



Towards a Parliamentary Strategy for African Women's Rights and Gender Equality



Uniting parliamentary efforts to end violence against women in Africa



Final Report
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Senate of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium

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Foreword

AWEPA, The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa, has undertaken activities since its inception to help improve the situation of women in Africa. As human rights and equality is core to our beliefs, we recognise the role of women as a key part of the development equation, especially in Africa.

Furthermore, AWEPA, believes that any kind of violence against women is an obstacle to the development of the society in which they live.

Within its Gender programme, AWEPA has amongst other things, promoted the cessation of violence against women through various activities organised in collaboration with European and African partners. We endeavour to bring awareness to European and African MP's on the important role Parliaments can play in changing and improving the social and political situation of women.

As President of AWEPA, I'm proud our section in Belgium organised an EU Presidency seminar in Brussels on 22 November 2010, titled "Uniting parliamentary efforts to end violence against women in Africa". This event is an illustration of what AWEPA stands for: bringing together parliamentarians of both continents to share experience and best practices. The aim was to implement concrete and legal ways to end Violence Against Women, specifically in conflict areas in Africa and in the campaign to end Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Africa and Europe.

I hope you will find this booklet useful as a tool/guide which gathers knowledge and experiences shared by high-level specialists, demonstrating that effective actions can be taken to end violence against women. At AWEPA, we strongly believe, that parliamentarians from Africa together with parliamentarians from Europe can make this evolution happen.



Miet Smet
Belgian Minister of State
President and Chair of AWEPA

1. Introduction

While it is a recognised universal fact that eliminating gender inequality and achieving women's empowerment are paramount to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, progress with implementation of the MDGs is the slowest in those areas that depend most heavily on improving the status of women and girls. Therefore on the occasion of the Belgian EU Presidency, the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) saw the opportunity to further its aim to help speed up implementation of these vital goals. We were therefore extremely pleased when the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to co-finance an event as part of the Belgian EU Presidency, and the Belgian Senate agreed to offer its home to facilitate the event.

The seminar titled "Uniting parliamentary efforts to end violence against women in Africa" took place on 22 October 2010 and saw a house full of African and European parliamentarians as well as members of Civil Society from both continents. It was an excellent opportunity to have an open discussion about the important role parliaments can and do play in ending violence against women in Africa.

This enriching day was devoted to two themes related to violence against women. The first session focused on the way parliaments can play a role in ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Africa and Europe. The second theme, in the framework of the 10th anniversary celebration of UNSC Resolution 1325, focused on violence against women in conflict areas in Africa. The day was gracefully brought to a close with the touching music of Grammy award winner and internationally known singer Dhobet Gnaohre.

The following day was devoted to a field visit to *Amazone*, a centre for women and women's organisations in Brussels, Belgium. It was an opportunity for the participants, mainly African Parliamentarians, to ask practical questions but also share their moving experiences with representatives from Belgian women organisations.

As Head of the Belgian Section of AWEPA, I'm very proud to present you with this booklet which houses the high quality and impressive presentations and speeches delivered by the speakers during this seminar. Ministers, parliamentarians, professors and members of Civil Society all shone a spotlight on the harshness of the glaring facts but also of the ways women and men in Africa and Europe develop ideas, actions and laws to change mentalities and stop violence against women.

Besides being an opportunity to learn, meet and develop new projects, this seminar also served as a base for a parliamentary resolution (see [conclusions](#) of this seminar) and two parliamentary guidelines on FGM/C and UNSC Resolutions 1325, now available online at www.awepa.org.

I would like to express my appreciation and thank all the speakers and participants for their involvement during the sessions and debates. I hope this report is an encouragement and an inspiration to go on changing mentalities and changing the terrible situation many African women find themselves in.



Sabine de Bethune
Head of AWEPA Belgian section
Member of the Belgian Senate

2. Opening session



The opening session was chaired by Hon. Ms. Sabine de Bethune, President of AWEPA Belgian section & Member of Senate of Belgium, Hon. Ms. Olga Zrihen, Member of Senate of Belgium & Hon. Mr. Jan Roegiers, Member of Parliament of Flanders.

2.1. Opening speech by Hon. Ms. Helga Stevens, Vice President of Senate of Belgium¹



Dear Sir Vice Prime Minister,
Dear Madam Minister of State,
Dear Colleagues Senators and Parliamentarians,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Senate, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this seminar organised in the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union in the Belgian Senate. It addresses the following issue: "Towards a Parliamentary strategy for African women's rights and gender equality – Uniting parliamentary efforts to end violence against women in Africa".

Violence against women and girls is an issue that touches all of us, wherever we live on the planet. It concerns us all, women, men, girls and boys, in the north and in the south. We must unite our efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls once and for all. This can only be achieved through effective work on women rights and gender, not only in Africa but also in countries such as Afghanistan. Europe also needs our constant attention because rights, that have been won, are too often taken for granted and can therefore be easily lost. We, members of the Parliament, must be pioneers. Because even in the 21st Century, women's rights are still violated and violence against women is still prevalent.

It can take on very subtle forms, through power shifts and legislation. It can be very brutal and physical, for instance through rape and/or genital mutilation. All forms of violence against women and girls must be condemned. In particular in conflict zones an end must be put to impunity related to sexual violence against women and girls.

Using women as mere change value in conflict zones must be stopped. Because this kind of practice touches mankind and society to the core of their beings, it is in my opinion the worst form of violence against women. If men harm women, they harm the whole society. In most cultures, women are the pillar of the family and

by extension they support the whole community. When harsh physical violence is perpetrated against women, it causes traumas that are often irreparable and affect the entire society.

The primitive rape of women is more than anything else a question of cynical power strategy, used to kill resistance and break down communities. To reiterate, we can only start speaking about equal opportunities if we at least insist upon respect for women's bodily integrity.

This is the bottom line. And it has nothing to do with culture or religion, but with human dignity.

It is our task as members of parliament to closely follow the current problems, to sensitise the population and to contribute to the solutions. It is our task to thrive for a better world where women and girls can live in peace as equals to men and boys.

I really believe that this is possible. It is a long way to go, but you, all people present at this seminar, prove that there is a will to reach this ideal. And where there is a will there is a way!

On behalf of the Senate I wish you a successful and educational seminar. I will eagerly look for the conclusions and the recommendations that will follow later on today. Thank you for your attention.



www.senate.be

¹ Original speech in Dutch

[2.2.Video message of H.E. Ms. Viviane Reding, Vice President of European Commission](#)

H.E. Ms. Viviane Reding, Vice President of European Commission, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship



Source: <http://ec.europa.eu>

[Click to view video](#) or visit www.awepa.org and click on Resources.



<http://ec.europa.eu/justice>

[2.3. Opening Statement by Hon. Mr. Abdirahin H. Abdi, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly \(EALA\)](#)



Madame Vice President of the Belgian Senate;
Hon. Steven Vanackere, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium;
Ms. Miet Smet, Minister of State and President of AWEPA;
Members of Parliament;
Distinguished Resource Persons;
Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you to make my statement on behalf of the East African Legislative Assembly. Indeed, my delegation expresses its deepest appreciation for the invitation by the AWEPA President, Ms. Smet, to participate in this year's EU Presidency Seminar. The seminar in itself, offers a great and unique opportunity for us to give a deeper meaning to parliamentary efforts to end the mistaken notion of custom and tradition towards FGM/C and violence against women, particularly those in conflict situations.

It is for this reason and owing to the cross-cutting nature of the theme that EALA's delegation for this year's event consists of the entire leadership of the EALA Committees – Committee Chairpersons, so that they can use the recommendations of this seminar as a launch pad to influence legislative reforms and to broaden further the scope of our work in dealing with FGM/C and violence against women in conflict areas.

The Great Lakes Region, which East Africa is part of, is associated with FGM/C and is also prone to conflicts more than any other part of Africa. The theme for this year's Seminar is therefore important to developments in the East African region and that of its neighbours such as The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Sudan and Somalia. We would like our region to enjoy peace and development, and to put an end to the pain and suffering of our women and the girl child; and specifically, to the cruelty of the African knife that has been known to disfigure body parts of our women and young girls in the name of custom and tradition. We, as The East African Legislative have made a significant effort toward this process of eradicating these vices by, in the recent past, adopting a Resolution urging the Partner States to take urgent and concerted action to end violence against women in the EAC region as well as another Resolution urging the EAC Partner States to take action against the practice of FGM/C.

These Resolutions are premised on the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community which obliges the Community to ensure, among others, the enhancement of women in culture, the promotion and protection of Human and People's rights through appropriate legislation, to discourage customs that are discriminatory against women.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, it is no longer a matter of custom and tradition, but a matter of public interest and importance to move towards the full realisation of the human rights of the girl child and women. We have come to understand that FGM/C and violence against women presents a social problem and may be labelled as one of the absurdities of modern times considered as one of the worst forms of discrimination against women. It is even most disheartening to see women suffering at the hands of their own society, companions and friends.

Owing to the above, it draws me to ask the following simple questions.

Who are the key actors in this whole episode of eradicating FGM/C and violence against women? Where is the point of convergence between the actors or are there uncoordinated efforts amongst them? What challenges do they face if any, and how have they been mitigated? Are there sufficient resources to support interventions? What have we done to eradicate the vices? Whatever we have done, have we done it well enough so that we can sustain its impact? What legal framework exists to eradicate the two vices – are they comprehensive, can legislations operate firmly within the existing framework?

The most probable answer to the above generic questions is that a number of actors are pursuing the problem and because of a lack of better coordination, we have not been able to decisively deal with it

whether at national, regional or continental level and the problems continue to manifest in different forms. On the basis of these shortcomings, it is therefore incumbent upon parliamentarians to work out mechanisms aimed at uniting their efforts to end violence against women especially those in Africa. Through opportunities such as the one offered by this seminar, it is possible to begin our collaborative efforts. Most importantly however, we should use our other platforms provided by the IPU, CPA, World Speaker's Conference, Africa Parliamentary Union, Pan African Parliament, National Parliaments and Regional Parliaments like EALA and ECOWAS, to speak our minds for and on behalf of the suffering women of Africa.

As I conclude, allow me to use this opportunity to urge each one of us to rally behind the theme of this seminar and to use our privileged positions to institute legislative reforms that will actualise the very recommendations we will come up with. When we get back to our work stations, we should be able to enact laws and adopt parliamentary resolutions that are deterrent in nature; establish Parliamentary Committees or Associations dedicated to the cause of the suffering women; commission parliamentary committees to investigate cases of violence against women; outlaw repugnant social acts like FGM/C; avail sufficient resources to support such committees and associations, share parliamentary knowledge amongst ourselves to gain from best practices. With these few remarks, I would like to thank you for your kind attention.



2.4. Opening Speech by H.E. Ms Miet Smet, President of AWEPA²

H.E. Ms. Miet Smet, President and Chair of AWEPA, Belgian Minister of State



What is AWEPA?

AWEPA is an international non-governmental organisation that helps African Parliaments and aims at putting Africa at the core of European issues. The association that counts 1500 members is constituted by actual and former Members of Parliament from almost all the member countries of the European Union as well as from Norway, Switzerland and the European Parliament. At work in Africa in a development perspective, AWEPA's objective is to enforce Parliamentary democracy by increasing parliamentary control on the executive as well as enhancing demographic representation and legislation. AWEPA considers that strong parliaments are a political lever for Africa's development. They contribute to foster peace, prosperity, and guarantee the continent's stability. In Europe, AWEPA members promote cooperation between parliamentarians and political leaders on African issues. With more than 20 years of experience, AWEPA is a catalyst for change and has broadly contributed to parliamentary and democratic capacity building in Africa. As a neutral organization, AWEPA members come from diverse political backgrounds. Awepa has a special consultative statute in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and figures on the list of the eligible OCDE-DAC organisations.

What are the AWEPA programmes?

African Parliaments – AWEPA implements programmes aimed at capacity building for the parliaments, their members and personnel as to improve their performance. Seminars and workshops improve parliamentarians' capacities to execute of their legislative tasks as to be better represented and exert a tighter control on the executive. Moreover, parliamentary personnel members are trained on the

issue of internal rules. AWEPA presently cooperates with near to 25 parliaments in Africa, counting national parliaments, regional parliamentary institutions as well as decentralised instances.

The thematic programmes – AWEPA informs the MP's and supports parliamentary action on development issues through conferences, exchanges and publications. Priorities on the AWEPA agenda are: HIV/AIDS eradication and orphan protection, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), poverty reduction and private sector development.

The European parliaments – To keep Africa high on the political agenda, AWEPA created a wide member net consisting of former and active European parliament members that are generally grouped in sections. These members are regularly invited to participate in AWEPA's activities. AWEPA organizes several activities throughout Europe, such as EU Presidency Forums, as well as African MP's visits to European MP's.

Research and Publications – AWEPA directs Research and produces booklets addressed to Parliamentarians as well as different tools on parliamentary democracy and other subjects related to development.

AWEPA works together with African humanitarians, some of whom are here today, to champion human rights. One of the greatest violations of human rights can be witnessed in the abuse that many African women and girls still suffer. We are gathered here today to call for parliamentarians to unite and form plans of action to eliminate violations against women and girls in Africa, and restore their human right to personal dignity and integrity. For many the topic of Female Genital Mutilation/ Cutting (FGM/C) is something you no doubt are well informed about, and for others, it may perhaps be a subject that has recently caught your attention; however, FGM/C is a practice that has been traced back to the 2nd Century BC where it was practiced amongst tribes residing on the west coast of the Red Sea, what is now present day Egypt³. Some historians suggest that FGM/C spread during the slave trade in the 15th and 16th centuries. Reports show that female slaves were sold at a higher price if they were "sewn up" in a way that made them unable to give birth.⁴ Although the tradition may be rooted in the slave trade, the practiced carried on under the reasoning of 'tradition'. Modern gender theory reports that FGM/C originated as a way to control women's sexuality. It was thought that the practice would control a woman's sexual desire and thus prevent premarital relations and infidelity, reinforcing the illusion that women were the property of their husbands⁵.

³ Chattin, Elizabeth T. 2005. *History of FGM*. <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~ehtoddch/politics/historyfgm.html>> Accessed on 5 October 2010.

⁴ Idem.

⁵ Idem.

² First part of the speech originally in French

Today FGM/C is practiced worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), it affects approximately 92 million girls in Africa over the age of 10⁶. FGM/C is not a medical procedure; it is a clear violation of numerous human rights which reflects deep-rooted inequality between men and women. FGM/C is almost always practiced on girls from infancy to the age of 15⁷, demonstrating infringement of the rights of children and further breaching an individual's right to health, security, physical and psychological integrity. The practice of FGM/C removes a child's feeling of personal security; meanwhile being a tradition, the practice is validated as a norm. The WHO describes FGM/C as inhuman, further arguing that the practice removes an individual's right to life, in the case that the procedure goes awry causing death by shock, infection or uncontrolled bleeding⁸.

The second session of today will focus on another type of violence against women; the peace and security of women in conflict zones. We will look at the importance of the adoption of United Nations Resolution 1325 and the integration, equal participation and full involvement of women in the promotion of peace and security, as well as the need to increase the role of women in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution⁹. Sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflict and war is used as a method of terror to breakdown families and communities¹⁰; it is real, and it has damaging consequences. The following statistics I am about to read are derived from various studies including the UN, UNFPA and the International Rescue Committee:

- In a sample of Rwandan women surveyed five years after the 1994 genocide, 32% reported being victims of rape¹¹,
- Based on the outcomes of a study undertaken in 2000 in Sierra Leone, researchers concluded that approximately 50,000 to 64,000 internally displaced women may have been sexually victimised during the armed conflict¹²,

⁶ World Health Organisation. Female Genital Mutilation: Key Facts. <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/index.html>> Accessed 5 October 2010.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ Idem.

⁹ United Nations Security Council: Resolution 1325. 31 October 2000. S/RES/1325(2000); pp. 1-4.

¹⁰ Ward, J. and M. Marsh. 2006. A Briefing Paper Prepared for the Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and in War and Its Aftermath: Realities, Responses, and Required Resources, pp. 4.

¹¹ Avega (1999). If not now, When? Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium (RHRC) (New York, April 2002).

¹² A. Benton, Research Report: Prevalence of Gender-based Violence Among Liberian Women in Three Refugee Camps, International Rescue Committee (IRC) (Sierra Leone, February 2004) unpublished data; also cited in IRC, Situation Analysis of gender-based violence (Liberia, April 2004).

- Out of 1,575 Burundian women surveyed, 19% reported to be victims of sexual violence, and 40% heard of or witnessed the rape of a minor¹³,
- In Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo, during and after the rebel offensive in 1998, approximately 2,000 women received medical treatment for sexual violence, 10 percent of whom reported rape-related pregnancies¹⁴.

The numbers don't lie, they also are a snapshot of reality; however, what they do tell us is that the nature of war is changing from the previous century when it was concentrated between armies and militaries. Today the targets of war are civilians. It is evident that the death toll of civilian men in war is higher; however, women and girls are a target for acts of sexual violence including torture, sexual slavery, rape and forced prostitution, which may lead to pregnancy and/or HIV/AIDS¹⁵.

I know everyone in this room is here because they want to contribute to ending violence against women, whether it is FGM/C or putting an end to the violence against women and children in conflict zones. Possibly for some it is to give a response to what happens in us when we hear of such violations on women and young girls, and perhaps it is to exchange and develop ideas on how to mobilise decision-makers in playing a more prominent role in the formulation of policy to accelerate the elimination of FGM/C. For many women and girls it is very important that you are here and that you are ready to take action on their behalf. Some of our speakers will give examples of progress being made such as H.E. Ms. Vabah Kazaku Gayflor, Minister of Gender & Development of Liberia who has been involved in putting together an action plan for women in conflict, Hon. Mr. Chris Baryomunsi who has been pioneering the law that was passed last year to eliminate FGM/C in Uganda, or other similar and as important actions that are making a difference. When we unify we make our actions much more powerful. The decision to work into this subject was an obvious one for me. As a woman I feel sorrow when hearing about the cultural practice of violence against women, and as a leader, it has been my duty to address it for many years. For AWEPA, this decision was uncomplicated because violence against women is in direct breach of our core values and mission. At AWEPA we cherish the fact that human dignity is a birth right of each individual; furthermore, we believe parliaments lie at the heart of creating a safer and stronger Africa. The combination of vision and belief in democracy are vital to an equitable society, the

¹³ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Press Release, Survey of Sexual Violence in Burundi (Burundi, 2005).

¹⁴ United Nations (UN) (2001).

¹⁵ Ward, J. and M. Marsh. 2006. A Briefing Paper Prepared for the Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and in War and Its Aftermath: Realities, Responses, and Required Resources, pp. 3.

preservation of democratic principles and the advancement of equality between the sexes. Another core aspect of AWEPA's vision, which is also shared by the international community and many of you here today, is achieving Millennium Development Goals 3 and 5, the former of which Promotes Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and the latter focused on Improving Maternal Health¹⁶.

We want to make these goals and this vision a priority on every agenda, at every European and African parliament; we want to raise awareness that FGM/C and violence against women is a tool for oppression, which condemns girls and women to a life of pain and hampers their development.

There was a time in Europe when human rights were not a birth right, where gender, race and class based discrimination were accepted as the norm. We have come a long way and today we can see how moral consciousness is evolving, human rights violations are frowned upon and sexual violence is by law not tolerated. Yet there is still a lot of work to be done for all women and girls to be safe in our countries and as number of our speakers from Europe will demonstrate. The situation for many women in Africa is desperate, where their personal security is not a birth right, where armed conflict increases the threat of systematic violent sexual violations, health and reproductive complications, physical and psychological distress, and social discrimination after escaping captivity¹⁷.

We will discuss in today's seminar how policy on eradicating sexual violence of women in conflict zones is an important beginning, but it is not enough, we also need to find ways to implement policy and deal with those who violate the laws of human rights and personal security. By the end of today we want each participant to be able to leave with a plan of action, and to return to their respective countries and be the voices of the girls and women who face this reality.

I want to take a moment to thank all of you who are here today, to our speakers from both Europe and Africa, for coming here to share their stories, knowledge, best practices and experiences in how to deal with such a sensitive, yet intricate subject, and I look forward to learning from you.

