

**A REPORT FOR THE LAUNCHING OF ICGLR TRAINING FACILITY ON
PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE
IN THE GRET LAKES REGION**

On 18th February 2014.



Introduction

- 1.0 The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) opened a Regional Training Facility (RTF) on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in the region. The RTF, which is based in Kampala, Uganda, is currently hosted by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. The Facility was launched on February 18, 2014 at a colourful ceremony in Kampala. This report summarises the background to the Facility, the process preceding the launch, the launch itself and the next steps.

Background

- 1.1 The Facility has its background in Article 11 of the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region which emphasizes Member States obligation to prevent, punish and criminalize the crime of SGBV in the GLR. In addition, under Article 6(9), the ICGLR **Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children** (2006), “*Member States agree (d) to set up a special regional facility for training and sensitizing judicial officers, police units, social workers, medical officers and other categories of persons who handle cases of sexual violence in the Great Lakes Region*”. In fulfilment of this obligation, Uganda offered, during the December 2011 Summit, to host this special Facility.
- 1.2 Consequently, the Summit Declaration of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the ICGLR at their fourth Ordinary Summit and Special Session on SGBV, held on 15-16th December 2011, “*took note of Uganda’s offer to host the Regional SGBV Facility and directed the ICGLR Secretariat to prepare the financial requirements (budget) for the establishment of Facility and present it to the next [Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee] RIMC for decision*” (see par 14).
- 1.3 On 28th February 2013, the RIMC received the concept and budget from ICGLR Secretariat and “**approved the establishment of the Regional Training facility in Uganda...**” The Conference Secretariat (CS) was directed to mobilize resources for the Facility...” UNWOMEN provided funds for furnishing and opening requirements of the Facility. Other partners promised to support as soon as the office opened. The RIMC also directed the Conference Secretariat to provide seed funds including for the staff of the SGBV Training Facility that would enable them (staff) to mobilize more resources from partners”. US\$100,000 has since been approved under the ICGLR Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development (SFRD) as seed money for this purpose. The RIMC further directed the Secretariat to; identify relevant partners including those organizations specializing in DNA scientific technology in order to train all stakeholders in handling SGBV cases, in particular the police and the judiciary, on the techniques related to DNA

evidence based technology for easy prosecution of the suspects. (See Decision 5 Pg. 7 of the RIMC Report). Bode Technologies is finalizing modalities with ICGLR to provide this service. With Uganda ready, the Summit of January 2014 in Luanda Angola welcomed the operationalization of the Facility in Kampala, Uganda (par 24 & 25 of the Summit Declaration) hence the facility was opened on 18th February 2014.



Preparations for the opening of the Facility

- 2.0 A two-man team comprising of Mr Nathan Byamukama and Mr Robert Semikooko was dispatched on 29th January 2014. They were to work with the Government of Uganda officials to organise the office, procure furniture and other equipment and to organise workshops for diplomats, Justice Law and Order (JLOs) and civil society. This was done, the challenges notwithstanding.

The Launching of the Facility

- 3.0 The RTF launch on 18th February 2014 was preceded by a press briefing on 17th Feb 2014 at the Media Centre. The media briefing was addressed by Mrs Elizabeth Kyasiimire, Commissioner Gender, Ms Diana Ofwona representing the Regional Director UN Women and Nathan Byamukama, representing ICGLR. The briefing was covered and telecast by several mainstream media including The New Vision newspaper which run an article about the launch on the same day the Facility was opened. The media briefing provided a unique opportunity to ensure that journalists are enlightened about the

Facility and also it was a good Q&A platform about the functions of the Facility. On whole journalists were very interested in the regional statistics on SGBV. They were referred to UN Women for further details (see attached stories from the media).

