a flagrant violation of the human rights of women, constitutes a major obstacle to achieving gender equality, and that its consequences are multiple, long lasting and devastating for the victims and the society in which they live;

Convinced that:

- Women's rights are an integral part of human rights;
- Gender equality, peace and development are inextricably linked;
- The rights of women are best protected and promoted in societies that are based on the rule of law, and in which women and men are informed and educated on the rights of women and gender equality;
- It is urgent and necessary to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate, with the full participation of women, effective evidence-based policies and programs that foster the strengthening of women's capacities for action, and which promote and protect their rights in the countries of the Great Lakes Region, as well as at the regional level;

- The participation and contribution of all civil society actors, in particular academia, non-governmental organizations, women's networks and associations, in collaboration with governments, have an important role to play in contributing to, ensuring, and monitoring the application of regional and international instruments for the promotion of gender equality and respect for human rights, and must carry out their actions in synergy at the regional level.

Through the work of the International Center for research and documentation on women we commit to;

- Facilitate the establishment of conditions which will better safeguard and promote respect for the rights of women in the Great Lakes Region, as is called for in national, regional and international instruments;
- Support respect for the human rights of women and promote the development of evidenced-based gender policies that take into account the specifics of the region;
- Contribute to the strengthening of human and building institutional capacities on women and gender studies, the formulation of evidence-based policies, and to foster sensitisation and advocacy with respect to women's rights.

Decide:

- To create and support in collaboration with UNESCO a International Center for research and documentation on women to be based in Kinshasa and which will carry out activities throughout the Great Lakes Region.

- To establish, via the Centre, partnerships with research institutions and regional networks on the African continent, networks of women parliamentarians, Ministers, academics, and women's NGOs, as well as with UN agencies and international organizations which promote respect for women's human rights and gender equality.

- To assist, through the establishment of the Centre and its Associate institutions and centers, in supporting intellectual collaboration among countries, harmonizing policies on women's rights and gender equality in the Great Lakes Region; supporting the development of the human and institutional capacities which promote the effective implementation of legal instruments and political commitments in favour of women's rights and gender equality in the Great Lakes Region.

- To establish a Forum of Ministers of the Great Lakes Region with responsibility for women and gender issues which will convene once every year in order to;
 - a. discuss the harmonization of policies and programs which promote women's rights and gender equality,
 - b. provide political guidance and support to the governing bodies of the Centre,
 - c. improve and expand knowledge and understanding of developments in this field (through the invitation of researchers and experts, and others), and
 - d. award prizes of excellence to recognize and promote women's participation in political decision making bodies in the Great Lakes Region.

Kinshasa, July 25 2008

Ministers with responsibility for women and gender issues in the Great Lakes Region.

BURUNDI

S. Exc. Mrs. Immaculée Nahayo



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

H.E. Mrs Pagonendji Ndakala

Po 

CONGO (REPUBLIC OF)

H.E. Mrs. Jeanne Françoise Léckomba Loumeto Pombo



KENYA

H. E Mrs Esther Murugi Mathenge



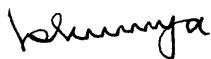
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

H.E. Mrs. Philomène Omatuku



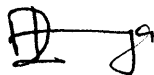
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

H. E Mrs Lucy S. Nkya



UGANDA

H. E. Mrs Hajati Isanga Rukia Nakadama



ZAMBIA

H. E. Mrs Patricia Mulasikwanda