I would like to end today's opening address with a quote from a passionate man named Christopher Murray who works at the Tasuru Girls Rescue Centre based in Maassailand in Kenya where, even though it has been made illegal, according to last counts FGM/C is still practiced on 95% of Maasai girls. He is dedicated to giving young Massai women a place of safety and learning after having escaped early forced marriages and FGM/C.

“When women are empowered, we as men are empowered. When women grow, we as men grow, and the society grows, and the country grows and the whole world grows. When women are given the chance to live a better life, then the whole world becomes a better place to live”¹⁸.

Thank you and enjoy the seminar.

¹⁶ United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

< <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>> Accessed 5 October 2010.

¹⁷ Ward, J. and M. Marsh. 2006. A Briefing Paper Prepared for the Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and in War and Its Aftermath: Realities, Responses, and Required Resources, pp. 4.

¹⁸ Dvd: Give a Girl a Chance en Feminenza Internazionale Ontwikkelingen. 2006. Nairobi, Kenya.

3. Session 1: Ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Africa



This session was chaired by Hon. Ms. Magda De Meyer, Vice President of AWEPA Belgian section & former Member of the House of Representatives of Belgium; Hon. Ms. Safina Kwekwe, Chair of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Women's Forum and Member of National Assembly of Kenya.

3.1. Accelerating abandonment of FGM/C: evidence and opportunities – by Ms. Francesca Moneti, Senior Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF

(Speech as reported by Belgian Senate note takers)



FGM/C is a topic that stirs very deep emotions. However, there is something in the way it is typically described that is not emphasised. I would like to elaborate on that matter, so that we may understand collectively why it is so hard to put an end to the practice and why at the same time, in the last few years, many communities have begun to abandon it.

As stated by the UN Secretary-General in his report to the UN General Assembly, FGM/C is not perpetrated as an act of violence, it exists in a context where families have no other choice. FGM/C and child marriage are performed by parents because they are believed to be the “socially correct” option for the girls and necessary to maintain the status of the girl and of the family. It is upheld by a social norm that is so powerful that families have their daughters cut even when they are aware of the harm it can cause. Women, who know the harms very well because they have suffered them themselves, maintain the practice because the social cost of not doing it is higher.

Let us focus on the social norms and on the way these norms are changing, both in Africa as in immigrant communities in Europe or in the United States. You, as parliamentarians and committed individuals can make the difference in your own societies. You can make the difference in helping to change the social norm. Many attitudes, behaviours and practices are “automatic” and are socially constructed. They have either always been there – it is the way things are done – or there is no envisaged alternative or they are held in place by social rewards and punishments.

Social norms have other characteristics.

- It is a social construct: if a community has a social norm, which is its rule, this community also has the power to change that rule.
- It is based on reciprocal expectations. Individuals

prefer to follow the rule if they see that most other people follow the rule and therefore think that others support it. These are empirical expectations. We see everybody else cutting their girls and therefore we believe that everybody else supports the practice of cutting.

They believe that most other people think they ought to follow the rule and may somehow punish them if they do not follow it. These are normative expectations.

People are frightened to admit that they don't agree with the practice because they fear other people's judgement.

Social scientists call this pluralistic ignorance.

People are not aware that others also want to behave differently. The key element is that it's not enough to know about the harms. Communication and dialogue among people are vital so that they can draw the conclusions of the information about the harm and take a decision that can't be taken by an individual who stands alone.

Decision making is interdependent: the choice of an individual or family is based on what other individuals and families choose.

What can parliamentarians do in such situations?

They can help to stimulate and to fuel this kind of public debate. It is necessary to collectively co-ordinate the change of a social norm by utilising appropriate social networks.

People need to become aware – and in time be convinced – that others are considering and ultimately taking the decision to stop the practice.

What are the dynamics of the social change process?

If an initial core group of families decides to abandon the practice, it is in the interest of this group to expand, thereby widening the support for non-cutting and daughter's opportunities for marriage. In this way, a dynamic is set into motion.

People who want to abandon the practice, try to enlarge the group and get other women and men to abandon as well. At a certain moment, the decision becomes collective and public. This is important because what one sees is important. In that way people will be convinced that they can stop as well, and that will mean a great relief.

The key elements for the positive change that you can help to fuel, is the provision of correct information from trusted sources about the practice, but not in a judgmental way. Making a judgement would create distance and even social conflict. The information has to do with the fact that the practice has nothing to do with religion.

In that respect the work with religious leaders is very important. So is the work with medical professionals. Secondly, it is important to create the necessary spaces to discuss and to give appropriate information and explore the implications so that people themselves can

make the decision to stop.

This has to be organised both locally within communities, as nationally, with public media, university debates, parliamentary debates.

Legal measures have to be taken to make clear that harmful practices are human rights violations and therefore, unacceptable.

There are three types of norms: social norms, moral norms and legal norms. Each has a corresponding regulatory mechanism. Social norms are adhered to because of desire for social rewards and fear of social rejection. People do not want to face shame. When moral norms are at play people will have a feeling of moral gratification when they adhere to the norm and of guilt when they do not. These are generated internally, irrespective of what others may think. Finally, legal norms are upheld by the respect for the rule of law and by fear of legal sanctions.

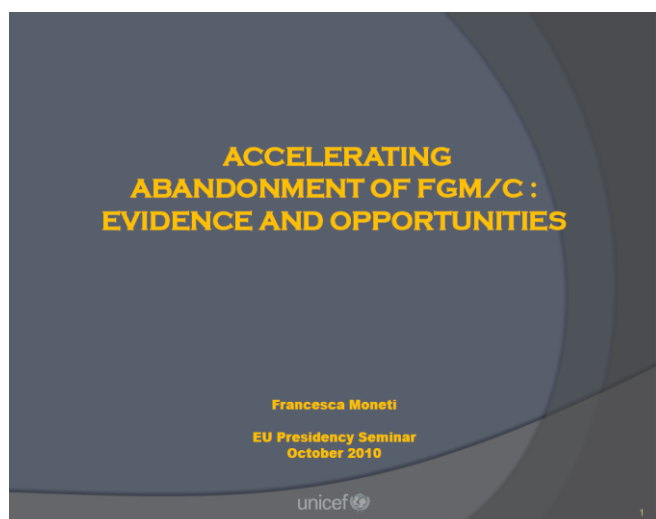
What happens when a law bans an existing social norm? If people feel strongly about the social norm in question, the law will hardly affect people's behaviour because the fear of social rejection is higher than the fear of not respecting the legal norm. In that context a law will not be particularly effective.

What we need is a stronger harmony between the social, the moral and the legal norms.

Let me give an example. In Eritrea, I witnessed significant work to raise awareness and enable people to change their attitude regarding the practice.

At that point the law was introduced and it created an additional instrument for people who were already beginning to abandon, and helped to accelerate the abandonment.

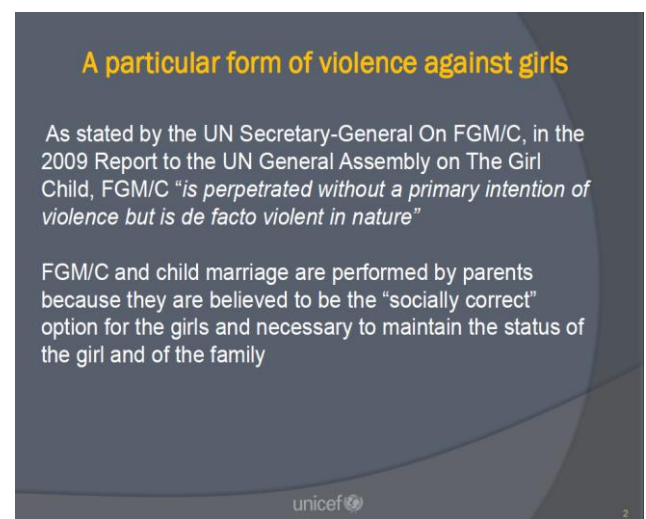
Presentation of Ms. Monetti ([link to presentation](#))



Our goal should be to shift the social norm and to complement existing action to raise individual awareness on the harms of FGM/C with the support of public discussion and dialogue leading to empowerment of those that practice it because they feel it's their only choice, and to collective agreement/decision on new social rules.

This whole process can be an inspiring process, one that motivates positive energy, rather than just telling people that it is a bad practice. The moral norm of doing the best for one's child can help to drive the change in the social norm of FGM/c or child marriage. This must happen collectively.

UNICEF has been working on a study that covers experiences of abandonment of FGM/C in five African countries, which will be launched on November 18th. This study highlights that the dynamics of social change that led to the abandonment of the practice were very similar in programmes operating independently in very different settings. Within the UN UNICEF and UNFPA are collaborating in a Joint Programme that is applying and further developing this understanding and supporting the abandonment of FGM/C in 12 African countries



Female genital mutilation/cutting functions as a social norm

"It is upheld by a social norm that is so powerful that families have their daughters cut even when they are aware of the harm it can cause"

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Pluralistic ignorance

- ⦿ No transparent communication
- ⦿ No common knowledge
- ⦿ People are not aware that others also want to behave differently

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6

Characteristics of social norms

- ⦿ Many attitudes, behaviors and practices – whether positive or negative for children's wellbeing - are "automatic" and socially constructed
 - EITHER have always been there "it is the way things are done"
 - AND/OR there is no envisaged alternative
 - AND/OR they are held in place by social rewards and punishments

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4

Decision making is **interdependent**
the choice of an individual or family is based on what other individuals and families choose

The behaviour is maintained because of a set of **social rewards and punishments**

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What is special about a social norm?

- ⦿ It is a *social construct*
- ⦿ It is a *behavioral rule based on reciprocal expectations*
- ⦿ Individuals prefer to follow the rule if :
 - (a) they see that most other people follow the rule and therefore think that others support it (**Empirical expectations**):
 - (b) they believe that most other people think they ought to follow the rule and may somehow punish them if they do not follow it (**Normative expectations**)

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5

Even if aware of the harm caused,
it is unlikely that an individual will behave differently from others
the social costs of not conforming higher for the individual and possibly also for his/her family



It is necessary to **collectively coordinate** the change of a social norm by utilizing appropriate social network(s)

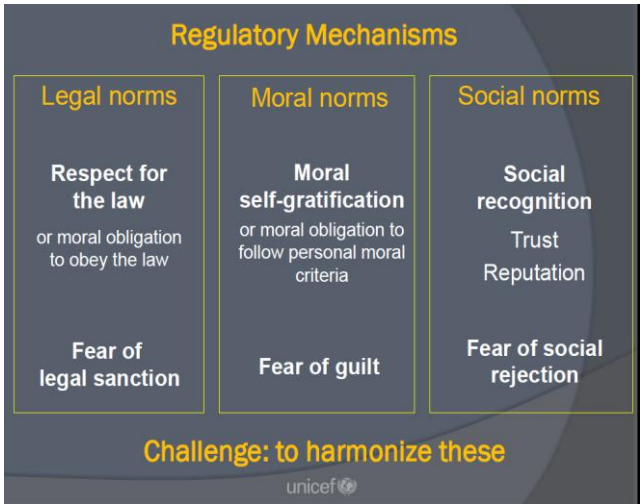
People need to become aware – and in time be convinced – that others are considering and ultimately taking the decision to stop the practice

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What are the dynamics of the social change process?

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Dynamics of process

- If an initial core group of families decides to abandon → a **dynamic is set in motion**: it is in the interest of this group to expand, thereby widening the support for non-cutting and daughters' opportunities for marriage
- When the group is large enough to ensure retention of social status, also manifested through marriageability of the girls, abandonment is self-sustainable. This point is sometimes referred to as the **"critical mass"** → and the social dynamic leading to the group's further expansion continues.....

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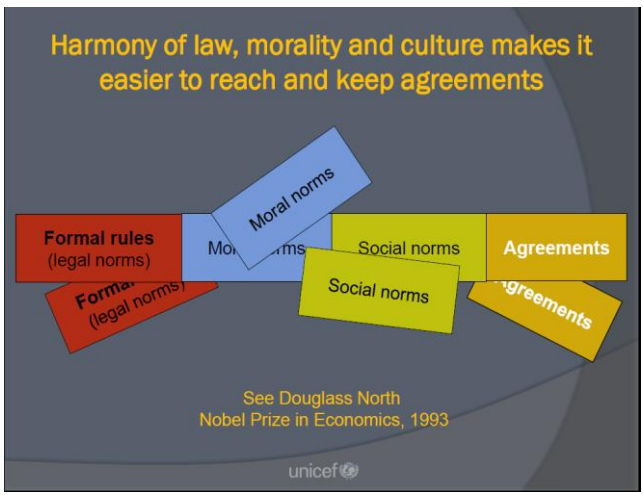
Elements for positive social change

- Correct information about the practice from trusted sources
- Opportunity to discuss and appropriate information together with other members of the practicing group and explore its implications with respect to existing social practices
- Legal measures that make clear that harmful practices are human rights violations and therefore unacceptable

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- Once there is a large enough proportion of the population to create a **"tipping point"** - the change is rapid and universal
- A **public commitment** is required. This enables people to see the change in expectations and trust that other people are committed to the new social rule
- After the convention shift, there is **no reason to return to the old social**. New social rewards and punishments are in place to maintain the new rule

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Goal is to shift social norm

Complement individual **awareness-raising on harms** of FGM/C



with support of public **discussion and dialogue** leading to empowerment of those that practice it because they feel it's their only choice, and to **collective agreement/decision on new social rule**

(has implications for communication strategy and work of committees and volunteers)

and with **legislation** that takes into account the social support of the practice and the capacity to enforce a ban against it

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Detailed evidence in study under publication

Innocenti Insight on Dynamics of Social Change

Will be launched by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre on 18 November 2010

- Outlines how the abandonment of FGM/C takes place
- Analyzes experiences in five countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal and Sudan

See <http://www.unicef-irc.org/>

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Coherence between moral norms and social norms

1. The moral norm of doing best for one's child motivates the continuation of FGM/C
2. When a better alternative becomes possible, **the very same moral norm that previously drove the persistence FGM/C now drives the process of change/abandonment**
3. Practicing groups **reaffirm their fundamental values and change the socially constructed "rule"** upheld by social sanctions of approval and disapproval, judgments of right and wrong

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Global level consensus on application of this social change perspective

Within the United Nations:

- United Nations Interagency Statement on Eliminating FGM (2008) – signed by 10 UN agencies
- Secretary General's report on The Girl Child to the UN General Assembly (2009)
- The UNFPA – UNICEF Joint Programme on Accelerating Abandonment of FGM/C

Beyond the United Nations:

- DWG Platform for Action Towards the Abandonment of FGM/C (2009)

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Build on the positive values

- Build on the "good" values rather than focus on criticizing the "bad" practices
- An approach based on criticism is bound to give rise to social conflict and to apparent or real discrimination (e.g. against immigrant communities)
- Criminalization of FGM/C is essential but needs to be enforced with sensitivity, taking into account the degree of social acceptance of the practices

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Major global programme for accelerating abandonment of FGM/C

The UNFPA – UNICEF Joint Programme on Accelerating Abandonment of FGM/C

- *40% reduction of the practice among girls aged 0-15 years and at least one country declared free of FGM/C by 2012*
- *17 countries targeted: Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Eritrea, Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali and Mauritania*
- Currently has a resource gap of approximately US\$30 million



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www.unicef.org

www.unfpa.org

3.2. Prevalence and policy on FGM/C in Africa – by Hon. Ms Safina Kwekwe Tsungu, Chair of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Women’s Forum



Introduction

Although VAW (editor’s note: Violence Against Women) has been recognised as a human rights violation, abuse and neglect of women’s economic, social and cultural rights have not. Yet the abuse of these rights more often than not contribute to the violence meted on women and girls such as domestic violence, rape, FGM/C, denial of property and inheritance rights etc.

This paper aims to provide a greater understanding of:

- the prevalence of FGM/C in Africa;
- why women are abused and discriminated;
- the structural causes of their subjugated status; the relationship between cultural, sexual, ethnic and economic structures; and the pervasiveness of both VAW especially FGM/C and women’s poverty.

It also examines the connections between patriarchal constructions of the state and religious institutions and the violence especially FGM/C and poverty affecting women in Africa. It further explores the policy and legal frameworks in place, if any, in selected African countries and how they contribute to the fight against FGM/C in the continent.

Violence against women in Africa

Violence against women and girls is a leading factor in the “feminization” of the two great evils plaguing Africa and the globe- poverty and HIV/AIDS.

The intersection between VAW, Poverty and HIV/AIDS is unmistakable as HIV/AIDS and poverty are simultaneously both a cause and consequence of gender based violence and contribute to the stigma and discrimination faced by women and girls in their families and communities at all times.

The impacts of these are exacerbated by:

- social and community standards that validate the subordination of women and girls;
- non rights-based approaches to development;

- inadequate services and the failure to protect sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls because of their ethnicity, language and class, among other reasons;
- government policies and services that are designed and implemented without attention to the realities of gender-based discrimination, violence resulting from real or perceived HIV status and the socio-economic, cultural and political disadvantage suffered by a majority of women in Africa.

In situations of armed conflict, the case is even worse for women and girls as they are particularly exposed to sexual violence; loss of property and livelihoods; loss of support structures such as legal recourse for violence visited upon their bodies; and impunity from prosecution that is often experienced during such times.

Where government policies, strategies, services and programmes are poorly designed and fail to meet the needs of women, governments and the international community need to put in place minimum standards for essential services as part of a minimum effort to grapple with this lethal linkage of VAW, poverty and HIV/AIDS. One of these would be involvement and presence of women in political movements, both at a local and national level, providing practical and effective substitute livelihood options to those people that conduct harmful practices like FGM/C and practical alternative rites of passage to communities that practice FGM/C as a rite of passage. However, for the fight against FGM/C to succeed, all these must be done in such a manner that the legal, moral and social norms of a Community are in a balance.

Prevalence of FGM/C in Africa:

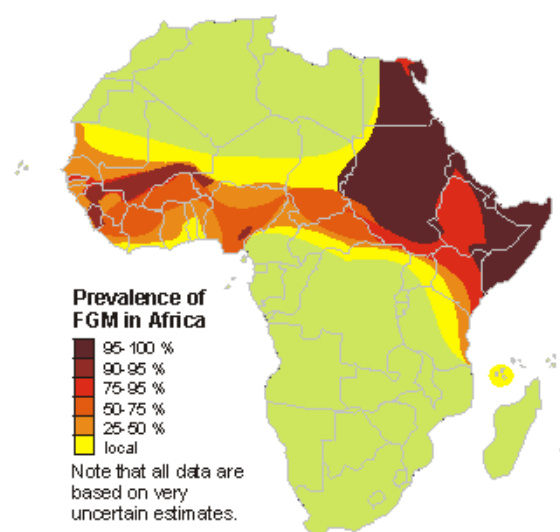
Many African countries practice one form of FGM/C or another. Whereas some practice surgical removal of either some part or whole of the female genitalia so as to deprive the woman of sexual arousal/excitement, others pull the female genitalia in a bid to enhance sexual arousal and excitement. Regardless of the perceived intent, FGM/C is WRONG regardless of the motive, the sanitation and health conditions of the environment where it is done and the process and extent of the mutilation.

In Africa, all the three types of FGM/C are practiced (1) the partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce; (2) partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora; (3) excision and infibulation i.e. narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and repositioning the labia minora and/or the labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris; and (4) all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example,

pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization. Infubilation is the most severe form of FGM/C accounts for about 10% of all FGM/C procedures described from Africa.

It is estimated that over 130 million women worldwide have been affected by some form of FGM/C, with over three million girls at risk of undergoing FGM/C every year.

FGM/C is mainly practiced in 28 different African countries. It is common in a band that stretches from Senegal in West Africa to Ethiopia on the East coast, as well as from Egypt in the north to Tanzania in the south. Some groups in the Arabian Peninsula also practiced FGM/C. It is also practiced by some groups in the Arabian Peninsula but is most prevalent in Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Mali even though in 2007, Egypt passed a law completely banning FGM/C.