The Launch of the Regional Training Facility – 18th February 2014

- 4.0 The launch started with a breakfast meeting attended by diplomats and partners. Thereafter a ribbon was cut to mark the establishment of the RTF. , The afternoon session was attended by officials from the Justice and Law Sector (JLOS). The launch was presided over by three ministers namely; Hon Karooro Okurut (Minister of Gender), Hon Shem Bageine (Minister of State for East Africa Affairs) and Hon Nakadama (Minister of State for Gender). Also at the opening, was the Executive Secretary of ICGLR, Prof Ntumba-Luaba, Mrs Diana Ofwona representing Mrs Christine Musisi the Regional Director UN Women and Pernilla Rydeo representing Mary Robinson, the Special Envoy of the Secretary General to the Great Lakes Region. Also in attendance were Mrs Elizabeth Kyasimire the Commissioner, for Gender and Ambassador Ben Lukwiya representing Ambassador Mugume, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 4.1 Several organisations attended the launch some of which, but are not limited to, UNDP, UN Women, UNAFRI, UN-RCO, UNFPA, Oxfam and Care. Embassies represented included; Japan, South Africa, Great Britain, Angola, Burundi, South Sudan and The Netherlands. (See attached list). Overall over 70 participants attended.

Speeches at the Launch

- 5.0 Elizabeth Kyasimire, the Commissioner for Gender and Social Affairs in the Ministry, expressed pleasure that the facility was located at the centre of the national machinery of gender equality and women empowerment in Uganda.
- 5.1 Ambassador James Mugume, in a speech read by Ambassador Ben Lukwiya, referred to the opening of the centre as a landmark occasion in the efforts to fight SGBV in the Great Lakes Region. “Since Uganda was mandated to host the regional training facility, we are happy to witness the launch of this facility as a big step in the implementation of the Kampala Declaration. This is, therefore, clear proof that Uganda is fully committed to the effort to fight and end sexual and gender based violence in our region.” “This launch of the Training Facility comes at a time when the region is marred with violent conflicts in which the majority of victims are women and young girls. “It is, therefore, timely that we have this facility to empower personnel that are usually involved in investigations of sexual violence to develop and harness their ability and attitude in handling sensitive crimes against women,” he added. Mr Mugume hoped all Member States will greatly benefit from the services that the Centre will offer. He called upon greater cooperation with the Centre by all other stakeholders currently engaged in eliminating SGBV.



- 5.2 As Permanent Secretary of Uganda’s Foreign Affairs Ministry, he said the ministry will remain available to work closely with the Ministry of Gender to facilitate the work of the training facility to ensure that it achieves its intended objectives.
- 5.3 Prof. Lumu Alphonse Ntumba Luaba, the Executive Secretary of the ICLGR, said the opening of the Facility was a great day for women in the Great Lakes Region. This is because it emphasizes the strong will demonstrated by the Heads of State and Government towards elimination of crimes that especially target women. This commitment is in furtherance to the Article 11 in the Pact on Peace, Security, Stability, and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which calls for the prevention, criminalisation and punishment of sexual violence against women and children. “The launch today of the Training Facility will equip security officers, social workers, medical personnel, and all stakeholders in rendering assistance to victims of sexual and gender based violence. It is a great step towards victory against impunity of this violence,” Prof. Luaba said. He thanked the Ugandan government for accepting to host the Centre, a brainchild of the ICGLR that received unequivocal backing from all the 12 Member States, including newly admitted South Sudan. He also thanked particularly UN Women both for financial and technical support towards the launch of the Facility. “We would not like to see this Facility used only for administrative purposes but as an operational centre,” concluded Prof. Ntumba- Luaba.

5.4 A representative of the UN WOMEN Representative in Uganda applauded the ICGLR for brokering many regional commitments to peace and stability in general and more recently in favour of women’s human rights through its Pact and Protocols. The opening of the Facility, she observed, was another great step forward in its commitment to oversee the improvement of women’s lives across the region. “It is important that regional leaders continue to provide political support and cover for ICGLR and the new initiatives to link and jointly work for the interests of the people of the Great Lakes Region,” she noted. According to Diana the opening of the Facility is a particular milestone in another respect. It comes a six years after the original Pact that established the ICGLR to restore and affirm the region’s peace, security, stability and development. In this time, ICGLR, together with a legion of partners, have overseen a number of high impact initiatives that have gone a long way to improve the lives and fortunes of the region’s peoples especially women.



