

# CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN THE ICGLR SPECIAL SESSION ON SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER, 2011

## CONCEPT NOTE<sup>1</sup>

### **I. Background**

In December 2010, at the request of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Regional Women’s Forum, Heads of State agreed to dedicate a special session on the problem of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in their next convened summit. Preparations are under way for this summit scheduled to take place in Kampala, Uganda from 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011. One day of the Summit will be specifically devoted to a Special Session on SGBV under the theme: ***“United to Prevent, End Impunity and Provide Support to the Victims of SGBV in the Great Lakes Region”***

In preparation for the Special Session, national, regional and international human rights organisations based in Kenya and Uganda have spearheaded a regional process to mobilize civil society organizations in the Great Lakes region to participate in deliberations leading up to the Summit.

### **II. Objectives of CSO Engagement**

- To promote clear and consistent messaging on SGBV experiences and demands to Heads of State for immediate commitment and tangible action
- To empower local and national women’s rights groups in the region to speak for themselves and ensure their voices are heard at high level decision making platforms
- To ensure Regional decision making structures take into consideration the human rights of women and children in their agreements which reinforce national commitments to women’s and children’s rights, in line with international and regional treaties and agreements.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prepared by the CSO Coordination Committee for the ICGLR Special Session on SGBV: ACFODE, ACORD Uganda, Action Aid Uganda, African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Akina Mama wa Afrika, CARE International Uganda, Centre for Citizens Participation in the African Union (CCP-AU), EASSI, Isis-WICCE, NAWOU, Raising Voices, Regional Associates for Community Initiatives and UWONET.

### **III. Thematic Areas under Focus by CSOs**

#### **1- Women's participation in decision-making on issues of conflict and security**

- a. Implementation and domestication without reservation of instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, UNSCR-1325 and UNSCR-1820
- b. Reinforcement of and increasing the strength of institutional frameworks such as the African Court and the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights to end impunity of SGBV at national and continental levels
- c. Increasing African women's appointments to institutional frameworks that protect the rights of women and children such as the United Nations and African Union peace and security architecture

#### **2- Improve regional reparation agreements and arrangements on SGBV**

- a. Including reparations for sex crimes in conflict and post conflict through commitment and enforcement of the law
- b. Improve sensitization on SGBV for social reform
- c. Comprehensive health reforms to include reproductive and psychosocial support for survivors of SGBV

#### **3- Commitment to real investment in prevention of SGBV**

- a. Create multi-sectoral prevention strategies beyond the police and legal frameworks that include health services, urban and rural infrastructures and the private sector
- b. Five percent increase in financial investments and other relevant resources in the multi-sectoral approaches to SGBV prevention by 2015

#### **4- Legal commitments**

- a. Creation of regional legal enforcement measures for holding nation states accountable for human rights violations specifically on SGBV.
- b. Promotion of the implementations of State protections for prevention and response to SGBV.

### **IV. Strategy for CSO Engagement**

Organisations in the CSO Coordination Committee have committed to working with relevant CSOs in all 11 member countries of the ICGLR: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

#### **National Level:**

At national level, the goal is to ensure CSO participation in the **national consultative forums on SGBV** which will help to provide national perspectives since each country is faced with

different types of violence against women as much as its varied dominance in different parts of the same country. Different stakeholders (government, civil society, research institutions, international and regional organizations) in the respective member states will be convened by the Ministry responsible for gender and the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum focal person. The National consultative forums shall establish gaps in their country legal frameworks on SGBV and implementation of the same, as compared to the regional instruments on the rights of women.

CSOs will be encouraged to focus on the aforementioned thematic areas in collecting information on the country situation on SGBV, which will later be combined into a regional score card. The national level CSO participation shall thereafter identify key representatives on SGBV that will participate at the ICGLR Regional Experts consultation meeting in October 2011 and the Summit in December 2011.

### **Regional Level:**

The CSO Coordination Committee aims to convene a **Regional CSO Experts Meeting on SGBV** on the eve of the ICGLR official meeting for Regional Experts and Ministers of Gender, scheduled to take place in Arusha, Tanzania from October 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The purpose of the CSO Experts Meeting is to develop clear recommendations based on the findings in the 11 countries, and which will elaborate and finalize the recommendations made in section III above.

Following the Regional CSO Experts Meeting, the CSO representatives will participate in the ICGLR meeting of Regional Experts, and advocate for the issues identified in the CSO communiqué to be included in the recommendations from the Ministers of Gender to the Heads of State Summit in December 2011.

The CSO Coordination Committee will support the participation of two (2) national civil society organisations per country as well as five (5) regional experts on the theme to participate in the Regional CSO Experts Meeting.

In December 2011, the CSO Coordination Committee will convene a **Parallel Session** during the summit to bring experience, voice and advocacy from national and regional levels to the Summit, and ensure women's independent voices and perspectives are present in the decision making spaces and in the media coverage during the Summit

### **V. Expected Outputs/ Outcomes**

- CSO consensus developed on regional priorities on SGBV and recommendations for action by Member States
- ICGLR Heads of State adopt key recommendations from the CSOs areas of focus

- First Ladies, meeting in the margins of the Summit, buy into and become champions of key CSO recommendations
- Increased media coverage on the various dimensions and demands on SGBV

#### **VI. Roles and Responsibilities**

Akina Mama wa Afrika will serve as the lead organization of the CSO Coordination Committee, responsible for convening the planning meetings, liaising with the ICGLR Secretariat, and overseeing resource mobilization for the December 2011 activities.

FEMNET, CCP-AU and EASSI will co-convene the Regional CSO Experts Meeting in Arusha, Tanzania in October 2011, with FEMNET taking the lead.

CSO participation in the national level consultations will be coordinated by the relevant members of the Coordination Committee who have presence in the respective countries.