Source : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fgm_map.gif

The practice can also be found among a few ethnic groups in South America while in Indonesia, the practice is common in several districts and in Europe, Australia and the United States FGM/C is practiced by some immigrant communities. A lot of sources exist for the practice, but all sources point into different directions. FGM/C is mainly practiced in Africa and Islamic countries and often regarded as a religious requirement solely because of the patriarchal constructions of the state and religious institution. Even if a country officially forbids or denies the practice, it is often a traditional part in the sociological structure and is often mistakenly justified by Freedom of Religion because it is seen as a religious practice. That is why despite laws forbidding the practice; FGM/C remains an enduring tradition in many societies and cultural groups. Indeed political leaders have found FGM/C difficult to eliminate on the local level because of its cultural and sometimes political importance.

All the myths that try to justify FGM/C have neither basis nor any proven records. FGM/C does not have medical or health value and therefore undertaking it in a more hygienic and medically safe environment such as a health facility does not make it right. Furthermore, those that do not undergo the mutilation do not suffer any conditions that require medical attention. It does not yield to economic empowerment either; otherwise female circumcisers would have been the wealthiest people in countries where the prevalence is high, with some countries posting 90% plus prevalence rates. The reality is that female circumcisers languish in poverty just like their clients and victims. FGM/C does not cure promiscuity; otherwise the world would have experienced hordes of sexually hyped women and girls in communities that do not practice FGM/C. So nothing that is fronted as a justification really explains why FGM/C is religiously practiced in 28 different countries in Africa.

The real and actual reasons for FGM/C are power imbalances and structural inequality between men and women that place the burden of safeguarding the chasteness and moral rating of a community on the shoulders of a woman even when it is common knowledge that promiscuity in traditional African communities involves both men and women. The brunt of guilt and atonement for promiscuous societies that is forced on women and girls yet simultaneously excuses men is a violation of human rights in itself. FGM/C is a result of inequalities and should be therefore the concern of everyone- male or female, those who practice it and those that do not, the rich and the poor, those from the north and those from the south. This is because inequalities matter for the achievement of the MDGs both at microeconomic and macroeconomic levels. At the macroeconomic level, they matter because they slow down the pace at which a given rate of growth translates into poverty reduction as a result of the health burden, loss of opportunity and the general despair exhibited by an affected community. They also matter for society at large because they generate high levels of social tensions, crime and conflict, with adverse effects for human wellbeing and progress. The act of FGM/C is nothing but violation of human rights in the form of violence against women, violation of rights of the girl-child, infringement on freedom from torture and violation of the rights to health and a bodily integrity.

FGM/C Policy in Africa:

In July 2003, at its second summit, the African Union adopted the Maputo Protocol promoting women's rights including an end to female genital mutilation. This instrument went into force in November, 2005 after ratification by 15 member States which rose to 25 by December 2008.

Even though FGM/C is closely linked to culture and religion, there are cases where policy attempts at ending FGM/C have been successful. Since 1997, 4,203 communities in Senegal, 364 in Guinea, 23 in Burkina Faso, 24 in The Gambia, and 14 in Somalia have voluntarily given up FGM/C as a practice. It is now believed that in Senegal the practice of female genital mutilation could be ended by 2015.

Nonetheless, some countries that prohibited FGM/C still experience the practice in secrecy as a result of low enforcement of this prohibition by governments. Egypt banned FGM/C in June 2007 whereas Mauritania, with a 70% FGM/C prevalence, gained support against the practice in January 2010 via a fatwa banning the practice signed by 34 Islamic scholars, thereby reinforcing the fact that FGM/C is not a religious requirement.

The case of selected African Countries

Country	Prevalence	Policy/law in place prohibiting/punishing FGM/C
Burkina Faso	71.6%; Type II	Law enacted in 1996, took effect in 1997 and ratified Maputo protocol in 2006
Central African Republic	43.4%; type I & II	Presidential ordinance prohibiting FGM/C issued in 1996 with the force of national law. The crime is punishable by imprisonment of from one month and one day to two years and a fine of 5,100 to 100,000 francs (approximately US\$8–160).
Cote d'Ivoire	44.5%; type II	December 18, 1998 law prohibits FGM/C and prescribes imprisonment of one to five years and a fine of 360,000 to two million CFA Francs (approximately US\$576–3,200). The penalty is five to twenty years incarceration if a death occurs during the procedure and up to five years' prohibition of medical practice, if this procedure is carried out by a doctor
Djibouti	90–98%; Type II	Revised penal code of April 1995 (Article 333) prescribes 5 years imprisonment and a fine of one million Djibouti francs (approximately US\$5,600). Ratified the Maputo Protocol in 2005
Egypt	78–97%; Type I, II and III	Law enacted in 2007 proved ineffective. in a survey in 2000, a study found that 97% of the country's population still practiced FGC, and another survey in 2005, 8 years after the ban, revealed that over 95% of Egyptian women have undergone some form of FGC.
Eretria	90%; Type I, II, and III	Law enacted in 2007
Ethiopia	69.7%–94.5% (varies from one region to another with Afar posting highest prevalence of 94.4% and Sothern region recording 46.3%); Type I, II, III, and IV	No law enacted to prohibit the practice and policy statements against FGM/C are not enforced.
Ghana	9–15%; Type I,II and III	Ratified Maputo protocol in 2007, Article 39 of constitution in part abolishes practices with injurious effect to human health. A presidential decree (not law) in 1989 declares FGM/C illegal.
Guinea	98.6%; Type I, II and III	265 of the Penal Code illegalizes FGM/C if a case is presented to the Supreme court with penalties ranging from hard labor for life for performing FGM/C and if death results within 40 days after the crime, perpetrator faces death sentence. Not yet ratified
Nigeria	25.1%; Type I, II and III	no federal law banning the practice, save for Section 34(1)(a) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that states "no person shall be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment" Ratified Maputo protocol in 2005
Senegal	5–20; Type II and III	Law enacted in January 1999 modifying the Penal Code to make FGM/C a criminal act, punishable by a sentence of one to five years in prison. Ratified the Maputo Protocol in 2005.
Sudan	91%; Type I,II and III	No law forbidding FGM/C after independence although Sudan, under the British rule, outlawed it in 1946. Not yet ratified Maputo protocol after signing in June 2008.
Tanzania	17.6%; Type II and III	Section 169A of the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act of 1998 prohibits FGM/C with punishment prescription of 5-15 years imprisonment or a fine not exceeding 300,000 shillings (approximately US\$250) or both. ratified the Maputo Protocol in 2007
Togo	12%; Type II	Law enacted on October 30th, 1998 and prescribes penalties of a prison term of 2 months to 10 years and a fine of 100,000 francs to one million francs (approximately US\$160 to 1,600). For those who fail to divulge information on upcoming procedure(s), punishment is one month to one year imprisonment or a fine of from 20,000 to 500,000 francs (approximately US\$32 to 800). Ratified the Maputo Protocol in 2005.
Uganda	<5%; Type I and II	Law enacted in March 2010, with convictions fetching 10 years in prison. For loss of life during FGM/C punishment is life sentence. signed the Maputo Protocol in 2003

		but no ratification yet
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1 Afar Region – 94.5 percent; Harare Region – 81.2 percent; Amhara Region – 81.1 percent; Oromia Region – 79.6 percent; Addis Ababa City – 70.2 percent; Somali Region – 69.7 percent; Beneshangul Gumuz Region – 52.9 percent; Tigray Region – 48.1 percent; Southern Region – 46.3 percent

The case of East African Community and the East African Legislative Assembly

The East African Community comprises five countries namely; the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Burundi, Republic of Uganda and the Republic of Rwanda. The legislative arm of the East African Community (EAC) which is the East African Legislative Assembly has all the traditional mandates of a parliament- to legislate, oversee and represent. In the fight against FGM/C, the EAC and its organs including EALA has undertaken several actions as follows:

1. Moved and passed a 17-points resolution of the Assembly on the 19th November 2009 urging the East African Community and Partner States to take urgent and concerted efforts to end violence against women in the EAC region and particularly the Partner States. As a result, two countries, Kenya and Uganda have passed two fundamental laws geared towards ending VAW and punishing perpetrators of VAW. Kenya enacted the anti- trafficking in Children Act 2010 aimed at protecting violence on children, especially girls. Some of these girls are trafficked across borders to undergo FGM/C especially during school holidays. Earlier, Kenya lost an opportunity to legalize against FGM/C when such provisions were struck out of the Sexual Offences Act during its debate by the 9th Parliament. The defence for such an action was that legislating against FGM/C is tantamount to “legislating against culture”. Uganda enacted the anti-FGM Act in March 2010 aimed at criminalizing FGM/C and specifically identifying it as an act of VAW.
2. Moved and passed a Resolution of the Assembly urging the East African Community to take action against the practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in February 2010. This called for enactment and enforcement of laws against FGM/C in all EAC Partner States, and called for the recognition and commemoration of February 6th every year as the international day against FGM/C with actions and audit of all actions of policy in nature or otherwise and how they contribute to stopping FGM/C in the respective countries and the EAC region as a whole.
3. All the 5 EAC partner states are signatories to the CEDAW and ratified the instrument.
4. All 5 EAC States are also signatories to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s rights on the rights of Women in Africa (Maputo protocol). However, only the Republic of Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania have so far ratified this protocol, with Kenya placing reservations on Article 6 (Marriage) and Article 7 (Separation, divorce and annulment of Marriage), reservations which were cured by the newly promulgated Constitution of August 2010.

5. EAC has gender framework in place with VAW including FGM/C comprising a major component.

The case of Kenya

The FGM/C prevalence ranges between 25% - 100% across different ethnic communities practicing it including the Gabra, Boran, Samburu, Maasai, Marakwet, Pokot, Kalenjin, Sabaot, Somali, Abagusii, Kuria, Meru, Agikuyu, and Taita amongst others. The fight against FGM/C started a long time before Kenya’s independence. Missionaries present in the 1920s and 1930s forbade their converts to practice clitoridectomy. In response, FGM/C became instrumental to the ethnic independence movement among the Kikuyu, the most populous ethnic group of Kenya – and the other indigenous people who reacted against what they perceived as cultural imperialistic attacks by Europeans, which consequently significantly strengthened these tribes' resistance to British colonial rule.

Because FGM/C is as a result of inequalities between men and women in society, while legislating on the Sexual Offences Bill, the Kenyan lawmakers succeeded in expunging FGM/C from the list of offences punishable by law even after medical research has proven that FGM/C has no medical advantages/value whatsoever. Ironically, when the World Health Organization stated that male circumcision greatly decreases one’s susceptibility to contracting HIV, men and boys thronged Kenyan health facilities seeking the service even in communities where male circumcision is culturally taboo. No man or boy has been excommunicated from such a community for undergoing circumcision whereas women who refuse and/or resist FGM/C are frowned upon and rejected. In fact, male circumcision has officially been adopted by the Kenyan government’s HIV/AIDS control and management policy as a strategy on prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission. Today it is actually encouraged and clinics, even in areas where male circumcision was never practiced, are now equipped to carry out the surgical operation in a safe and secure environment. This is the ultimate demonstration of discrimination as a result of power imbalances and structural inequalities. Death and injury arising of FGM/C, if reported to the police, is charged under the Penal code as a crime of assault and/or serious injury. In addition, girls who resist FGM/C can seek refuge in the Children’s Act of 2001 by citing that FGM/C will interfere with their rights as children to life, development and protection. However, since there is no specific legislation outlawing FGM/C, such cases seldom see a court room.

The case of Uganda

For a long time, the most notorious community in Uganda that has kept FGM/C alive, the Sabiny, have religiously advocated for the practice. Even though FGM/C prevalence stands at less than 5% in Uganda, 100% of the Sabiny women and girls have undergone FGM/C with dire consequences of under development, high health burden arising of FGM/C related complications, low literacy rates and overwhelming poverty levels. However, in 2009, the Parliament of Uganda engaged itself in prohibiting the practice by passing legislation prohibiting all forms of circumcision, which became law in March 2010. The case of the United Nations

In the global arena, the UN family has persistently pronounced itself against all forms of VAW. Such actions include the Human Rights Council's resolution 11/2 of 17th June 2009 and resolution 7/24 of 28th March 2008 on the elimination of violence against women; all resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of violence against women; General Assembly resolution 64/137 of 18th December 2009 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, and all other resolutions of the Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women relevant to the elimination of all forms of violence against women; Security Council resolutions 1325 of 31st October 2000, and resolution 1820 of 19th June 2008.

The UN's Human Rights Council (HRC) has advanced from 'encouraging' states to give 'due attention' to the elimination of VAW (Resolution 11/2 2009), to the more compelling language of 'urging' States to 'adopt and implement' such policies and to establish or strengthen plans of action to do so. It is encouraging to note that the UN's Human Rights Council during its fourteenth session on 15th June 2010, drafted a 24 point resolution aimed at "Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: ensuring due diligence in prevention" whilst dealing with Agenda item 3 which was on "Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development."

Conclusion

It is the duty of States to exercise due diligence to prevent violence against women and girls. States, together with their informed citizenry, must use all the appropriate means of a legal, political, administrative and social nature that promote the protection of human rights and ensuring that acts of violence are considered and treated as illegal acts for which adequate, effective, prompt and appropriate punishment and remedies, including reparations, are available.

Effective prevention of all forms of violence against women, such as FGM/C, requires a number of measures

including working with communities, civil groups and the involvement of boys and men in the construction of a new masculinity as an effective measure to combat VAW.

Since poverty is a factor that increases women's vulnerability, States must develop and implement poverty eradication strategies, publicly condemn VAW, and rank elimination of FGM/C as a matter of high priority. There is need for adoption and implementation of multifaceted and comprehensive approaches that promote gender equality and empowerment of women; integrate awareness, education, training, political will, legislation, accountability and targeted policies and programmes; specific measures to reduce vulnerability; data collection and analysis; monitoring and evaluation; and protection, support and redress for women who have experienced violence.

Furthermore, it is imperative to stress the importance of the full participation of women in the development of effective policies and programmes relating to the prevention of violence against women and acknowledge that confronting and changing the harmful attitudes, customs, practices and gender stereotypes that underlie and perpetuate violence against women is fundamental to ensuring effective prevention of FGM/C.

The obligation to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls lies with the State. Therefore, States must enact and where necessary, reinforce or amend domestic legislation and take measures to enhance the protection of women and girls who have experienced violence and to ensure that such legislation conforms to relevant international human rights instruments and international humanitarian law. States should abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women, and to remove gender bias in the administration of justice.

www.eala.org

3.3. Unicef short film on FGM/C

<http://www.youtube.com/unicef#p/search/2/V9DzLujRlro>

3.4. The role of Civil Society – by Dr. Ms. Bogaletch Gebre, Executive director of Kembatta Women’s Self-Help Center

Doctor Ms. Bogaletch Gebre, Executive director of Kembatta Women’s Self-Help Center, gynaecologist, Ethiopia



I want to thank the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) for inviting me to this august conference, which is attempting to ‘Unite parliamentary efforts to end violence against women in Africa.’

I am expected to stress the Role and Actions of Civil Society towards achieving these efforts.

Civil society is defined as that sphere of society outside the state sphere, which includes all Non-Governmental Development Organizations (NGDOs). CSOs are dependent actors in constantly changing environments. Thus, the core of system strategies for Civil Society should be an approach that enhances insightful agility. That is the ability to recognize, understand and adapt – in sustainable-oriented ways – to changes, which determine the specific context of their work. Sustainable action is about bringing particular types of change in a dynamic system linking ecology, economy and social and political systems, and these interact at many levels at once, from local to global and back to local. Within this framework CSOs must be able to operate in the context of forces that are unstable and unpredictable. This creates both opportunities and threats to achieving sustainable impact in what they do.

Second, CSO’s impact is conditioned by the policy framework (environment) and quality of their funding. In today’s aid conditions, they require approaches that

do not only over-sectionalize what they do, but also show how integrated action can be effectively pursued.

Thirdly, if Civil Society is defined as that sphere of society outside the state sphere, that section of society which has always been dis-empowered since time immemorial are women. That by itself makes them potentially the most vibrant members of Civil Society. As they have “nothing to lose but their chains” to use Marx’s famous phrase. However, it must be recognized that for women to lead and become the principal social agency, they themselves must go through transformation from state of passive resources and object to active citizens.

In this scenario, what is the role and action of CSOs in ending violence against women, particularly FGM/C in Africa?

Based on a practical experience and learning over the last ten years with in the CSO frame work and in the community, I would like to highlight a few major roles I believe African Civil Societies can play to end GBV (editor’s note: Gender Based Violence) in general and FGM/C in particular.

1. CSO must have persistent and committed leadership to action, under any political and social contexts.
 2. CSO must use multi thrust, all inclusive approach (young old, women, men, literate non-literate, elders, religious leaders) representing the communities.
 3. Respect the communities, listen to the communities, learn from the communities, and facilitate and work with the communities and not for them.
 4. Should use culturally sensitive home grown strategies; create consistent and visible community based movement against GBV.
 5. Build capacity of women and girls who can speak in their own voices, to become the foot soldiers and social force in their communities; (equip them with information and knowledge, capacitate them economically, socially and politically).
 6. Enhance community action learning and sharing instead of project tours.
 7. Build capacity of communities, particularly women, for consistent lobbying and advocacy efforts at all levels to challenge and change conservative pro patriarchal attitudes; to demand for enactment and enforcement of laws against GBV.
 8. Build the capacities of local institutions (CBOs, local government, youth organizations and clubs) engage communities consistently.
 9. Create stable community owned movements ensuring sustainability; Elimination of gender based violence is not a job; it must be a way of life.
 10. And above all, build trust, be transparent, accountable and financially responsible at all times.
- In explaining the points I highlighted above, rather than theory, I would like to use KMG-Ethiopia, my own organization as an example of what CSOs can do; their

challenges and opportunities and briefly tell how it has reduced FGM/C and other harmful customary practices from 100%, some ten years ago-to 2-3%, currently.



Mother - Child health centre installed by KMG Ethiopia at Durame, the capital of Kembatta Tembaro Zone. Source: www.kmgselfhelp.org

KMG-Ethiopia is an indigenous non-governmental, woman focused, integrated community development organization, established at the end of 1997. It has taken steps to harmonize women's rights issues with cultural belief systems among communities. The organization was founded with the belief that if women are empowered and their human rights observed and their talents nurtured, the lives of both men and women would improve.

Before it began its intervention, KMG conducted a baseline study in 1998 in Kembatta/Tembaro zone in Southern Ethiopia that showed that gender-based discrimination and violence, including FGM/C, bride abduction, widow inheritances, domestic violence were endemic, impacting virtually 100% of all girls and women. Women were typically valued little more than the cows they milked, received little education, and were subjected to variety of illness.

A 2008 UNICEF survey of attitudes in Kembatta/ Tembaro Zone (about population 1.5 million) showed an amazing inversion: 97% of all men and women opposed female genital mutilation. We estimate that hundreds of thousands of girls have been spared genital mutilation. Such dramatic reduction did not take place just by fiat or laws, but by the consent of communities that have learned the reasons these traditional practices are harmful. Today, self-monitoring and adherence to their own social contract that bans such mutilation is given. Behavioural and attitudinal transformation has also taken place on prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, a topic long considered taboo. Today, people in both Christian and Muslim communities go in groups to undergo blood tests. Marriage without prior testing for HIV has become unacceptable, in both Muslim and Christian institutions. The change is so great, in fact, that across our region, young men now seek uncut girls to marry, and whole communities, including children, openly discuss these once-taboo subjects at open-air meetings

once limited to only elders (used to be called removing the dirt). Over 2000 pool of trained and skilled facilitators work among communities on various issues, such as human, legal and constitutional rights of citizenry, good governance, sexual and reproductive health and environment.

An amazing individual and community transformation is taking place. A woman who declared "I started to change from the inside out"; of a sheikh who threw his own son out of the house (called the police) in order to protect the right of his daughter-in-law to have free choice about whom she would want to marry (in the case of a widow's inheritance); of girls who declare that "this is my body, no one has the right to destroy it," refusing to undergo genital mutilation, for the first time claiming personal agency; of a 60 year old woman who (after learning about concept of gender and discrimination and universal HR) cried out, saying "I know it is late for me, but now I will die knowing that I am also a human being," for the first time feeling human entitlement.

