



FEMMES AFRICA SOLIDARITE

**Outcomes of the first Regional Conference on
Women, Peace, Security and Development in the Great Lakes region
9, 10, 11 July 2013 – Bujumbura, Burundi**

H.E. Mary Robinson, the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region in Africa, in partnership with Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) organised the first Regional Conference on Women, Peace, Security and Development in Bujumbura, Burundi on 9, 10 and 11 July 2013.

Deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), particularly in the eastern region of the country and its disproportionate impact on women and children, the conference aimed to develop a road map for women's participation in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and the region and the adoption of a Regional Action Plan for United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 for the Great Lakes region.

The PSC Framework, also called the "Framework of Hope" by the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, was signed on 24 February 2013 by 11 African countries and was the fruit of a concerted effort between the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the South African Development Community (SADC). According to Mary Robinson, it is important that women's voices are heard "*from the bottom up and adhered to and implemented by Governments from the top down.*" More than one hundred women leaders including Ministers in charge of gender issues in DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, civil society groups from the 11 signatory countries of the PSC Framework, as well as regional and international partners attended the conference.

The conference was officially opened by the President of Burundi, H.E. Pierre Nkurunziza and attended by special guests such as Ms Valérie Trierweiler, Ambassador for the Fondation France Liberté, Ms Bineta Diop, FAS Founder and President, Professor Ntumba Luaba, ICGLR Executive Secretary and Ambassador Boubacar Diarra, the Special Representative of the AU to the Great Lakes region. "*We are showing that women's leadership matters and must be at the heart of the Framework of Hope,*" Mary Robinson said in her opening remarks.

During the three day conference, the participants worked to consolidate an integrated regional approach for the full and effective participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding through the implementation of the *Framework of Hope* and the 1325 Regional Action Plan for the Great Lakes region.

The conference was a great success and ended with the adoption of the "*Bujumbura Declaration*" read by the DRC Minister of Gender, Family and the Child.

The declaration recommends actions to strengthen solidarity and partnerships between the Office of the Special Envoy of the Great Lakes region, governments, regional and international institutions and women's civil society groups for the successful implementation of the PSC Framework. Another key achievement of the conference was the adoption of the draft Regional Action Plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 by the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. Following the incorporation of amendments, a final document will be circulated for validation by the three countries. A Steering Committee for the Regional Action Plan for resolution 1325 will be established and presided by Burundi for a year. Rwanda will host the next meeting of the Regional Steering Committee and DRC will act as Secretariat for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan.

Finally, the President of FAS concluded: "*I applaud the diversity of voices that was represented at the conference and that civil society and government representatives were able to transcend boundaries to arrive at consensus. This conference showed that when women mobilize, they can get things done. Women have spoken. It is now up to the international community to fulfill their commitment to peace, security and development in the region.*"



H.E. Mary Robson and H.E. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi



The UN special Envoy for the GL Region at the Opening Ceremony



Bineta Diop, FAS Founder and President



Professor Ntumba Luaba, the ICGLR Executive Secretary



Ms. Valérie Trierweiler, Ambassador for the Fondation France Liberté



Ambassador Boubacar Diarra, Representative of the AU to the GL region



HE Thérance Sinunguruza, Vice President of Burundi



Panel on Implementation of Commitments of the Framework of Hope



Plenary session of the Conference



Group photo of the participants