Aide-Memoire

2nd Regional Consultation on the Implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325 in the Great Lakes Region (Burundi, DRC and Rwanda)

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Kinshasa, DRC

The Ministries Responsible for Gender and Women’s Affairs - DRC, Burundi and Rwanda

In Partnership with CAFCO, Pro Femmes, and CAFOB

In Collaboration with FAS and with the Support of the Government of Finland
**I. Context:**

On October 31, 2000 the Security Council United Nations unanimously adopted the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 which focused on women, peace and security. In this resolution the Security Council recognizes that armed conflict disproportionately affect women and girls and highlights the vital role that women play in the prevention, management and resolution of disputes and in the reconstruction of political and socio-economic development in post-conflict period. Few Security Council resolutions have addressed the socio-political context of the Great Lakes Region with a long-term Gender perspective. Indeed wars and armed conflicts have marked for decades societies from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. The consequences of these conflicts have affected the daily lives of women and girls of these 3 countries and have consequently impacted societal structures in the region.

UNSCR 1325 therefore encourages States to adopt policies and programs for gender equality, integration of women in peace processes, security and development. It requires the effective participation of women and gender mainstreaming in peace and security. It provides a framework for action in the fields of conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacebuilding.

Overall, Resolution 1325 calls for the United Nations and Member States to take concrete steps to:

- Increase women's participation in conflict prevention, in peacekeeping operations and support women’s peace initiatives in conflict zones and post-conflict reconstruction;
- Ensure women's participation in the institutions and decision-making mechanisms in countries in conflict, in transitional period or post-conflict situation;
- Strengthening the protection of the rights of women and girls and address their specific needs related to the context of war and conflict;
- Integrate gender in activities promoting peace, security and humanitarian actions.

Resolution 1325 is thus an important instrument that governments and civil society can use to secure and strengthen the rights of women in conflict and post-conflict, but also in consideration of gender issues in peace and security as well as in programs of post-conflict recovery. Thus the implementation of this resolution requires from the governments to implement policies and programs on gender, peace and security. This is consistent with the call of the Security Council in its presidential statement of October 2005 to all Member States of the UN for the development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Resolution 1325.

**II. Project Background:**

Initiated by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and supported by the Finnish government, "the Regional Project on NAPs on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and Security” was designed for the three countries in the Great Lakes Region: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

In a region that has been torn apart by several cycles of violence to which women have paid a heavy price, this project will contribute to full and equal participation of women in prevention
mechanisms, management and resolution of conflicts, taking into account their needs in the peace process, reconstruction and development.

For two years a collective sense of ownership of the project has been created in the three countries through exchanges, workshops organized for women leaders at the country lever or through international fora.

In each of these countries, a project launch workshop was organized. On that occasion, a Project Steering Committee was elected following an inclusive process that involved government actors, women's organizations, civil society and international stakeholders. These steering committees have established offices and internal regulations governing their operation.

In order to document the process of developing national action plans, baseline studies (baseline study) were conducted in 3 countries by national consultants. The overall objective of these studies was to assess the state of play regarding the implementation of the provisions of Resolution 1325, identify challenges and identify strategies for its implementation. Validation of these studies was made by the steering committee with input from other state and non state stakeholder concerned by Resolution 1325.

The diagnosis reached by these studies has helped to launch a process to develop national action plans in the three countries in a participatory and holistic approach that targeted the priority areas of the Resolution in each country. Workshops were organized for the validation and the launching of these Action Plans in each country.

Along with activities at the national level, a baseline study on the implementation of Resolution 1325 at the regional level was conducted by an international consultant who has done research in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

Two years after starting the project and as a follow-up on activities already conducted in 3 countries, a regional workshop to validate the study conducted at the regional level to align and harmonize national action plans was organized in Bujumbura in August 2009.

In this workshop, delegations from 3 countries exchanged views on a draft regional action plan and have agreed to continue discussions on the establishment of a common regional action plan. At that time some countries needed to deepen the development process of NAPs. In 2009, the regional study and the work of the First Regional Consultation had proposed a number of recommendations including:

- The consolidation of national action plans and finalization of the Regional Action Plan;
- The need to adopt an integrated regional policy on the implementation of UNSCR 1325;
- Promote national and regional synergies around the theme Women, Peace and Security;
- Strengthening sub-regional organizations so as to incorporate the theme Women, Peace and Security

With this in mind, Femmes Africa Solidarité has continued its collaboration with national partners to consolidate the work done at national level by supporting the holding in 2010 of workshops to review or develop key 1 national action plans indicators for operations in Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda.
III. Rationale for Organizing a Regional Consultation:

In its presidential statement of 23 October 2007, the Security Council of the United Nations stressed the need to "strengthen cooperation between Member States and with United Nations agencies and regional organizations to adopt and promote regional strategies to ensure the full implementation of all aspects of Resolution 1325 (2000).

The organization of a regional consultation is also in line with the project’s design to adopt a regional perspective. Indeed, the 3 countries share common borders, near historical experiences in conflict management and joint inter-state organizations at the regional integration level and above all, similar women experiences in war situation is shared.

**General Objective:**

- To contribute to the consolidation of an integrated regional approach on the implementation of Resolution 1325 in the Great Lakes Region through the harmonization of the politics on Women, Peace and Security in the three countries, as well as through the implementation of a Regional Action Plan and a Regional Steering Committee.

IV. Methodology:

Holding the second regional consultation aims to help the three countries to have a common view on the involvement of women in conflict prevention, peace processes and reconstruction. To root at the regional level the harmonization process of an integrated regional strategy, the consultation will follow the following steps:

- Review the status of implementation of Resolution 1325 at the 3 states level;
- Review of progress made regarding the implementation of national action plans;
- Exchange experiences and best practices on the implementation of UNSCR 1325;
- Analysis of regional perspectives on UNSCR1325 at level of the Great Lakes region;
- Analysis of the Draft Regional Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 with the indicators and sources of funding;
- Analysis of operating procedures for the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action;

V. Expected Results:

- The Harmonization of policies on women, peace and security in the region is improved through the exchange of experiences and best practices;
- The regional perspective on UNSCR1325 is better understood through the complementary roles and responsibilities of States and relevant regional and sub regional organizations;
- The draft Regional Action Plan with agreed indicators is adopted;
- Sources of funding of the Regional Plan are identified;
- The monitoring of the Regional Plan and the regional coordination structure are defined;
- The Project perspective and strategies are discussed and agreed between participants.
VI. Participants:

- 10 participants from each country representing the Government, Parliament and Civil Society;
- The continental and regional organizations: AU, ICGLR, CEPGL and are represented at the Regional Consultation;
- Project partners will also be represented: Government of Finland, UN Women, UNDP, etc. ...
- Members of FAS, as well as project beneficiaries in the Greta Lakes Region.