Today some of these women have become poetesses, advocates, appointed and elected from local to federal posts; and all of them simply have become agents of change.

From its inception, KMG has recognized the indispensability of freedom from all forms of violence for women. The challenges at the beginning were how to establish linkages among the various components that would make such freedom workable and practical on the ground.

Development or change and transformation is not unlike cells of the human body, infinitely differentiated in form and function, yet united in common purpose which exceeds that of its components.

Our progress has been due to a number of factors: respect the wisdom, insight and the way of life of our diverse people; our willingness to listen and learn from the communities; facilitated community conversation, building mutual respect and mutual learning and learned from other pioneers; our ability to link ecology, economy, and society into a holistic approach that resonates with local people; the systematic approach we have used to develop working tools that address many taboo issues on gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, gender and leadership and decision-making hierarchies; our unflinching commitment and ; it is not a one time workshop but consistent engagement with communities; building capacities of local institutions, leveraging quick wins as stepping stones for strategic victories, trusting and unleashing communities capacities, and of course, the support of many local and international organizations; most importantly, women became the foot soldiers, they used their own voices, and the movement was led by women themselves.

Challenges CSOs facing working to reduce VAW and eliminate FGM/C.

1) The political dimension of VAW/ FGM

As Dr. Rasheed Akinyemi, Institute for Political Science University of Vienna - Austria (June 2000) wrote, "in African politics, while the traditional systems attempt to protect and maintain the cultural and traditional values and practices the modern African State with modern political elite display double standard in their political approach. While they intend to promote modern values (such as democracy, Human Rights), they still find it difficult to take responsibility for some traditional and cultural rites that are not compatible with new values being propagated" This is the case with gender based violence, such as FGM/C. For one, the power structures of indigenous (traditional) political systems are made up of same structures and institutions which comprise personalities of higher social standing, thus have influence over their constituencies; which the modern political elite depend on their votes to staying in power. Thus they do not want to upset or antagonize the traditional establishment. Therefore, VAW, such as FGM/C, bride abduction, widow inheritance, domestic violence are SANCTIONED as Culture.

Moreover, one huge structural constraint in a traditional society where the fiercest patriarchal values are prevalent in the violent psyche of the modern political elite against women; their own attitudinal change and transformation is not witnessed; it is lip service; (there is no political commitment; dealing with such matters is left to women's ministry, women's organizations, NGOs and at best for first ladies as a pet project).

Many governments blandly deny the existence of legalized discrimination against women. They claim that women are equal in law and under the law and that gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution. Throughout Africa such claims are bogus. To put the matter simply, the articles in Constitutions, which allegedly provides equal rights for women, actually serve to legalize gender discrimination in most areas. In more Islamic areas and many African countries, it is even worse because there is not even any pretence of a separation between Statutory and Customary laws, where the Customary laws totally deny dignity and rights of women and are constitutions in the name of culture and religion. In these cases, there are no theoretical "statutory spaces" where women may claim gender equality.

Women are lynched, chased out, abducted and raped, maimed and deformed, acid burnt, abused, slaughtered, shot and killed, used, abused and discarded.

FGM/C is only one of the manifestations of gender based violence against women; it is a power issue, it is about controlling women's sexuality, violating her

bodily integrity. The State-policy makers must show political commitment by placing VAW, including FGM/C on top of their political, social and development agenda. The parliamentarians must work with NGOs/CSO to gain more insight into the conditions and make sure the enactment and enforcement of the law against VAW is implemented.

2) Lack of Political Space for CSO to operate

The modern African state is in conflict with itself; any CSO group, organization, NGO or individual that has not declared loyalty to the government in power - is a political suspect. Democracy demands elasticity, transparency, broadmindedness and tolerance, openness, fairness. Most African states cannot tolerate any social mobilization or movement outside the state control or any criticism. This creates misunderstanding, particularly between local governments and CSOs/NGOs.

CSOs/ NGO should be considered as development partners, facilitators for policy implementation. Perhaps it is here that some courageous Parliamentarians could play facilitation role, through various mechanisms. I expect parliamentarians to demonstrate their commitment for Democracy and respect for human rights through lobbying for proper space and place for Civil Society movement in this 'growing democracy in African countries'. Parliamentarians should commit themselves to visit their constituents and the CSOs/NGOs who work among their constituencies; learn about their work; their achievements and short comings; examine if they are abiding by the rules and regulations; thus they can assure the government of real or imagined political threat.

Often, the international community, bilateral and multilateral agencies and donors choose silence on country laws and legislations, rules and regulations that narrow space for CSOs to engage in community mobilization, human rights, women's rights issues, in the name of political non interference on national affairs. My own country is the best example of "growing democracy" where it enacted a new CSO law which impinges on civil movements.

3) Limited capacities and competences of local government

Local government can play a key role in promoting greater equality and building inclusive societies and reducing poverty. However, where decentralizations contribute to increased capacities of local governments this is overstated. Local government codes governing decentralization are more likely to decentralize responsibilities than power and resources. Usually, little power is devolved from central government and few financial and technical resources are transferred. Thus they have limited knowledge and

understanding to translate policies and proclamations. They are expected to govern without adequate tools and resources. Though this could create opportunities for CSOs/NGOs to fill skill and knowledge gaps, it often creates suspicion and misunderstanding between local governments and CSOs/NGOs.

4) Lack of Strategic Funding

To start with currently, less than 1% of international aid goes to women's causes; development approaches are disconnected and fragmented. Gender politics is full of rhetoric, hand-wringing and principled statements and empty slogans. So far a developing nation that has brought meaningful and positive changes, to women's and girl's lives is a rarity; enabled women speak in their own voices, giving the tools to equip themselves and their families for a better life is just rare.

Most funding that comes to the sector is project based, fragmented and does not allow long term strategic planning or sustainable institutional building. Aid is given based on political expediency; COS operating among minority nationalities receive very little funding, like KMG-Ethiopia. Most funding is bilateral aid; I am not saying that governments should not be supported; but in areas where governments do not have competences and confidences, such as gender and human rights and good governance, CSOs should strongly be supported to act in strategic manner.

5) There is very little in county or South –to South sharing of good practices

African CSOs/ NGO often meet in northern conferences, and not on the field within the continent where community action learning could take place, leveraging and accelerating the momentum of change already in different parts of individual countries and the continent. We do not often validate each other's work; maybe it is because we are competing for the same small piece of pie. However, eliminating violence such as FGM/C is a collective responsibility; it needs solidarity of humanity, we need a global movement. Opportunities

- The international development frame work for gender equality, human rights respect, democratic development, commitment of parliaments showing their commitment for action presents very good opportunity for the Civil Society to surge the movements against GBV collectively.
- Research and Development
CSOs must undertake local and national practice oriented research and collect, analyze and disseminate gender disaggregated data and information, including statistical methods that recognize and make visible the unremunerated work of women, for use in policy and programme planning and implementation. This would also fill the missing link between theories at academic

institutes and practical realities of development effort in the sector

- Assist Local government to fill the knowledge and skill gaps. Local government needs administrative and organizational competence and human and financial resources to deliver on the diverse expectations of women and men for security, access to justice, public services, participation and economic well-being. These are areas where CSOs have skills and competencies to assist local government to be effective. As the level of government closest to citizens, local authorities can play a vital role in addressing gender based violence, gender inequality and in building the capacity of women by involving them in local decision making, planning and management.

Conclusion

As with any struggle for freedom and dignity, the struggle against inequality, injustice must lie with women themselves; they must take the leadership. However, sadly, women have been culturally conditioned and have accepted violence as normal, 'natural' and a woman's fate. Women bear the violence and suffer silently. Elimination of gender based violence is not a job; it must be a way of life. History of those struggles, such as against racial apartheid, segregation, for national freedom and dignity, teach us we must walk the talk.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the emancipation of slavery, segregation and totalitarian regimes. Racial apartheid was addressed but the oldest prejudices in gender apartheid were ignored; drug trafficking was addressed but indifferent to sex trafficking continued, as did the daily human rights atrocities inflicted on women.

In this century, the West's biggest war is against terrorism. Do they know women and girls of the developing world live in terror throughout their lives? Women are in fear at home, while working in the fields, going to fetch water or wood, going to market or to school and in the class rooms, even while in bed. What is our mandate as the human race living in the 21st century? Will this be the target of our war to liberate half of the human race in the 21st century? I suggest that the aid money must be conditional to how well a country is doing on its Gender Index; the budget performance, concrete deliverables, such as concrete policy and political action an enforcing laws against GBV.

The first is that there is no better business and just cause than to promote the role, rights and interests of women. Structurally it is simply not acceptable in society anywhere in this globalized world, for women still to be treated as second class citizens – less access to education than men; lower salaries than men; less rights to land than men; less inheritance rights than

men; to be the subject of abuse and violence by men who often commit such acts with impunity; to be killed in day light; lose their lives giving life, or suffer from fistula, be mutilated, or similar injuries.

This diminishes all of us as a human race; but also reduces the productive capacity and competitiveness of a nation at least by 50%. This should be at the top of every political agenda in the 21st century.

Freedom for women is not a moral issue; it is a survival matters for the entire human race. It is simply good business in this globalized world. It is not about freedom of women, but freeing humanity from the perpetual trauma and poverty of our times.

I feel it is our historical mandate, as people living in the 21st century, to struggle against and stop brutality against half of the human race. We cannot honour a culture or a religion or political system that dehumanizes and marginalizes women or any other group. We cannot afford to have “Gender Apartheid”, just as today we cannot afford to have Racial Apartheid.

We must challenge ourselves to create the Movement towards Consolidating Humanity for the Dignity of Both Women and Men. Indifference and apathy are not acceptable, let us find creative, workable and durable solutions.

Hopeful strides are already being made by women and a number of concerned institutions. Women’s work for equity and equality in Africa, India, and Asia, Latin America and the West and North show promise. More importantly, unlike, any other group through history, though the relationships are complex, men and women always have desire, concern for each other. They cannot live without the other. This by itself gives us great opportunity for women’s struggle for freedom and equality to be different –qualitatively- that addresses the notion of “solidarity of humanity”, committed to the survival and wholeness, and dignity of the entire people, female and male.

Europe and Africa, not only neighbours, but linked in their language, cultures, and with economic affinities which date far back. These relations have been revitalized through successive frameworks- Yaounde Convention, Lome Conventions, the Continuo Agreement, European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement. I believe this Parliamentarian’s effort is in recognition of these facts.

I plea to this distinguished audience not to take this meeting, business as usual, where you heard another ‘gender rant’, one more meet on FGM/C. I challenge The European and African Parliamentarians to find Parliamentary Strategy to start Europe –Africa Movement, which would resonate to the World Wide Movement- Towards Consolidation of Humanity;

starting with coming DECADES. Make the 21 Century, a Century where Women could live without fear, a Women’s Equality, Equity truly won. We can do that. We can start today- where each one of us here can set-off such a Movement in our own neighbourhood; in our countries. Such movement does not need significant resources. It needs first and foremost a change in attitudes and commitment to action; then there would be change in the world.

THANK YOU.

www.kmgselfhelp.org

3.5. Challenges and good practices of the abandonment of FGM/C in Europe – by Pr. Ms. Els Leye, Senior researcher at ICRH (Speech as reported by Belgian Senate note takers)

Pr. Ms. Els Leye, Senior researcher & team leader of Sexual and gender based violence unit at ICRH (International Center for Reproductive Health)



I am happy and honoured to address this distinguished audience on such an important topic as violence against women and most particularly female genital mutilation.

I will focus on FGM/C in Europe, which I have been working on for the past 10-12 years. I have done research on this topic at the International Centre for Reproductive Health at the Ghent University and have also been involved in the more activist side -although it is not always easy to combine these two - more particularly, I have been involved in the creation of the European network for the prevention of FGM/C and in the END FGM European Campaign of Amnesty International.

I would like to highlight some of the achievements in Europe at EU-policy level and at national level. I will also mention some of the challenges that still remain. Finally, I will give some recommendations.

Important achievement at EU-policy level are the resolutions on FGM/C. Two resolutions were adopted: in 2001 and in 2009. They focus particularly on FGM/C in Europe. A second important achievement is the Daphne Programme. This program has been instrumental in pushing the agenda on FGM/C and violence against women in Europe.

It is a budget line created by the European commission, in which projects are funded that focus on violence against women and children. From 1997 to 2007,

14 projects were funded for a total budget of 2,4 million euro.

I would also like to mention the creation of the European network for the prevention of FGM/C. This network was created at the end of the nineties by a number of very committed community based organisations in Europe. They decided that it was necessary to cooperate in order to be stronger and to push the agenda on FGM/C in Europe.

The END FGM European Campaign was initiated by Amnesty International Ireland in collaboration with a number of community based organisations and NGO's in Europe.

They drafted a strategy to be adopted by the European Union. This is an important instrument, containing a number of recommendations and suggestions that can help pushing the agenda on FGM/C in Europe and in Africa.

There are also achievements at national level. Ten member states have adopted specific criminal laws on FGM/C. However, that doesn't mean that FGM/C is not punishable in countries where such a specific law doesn't exist; in these countries general criminal laws can be applied.

New national action plans have been developed by the European network in eight member states. And in many countries special health services are available. Many member states have NGO's or community based organisations for prevention work.

There is an increasing bulk of research performed on: the reassessment of FGM/C in a migration context; the health seeking behaviour of affected communities; the evaluation of service delivery, the difficulties in implementing laws.

At EU level there are several challenges. One of the most important problems is the lack of available funding. The problem has already been addressed by previous speakers. Fortunately, the Daphne Programme funds projects on violence and FGM/C, but this programme is limited to Europe only. The European commission should adopt a strategy and develop a co-ordinated approach to fund more projects on FGM/C in Africa.

In Europe there are ongoing efforts to put the problem on the agenda, but a joint strategy is still lacking. There is a lack of data about the magnitude of the problem in Europe. Some countries have performed studies in order to assess the prevalence of FGM/C, but they are still very incomplete. It is necessary to have a clearer idea about the magnitude of the problem in order to justify the claims for funds by both community based organisations, researchers and policy makers.

At national level there is:

- Lack of co-ordination. Few countries have a co-ordination body that joins all the actors at national level. It is crucial that the government collaborates with community based organisations and that both of them elaborate a joint agenda.
- The national action plans that were developed by the European network lack government support.
- Lack of knowledge about FGM/C among professionals. A wide range of professionals in Europe have to deal with FGM/C: gynaecologists, teachers, police. However, there is still a lack of knowledge among most of the professionals, and as a consequence adequate care is hampered.
- The community based organisations and NGO's working in Europe have done tremendous work in sensitizing their communities. The next step is to reach a behaviour change, through behaviour change interventions. This will need more resources and funding.
- Our centre has investigated the implementation of laws. Barriers in the implementation of the laws include the identification of cases, principally obstructed by the lack of knowledge among professionals. Another barrier is the complexity of finding sufficient evidence to bring a case to court.

However, the focus should not be exclusively on creating laws and developing repressive measures. First and foremost, we should take the work of the communities into account.

I would like to terminate my speech with some recommendations.

Firstly, we should look at what is already in place, e.g. the END FGM European Campaign. The strategy developed by this campaign focuses on five topics: data collection, health aspects, the protection of girls and women against violence, asylum, and development co-operation. There are specific recommendations in which EU institutions should be involved in developing and implementing this strategy.

Secondly, we need a co-ordinating body at EU level.

Thirdly, we must develop instruments with clear indicators to measure our progress.

Finally, budgets need to be increased, especially for the community based behaviour change strategies.

[Link to presentation](#)

Challenges and good practices of the abandonment of FGM in Europe

Els Leye

AWEPA seminar Violence Against Women
Brussels, 22 October 2010
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ICRH

Achievements at EU (policy) level

- EP Resolutions on FGM (2001 and 2009)
- EU Daphne Programme '97-'07: 14 projects on FGM in Europe (2.4 million euro)
- EU Strategy for Equality between Men and Women 2010-2015: EU strategy VAW to include FGM
- END FGM European Campaign
- European Network for the Prevention of FGM



ICRH

Achievements at national level

- Specific criminal laws adopted in 10 EU MS
- New national action plans developed in 8 EU MS
- Special health services available
- Many EU MS have CBOs/NGOs for prevention work
- Increasing bulk of research performed on a.o.:
 - Reassessment FGM in migration context,
 - Health seeking behaviour of affected communities,
 - Evaluation of service delivery,
 - Difficulties in implementing laws.



ICRH

Challenges at EU level

- Limited funding available
- Ongoing efforts at policy level but no integrated EU agenda yet
- Little coordination at European level between multiple agencies
- No accurate knowledge on magnitude of problem



Challenges at national level

- Lack of coordination
- Lack of government support for NAPs
- Lack of knowledge FGM among many professionals
- Few effective interventions on behaviour change
- Implementation of laws:
 - Risk assessment
 - Mechanisms to increase reports of (suspected) FGM cases



Recommendations

- Adopt EU strategy proposed by END FGM EU Campaign
- Establish a coordinating body (EuroNet-FGM?)
- Develop instruments to measure progress
- Increase budgets, specially for community based behaviour change strategies



www.icrh.org

3.6. Intervention of H.E. Ms. Isabelle Durant, Vice President of the European Parliament¹⁹

(Speech as reported by Belgian Senate note takers)



Ms. President, I am member and Vice President of the European Parliament.

As the previous speaker very well explained, FGM/C has been the object of many European Parliament resolutions, either as a main issue either in the frame of resolutions addressing Violence Against Women in general.

This reminds us of the important role parliaments can play. Other participants, European or African, will evoke their national parliament. One of the first tools of Parliaments is used to elaborate resolutions. This work must be based on a main content. As you mentioned, Ms. President, our resolutions have to be realistic and based on fieldwork. At the European Parliament, we are lucky to benefit from a precious and very efficient lobbying even if we could expect a still better coordination between the different organizations, either the ones who fight in favour of human rights, and thus women rights, or those active in the field of education and healthcare. I can assure you that the elected parliamentarians at the EP are very sensitive to that question.

Furthermore, it is crucial that we can denounce and request legislations, in our Parliaments - as is the case at the European Parliament-, although we know that laws, either European or national, will not suffice. This is also the case in African countries where it is not enough to vote a text against mutilations for the law to be applied. Of course, it is insufficient, but it is however a necessary condition. Parliaments must exercise pressure by law. In Africa, as anywhere else, other laws

¹⁹ Original speech in French

are not applied; this is not a reason to not make laws anymore.

Moreover, following the example of the European Parliament, we all must refuse the dangerous option to make the issue a medical one. Some could defend the idea of practicing excision or infibulations in hospitals or healthcare dispensaries under the pretext of protecting young girls or women's health. This would be a tacit acceptance of mutilations. Of course, I am far from denying the fact that mutilated children should receive medical care. But to accept that these mutilations take place in a medical environment would implicitly privilege the normalization of this practice, which is unacceptable. Medicalisation can sometimes be presented as an alternative to violence and to health problems incurred by the little girls, although, in this case, medicalisation is a lure. The European Parliament has regularly insisted on this point. Finally, I will address an aspect that has not yet been mentioned: the issue of asylum. On this subject there exists international legislation in the framework of the Geneva Convention, as well as European and national legislations. Some European countries have already promoted the idea that the threat of FGM/C could become an admission criterion for asylum in a European country.

I am of course aware that the issue must first be addressed in the countries where mutilation occurs. Nevertheless we cannot substitute ourselves to the governments of African parliaments.

We must subsequently act in favour of hosting in our countries young girls and women persecuted in their countries because of their gender.

In this respect, some national legislation seems praiseworthy but one has to take further steps: the European Union should impose the member States to recognize FGM/C as a condition for asylum. In effect, there exists an important connection between the numerous diaspora in our countries and the communities originating from African countries.

In other words, people that arrive in Belgium, France, Great-Britain, and Germany via asylum, keep a strong tie with their community of origin, which is also the case for women who can or could enter a European country because they are at risk of FGM/C. As Europeans, we must take that responsibility.