5.5 In the area of women empowerment in particular, ICGLR, together with UN WOMEN, established the Gender Unit within its secretariat in Bujumbura, Burundi, which has been instrumental in mainstreaming gender issues in the organisation’s agenda. It also established the Regional Women’s Forum and the Regional Centre for Research and Documentation on SGBV hosted by DR Congo hosts. “The fact that a wide range of expertise will emerge from the Centre from investigation and prosecution personnel, to specially trained interpreters, forensic specialists, psychosocial trauma counsellors, health professionals, witness protection specialists, attorneys and judges means that at last we

will be contributing to a much clearer accounting of sexual and gender based violence in justice processes. We will also be accounting for better outcomes for survivors,” she noted. “The launch today of this historic regional training facility is an emotional moment for all those who have waited for justice for far too long,” she added.

- 5.6 Based on UN WOMEN’s foregoing experience in combating SGBV, she revealed that the organisation is willing and ready to strengthen further collaborations with ICGLR and the Ugandan government in order to kick start the operations of the Facility. This will be done through the development of appropriate, relevant, context specific curriculum, sourcing high expertise to conduct the training of trainers, knowledge management, and supporting the resource mobilisation efforts. “UNWOMEN is proud to partner with the regional training facility and is pleased to announce the flag off of this collaboration with an initial contribution of fifty thousand US dollars (US\$ 50,000) to equip the centre,” she revealed.
- 5.7 In her speech delivered Ms Pernilla Rydeo on behalf of the UN, Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, Mrs Mary Robinson expressed gratitude and emphasized how opening of the Centre dovetailed with her mandate that the Peace and Security Framework for the region encapsulates. On the launch, Mary Robinson said, it was a fulfilment of one commitment out of many regional leaders agreed to within the Framework. “As we launch the training facility, we must follow through with quality, timely, harmonised training curricula to ensure that it serves the purpose for which it has been established; to equip prosecutors, judicial actors, police officers, medical personnel, social workers and other relevant professionals to deal with cases of sexual gender based violence,” she noted.
- 5.8 Minister Bageine welcomed the opening of the Facility and said it was a useful addition to efforts within the East African Community to purge the problem of SGBV. “We recently passed a Protocol on Peace and Security and are in process of extension of the jurisdiction of the East African Court of Justice to include handling crimes against humanity...which have always been directed at women,” he said. As a Community, which covers a huge chunk of the ICGLR, Bageine said there was overwhelming interest to promote peace and security and to advance especially the lives and rights of women and children because of its impact on the region’s progress.



Tina Musuya of the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention stresses a point

5.9 Minister, Nakadema was happy that eventually the Facility is open and is going to meet the expectations of the region. She recalled the long struggle from Arusha in November 2014 to date and expressed happiness for Ugandans about the Facility. She concluded her address by inviting the chief guest Hon Karoro Okurut, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

Speech by the Guest of Honour

6.0 The Chief Guest, Mary Karoro Okurut, lauded the spirit of regional cooperation that makes the realisation of important projects like the Facility possible. She said Uganda was not going to merely host a ‘white elephant’ but would ensure it works. The manner in which SGBV cases are prosecuted are akin to second violation given that the victim is required to recount what happened in full view of everyone. This, experts have noted, is the reason far fewer cases are reported. It is why a Regional Training Facility is crucial. “Sexual violence has reached epic proportions,” Karoro warned, recounting tales of survivors from the ongoing violent conflict in South Sudan. “The guns may fall silent but in the lives of those women, of those girls, of even the young boys who have undergone this violence for them the guns will go on and on unless we get this kind of specialised training,” she said. She rallied regional Governments and Agencies to offer their fullest support to the Centre so that it is well staffed, facilitated, encouraged, and appreciated so that its work can have far reaching impact beyond where it is hosted. “We owe it to the citizens of the region, the men and boys, women and girls, to ensure that all occurrences of sexual gender based violence are prevented in order for peace and security to be guaranteed,” Karoro urged.

