



Recommendations and Commitments made during the Parliamentarians' meeting on the ICGLR Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children, *Hotel source du Nil*, Bujumbura, Burundi, 22-23rd April 2010

Introduction

- 1- The Conference Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) ,with the support of the UNIFEM, organized a regional meeting on combating the Crime of Sexual Violence as a Crime against humanity, at *Hotel source Du Nil* in Bujumbura, Burundi from 22-23rd April 2010.
- 2- The meeting was attended by Members of Parliament from the Member States of the ICGLR. The opening ceremony was presided over by the Guest of Honour His Excellency, Anatole Manirakiza, Vice President of the Senate of Burundi; Amb. Liberata Mulamula, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR; Marie Jose Kandanga representing UNIFEM Regional Director, Central African Office and Mr Gaspard Kabura the National coordinator of Burundi.
- 3- Member States that were represented were: Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Objectives

The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

1. review the State of the Crime of Sexual Violence in the Great Lakes Region,
2. create awareness around and disseminate the ICGLR Instruments on the Prevention and the Suppression of the sexual violence for a common interpretation and understanding among parliamentarians,
3. share experiences of best practices/lessons learnt from Member States to respond to the crime of sexual violence,

4. to sensitize on the importance of gender sensitive legislation , policies and budgeting for effective domestication of the ICGLR protocol on sexual violence and
5. develop a plan of action that parliamentarians commit to, to protect women and children from sexual violence.

Content

6. During the two days meeting, the participants reviewed the situation of sexual violence in the 11 member states of ICGLR and discussed the content and domestication strategies of the ICGLR instruments on sexual violence. Progress being made at different national levels was shared and common challenges in the fight against the Crime of Sexual Violence SGBV were identified. The importance of integrating gender dimension in legislations, policies and national budgets was also discussed as a long term strategy to combat SGBV.
7. The participants identified existing laws and initiatives against sexual violence among the six countries of ICGLR represented, identified the gaps according to the ICGLR protocol, and suggested solutions to the challenges. They also made recommendations and commitments to contribute to the fight sexual against sexual violence..

Recommendations

- (i) The Parliaments in the region should put in place laws and /or implementation mechanisms that take into consideration elements of the model legislation such as; a one-stop centre for victims of SGBV; a training facility for State officials; a committee for women and children about SGBV as well as protection of children born out of rape, defilement and pedophilia.
- (ii) Parliamentarians should advocate for consolidation of all laws related to SGBV in one piece of legislation, putting into consideration the provisions of ICGLR protocol on SGBV , for easy reference;
- (iii) Parliamentarians should establish a sub-committee under the Regional Forum of Parliament to address issues of SGBV;
- (iv) The Conference Secretariat should work with the Speaker of the Republic of Kenya to convene the Regional Forum of Parliament as soon as possible to enable committees of the organ to work;
- (v) The Conference Secretariat should provide sufficient information to parliament specifically to Women parliamentarians to assist them champion for good legislation, policy adoption, monitoring and advocacy;
- (vi) The national parliaments should empower parliamentary technical staff in SGBV issues and create SGBV desk, where they do not exist;
- (vii) The Conference Secretariat of ICGLR should organize a similar workshop and train parliamentary staff (who are researchers for MPs) about the protocol and

- (viii) National parliaments to be provided with gender budget statements by the executive and to review policies to ensure gender responsive budgeting for effective implementation of legislation and policies ;
- (ix) Parliamentarians to audit national legislation and laws to ensure they are in conformity with the regional protocol on SGBV ;
- (x) Parliamentarians to explore ways of using micro-finance as a tool for women empowerment to combat SGBV and enhance peacemaking processes;
- (xi) Member States should consider establishing specialized tribunals/chambers within the existing legal framework to try SGBV cases to accelerate and simplify procedures;
- (xii) The Conference Secretariat should communicate to the Speakers of the ICGLR Member States about the resolutions of the Bujumbura meeting for ease of follow up.
- (xiii) The Conference Secretariat should consider organizing a multi-stakeholders meeting including (but not limited to) ; parliament, judiciary, police, civil society, religious and traditional leaders, private sector, army and victims of SGBV where all actors can exchange experience, harmonize strategies and interventions in dealing with SGBV issues in the region.

Commitments

Participant MPs meeting in Bujumbura commit:

- (a) to form part of a regional steering committee to follow legislation on SGBV and compliance thereof in the respective countries;
- (b) to debrief fellow parliamentarians about this meeting and to distribute the report widely to all of them;
- (c) to use their membership in different committees of parliament to ensure that reviews and amendment of laws are made and budgets are accordingly scrutinized to address SGBV ;
- (d) To advocate for a budget line in our national budgets for gender issues within each ministry and ensure effective disbursement in a timely manner.

***Done at Hotel Source Du Nil , Bujumbura, Burundi
23rd April 2010***

***Attachment:
List of participants***