I can assure you that in the European Parliament, and in particular at the heart of the Woman Commission, the issue of Human Rights and Women Rights is omnipresent.

We are determined to exercise constant political pressure as to respond to the demands of numerous associative lobbyists who alert us efficiently.

Unfortunately, I am the messenger of bad news.

You asked for additional financial resources. The European budget is in the pipeline and being a member

of the Budget Commission I believe that the budget for the Daphné budget will not be increased but risks being reduced in this period of budget restrictions. We will do our utter best to keep finances up to workable level but I feel that the task will be difficult. The Member States are reluctant to contribute to the European Union. One day, it will have to rely on its own financial resources in order to offer more and better support to the fieldwork that you accomplish and that I encourage you to pursue.

In any case, you can count, as much as possible on the work of the European Parliament; I will gladly be your contact person.



www.europarl.europa.eu

3.7 Intervention of Hon. Ms. Petra Bayr, Member of National Council of Austria

(Speech – as reported by Belgian Senate note takers)



I will give an overview of the activities against FGM/C in Austria over the last decade. This struggle can only lead to success if there is a real co-operation among all the stakeholders.

In 2000 our former Minister for Women's Affairs, Barbara Prammer, invited African women's organisations to organise a survey of FGM/C in Austria. We learned that 30% of those people coming from 28 countries in Africa where FGM/C is practised, declared that they already had or that they planned to exercise FGM/C on their daughters. FGM/C is not only a problem in Africa, but also in Asia, e.g. Indonesia and Malaysia. As a consequence of migration, the problem is introduced in Europe and in the US.

Of those 30%, 90% said that they have it performed when they are on holiday in their country of origin; 9% said that the circumcision was performed in Europe and 1% said that it was performed in Austria itself.

In 2001, there was an amendment to the Austrian criminal law, where FGM/C constitutes a crime of (serious) injury. FGM/C is also liable to prosecution if the victim consents to the mutilation and also if the mutilation takes place abroad.

In 2002, the Austrian development cooperation implemented a film project with villagers at the Afar region in Ethiopia. The film reflected the experiences and the discussions of the villagers and their decision to abolish the tradition.

The same year, the Waris Dirie Foundation was established in Austria.

In 2003 the Inter-African Committee organised a Conference "Zero tolerance on FGM" in Addis Ababa. 28 countries talked about ways to stop the violation. It was decided that February 6th was to become the international day against FGM/C. I took part in that conference and decided that an initiative had to be taken up in Austria.

Therefore I founded the "Austrian Platform Stop FGM". I am the spokesperson of that platform.

We have created a homepage www.stopFGM.net, which constitutes a very large platform for information, initiatives and scientific research. It offers the possibility to express online support. More than 1000 persons have already signed it.

The Austrian platform against FGM/C organised its first press conference around Feb 6 2004. From then onwards, this conference has been organised every year. There has been a massive media response. We always invite a prominent person, a Minister, an artist, an author, a human rights specialist or people with field practice.

The same year we started a co-operation with the Female Health Agent of the City of Vienna.

The outcome of this co-operation was that the knowledge about FGM/C has been added to the curriculum for midwife education.

In 2005, the Austrian Platform against FGM/C organized a survey among doctors and midwives. This survey has shown that there is much ignorance among doctors, more knowledge among midwives. However, most of them are interested to get more medical as well as general information.

There was an all party motion in the Austrian parliament to make February 6th one of the UN international days. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs mentioned this need to the Secretary-General of the UN.

The criminal law was amended stating that FGM/C is an offence. Women who were victims of FGM/C at an early age have the right to go to court when they have reached the appropriate age to do so. "Bright Future", the first information centre, was opened in Vienna by the African Women's Organisation.

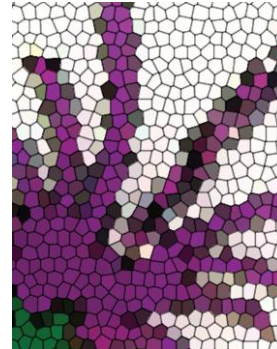
In 2006, we continued to give information to doctors and organised evening events. We invited a Muslim religious leader, who declared that FGM/C is not required by the Koran. This event was organised just before the summer vacation and enabled several people to change their views on the matter.

The problem was also a topic during the Austrian EU presidency.

In 2007, we launched a pin representing the flower Clitoria, a symbol of the right to physical integrity.



Source: www.stopFGM.net



www.stopFGM.net

Austrian platform against Female Genital Mutilation

The same year a new medical counselling unit was founded with a special focus on women with a migration background.

In 2008 together with the speaker of the Austrian Parliament – we invited kindergarten teachers to get practical information how to be active against FGM/C and what to do if they think some of the girls they take care for could be affected.

We also published an information folder for parents in five languages (German, English, Arabic, Somali, French) which are distributed in medical practices and launched the idea about a national action plan.

In 2009 we focused the whole year on the question of FGM/C as a human rights violation.

We organised a medical training for surgeons at hospitals. The city of Vienna released a guideline for teachers, nurses and doctors.

This year we organised an instruction for staff members of women's counselling centres from all over Austria.

We introduced the Amnesty International campaign END FGM in the Austrian parliament. Yesterday I asked a question in parliament about the implementation of the national action plan to combat FGM/C.

3.8. Intervention of Hon. Ms. Olga Zrihen, Member of Senate of Belgium²⁰



Intervention elements

UNICEF Definition

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to all surgical procedures that consist in taking away partly or totally the external genital organs of a girl or a woman, or to mutilate them in any other way, for cultural or other reasons than therapeutic.

FGM/C is universally unacceptable because this infringement on women and girl's physical and psychosexual integrity constitutes a form of violence against them.

It is estimated that from 100 to 130 million women actually alive in Africa, some 26 million underwent infibulation. Given the actual birth rate levels, this means that 2 million girls are at risk of undergoing FGM/C every year.

These practices have been reported in at least 28 African countries, as well as among a some South-East Asian populations, and some immigrants from those countries and regions living in Europe, in North America and Australia. These practises are committed by members of diverse immigrant communities in Belgium.

Reasons leading to these practices

- 1) psychosexual: to reduce women's sexual desire, preserve chastity and the girl's virginity before marriage as well as faithfulness during marriage and increase men's sexual arousal;
- 2) sociological: to respect cultural traditions, initiate the girls to the statute of adulthood, social integration and to maintain social cohesion;
- 3) hygienic and aesthetic: in some communities, the external genital organs of girls or women are

considered ugly or dirty and are thus removed for hygienic or aesthetic reasons;

4. religious: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting is practised in certain communities for the sake of religious beliefs.

5. other: to increase women's fertility and increase the infants' chances for survival.

FGM/C is most often practised on adolescents between 4 and 14 years of age. Nevertheless, in some countries almost half of FGM's are practised on babies under one (44% in Erythrea and 29% in Mali).

Health damage, FGM/C can cause irreparable damage on children and women's health.

1) They can cause death by haemorrhage, severe bleeding, neurogenic shock due to the unbearable pain, traumatism and/or severe generalized infection and septic shock.

2) They are very often traumatic.

3) Other negative consequences : non-healing of scars ; abscess formation ; cysts ; excessive formation of scar tissue ; urinary tract infection ; neuroma ; painful sexual intercourse increased risk for HIV, hepatitis and other diseases transmitted through the blood arteries ; genital tract infections ; pelvic infections ; infertility ; chronic obstruction of the urinary tract / kidney stones, urinary incontinence ; increased risk of haemorrhage and infection whilst giving birth.

These practices have disastrous consequences mostly because FGM/C is performed by local traditional health practitioners, (usually by women that inherit their know-how from the former generation), who enjoy a particular stature in traditional societies without having the adequate medical expertise. However, there is a trend towards the medicalisation of FGM/C (meaning that the practise is performed by trained midwives and nurses instead of traditional practitioners). This trend towards medicalisation has risen in some countries over the last ten years. They constitute an implicit attempt to the girl's and women's fundamental right to physical integrity. Instead of putting an end to these practices, medicalisation would encourage their legitimacy.

A serious infringement of fundamental rights.

1) In section 5 of the Secretary General of the United Nations' report entitled "Strategy for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" with the objective to "Fight against all forms of violence against women and the application of the Convention on the elimination of all discrimination forms against women", is mentioned that "prejudicial traditional practises such as female genital mutilations remain current forms of violation [...]".

²⁰ Original speech in French

2) FGM/C constitutes a fundamental violation of girl's and women's rights as enounced in many international Conventions, in particular in the Convention on children's rights and in the Convention on the eradication of all forms of violence against women.

It affords a discriminatory practice that deprives girls and women of their right to equal opportunities; their right to get access to the best possible healthcare conditions, their right to be protected from any form of physical or psychological violence, from bodily injuries or ill-treatment; the right to be protected from harmful practices for their children and women's health; their right to take decisions concerning procreation without being discriminated based on the inferiority or presumed superiority of one of both sexes, or on the stereotyped roles given to men and women.

What are the alternatives in countries directly concerned by this practice (Developing countries)?

1) To create a protective environment for the children.

Either one tries to reduce the risks of female genital mutilations or not, this practice is unacceptable.

2) The mentalities, traditions, customs and beliefs must progress. FGM/C is based on traditional beliefs and ignorance. Parents are often unaware of the dangers linked to these practices, or judge them legitimate for cultural reasons. In other cases, social pressure is so important that it is impossible to oppose it even when the parents suspect or know they are harmful for the child. The need for information is very important, and the media can play a crucial role in this aspect.

Moreover, men just as women must get involved and participate in the fight against FGM/C.

3) Public authorities must show their willingness to put an end to FGM/C. This can be accomplished by the ratification of the ad hoc international conventions, by adopting laws that prohibit them and by integrating the fight against these practices to the national development plans, and to the programmes for poverty reduction and other linked interventions.

4) FGM/C must prohibited by law.

5) FGM/C opponents must be sustained.

NGO's play a catalytic role in uniting communities' efforts to combat FGM/C with one voice. Religious or moral authorities who dictate or influence societies' values can also play a key role and lead to a prompt eradication of these practices. Their will to abolish FGM/C can contribute to the fact that no family of their community will go on perpetuating this tradition.

6) Children and adolescents must undergo FGM/C. Girls and adolescents can be constrained to suffer these harmful traditional practices. But, in certain cases, it occurs that girls chose to undergo FGM/C rather than suffer from the social consequences brought on by opposing the tradition. In these cases, it is crucial to inform the girls of possible alternatives so that they have the means to protect themselves and their future

children. Boys must also be informed of the negative impact of FGM/C on the reproductive health of girls and of the existence of discriminating practices and their social consequences.

7) It is indispensable to first understand the prevalence and the nature of FGM/C.

Through the implementation of a data base on these practices and via impact indicators on a global scale (issuing from field surveys), one can define the indicators that allow evaluation of the progress of best practices, to realize participative evaluations and ethnographic studies viewing towards a better comprehension of the reasons why these practices are continued.

8) Healthcare services must be able to take care of the after-effects of FGM/C and the educational system must contribute to their prevention. Healthcare providers must take care of eventual delivery complications and teachers must condemn these practices at school.

Belgian political Initiative. Resolution 533/1 to 6 (Olga ZRIHEN and consorts – Belgian Senate – January 2008) – Adopted by the commission on April 21 2009 (11+/0-/0a) as in the Plenary Session on the 14th of May 2009 (49+/0-/0a)²¹

1) This resolution aims to regulate the FGM/C practice in some in some migrant communities in Belgium.

2) It is derived from statements established by NGO's active in this field as well as from reports made by international organisms and institutions on this practice (cfr. World Health Organisation)

3) As a reminder, this legislative text is aware that the practice of FGM/C is not the prerogative of a society, a culture or of a philosophic or religious conception. As such, this text is free of any ethnocentric idea.

4) Following this resolution, it has been estimated in 2008 that 200 young girls are born each year in Belgium in high risk families, meaning that these families come from a country performing excisions or infibulations.

5) This legislative text reminds also that FGM/C leads to severe consequences, either immediate complications, or identity disorders. Obviously, these problems can affect the social status of women.

6) The objective of this legal text is also to denounce any form of medicalisation of the mutilating practices because it confers them an official status. In other terms, medicalisation tends to legitimate those practices and is a redoubtable means to assure their continuation.

7) Moreover, although many reasons have been invoked to legitimate FGM/C, no argument in their

²¹<http://www.senate.be/www/webdriver?MItabObj=pdf&MIcolObj=pdf&MInamObj=pdfid&MItypeObj=application/pdf&MIvalObj=67109506>

favour makes sense. The fact that in Belgium a specific legislation has been adopted allows avoidance of the debate on cultural relativism. It is no longer possible to refer to an excuse related to culture: there is no pretext for giving torture a cultural alibi.

8) This text– which refers to several international instruments that relate fundamental rights– does not hesitate to qualify FGM/C as torture, which implies numerous consequences, in particular legal ones:

- FGM/C constitutes a flagrant violation of the fundamental rights of each woman: the right to life, security, freedom, and physical, psychological and psychic integrity that are recognised by numerous international instruments.

The present resolution is therefore inspired by international mechanisms that aim to fight any form of discrimination against women.

- Even more the text emphasizes the fact that the resolution adopted in this room was unanimously accepted in 2004, and recommended – among other recommendations – to *“rally all the efforts for the eradication and prohibition of female sexual mutilations in countries where they are still practised, in particular in countries that concentrate Belgian development aid”*.

- The text also certifies that although Belgium detains a whole battery of legal means as well as a disposition in its Penal code, with a specific mention concerning genital mutilations, no effective application of this text is known until today. It is this failure that the text wants to make up for.

The objective of text 533/1 to 6 was multiple and concerned many levels of execution. Its main lines were the following:

- The priority action focused on education and information – obviously for populations and communities, the victims or potential victims, but also doctors from ONE, (the organisation that monitors child services) were called upon to adapt the endangered child care system to take into account the cases related to excision!

- This action for education and information could not be efficient without giving real support to the associations that fight for the abolition of FGM/C.

- It also meant that legal tools had to be adapted in Belgium, such as:

- * The implementation of a new National Action Plan to end all types of violence, that would be elaborated in close cooperation with the federal authorities and extended to all forms of violence to women;

- The implementation of the Belgian law that sues all the authors of female genital mutilations practised on Belgian territory;

- To concede the status of refugee to all person undergoing or at risk of suffering persecution “because of their gender”.

- *Finally at international level, this resolution asked to:

- Mobilise diplomatic and political efforts to stop these practices in our Development Cooperation partner countries;

- Make the fight against Female genital mutilation a priority issue of development policy;

- Sustain local initiatives that are committed to the eradication of these practices through education and information of the concerned communities;

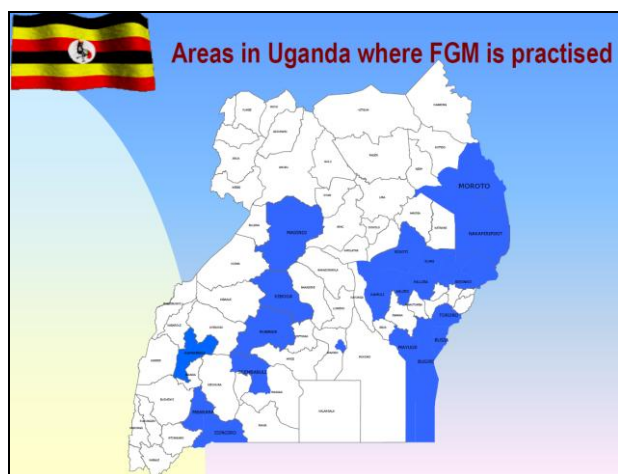
- Assure the follow-up of the ratification of international instruments (for instance the Maputo Protocol) on the elimination of discrimination against women.

3.9. Intervention of Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, Member of Parliament of Uganda

(Speech –as reported by Belgian Senate note takers)



As a member of the parliament of Uganda I support issues connected with women empowerment and gender equality. Uganda is surrounded by countries that practise female genital mutilation. In Uganda itself it is mainly practised in the north eastern part of the country. In the rest of the districts, it is practised by migrants who originate from specific ethnic groups.



Source: Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi's presentation at EU Belgian Presidency seminar, 22nd October 2011, Brussels, Belgium

In some communities of Africa, apart from the razor blade, traditional instruments are used, like a hooked knife. I'm sure you can imagine the dangers that are associated with the use of those crude instruments. How can men be happy when women are undergoing this kind of trauma, the abuse of their rights?

In Uganda, the prevalence of FGM/C is about 5 %. That might sound little, but in our view, even one woman who is traumatised, is a very big problem. FGM/C is an old practice among the ethnic groups of mainly the Sabinu, Pokot, Somalis and Nubians.

Community Campaigns against FGM/C started in the early 1990's mainly with support from UNFPA. Significant progress has been realized in community mobilization. Communities appreciate the need to abandon the practice and some local surgeons have actually abandoned the practice. The prevalence kept falling throughout the nineties. In the early 2000's, the communities demanded that FGM/C should be abolished. A number of local governments passed by-laws and ordinances prohibiting FGM/C. In Uganda the cutting is usually done every even year. So for example 2010 is a year when it is practised. We undertake assessments that enumerate how many young girls and women have been cut.

Local governments passed by-laws and ordinances prohibiting FGM/C and demanded for a national law. A Bill entitled the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Bill, drafted in collaboration with LAW Uganda, was tabled in Parliament and passed in December 2009 and assented to by the President in March 2010. Legislators overwhelmingly supported the legislation including those from the practising communities. In the past, when you supported FGM/C, you were easily voted into parliament. Those who spoke against FGM/C were not voted in. That was the situation in the late 80's-early 90's. Some of the MP's lost their seats because they campaigned against FGM/C. We have evidence that parliamentarians who opposed FGM/C have now become more popular in their communities. The communities themselves now appreciate the negative and harmful effects of FGM/C. The offence of committing FGM/C now leads to imprisonment of 10 years. We also created a special category of offence, called "aggravated female genital mutilation". It applies to situations when the offender is a parent, a guardian or a person having control or authority over the victim, or if the victim suffers a permanent disability, or if HIV-infection is transmitted in the process of carrying out FGM/C, or if FGM/C is undertaken by a health worker. These cases are liable to life imprisonment.

We also created laws for other offences, e.g. if someone performs FGM/C on herself. We also wrote in

the law that consent of the victim, culture, religion or any other reason shall not stand as a defence in the courts of law. The law provides protection of the females who have not undergone circumcision, and of the spouses and members of the family whose daughters, wives or relatives have not been circumcised. The law also offers compensation for girls who have undergone FGM/C. If a woman is under risk of FGM/C, a court can issue a protection order.



Some tools used to perform FMG/C

Source: Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi's presentation at EU Belgian Presidency seminar, 22nd October 2011, Brussels, Belgium



www.parliament.go.ug

Finally, we have provided extraterritorial jurisdiction. FGM/C can also be punished when it is carried out in another country. Anybody who had knowledge of this practice is bound to report it to the authorities. Communities and Law Enforcement Officers are being trained and sensitized about the Law.

We are aware that legislation by itself is not sufficient. Therefore we have mounted a campaign. The government now allocates a budget line for the Campaign against FGM/C in order to supplement the resources from UNFPA, UNICEF and other partners. We are also benefitting from the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme. We work closely with parliaments of neighbour states, especially with the parliament of Kenya and the East African Legislative Assembly, to ensure that we have similar legal regimes.

We have worked with No Peace Without Justice, an international committee seeking an effective system of international justice, to pass a resolution in our parliament in order to urge our government to support a UN resolution to ban FGM/C at a global level. Someone said that political commitment is lacking in some of our countries. I am saying that the political commitment in Uganda is total. Our president and his wife launched a campaign against FGM/C in Uganda. Uganda is determined to eradicate FGM/C by 2015.

3.10. Discussions

(As reported by Belgian Senate note takers)

Ms. Bamba Massany. – I am a member of the Ivory Coast Parliament. Since this morning, we have been listening to many speakers from different countries on the issue of the fight against FGM/C and the means that have been affected to this purpose.

I witness and deplore the absence of coordination between the actions led in Europe and the ones implemented in Africa. There exist many best practices and difficulties on both continents and a better coordination would render us more efficient.