The Launching & Afternoon Session with Civil Society and JLOs

- 7.0 The afternoon session comprised of an interaction between the Secretariat, Gender Ministry and Civil Society Organisations engaged in combating SGBV. The aim of the interface was to begin the reflection and preparation of what the Centre’s curricula must focus on, who and how it must be delivered, potential sources of collaboration, both technical and financial, and ways and means of harnessing already existing knowledge and ongoing training efforts in respect to the elimination of SGBV.
- 7.1 The session attracted the Police, the Justice Law and Order Sector, the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention, the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, Isis-WICCE, among so many other stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to share ideas on the Centre’s objectives and scope, what its curriculum should look like, and possible skill sets required to deliver it. The representative of UN WOMEN Representative Ms. Diana Ofwona reiterated her organisation’s enthusiasm and commitment to the Centre. She challenged all other partners to come together and work in a coordinated manner because issues of SGBV are multidisciplinary in nature and require a holistic approach. ‘In terms of training, there will be a wide variety of people trained in different areas,’ she said. One of the critical areas to focus on is the content of the training. That is; what kind of training, for whom, for how long; harmonising levels of understanding; what comprises SGBV.



- 7.2 According to Mrs Ofwona, there are over 900 forms of abuse carried out in Africa alone, she revealed, including breast ironing in West Africa. There is little awareness of this among most security organs in the region. “When the training actually takes place it is important that we don’t rush. A dialogue happens to enable in-depth discussions about

what we really want. We must be specific, we must be targeted, and we must be on spot,” she cautioned.

- 7.3 Nathan Byamukama, the Programme Officer Crosscutting Issues at the ICGLR Secretariat, spoke on behalf of its Executive Secretary. He reiterated appreciation to Uganda for hosting the Centre pointing out the central role of both the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Gender who made it possible. He also thanked UNWOMEN for the financial donation to help set up and run the Facility. He appreciated the three ministers who graced the function and the commitment they pledged to support the Facility. The Centre is specific on SGBV. Its scope is also understood to be the 12 member states of ICGLR. In terms of the curriculum, greater cooperation is needed to make sure it works. He further explained the objectives, rationale and added value of the centre. (See his presentation attached). The presentation was well received and it attracted many responses from the audience.
- 7.4 **Alex Musuale**, an official from the Government’s Analytical Laboratory in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, expressed challenges of supplying necessary support since victims of SGBV destroy evidence when they quickly clean themselves following rape/defilement. He called for greater public education for victims to understand the crime committed against them and support justice by not ‘destroying’ evidence, while families should not conceal such cases out of fear that they will be embarrassed. “Our justice system is evidence based. So as we work on training, we should incorporate the element of public awareness on each and every one’s role in conserving the scene of crime,” he urged.
- 7.5 **Tina Musuya** of the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) expressed excitement over the Centre but said for it to work it would have to cut through people’s life stories, their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours especially where SGBV cases tend to be embedded and normalised. This affects both victims and those making interventions. “Therefore the training should work around the issue of knowledge and attitudes whereby there is a similar analysis of this particular problem in terms of its drivers,” Ms Musuya noted. She said CEDOVIP is ready and willing to lend any necessary support on the fact that they have accumulated vast experience working in the area of SGBV.
- 7.6 **Lucy Ladyera** from the Secretariat of the Justice Law and Order Sector emphasised the need for coordination considering that some work in the area of SGBV prevention is ongoing in many different organisations and forums. This is important to avoid duplication. For instance, she said, JLOS is training judicial officers and the police on how to handle SGBV cases. The Police, too, have been reviewing its procedures like amending Form 3 that deals with the presentation of evidence in court as well as the collection of the evidence itself. Now, registered midwives as well as clinical officers were able to examine the victims as well as be able to give evidence in court. She also encouraged engagement and coordination so that the Centre blends with existing

institutional training structures such as the judiciary, which insists on training its officers within its established structures and systems.

- 7.7 **A retired magistrate** who has been involved in training especially mind set changes within judicial officers lauded the opening of the Centre and said it has the potential to advance the ongoing work. “This training facility to me is a gift. It is a love letter to the people of the great lakes region. And I’m proud to be part of this process,” she said.
- 7.8 **Carol Bunga** from the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda said there was need to carry out a needs-assessment for each group that should inform the design of a better curriculum. This, she said, is important to navigate cultural morals where there is no open discussion about sexual matters in a judicial setting where one is required to go into the nitty-gritty of what happened especially during prosecution of SGBV cases. She also emphasised coordination and engagement to avoid duplication. She cited the training IRCU has been conducting with Muslim leaders at district level and the impact it has had to the extent that the Kadhs have incorporated them in their legal processes.
- 7.9 **A participant** highlighted the issue of staffing at the Centre in respect to the tonnes of work that needs to be done and the scope (12 countries) that needs to be coordinated to that all what is happening in each country in the area of SGBV prevention is captured and harmonised. Presently, the Centre is supposed to have a Director, a Programme Officer, and two assistants. The participant cast doubt on whether such a small number of staff can kick start the sort of thinking required to get the Centre off the ground, as well as in designing the curriculum.



