

Press Conference

Thursday, 03 July 2008

Elimination of sexual violence and ending of impunity in the Great Lakes region

In collaboration with the Vice-Ministry of Gender and Human Rights, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) along side BINUB, UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNHCHR, jointly held a Press Conference on 03 July at the UN Information Center in Bujumbura on results of the Goma high-level regional consultation on "Elimination of sexual violence and the ending of impunity in the Great Lakes region."

Ms. Hyacinthe Budomo, ICGLR Gender focal point, stated that the high-level consultation held in Goma from 16 to 18 June 2008, falls within the framework of the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region (GLR).

She indicated that after several years of instability within GLR countries, regional Heads of State declared their collective determination to transform the Great Lakes region into a space of sustainable peace and security for states and peoples, political and social stability, shared growth and development, through the Dar es Salaam Declaration adopted in November 2004.

Ms. Budomo indicated that heads of state at the conference in Dar es Salaam, paid special attention to the issue of sexual violence in the region and stressed the fact that peace, security and sustainable economic development, can not be achieved in the GLR without sustainable solutions to the problem of sexual violence against women and children.

"Heads of state committed to address this issue and to find a lasting solution [and] the project on the prevention, fight against sexual exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence and assistance to victims was proposed. The aim of the Goma conference was to summon new momentum for these objectives", she said.

The Vice-Minister in charge of Gender and Human Rights, Rose Nduwayo, stated that the Burundi government is looking into sexual violence in line with the Goma recommendations. "In fact it carried out a bottom up mobilisation of the administration and the police force to curb this problem. Furthermore, to combat this problem, "we need to strengthen women's economic power and bring back peace", she said. Ms. Nduwayo also outlined the national strategy for the fight against gender-based violence. It includes areas such as: health, justice, education, security and social rights. "Once the strategy is implemented, the aim will be to equally implement the Goma Declaration recommendations", she added.

ERSG and president of the Working Group on Gender, Youssef Mahmoud, indicated that the Burundian government roadmap builds on the last UN Security Council Resolution of 19 June, 2008 on sexual violence. He emphasized that peace and security is incomplete as long as gender-based violence remains a challenge. He congratulated the Burundian government, which is addressing this problem openly and is making efforts to end it. "Our role will be to support the government in the implementation of this strategy. We will also work hand in hand with the ICGLR Secretariat", he said.

Guy Karema