A great number of European NGO's are active in this domain, for instance in Italy, the NGO: No peace Without Justice. We were in New York recently for the 65th Assembly General of the United Nations, where we wanted to make a common declaration for the total prohibition of Female genital mutilation.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of appropriate lobbying, the UN declaration has not been accepted. At the outcome of our work, I can only call for a better coordination between all the NGOs and the countries that fight the same battle.²²

Mr. Abdul Karim Harerimana. – I am a member of the East African Legislative Assembly, but I originally come from Rwanda. Fortunately, this type of bad practice is not carried out in Rwanda, nor to my knowledge in Burundi, but it is practised in certain parts of Uganda, western Tanzania and east DRC. Though I have been fighting FGM/C for more than 40 years since I was a student at university, this is the first time I have seen this film from UNICEF. I think it is now the time not only for women to stand up against such FGM/C atrocities but it is time for all of us, both men and women to react all over the world. I would like to add one more thing; it is necessary to encourage those who practice FGM/C to visit other areas of Africa where it is not a practice to see for themselves how women are actually living and to see how children are brought up. They should be made to see that the fact that women are uncut does not lead to infidelity.

Mr. Frederic Ngenzebuhoro. – I am a member of the East African Legislative Assembly, coming from Burundi. I shall go directly to my proposal. I think as parliamentarians we should propose that in each country and in each parliament we have a committee solely in charge of this issue of FGM/C. This committee could overview how the international conventions and protocols, already ratified by the countries, are implemented.

If they are not implemented then to see how they can be domesticated in our national laws and through

these laws see that they are implemented. Secondly, these committees could organise legal debates and involve the media so that these issues may be known by everyone in all the countries. Lastly, these committees could be what others ask it to be or not to be concerning all the initiatives about these issues and sometimes give annual votes to the country.

Ms. Gabrielle Ngalula. – Good morning, I am not a parliamentarian but I am member of several associations in Belgium. I would like clarification. It seems that female genital mutilation did not exist in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As far as I know, this practice has been exported by the wars that took place in the eastern part of the Congo. I would like to address the members of the Congolese Parliaments who are here today and ask them if this question has been raised at the heart of the parliamentary institution and if yes, whether measures have been taken.

In Belgium, I am member of a group that has drafted a law proposition which has been debated in all the Belgian parliaments. Therefore I ask myself if the Congolese Parliament has opened a debate on this question and what has been decided. In fact, these mutilations have been used as a weapon in this country whereas they did not exist before the conflict.²³

²² Question originally in French

²³ Question originally in French

4. Session 2: Women, peace and security



This session was chaired by: Hon. Mr. Alain Destexhe, Vice President of AWEPA Belgian section, Member of Parliament of the French Community of Belgium & Member of the Brussels Regional Parliament and Hon. Ms. Mary Mugenyi, Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP).

4.1. Violence against women in conflict areas – by Ms. Dagmar Schumacher, Director of UNIFEM (part of UN Women) - Brussels Office



Excellencies,
 Ladies and Gentlemen,
 It is a great pleasure and honour to be on this panel today. I would like to thank the Government of Belgium, the Belgian Senate, AWEPA and SIDA for hosting this important event at this so opportune time. What will I cover today? Firstly, I will provide an overview on where we stand right now with regard to the policy framework on addressing violence against women issues in conflict and post-conflict situations, with focus on SCR 1325, I will then highlight achievements so far and remaining challenges while at the same time refer to the events and actions currently taking place in NY and worldwide as we speak. I will finish by focusing on concrete actions that we can all engage in to push the envelope and to make a difference.

Prior to going into *media res*, let me briefly talk about UN Women. As you know, in an historic move, the United Nations General Assembly voted to create the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women — [UN Women](#). This is the result of years of negotiations between UN Member States and advocacy by the global women's movement. UNIFEM has proudly become part of UN Women, along with DAW, OSAGI and INSTRAW. On 4 October this year, Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, took on her position as new Executive Director of UN Women.

This new entity will be fully operational as of January 2011.

The conference today takes place at a very critical time – the date could not have been more apt. This is THE month of commemorating the 10th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325. We are at a crossroads – and we have to take the path of concrete actions if we want to really make a difference. It is everyone's responsibility to capitalize on this momentum and to make sure that implementation of 1325 becomes a reality.

Women count for peace. There is no more direct way to state this simple truth.

As half of any society, as the foundation of family and community stability, as core economic actors, and as local and national decision-makers, women's participation is essential to all aspects of peace and security.

Everyone loses from conflict. But since conflict exacerbates gender-based inequalities, women's survival and recovery prospects are much weaker. In many internal conflicts, instead of targeting soldiers, belligerent parties target civilians because they can sow terror and despair more swiftly and effectively. And when targeting civilian, they often target women and children.

Sexual violence, in particular, is a very powerful tactic to destroy communities and traumatize societies beyond recovery. It is one of history's greatest silences yet critical impediment to effective peacebuilding. It results in devastating situations for individuals, families and communities who must cope with unwanted pregnancies and children, stigmatization and rejection, diseases and reproductive health issues, psychological trauma, and disintegration of the social fabric. It can hold communities hostage by preventing women from gathering water and wood or from participating in public life. It keeps girls away from school, and reinforces gender discrimination. These are but a few of the consequences of sexual violence in conflict.

After conflict, most internally displaced people and refugees are women and children, which puts them in a phenomenally vulnerable position. Women face enormous difficulties in recovering property, for example, especially in societies where men traditionally hold land rights.

If peacebuilding and recovery included women, women would be able to set priorities, obtain resources and rebuild their lives. But the fact that women are so profoundly excluded from peace talks and post-conflict

decision-making means there are few resources for their needs.

UNSCRs

Recognizing these challenges, and thanks to the enormous advocacy efforts from women's rights activists around the world, the UN SC unanimously adopted in October 2000 Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. This landmark resolution was the first to link women's experiences of conflict to the maintenance of international peace & security and provided women and girls with a legitimate basis to demand action from their governments and the international community.

Eight years later, SCR 1820 was particularly important as it was the first one to recognize conflict related sexual violence as a tactic of war requiring specific responses on peacekeeping protection systems, justice and prosecutions, and inclusion of SV in peace negotiation.

In 2009, two additional resolutions were passed: 1888 and 1889, which complement 1820 and 1325 respectively by strengthening tools for its implementation and monitoring and assigning high level leadership position within the UN.

Together, these resolutions provide a powerful framework and mandate for implementing and measuring change in the lives of women in conflict-affected countries.

Ten years after the adoption of resolution 1325, what have we achieved?

One of most significant achievements of the last 10 years has been the recognition of sexual violence as a tactic of war. Sexual violence in war now demands a security-military and political responses.

Countries have adopted gender quotas for post-conflict elections. Many UN agencies are supporting security sector reforms from a gender perspective, so in countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda and elsewhere there are now special police units to tackle gender-based violence.

Many successful practices have been identified, such as the mobile legal assistance to SV survivors in remote areas of DRC, or the implementation of Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations with respect to reparations to survivors of sexual, both initiatives supported by UNIFEM-managed UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.

With regards to challenges, Despite serious efforts to engage women from Civil Society in peace processes such as in Darfur in 2006 and Uganda in 2008, women continue to be excluded or seriously under-represented. According to the September 2010 Report of the Secretary-General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding, women comprise just eight percent of negotiating delegations in UN mediated peace processes since 1989.

Systematic gender-based violence – including sexual assault – persists in situations of armed conflict, as was seen recently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The perpetrators of these war crimes still go unpunished in most cases. Finally, the lack of financial resources remains one of the critical challenges.

What are the main priorities we should focus on?

As explained, we have obtained quite a lot of achievements in the past few years, but this is clearly not enough and we need to continue the struggle. Now we are at the crossroads and it is the moment to keep our efforts and energy up to transform all these nice words into real and effective action on the ground.

Progress towards full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 can only be achieved through women's empowerment. The three pillars of the resolutions, which guide our actions in this matter, are the so-called "3 P's": prevention, protection and participation. With regards to participation, this does not only relates to women's participation in peace talks and mediation efforts, but an active role as decision-makers in national politics, contributing to violence against women prevention and response.

One very powerful tool to put these into practice at national level is the development of National Action Plans (National Action Plans) on 1325 and 1820. Guess how many of the 192 UN member states have adopted National Action Plans so far? 150? 100? 70? No, there is actually not more than 23 National Action Plans adopted. In Africa, the number is increasing but there is need for further acceleration. Today we can count six National Action Plans in the continent: Côte d'Ivoire (January 2007), Uganda (December 2008), Liberia (March 2009), Sierra Leone (March 2010), Rwanda (May 2010), DRC (June 2010).

Ideally, National Action Plans should contain specific and realistic objectives, timelines, a dedicated budget, indicators and targets, reporting and monitoring mechanisms and clear lines of responsibility. Also, the process of developing National Action Plans is as important as the National Action Plan itself: consultations with broad spectrum of stakeholders,

government leadership and linkage with the national planning frameworks for implementation and budgeting are critical. In Liberia, Uganda and Sierra Leone, UNIFEM, along with UNFPA and OSAGI, has supported upon the request of the governments such multi-stakeholder processes to define priority indicators, a key element for the implementation of the plans.

And yet: National Action Plans are not the only way. Priorities can also be defined through gender strategies or other national planning frameworks. For example, the US International Violence against Women Act is an interesting strategic public policy approach to the crosscutting relevance of violence against women issues for other areas such as poverty, development, peace and security as also a matter of foreign policy.

Who is responsible to make this happen?

The UN system, including the Security Council, The parties to conflict. But the final responsibility to implement the resolutions lies with the Member States. And I am not only referring to those countries affected by a conflict situation: all UN Member States have a role to play. Possible actions include, for example:

- supporting and collaborating with women's peace activists, including gender and 1325-related elements in pre-deployment training of their military and civilian personnel;
- ensuring representation of women at all leadership and decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions including women's participation and leadership in peace processes using if quotas if necessary;
- increasing the number of women in police and military forces;
- bringing to justice perpetrators of human rights violations against women and girls in conflict situations in accordance with national and international laws;
- collecting a meaningful set of indicators to track progress and help address the lack of accurate data.

Seizing the momentum: 10th anniversary

The 10th anniversary commemoration is an opportunity to advance implementation, while acknowledging challenges.

What is happening now in New York?

Last Wednesday the Security Council debated the report of the Secretary-General on women's participation in peacebuilding. This report has at its core a 7-point action agenda on increasing women's participation in peacebuilding. Amongst others it provides concrete measures for increasing women's participation in peace processes, governance structures and early recovery. In this third commitment

the Secretary-General also makes a bold and welcome goal to increase UN post conflict spending on women's needs from 5% (the current level) to 15%. Over 30 Member-States welcomed the report and endorsed its 7 point action plan. It marks a critical step forward on 1325 and we must support its implementation and hold the UN to account to implementing it.

Yesterday, The Global Open Day on Women, Peace and Security showcased the 27 Open Days that took place in conflict-affected countries around the world this year where for the first time in history, women's peacebuilding organizations and women community leaders had a direct dialogue with senior UN leadership on their needs and priorities. The women presented a report highlighting the main findings of the Open Days. The number of signatories to the UNIFEM-led 1325 petition gathered up to now was presented to the Secretary General (the petition is also available for your signature outside the conference room).

Next Tuesday, during the Open Debate at the Security Council the Secretary General will present to the Security Council the report on 1325 implementation. The latter will entail a set of recommendations to the Security Council, such as:

- a more coherent and coordinated approach through the establishment of a comprehensive framework consisting on an agreed set of goals, targets and indicators to guide the implementation;
- systematically address women, peace and security issues in all SC meetings and reports;
- establishing a working group to review the progress of the implementation and make recommendations to address gaps;
- bringing to justice perpetrators of violence against women in conflict;
- encouraging member states to adopt National Action Plans.

Last, but definitely not least: endorsing, adopting and starting to use the set of 26 indicators on 1325, which were developed under the technical leadership of UNIFEM (part of UN Women). We strongly hope that the indicators will be endorsed by all Security Council members, as the opposite would constitute a huge set back in the process.



What do we need?

At the moment, we need four things:

- Political will;
Evidence of the impact women's participation is having and on the abuses women experience;
- Resources; and
- An accountability system.

It is encouraging that all of you, as elected members of your national parliaments and as representatives of your constituencies, have not only the legitimacy but also the power to make a difference in all of these.

Specifically, one of the key roles Parliamentarians can play lies in monitoring national-level implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820 through the Government's progress and action on this issue. Parliaments can ensure that a corresponding framework policy is established and/or improved, and implemented.

This could be done, among other things, by:

Asking questions in Parliament to ministers to enquire about 1325/1820 implementation

Participating in meetings, task forces on Peace and Security to increase gender awareness in the parliamentary debate

Proposing motions for developing National Action Plans and/or asking the government to report on 1325 National Action Plans' implementation.

Considering establishing parliamentary forums, groups or task forces on women, peace and security issues, bringing together not only members of Parliament, but also civil servants and Civil Society representatives. This is the case for example of the Belgian Platform 1325 created in September 2009 and which includes parliamentarians, women's organizations, NGOs, and representatives of the five ministries involved in the development of the National Action Plan.

Ensure incorporation of clear lines of responsibilities, as well as a sound monitoring and accountability system.

Ensure linkage and coherence with other policies related to women, peace and security as well as allocation of adequate funding.

In coordination with members of parliament, continue preparation of tools and resources to facilitate 1325 implementation. This could be handbooks or compendiums, including the one under development by UNIFEM. It will be then up to the Member States to

decide to act or not. All pieces are already in place and we have keys. It's just up to us to decide to start the engine and make it happen.

Your Excellencies, let's seize the momentum and make it happen.

On our side, UN Women will play a major role in the UN's work on women, peace and security, just as the different offices that make up UN Women have been working on advancing resolution 1325 for many years. UN Women is poised to continue, with renewed energy, to support national, regional and global processes for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, in coordination and collaboration with governments, Civil Society and other UN entities, such as DPKO, DPA, UNDP, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNFPA and the Special Representative of the SG on Sexual Violence in Conflict. UN Women will also work to strengthen coordination and coherence among various entities working in post-conflict environments, and to ensure that resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions are fully implemented on the ground and that women survivors of violence are empowered as leaders and agents of change

Let me finish with a quote from UNIFEM Executive Director, Ms. Ines Alberdi: It is time for us all to count the number of women at the peace table, the number of women raped in war, the number of internally displaced women who never recover their property, the number of women human rights defenders killed for speaking out. All of this counts, and we are counting.

Thank you for your attention.



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4.2. African Common Action Plans for Women in Conflict – by H.E. Ms. Vabah Kazaku Gayflor, Minister of Gender & Development of Liberia



First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for the invitation to be a part of this conference. It is an honour to be amongst so many distinguished colleagues, and to speak to you today on the very pressing topic of women, peace and security in Africa.

Coming from Liberia, I am no stranger to the massive destruction that can be caused by only a few. In recognition of this and in solidarity with all my brothers and sisters who are still living in the terror of war and violence - those in the DRC, in Sudan, in Somalia and other nations caught up in the nightmare of armed conflict - I would just like to say on behalf of the women of Liberia, that we support the victims and continue to pray for the day, when you, like Liberia, will find a new hope in peace.

The purpose of this seminar is to come together as a community of concerned individuals, to share information, and experiences, to exchange ideas, and come up with best practices that we can all learn from as we work towards women's full inclusion in the process of ending and recovering from the conflicts by which they are so severely affected.

In that spirit, I will take this opportunity share with you the experience of my country's civil war - the toll it took on women and the crucial role they played in bringing it to an end - and the steps that we are now taking to rebuild, and protect against a repeat of the violence that so devastated our country.

The civil war in Liberia was a long and brutal affair. It was characterised by the complete collapse of social structures and public institutions, and an absence of judicial and moral accountability. It created an environment that left women particularly vulnerable,

and as a result, they felt the effects of the conflict more strongly than the rest of the population. Some fought and died beside men and boys as combatants, many were left behind to head families they were not equipped to care for, and all suffered. Economic vulnerability, loss of security, and displacement left Liberian women susceptible to the cruelties of war. Early marriage, abduction, forced labour, sexual slavery, torture and other human rights violations were commonplace, and women were forced to engage in illegal or dangerous activities in order to survive. Acts of violence, especially sexual violence, became a defining characteristic of the conflict.

In Liberia, we will never know the true number of women who faced this pain during the war, but estimates from areas of fighting suggest that nearly 60% of all women were raped at least once during the conflict and the psychological and physical effects of these acts continue to be seen years after the fighting has ceased. What we do know is that sexual violence is a tactic used to terrorize and demoralize the victims, their families, and the community. It has become a weapon of war in conflicts all around the world, and Liberia was no exception.

However, despite the injustice and violations that Liberian women suffered during the war, they emerged as key players in bringing about the end of the conflict. The women of Liberia grew tired of being victims, of having their lives hijacked by self-serving governments and warlords, of being bystanders in the processes that determined their fate – so they took action.

What began as a group of women singing and praying for peace in the fish markets of Monrovia, grew into a coordinated effort that became so influential that it commanded the attention of then military dictator Charles Taylor, leaders from throughout the nation, and eventually the larger international community.

From 1994 to 2003 thousands of Liberian women mobilized to stage non-violent protests and demonstrations calling for an end to the conflict. They united across ethnic, religious, and socio-economic barriers to form the Women of Liberia's Mass Action for Peace. They cast off their traditionally subservient role in Liberian society, demanding an end to the conflict and advocating for their rights. The unprecedented success of their efforts was never more apparent than when these women forced presidents, warlords and diplomats – by using their bodies to physically barricade them inside a building - to reach an agreement at the Accra Peace Talks. But the women of Liberia did not stop there. They pressed forward to end the legal, social and cultural

barriers that had excluded them from the political process for much of the nation's history, and in 2004 they held the first National Women's Conference.

This conference was used as a venue to identify issues and problems affecting the overall advancement of women in Liberia, and to set clear objectives for addressing them. The unfair and unacceptable exclusion of women from the political decision-making process was earmarked as one of the problems to be tackled under the country's two-year transitional process. The outcome was the development of the Strategic Women's Action Plan which identified barriers preventing women's full participation in politics, outlined steps to be taken to address those issues, and helped steer the efforts to restore and strengthen democratic governance in Liberia.

The women of Liberia had seen the powerful force that their collective voice could be, and they resolved to be a factor in the shaping of their nation's future.

As a result of these efforts, the 2005 general elections proved to be a turning point in the future of politics and political decision-making for the country. Women's participation was boosted through the Mobilizing Women to Vote Campaign, a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Gender and Development along with her NGO, UN and Civil Society partners.

The Campaign targeted women candidates, women and children in general and Liberian society as a whole. We held collaboration meetings with local women leaders and groups, performed songs, dances and dramas in populated areas, had radio talk shows, printed banners and t-shirts, published articles, held dialogues with community and traditional leaders, visited rural areas, and distributed voter education materials, all with the goal of raising awareness of the importance of women's participation in the elections.

Largely due to the tireless efforts of those driving this campaign, an unprecedented number of women participated in the 2005 elections – they made up more than 50 percent of registered voters.

The result of this participation was the historic election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first woman head of state in Africa. For the first time in the history of Liberia, women were targeted during campaigns, encouraged to exercise their right to vote, and had the self-confidence to do so. Thus a gradual process had begun to create a new culture of women's equal participation and representation in political life in Liberia.

This culture of equal participation and representation gets at the root of the inequalities that first sparked

Liberia's civil war and will be a crucial step in maintaining peace, security and ending violence against women in Liberia.

1325

As the experience of my country demonstrates, women play multiple roles in conflict. They are combatants, victims, and agents of change. In order to protect women in Africa from the violence and suffering that they so often endure in conflict, and allow them the opportunity to be the catalyst for positive change that they have proven they can be, special measures must be taken. It is with this in mind that the international community adopted UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

The widespread adoption and implementation of these resolutions will put women, peace and security at the top of international, national and local agendas where they rightfully belong, thereby contributing to the end of violence against women that has become so commonplace in conflicts throughout Africa.

