

PRESS RELEASE

Regional conference on Strategies for Implementation of the ICGLR instruments on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in the Great Lakes Region, Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda 1st-3rd December 2017.

Kampala-Uganda, 29th October 2017: The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) - Regional Training Facility (RTF) on Prevention and Suppression of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) will hold a Regional conference on Strategies for Implementation of the ICGLR instruments on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in the Great Lakes Region at the **Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda from December 1-3, 2017.**

This Great Lakes High Level conference will be held under the theme "**Strategies for Implementation of the ICGLR Instruments on Sexual and Gender based Violence**".

The ICGLR is a grouping of 12 Member States namely : Angola, Burundi, Central Africa Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo (Congo Brazzaville), South Sudan, Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The Conference will be attended by Ministers of Gender, Chiefs of Justice, Parliamentarians, ICGLR National Coordinators, ICGLR Centres' experts, Fora and development partners to interrogate the implementation challenges of these instruments by Member States after 11 years when the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (what others have called the "ICGLR Constitution") and its related Protocol on Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children were signed by ICGLR Member States.

The conference sponsored by GIZ, is organized by the ICGLR – Regional Training Facility (RTF) based in Uganda, and is an institution of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) based in Bujumbura, Burundi. The RTF was established by Art 6(9) of the Protocol on Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children, with the mandate to train and sensitise judicial officers, social workers, police, medical officers, prisons officers and all those who handle cases of sexual violence.

Member States of the ICGLR collectively committed to combat the rampant crime of sexual violence in the Great Lakes Region. Several regional instruments with attendant obligations for ICGLR member states to address the crime have been signed and ratified. The challenge however remains with the implementation of these instruments at national and regional levels. The ICGLR also has a mechanism of implementation of its instruments and decisions at national and regional levels, including those related to sexual violence, but for various reasons including lack of sensitisation, the mechanism are neither uniformly nor consistently utilised to expected levels. The obligations under these instruments include the obligation of Member States to domesticate these instruments; to fund the structures created by these instruments, to amend laws and procedures in courts that are contrary to the instruments and to take legal and administrative measures to comply. The conference will agree on workable strategies to effectively implement these instruments across sectors of government as well as meaningful consultation of the civil society, women and youth.

According to the Ag. Director of the RTF, Mr. Nathan Byamukama, the conference will provide an opportunity to do the following:-

1. Brief Ministers responsible for gender, Parliamentarians, Chief Justices/Judicial Officers, National Coordinators (NCs) and Members of the RWF and other participants , on the overall progress made to date, the challenges faced and the gaps remaining in the implementation of the ICGLR Instruments on Sexual Violence (specifically the Kampala Declaration and the ICGLR Protocol on SGBV) in conflict and peace times;
2. Agree with the Chief Justices on the viability of establishing Special courts, Special court sessions and special court procedures for Sexual and Gender based violence & the role the RTF can play in training of officers of these courts;
3. Operationalize the FP-ICGLR Committee on "Women, children and Vulnerable Persons" that would spearhead the implementation of the ICGLR Instruments on sexual violence in respective Member States;
4. To review progress in Member States compliance with ICGLR instruments on SGBV after six years of the Kampala Declaration and after 11 years of the Pact ;
5. Share the work and strategies of the ICGLR Secretariat and its decentralised organs including the RTF and the Foras Civil Society, Youth, Forum of Parliaments and all organs of the ICGLR in fighting the crime of sexual violence;
6. Sensitize the delegates on the progress made by the RTF since inception 3 years ago and sensitize Member States on their role towards the efficacy of the RTF as a centre of excellence;
7. Sensitise delegates on emerging regional issues and commitments to the instruments such as commitments made at the AU on Early Child Marriages.

Mr. Byamukama further indicated that the Regional Training Facility (*otherwise known as the Kampala Center on SGBV*) will take this opportunity to open its newly acquired offices in the afternoon of 1st December 2017, located at Block 255, Plot 1345 – Munyonyo, just a few metres from the venue of the Conference.

The Guest of Honour at the Opening of the RTF Offices is expected to be the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet K. Museveni, while Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Sam Kutesa is expected to open the Conference in the morning of 1st December 2017.

The conference will be addressed among others by the ICGLR Executive Secretary- **Amb Zachary Muburi-Muita**; Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region; **Amb. Said Djinnit**; Chair of the ICGLR National Coordinators, **Amb. Ollandet Jerome**; ICGLR National Coordinator for Uganda and Permanent Secretary of MoFA, **Amb. Patrick Mugoya**.

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