Nathan Byamukama, the Programme Officer Crosscutting Issues at the ICGLR Secretariat, shares a point with Prof Lumu Alphonse Ntumba Luaba, the Executive Secretary of the ICLGR, during the opening of the Facility

7.9.1 Richard Mwokozi of Oxfam suggested that the curriculum make a point not to forget SGBV in emergencies or humanitarian situations. “When a crisis breaks out, everybody is running around to ensure that there is water, latrines, food but there is always little concern what is happening to the women and girls in terms of sexual and gender based violence,” Mr Mwokozi said. He added that coordination will have to be rolled out to the district since a lot of work in SGBV prevention takes place at the district. Other than that, he said, it is entirely a good initiative that Oxfam will certainly partner with to input its contributions in any way it can.

7.9.2 Another participant said there is an emphasis on SGBV as only happening to women and girls yet boys and men also experience sexual abuse and it is as hard for them, if not more so, to report abuse meted out to them than it is for women. The training facility then, he cautioned, must not perpetuate this view. In the curriculum design, focus on men should be made clear.

7.9.3 Nathan Byamukama, the Programme Officer Crosscutting Issues at the ICGLR Secretariat, expressed appreciation for the discussions, the critical issues that were raised, and said further engagements will certainly build upon this very strong start. He noted that reconciling and harmonising disparate viewpoints and ongoing efforts will all depend

on the willingness of partners to engage fully and frankly and to seek the necessary compromises that are beneficial to the progress of the SGBV prevention in the region. “The whole logic of the ICGLR is to convene ourselves, discuss, and agree. Share experiences and pick out what works for you. This is the importance of this framework,” he said.

The afternoon session adjourned on a high note into an informal interaction over tea.

8.0 Challenges

1. The funds that were approved in December 2013 did not get to the ICGLR account until late January 2014. This delayed this report which according to the LoA was to be by 31st December 2013.
2. The launch date for the Facility was changed from 12th to 18th February which disorganized the preparations to some extent since initial invites had already been sent out and also affected the budget.
3. That process to demarcate the office delayed due to the absence of the authorizing officer (i.e. the Permanent Secretary) who was out of the country. This delayed the procurement processes including delayed demarcation of the office as well as delayed procurements of items to fit within the demarcated space.
4. Limited human resources which was magnified by the recalling (back to Burundi) of one of the two officers (Mr Robert Semikooko) in charge of procurement. This left only one person overstretched to oversee all matters pertaining to successful launching of the Facility.

Next steps

The minister of Gender, Mrs Karoro Okurut, was anxious to know when the Facility will start and wanted its head appointed as soon as possible. The partners were also wondering about the same. In order to keep the momentum high, the Facility needs to open. The Facility began functioning on 1st April 2014.

The Launch in Photos



Figure 1 The Executive Secretary of ICGLR Prof Ntumba -Luaba at the tour of the Facility



Photo: The Guest of Honour - Hon Mary Karooro Okurut, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, delivering making her address



Above: The Executive Secretary ICGLR greets the Minister of East African Affairs while the UN Women representative (in yellow) looks on. Seated is the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.



In photo: Guests listen keenly to the presentations at the Launch



Above: Article on the Launch of the Facility published in The Daily Monitor Newspaper



In photo above: Newspaper article featured in The New Vision Newspaper



Above: Article published in The New Times

FACILITY ACCESSORIES



RECEPTION AREA



DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



SMALL CONFERENCE TABLE



ONE OF THE OFFICES



RECEPTION AREA



ELECTRICAL AND IT PERSONNEL WIRING THE OFFICE



PHOTOCOPYING MACHINE



OFFICE STATIONARY



BOADROOM