Liberia and 1325



I would now like to talk about the approach we have taken in Liberia to developing and implementing a National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN SCR 1325. I will share progress made and lessons learned in hopes that this will lead to productive dialogue on how other African nations in the midst of and recovering from conflict can protect the rights and security of women, and encourage their participation in conflict-resolution, peacebuilding and reconstruction processes.

The Liberia National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council 1325 or "LNAP" is our answer to the UN Secretary General's call for the implementation of national action plans. Early efforts to implement UN SCR 1325 - undertaken independently by various stakeholders - experienced varying degrees of success, but were uncoordinated and largely undocumented making monitoring of the process difficult – it became clear that a coordinated and coherent national effort was

needed to ensure effective implementation. Accordingly, the Ministry of Gender and Development was mandated by the Government to oversee the development of the LNAP.

From the outset of the project, we sought to capture the true condition of women in Liberia, their needs, their experiences and their hopes for recovery. The LNAP was thus developed and validated through a rigorous process of inclusive consultation and participation that spanned the nation and included everybody from Ministers, to traditional leaders, to rural women. Gathering input and support from women, and men, of all walks of life was an arduous process, but was vital to creating a sense of ownership at all levels.

The plan that resulted from this process is constructed on four pillars: Protection, Prevention, Participation and Empowerment and Promotion. It is closely aligned with Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy and is strongly tied to both resolution 1325 and 1820. Our progress towards the implementation of this Plan thus far has been encouraging.

We have seen increases in the number of women choosing to join the security sector.
-Women now make up 15 percent of the Liberia National Police force;
-ROTC curricula targeting women is being developed for use in high schools and universities; and
-Accelerated learning programmes are helping women meet minimum education standards to enlist in the Armed Forces of Liberia.

We are strengthening the judicial system and law enforcement in order to eradicate the environment of impunity that has long existed for perpetrators of violence against women.
-The rape law has been amended to cover a wider range of offenses in its definition of rape and to prescribe stricter punishments for offenders;
-A special court has been established at the Temple of Justice specifically to adjudicate sexual offense cases; and
-We have established a Gender Based Violence Interagency Coordination Task Force, and developed a National Gender-Based Violence Action Plan.

We have put significant effort into training, and building the capacity of women to participate in all conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery processes. Peacebuilding education and sensitization programmes are being carried out by the Government, NGOs, UN agencies and Civil Society and as a result of this collaborative effort, women of all walks of life are being equipped with the knowledge

and tools they need to lead the nation into a peaceful and secure future.

We, along with our partners, have implemented numerous projects to empower women economically. And we are seeing their increased participation in the formal economy and the breaking down of gender stereotypes that excluded them from many industries.

We are taking action at both the policy and programming level to improve psycho-social and health care for survivors of gender based violence.

We are ensuring that women have a say in political and decision-making processes.

- A Gender Equity Bill is before the legislature and calls for 30 percent representation of women in government which will ensure that women have a voice in all decision-making processes affecting the nation; and

- Voter education, sensitization, and widespread awareness activities will be carried out over the course of the next year to ensure that women are prepared to cast educated and meaningful votes in the 2011 elections, and that the momentum of the 2005 elections is not lost.

The full implementation of the LNAP will be a long process and it must be continually evaluated and adjusted to fit the changing environment in Liberia. There are challenges to overcome, especially in terms of financial resources, and technical and institutional capacity, but the high levels of participation from UN, NGO's and Civil Society, along with the success of projects thus far, are positive signs for the future.

With continued support from international donors and increased support from the private sector, as well as the ongoing commitment of NGOs, Civil Society, and the Government, the full implementation of the LNAP is an achievable goal. The realization of this goal will help build a more just and equitable Liberia for women, and a peaceful and secure future for all Liberians.

It is my hope that the discussion occurring here today will provide a lesson-sharing opportunity that will strengthen similar efforts in nations across Africa, and lead to a more unified commitment to the implementation of UN SCR 1325. On this note, I would like to share some of the lessons learned and best practices that have emerged from Liberia's work towards implementing UN SCR 1325.

The LNAP, Lessons Learned and Best Practices

In the implementation of the LNAP, several items have stood out as being key to the success or failure, of various initiatives. To my colleagues working to

develop similar plans in their countries, I would offer the following advice.

Put into place strong institutions and policy framework. It is critical to put into place strong institutions to coordinate, manage and promote the implementation from the national to the community level. Examples of steps that Liberia has taken in to achieve this include setting up county offices for the Ministry of Gender to, among other things, oversee and monitor the implementation of the LNAP at the county level, and the development of policies, namely for example the National Gender Policy, and the Girls Education Policy, that support the principles of UNSCR 1325.

Use an inclusive and participatory approach. The development of any action plan must be done in a way that is fully inclusive and participatory in order to create a sense of ownerships and ensure that the resulting plan is in line with the needs, and concerns of individuals from all walks of life.

Develop a strong popularization strategy. It is crucial to the success of any action plan that the people who will be called on to execute it - from the highest levels of government, to the grassroots rural women's groups – are aware of and understand what UN SCR 1325 stands for and what it is meant to accomplish. Furthermore, men must be targeted with any popularization plan. The principals in 1325 go against cultural, social, and political norms that have dominated much of the continent for decades, and a concerted effort must be made to make sure that men are brought on board with the plan.

Capitalize on the capabilities, energy and resources of Civil Society and especially women's groups at the grassroots level. At the Ministry of Gender, we are working diligently to ensure that the voices of women, who were never heard before, are now echoing loud and clear at every level: in the villages, in the rural areas, in community decision making, in local politics, in security discussions, and at the national level. The key has been developing a Rural Women's Structure to bring out the voice of women who have never been involved in the prominent women's groups. Through this structure, we are presenting Liberia's local women on the international scene, thereby empowering women at all levels, while also ensuring that the international community hears the struggles and priorities of our most vulnerable women and that they hear it straight from the mouths of these women and not just through politicians. Through their active involvement in ending the conflict in Liberia, women of this nation have shown that they are ready, willing, and

able to drive change for a more peaceful and equitable future.

Ensure that policy measures and legal actions are put in place to support the letter and intent of 1325.

Many ad hoc programmes can be put in place for women; however these interventions cannot be sustainable without the basis of a policy perspective. Governments, like Liberia's, should look at the process of Constitutional reform as an opportunity to set the legal groundwork for ensuring women's equality in all areas: economic, social, cultural, political, and especially in the decision making processes surrounding conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery.

Create avenues for the provision of human capital support.

Training must take place for women at various levels. In Liberia, the majority of our women are illiterate and we must institutionalize programmes to make them functionally literate while incorporating human rights training and encouraging their increased role in decision making.

Target women for economic interventions.

Women not only want more and better work opportunities, providing them is critical for ensuring better conditions for their children, for increasing their visibility and leverage in community and household decision, and for the economic benefit of the entire country. These are factors that will contribute to the overall peace, security, and stability of Liberia at this critical period in its development.

Target youth in peacebuilding.

The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. It is therefore critical that they are exposed, at an early age, to programmes that teach leadership, peaceful methods of conflict resolution, and promote open dialogue on issues such as gender equality and human rights. Furthermore, education and employment programmes should be stressed among youth to avoid future generations from falling into the poverty trap that contributes greatly to creating an environment that is susceptible to violent conflict.

Build a strong foundation of Governance and Rule of Law.

Gender justice must be key and taken seriously, with paralegal systems put in place to increase all women's access to the legal system and targeted training of

lawyers and judges on the issues of women's rights and sexual and gender based violence.

Make early and strong movements to include women in the political process.

It is critical that women be involved in the political process through all phases of conflict resolution and rebuilding with programmes that encourage women to run for office, train them in campaigning, and encourage them to exercise their right to vote.

Without women voting their preference, and without women's contributing at the centre of the political dialogue, a country will lose the potential of women and their unique skills and perspective within the reconstruction process. For countries such as Liberia that have been so horribly destroyed, missing out on the full participation of half their population is an unacceptable set back.

In considering international support and cooperation - which has been such a key factor in Liberia's development and implement the LNAP - I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few suggestions for the international partners:

- First, they should respect the new aid environment, recognizing Government as the leader. This is especially critical in post-conflict countries, where Government is made up of people who went through the conflict and are in a better position to see what changes are feasible, what can be sustainable, and what steps needs to be taken to get there.

As an example of the potential for Government leadership in this area, Liberia has established a National 1325 Steering Committee made up of Cabinet Ministers, Civil Society Organizations, NGOs and UN Partners. With this Steering Committee, we have been able to prioritize ways for the international community to support Government's own strategy to implement 1325. By working through and with this group, international partners can ensure that their interventions to support women are sustainable and reach across the various sectors that are critical for success.

- Secondly, international partners should prioritize funding that reaches communities and the most vulnerable women. Especially in Liberia where so much has been destroyed, the financial needs are great. We can make the largest impacts with programmes by ensuring that larger percentages of aid packages are used by the country and within the country. This means taking programmes down to the community level and moving beyond technical capacity support and policy development. Although technical capacity and policy are necessary, our interventions must reach the women, particularly at a grass roots level. If they do, I can guarantee that donors will be getting the largest return on their investments.

- Lastly, international assistance should be given with specific attention as to how that funding will place the issues of women and conflict at the forefront.

I use the example of the Danish support to Liberia, nearly 20 million US Dollars to support our achievement of MDG 3. This money has ensured women and girls are targeted in programming for youth, programmes for agriculture, microfinance, literacy and education, and technical programmes.

In Conclusion

The unique experiences of women in conflict, and the necessity of including them in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and reconstruction have been noted. However, ten years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, women are still not participating equally in peace and security initiatives across Africa.

It must be recognized that adopting the resolution is just a first step - it is not an end. It is now up to us, all of us - government, donors, NGOs, the UN, Civil Society - to commit to turning the principles encapsulated in UN SCR 1325 into results in the real world.

Recently, countries have begun taking steps to do this. At the international level, 23 countries have already put in place their national action plans, however, only five of those countries are African nations. Liberia is, therefore, proud to be among the first to develop and launch a national action plan for the implementation of this seminal resolution, and welcomes the opportunity to be an example to other African nations looking to do the same.

We can bring an end to the conflict and violence that are so pervasive throughout Africa, but the involvement of women is critical if we hope to achieve this. If we hope to understand the intricacies of conflict and begin to forge more sustainable paths to lasting peace, we must hear the voices of affected women. If we hope to bring security that respects the rights of all members of society, we must consider the circumstances of women. Women can be leaders of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation, but for this potential to be met, we must ensure their stories, their unique experiences and their needs are heard, and that the critical role they can play in these efforts are recognized and institutionalized in from the grassroots to the international level.

May our discussions and sharing today allow us to learn from one another and build a stronger international alliance for bringing women and girls to the forefront of our programmes and interventions for security, peacebuilding and development.

4.3. Role of Civil society – by Ms. Katlijn Malfliet, President of “Vrouwenraad”, the Dutch speaking Women Council of Belgium²⁴

Pr. Ms. Katlijn Malfliet, University of Leuven, President of “Vrouwenraad”, the Dutch speaking Women Council of Belgium



When we speak about “women, peace, security” and violence against women, we also speak about the UN resolution 1325 and its recalling resolutions (1820, 1888 en 1889). Even in Civil Society, which is the topic of my intervention, we work towards the implementation of resolution 1325.

In the Dutch speaking Women Council of Belgium I am the President of, this element has been made a key-point of our three power pillars. Alongside non-discrimination is still very important for the Women’s movement, our second power pillar concerns women’s solidarity and the third one stresses the importance of gender in the peacemaking process. On this point, the women’s movement still has a lot to achieve. We are convinced that we can work efficiently for peacebuilding and post conflict initiatives, under the condition that enough attention is paid to gender issues linked to war and armed conflict. The implementation of resolution 1325 is a key instrument towards this goal and therefore needs close attention. To monitor the implementation of resolution 1325, we have created in Belgium a platform coordinating the peace movement, the women’s movement as well as the people in charge of the

implementation of the national action plans of 1325 in the ministries.

From this experience I would like to communicate two important messages.

I would like to make a first statement: the recognition of Civil Society as a key actor for the implementation of resolution 1325 implies budget resources. As you all know, there is a National Action Plan but the Belgian army is the only actor that actually assigned a budget to the implementation of this Action plan. No further budgets have been foreseen to this purpose. My second statement is that the Civil society should remember that it is possible to have different interpretations of 1325 and therefore we must remain alert. If we address the issue of the eventual role of Civil Society in the implementation of 1325, we indeed have the possibility to directly cooperate with women organisations in the field, in the conflict zones. The organisations exist and through the diaspora organisations in Belgium we often have good contacts with these communities. Hence we are operational. Everything is ready. The only problem is that there still is no available budget to realize our goals. We entirely agree with what the former speakers said about empowerment and the idea that women from Civil Society organisations who have been subjected to rape or mass rapes must be helped in their difficult re-integration in the community. Civil Society is ready to offer help but to be able to play our role to the full, we must ask more financial means from the Belgian public sector.

My second message could even be more important. During our work with the platform on resolution 1325, awareness gradually arose on the fact that 1325 contains a dangerous trap. The resolution can have diverse interpretations. Does it mention more women, from a quantitative point of view, more women in negotiations, more women on the field, more women involved in the peacemaking process? This is undoubtedly true in part. It is relevant and one has to work towards this direction. But in resolution 1325, the element “there must be more women participation” can in a certain way be paired to an equally important aspect, namely the gender dimension in war and conflict. This has to be analysed and the necessary consequences have to be drawn. In the first place it does not concern “more women”, an element that the army is more than eager to feed on because they can recruit more women in the frame of what has been broadly called “peace missions”.

If we take resolution 1325 seriously, we must tackle the fundamental issue of the existing socio-cultural role models on the field that could make way for male or female identity patterns in a conflict situation. The fact that in all the conflict areas one still refers to the terms “Warlords” signifies that a specific gender approach still validates the prevailing pattern where men behave

²⁴ Original speech in Dutch

as warlords, as the ones who will caution the establishment, and on the other hand considers women as caring for the house and in charge of reproduction. It is exactly because of this caring role that women are massively raped: it makes them particularly vulnerable for the enemy who in wartime uses rape as a weapon. If we interpret resolution 1325 from this gender approach, the text takes on another dimension. It becomes clear that resolution 1325 is not only a woman issue. 1325 is not something that should exclusively rely on the shoulders of women. By this means I would especially like to stress that– and this is the gap in resolution 1325 - if we do not focus on this aspect, the whole male gender perspective on war and peace will remain as such. Civil Society has to be alert to prevent this. Civil Society must plead for the leadership’s close attention to the roles of men in armed conflict, cultural model roles of expected male behaviour and their influence on the local leadership. Although it is of uttermost importance, it is not enough to stress women needs and the policy implemented for their empowerment when they need help because of the endured traumas. Resolution 1325 must become an analytical looking glass to fully shed light on the inherent gender dimension in instable and violent contexts. This is the fundamental problem at stake and we must be careful that it does not get obscured by the other interpretation of 1325, namely the “more women” lecture.

My concrete question though is: “Can Belgian Development Cooperation and the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs be independent, critical and conscious enough of the issue at stake to correctly interpret 1325 and grasp the consequences of the approach to gender in war and armed conflict? Could this interpretation be handed over from the federal authorities to the Regions?”



4.4. Burundi case: Great Region post-conflict country– by Hon. Mr. Chrysologue Rugagamiza, Member of Senate of Burundi²⁵ (Speech –as reported by Belgian Senate note takers)

Hon. Mr. Chrysologue RUGAGAMIZA
(in replacement of Hon. Fidès SINANKWA) -



I will give you a brief presentation on how my country, Burundi, has integrated the Peking resolution on violence against women, peace and security. Initially, it was scheduled that my colleague Ms. Fides Sinankwa would make this presentation but right now she has some problems with her voice.

Sexual aggressions constitute a serious social and health issue that took on disastrous dimensions in the Region of the Great Lakes countries. They reached a peak in the context of armed conflicts that ravaged these countries, especially during the last two decades.

Sexual disparity is at the heart of sexual violence against women. Research on the issue showed that the aggressors are almost exclusively men who often come from within the victim’s surroundings. These armed conflicts are always triggering population shifts. The situation worsens when sexual violence is committed in refugee and deported people camps.

²⁵ Original speech in French

According to the HCR, 85% of refugees are women and children, this constitute a very vulnerable population group in this type of situation. The loss of their sense of identity, the deployment of armed forces often used in these contexts, the absence of the male population that could guarantee women's security are all factors increasing the risk of widespread violence against women.

Coming out of the harsh experience of armed conflicts in Burundi, we witnessed that the social, political, economical and cultural system of this country has been undermined. This is the reason why, towards a new start, the Government had to invest all its political willpower in creating other bases. The extent of the phenomenon escapes us because sexual violence remains a taboo and victims do not speak out because they fear retaliation and social exclusion.

Nevertheless, the vulnerable population groups are principally women and children lacking social protection, that is: isolated women, widows, unmarried women, women at the head of a household, marginalized women, as well as prostitutes. To consolidate the laws related to the prescriptions of resolution 1325, Burundi has implemented a national action plan that enables the Government to sensitize Civil Society on the necessity of active prevention regarding the conflicts' after-effects on women in order to protect them.

We have been speaking here about women's participation in decision-making policies regarding peace, security and reconciliation. It has to be stressed that Burundi represents a special case. We want women to participate in conceptualisation of the clauses of evolution towards peace and security. Women will be part of the decision-making authorities. This is essential for success.

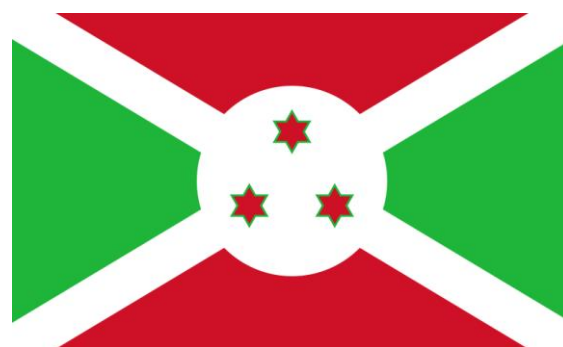
From a constitutional aspect, women now occupy responsibility positions formerly invested by men. From a legislative point of view, rape has become a severe imprescriptible crime. The culprits can in no way be amnestied or offered clemency.

In the health sector, the State gives a subsidy for every child born and every child receives free healthcare up to the age of five. Assisted delivery rates have risen from 22,9 % in 2005 to 30,7% in 2006, 41 % in 2007 and 55,3 % in 2008. Maternal mortality rates have significantly been reduced at a national scale. Regarding the fight against poverty; the development programmes' projects focus on women's specific problems, especially in rural communities. As far as education and women's training are concerned, an enhancing policy for the reduction of

disparities between girls and boys and free primary education contributes to increase parity. This policy has been achieved through political debates specifically focused on women's issues.

The Parliament has organised seminars on violence and its after-effects on women. By raising awareness on the magnitude of the problem these debates allowed the incorporation of dispositions on the reduction of gender offences in the revised Penal Code. This constitutes a major recent reform.

Priorities have been established in the following fields: Teaching and Education, women's representation in institutions, women's participation in peacekeeping operations and in post-conflict planning. Women have been sent as witnesses to places where only men had been sent before them, for instance to Somalia and Darfur. The Government is aware that women refugees live in insecure and remote places like refugee camps in rural and urban environments and helps them to be better protected against these forms of violence. It foresees mechanisms to introduce complaints and lawsuits. It implements programmes to boost their self-confidence, to regain trust in life and to enable their insertion in the local context, or their voluntary repatriation or accommodation in another country. Women are vulnerable because of their gender; they are less protected as refugees and in the meanwhile have to care for their family. Therefore the government has decided that it was fundamental to facilitate their access to means of support so that they would not depend on sporadic aid resources. In this field, actions have been organized to encourage rapprochement between returnees, displaced women and women remaining on the hills.



I will now mention recommendations and future perspectives. The government is aware that it must conform to the following best practices: to rely on the media and educative programmes to sensitize the population on the unacceptability of all forms of violence against women; to set up training sessions catering to magistrates, law enforcement agents, members of judicial professions, social workers and medical staff to assure that the perpetrators of violent practices against women be sued and sanctioned and

to provide appropriate help for the victims. In conclusion, by virtue of resolution 1325 and by means of the strategic framework and the priority plan for peace consolidation, the Government of Burundi recognises the important role of woman. It sustains that no strategy will be decided nor implemented without taking into account the notion of gender in order to guarantee women's participation in the decision-making process, the choice of priority actions and their implementation. Burundi has rallied the zero tolerance statement on the issue of violence against women because our mothers, sisters and girls deserve better than violence.

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[4.5. Violence Against Women in Conflict: Good parliamentary Practices from Ireland – by Hon. Ms. Katarina Bulbulia, former member of Senate of Ireland](#)



Ladies and Gentlemen, war is not a safe place for a soldier. But the world has overlooked – or hidden the fact for centuries - that conflict can be even more dangerous for women than for soldiers. With Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Security Council made its first effort to protect women in conflict. For the first time, they acknowledged that conflict does discriminate, and all too often it discriminates against women.

This UN Resolution is now 10 years old, and too many countries have been slow to implement it. Ireland is finally about to publish its National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325, with input from the armed forces, Civil Society, and academia. All Parliaments should take an active role and advocate for their own National Action Plans. Where these Plans do not exist, or are weak, Parliaments should insist on their governments to do more. Where such Plans are being drafted, Parliaments should actively participate in shaping them.

Ireland's Plan has been shaped by a cross-learning initiative between Ireland/Northern Ireland, Liberia and Timor-Leste. Since these countries all have a history of conflict, they can learn from those directly affected.

Ireland has already taken unprecedented initiative in this area. Micheál Martin, Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, has appointed a Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security. Nuala O'Loan has filled that role since March, 2009. As the former Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, Nuala has an unmatched level of experience and knowledge. She has already been hard at work to promote the issues of Resolution 1325 internationally.

Ireland, through Irish Aid, has also organised events in all three of those countries, bringing together high-level officials and experts from civil society. Each event focused on one of Resolution 1325's "three P's:" Participation, Protection and Perspectives of gender.

On Participation, we focused bringing women into the decision-making process. We recognise that women's voices should be heard in all levels of government and Civil Society. Another event focused on protection. Women must have access to mental and physical care, and fair legal systems. Our final event focused on gender perspectives, making sure that women play a critical role in mediation, post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding.

Finally, Ireland has a number of historical connections to the Congo. Dating back to 1903, and Roger Casement's famous Congo diaries, to 1960, and our United Nations actions to prevent the Katanga crisis, Irish people have stood up to the most terrible extremes of violence and exploitation in that country.

In recent decades, as we all know, The Congo has suffered from the most horrific and ongoing civil war. Rape is being used as the most sickening and destructive weapon of war. To make matters even worse, the UN force now in the country, MONUC, is scheduled to leave soon.

As the AWEPA Irish section, we want to do everything we can to prevent further sexual violence in the Congo, ahead of the 2011 UN demobilization. We will hold a major event in the Irish parliament aiming to make sure UN troops are getting the gender-based violence training that they should make sure that is the case. We will also support the best efforts to secure legal prosecutions of these despicable crimes. We hope you will all support our efforts for this cause.



4.6. Gender in the Ivory Coast - by Hon. Ms. Bamba Massany, member of National Assembly of Ivory Coast²⁶ (Speech – as reported by Belgian Senate note takers)



I am a member of the Ivory Coast Parliament. The Ivory Coast is also subject to violence inflicted on women. This violence is widespread and worrying due to the physical, psychological, social and economical repercussions. More than one woman out of ten has been the victim of at least one of these types of prejudices.

Violence based on gender, such as sexual violence and physical violence have increased during the conflict. In 2002, our country has been confronted with a political and armed conflict, witnessing the escalation of violence in relation to women. Genital mutilations plague nearly 36% of women between fifteen and forty-nine years old. This practice has consequences on women's health: infections, severe bleedings, etc. Inequalities related to gender can be explained by socio-cultural factors, depreciating stereotyped social relations and by a weak human rights based approach to address specific needs of women and men. The persistency of inequalities related to gender is also due to the weak popularization and insufficient implementation of the regulations and legislative texts promoting gender equality and equity. To face these inequalities, the Ivory Coast government implemented an institutional framework for the creation of the Directorate for the promotion of equality and gender. This organism is a structure aiming to implement its own policy in terms of gender promotion. It coordinates the undertaken actions and guarantees that gender equality and equity between women and

²⁶ Original speech in French

men be respected. It monitors the implementation of the international engagements in the frame of equality and gender equity.

As far as the creation of legislation and policy are concerned, the principle of equity between men and women has been approved by our Constitution. In February 2007, the President of the Republic signed the solemn declaration of the Ivory Coast on equal opportunities, equity and gender. This declaration also reflects the political commitment of the government and constitutes an instrument for the orientation of the national policy in terms of gender and application of the 30% quota recommended by Peking.

A political document on equal opportunity, parity and gender has been elaborated and adopted by the Council of Ministers on 23 April 2009. It aims at the creation of a positive environment that takes gender into account in all sectors and at all levels. It moreover constitutes a framework for the insertion of the gender based approach into the programmes' policies and backs development projects in all fields of society.

Regarding women's participation in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, a national action plan for the implementation of United Nations' resolution 1325 has been created in 2007 on women, peace and security. It has been adopted by the Government for a period of five years, from 2008 until 2012. A code of the individual and the family, awaiting ratification by the Government, has been written and validated. The national action plan collaborates with women of Civil Society who promote women. Parliamentarians also participated in its creation. This plan bore many benefits. From an operational point of view, a fertile environment for gender awareness has been created thanks to the promotion of national "gender" assets, such as research on gender-based violence, concentration of financial resources and creation of income generating activities. The plan is moreover encouraged through the creation and implementation of projects dedicated to gender-based violence involving women in the reconstruction. The realisation of all these programmes does not go without constraints: lack of qualified human resources, insufficient national budget resources, lack of time on part of the responsible authorities, persistency of socio-cultural "markers", poor knowledge of the gender-based approach...

The Parliament cooperated with Civil Society to ratify the Maputo Charter that portrays many women's empowering positions. Following my initiative, it fought in favour of a resolution draft that prohibits genital mutilations once and for all. We defended this project before the United Nations Council in New York. We hope it will have a positive outcome.

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4.7. Discussions

Mr. Luc Huyse. – This will be a short intervention. There are two books available to you all, one with the title "All things pass, except the past" and the other which is the French version "Tout passe, sauf le passé" (editor's note: available on www.awepa.org).

This book discusses what happens after a civil war ends, after a brutal repression ends. How do individual victims deal with such a painful legacy? I also discuss in the book the role of women in the search for justice, and in the search for truth of what happened in the context of the Truth Commissions. Moreover, I discuss the role of women in these very complex proxies of reconciliation, giving many examples of women who have played a crucial role in reconciling with those who fought civil war.

There is a copy of this book for each participant and if there are any members of parliament who would like to distribute this book inside their parliaments then please contact AWEPA for a copy. AWEPA has already distributed this book in several African parliaments.



On the left : Hon. Ms. Lydia Maximus, Honorary Vice President of AWEPA and political coordinator of the AWEPA Burundi Programme; on the right: Pr. Luc Huyse, author of "All Things Pass, Except the Past"

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lola Kisanga.–

Mister President, I would like you to allow the head of our delegation to introduce Mrs Eve Bazaiba Masudi's intervention. Mr Alain Destexhe. – You have the floor, Mister Mbuku Laka.²⁷

M. Boris Mbuku Laka.– Mister President, – I thank you on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also thank the speaker who announced a welcome initiative of the Irish Parliament to sustain the Democratic Republic of Congo. This morning, a speaker declared that genital mutilation would be performed in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In my country,

²⁷ Question originally in French

there is no tribe, no family that resort to this practice. The Congolese penal law has prescribed that genital mutilation is an offence. In the same frame of mind, rape has been declared an imprescriptible crime against human rights.



H.E. Ms. Miet Smet, President of AWEPA discussing with Mr. Luc Dhooere, Honorary Vice President of AWEPA & political coordinator of AWEPA DRC Programme and of AWEPA Forum of Parliaments of the members states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Programme

Mrs. Eve Bazaiba Masudi. – I welcome the initiative of AWEPA that is doing a good job in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With its two representatives, we cross the whole territory until its most remote villages to talk about violence committed against women. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sexual violence against women is very common. In this aspect, we call upon the world's attention. For many years, Congo has been the theatre of conflicts involving several neighbour countries and their allies. Women have been the principal victims of these clashes. I would like to linger on the role of Parliamentarians and their suggestions of solutions for the eradication of sexual violence on women. We dedicate a lot of time to the management of their after-effects. We need to learn more on the real causes of this scourge to make an efficient response. Nowadays, the war, the presence of uncontrolled armed groups, the illicit exploitation of mineral resources, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons fuel the disorders. Once the causes are unravelled, one has to identify the instigators, the ones who pull the strings. War is only the visible part of the iceberg. We have to ask ourselves where these uncontrolled armed groups come from. In 1994, during the conflict between Tutsis and Hutus, France suggested that more than two million Rwandese enter the Democratic Republic of the Congo, without any control or disarmament. All the Parliamentarians of the world must unite to solve this problem. Today, Burundi, Sudanese and Ugandan rebels use the Democratic Republic of the Congo as their back office. Worldwide it is assumed that Congo

hosts rebellions from other countries, however the fact is, Congo suffers from this problem. If Parliamentarians who have the power to control and call on their Governments do not attack the causes, they will never find a solution and will continue to spend money and energy in vain. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has started adopting adequate laws to forbid sexual violence committed against women. We have changed the criminal code and the Congolese military code to increase the charges and extend the definition of this type of violence. We retained the definition “sexual violence against women in situation of armed conflict” as included in the Statute of Rome in the International Criminal Court so that those offences can become infeasible crimes against humanity as to put a halt to impunity.

Parliamentarians must guarantee the application of these laws. Resolution 1325 of the Security Council is ten years old. The Peking Action Plan is fifteen years old. The Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women is thirty years old. The International Women's Day is hundred years old. But nothing changes because we go on handling the consequences instead of tackling the causes. I want to make clear moreover that beyond resolution 1325, the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes into account resolution 1820 of the Security Council that enforces the fight against impunity.²⁸

Ms. De Backer. – I would like to just thank AWEPA for the organization of this seminar not only because it is timely, but because of its very high quality. AWEPA can be applauded for having put this high on the agenda. Unfortunately, my minister Mr Vanackere could not attend as he is on an official mission in Istanbul, but it is no secret that he is a strong advocate for gender issues, the National Action Plan and violence against women. These issues are high on our agenda and are high on the agenda during our Presidency of the European Union. We organized three seminars which have already been mentioned today, on Participation, Prevention, and Protection, in Geneva, Brussels and New York. So I can only express my approval and wish you a good continuation.

Mr. Ivan Hermans. – In fact, I was asked by the UNFPA to be present at this conference and to ask a question to start off a debate. But before I do so, I would like to congratulate the Senate on holding this meeting under the EU Belgian presidency and on getting all these important experts and people together to discuss this very important and riveting topic on the execution of Security Council Resolution 1325. As you may know, UNFPA has programmes in about 140 countries, and in

²⁸ Question originally in French

about countries we are trying to bring into practice the Resolution 1325. Financing however is mostly limited, and my question will therefore be about the financing of all this. The present financing that we have at UN is catalytic, but it does engender a lot of good practices as a result. If you look at what has been done in Nepal on Resolution 1325 there are indeed tangible results. The Mano River Women Peace Network led to good results. In Timor and other countries like Kenya all the activities around 1325 during the recent civil unrest were quite successful. If we look at this Resolution 1325, it is now 10 years old and it lasted until 2007, 2009. Other Resolutions will come, but in practice in the field, when we in UNFPA work with our UN partners, with women's groups at the grass roots level, with civil societies, parliamentarians and governments, it is clear that wherever we work these women's groups lack the real resources to sustain the initiatives and to continue to work. Mostly they work on a voluntary basis which is good for some time, but then it stops or has to stop. This really is an enormous problem.

Another huge problem with financing is that the victims do not get any compensation although they are invalidated and incapacitated by the conflict, whilst war veterans, who are men, do receive compensation. Women, however, get very little compensation. So these programmes and projects cost a lot of money and the question is now, will the scarce resources continue to be available in the coming years?

Alongside this we still have the consequences of the financial crisis, and we see that many traditional European donors are rolling back their funding for development cooperation and also probably for this issue too. In the long run we wonder if the UN Resolution 1325 will be able to compete with all the other priorities in the development area. So the question is how to secure funding for the implementation of 1325, for the execution of policies on gender based violence?

Furthermore, what is AWEPA's strategy towards its partners, towards European governments to keep this on the agenda for the coming years? How can AWEPA better strategise, together with its partners, to be successful not only for policy development but for continued funding? Then of course there is the role of Belgium, which is now a kind of front-runner in this topic, but how will Belgium continue to motivate and encourage the EU member states, the upcoming EU Presidencies and the EU Commission to prioritise this important issue? That is my main question for the meeting today.

Ms. Chantal Van Cutsem. – I represent Lawyers without Borders. We try to give law back to vulnerable populations. We are present in a great number of African countries, among the Great Lakes countries, in order to promote access to justice for victims of violence and to fight against the perpetrators' impunity. In our daily work, we are aware that many obstacles subsist for the victims at all levels. Beyond the fear of speaking up, other problems subsist, such as the weakness of inquiries, the procedure costs, the difficulty to show proof, the non-execution of the sentences, the slowness of justice, etc. I stress the importance of voting substantial budgets and strengthening the national legal system so as to restore justice and make it accessible and operational for the victims. As for the fight against impunity, I would like to remind everyone that the Rome Statute must be ratified at the International Criminal Court that decrees that sexual violence is an international and infeasible crime. Moreover, compliance with the International Criminal Court and cooperation must be encouraged in all the participating countries. I congratulate the DRC for the legislation on the fight against sexual violence that has already been adopted. I believe one more important step has to be made for the implementation of the Statute of Rome in DRC so that international crimes such as sexual violence can be judged by civil courts rather than military courts that often lack independence.²⁹

Ms. Bogaletch Gebre. – I think that the Resolution 1325 should be revisited. As far as I know women in developing countries like mine live everyday in fear of rape. When we go to work in the field, fetch water, go to the market or to school, in the classroom, even in the bedroom we are in constant fear. During the war, there may have been an increase in the numbers of mass rapes but in any case women are still the victims of such violence. Also when women are raped, men interpret it as if their honour has been damaged rather than the woman who has been raped. Women do not get support from the husbands, the brothers or the fathers; as a result they are doubly and triply damaged. Thus, when we talk about rape we should reassess what it really is as it occurs not only during war times but throughout our lives as women.

Before I finish, I would like to thank the European Commission which gave us a five year grant of 450,000 euros. It allowed us to get the results that we did even when we did not have any background or any understanding except our vision on what we could put together. Consequently, I am now able to talk of this long term finding which gives Civil Society the opportunity to learn, reapply and produce results.

²⁹ Question originally in French

Ms. Kaat De Nijs. – I work for the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I am the coordinator of the Belgian Action plan on the 1325 and I also coordinated the EU position on 1325 being held on Tuesday 26 October 2010. The Security Council has 15 members and we are trying to adopt the UN indicators developed by UNIFEM (part of UN Women). There are 26 indicators and we know that there are five members in the Security Council that do not want to adopt these indicators on Tuesday. I now call on the Uganda chair to change your minds and support these indicators. As we have heard today we need accountability, what does not get counted does not count. I also call on participants from Nigeria, Gabon, Russia and China to also do the same. We need all other African countries to make regional, national and international statements on Tuesday to support and adopt these indicators. This tenth anniversary cannot go by without this adoption.

Mr. Zahra Ali Cheikh. – I would like to return to the words of the representative of the Congolese Senate concerning a possible Burundian rebellion in the Congo. Until today, Burundi has witnessed no more rebellions. All the rebels have returned to Burundi and they are in power. The last refugees in Congo are going home. I would like to reassure our Congolese friends: There is no rebellion anymore in Burundi. Not inside, nor outside.³⁰

Mrs Madeleine Bitshilwalwa Lwakabwanga. – I represent GAMS- Belgium, the Group for the abolition of FGM/C. We are member of the Inter African Committee that regroups the national committees that are at work in twenty eight countries of the Continent. On the 11th of October 2010, we were informed of the arrest of the director of the national committee of Gambia and her assistant. They have been imprisoned for eight days without valid motive. This is an alarming fact. The grip is tightened on organisations that work on the field. African countries' governments should give much better support to these organisations which, despite achieving an enormous job of awareness and prevention, are poorly tolerated.³¹

A participant. – I would like to make a statement on behalf of the associative network of the Congolese women of the diaspora. Culture is the essence of a people and art is important in our lives. We have thus made a mock-up of the statue called "Shaumba", named after the Congolese woman called Demba, who is known to soothe tensions in her community. This is the artwork of a Belgian artist named Somma Simon

and it calls for a stop to violence. In Bantou communities, figurines are used as a remedy to problems which may arise in child birth or to heal mental disease, etc. The vital force and the purpose of these Bantou prayers resides within the statue; in turn, influencing their behaviour. The statue inherits attributes of memory, power and veneration. It is magical, helping people to move on through providing moral support. The statues are living objects that provides reassurance and allows for group cohesion in ceremonies. Shaumba will be erected in Brussels, a most artistic city. While looking at her, people will understand that women need to be protected.

Ms. Dagmar Schumacher. – I would just like to support the point made by Kaat De Nijs that it is extremely important that the indicators are endorsed next Tuesday. I can only really encourage governments to go ahead to and make a difference and endorse the indicators at this Security Council Session.

I would also like to go quickly back to the point on financing; while it is not a solution at least there was a suggestion made by the Secretary General last Wednesday in the discussions on the report of the SG on Women's Participation and Peacebuilding where he called for an increase in UN post conflict spending on women's needs from 5% (the current level) to 15% in the future. I know it is not a solution, but it is a way forward and we must support its implementation and to hold the UN accountable to go ahead with this.

Ms. Maddy Janssens. – I am a member of the think-tank *Evenwicht* (Balance). It is clear that in all these years nothing has changed. I would like to ask African women if they want to consider taking over the political power. Next year there are elections in Congo. Why do women not stand for President? This is the only path that will give results.³²

A participant. – I am a citizen of the Central African Republic. I join my voice to the Congolese parliamentarians. In 2007, we were gathered into an assembly in Congo. The LRA, the rebellion that we all know about was already devastating the country. At that time, together with my colleagues of Uganda, Soudan and the DRC, I had written that we had to tackle the problem by the roots. The Central African Republic is very far away from Uganda. It has been completely invaded by this rebellion on its eastern part. There are rapes and killings all day long. We have been insisting thoroughly on Resolution 1325 but if we do not tackle the problem from the beginning, we will face it in the future as well. We must prioritise

³⁰ ³² Question originally in French

³² Question originally in Dutch

prevention. If this had been the case, we would not have gone through all this grief.³³

Ms. Albertine Tshibilondi. – I work at the “Centre d’études africaines et de recherches interculturelles” (CEAFRI) (Centre of African studies and intercultural research). I am also a researcher and member of the Commission on “Women and Development”. We have been working a lot in the framework of the National Congolese Plan, on the follow-up of Resolution 1325. I am glad that the plan has been adopted. However, last November, the question was raised whether it would be applied in the Provinces. The issue of the resolutions’ implementation in the provinces has effectively been raised. As has been stressed this morning, we have laws and resolutions but what about actions? How can we translate Resolution 1325 into practical actions so that women cannot only participate but also gain access to economical power and other rights? Moreover, how can we raise awareness of this resolution, in our villages, so that women, who are mostly illiterate, can seize this tool, defend their rights and become more assertive? Indeed, these women are not only victims and resolutions shouldn’t remain a dead letter in Parliaments.³⁴

Ms. Standaert. – I would like to speak up in the name of the victims, the raped women I have encountered. I would like to share their burden. These women have been confiding in me since 2007. First of all, they want peace. They live in constant fear. Secondly, if we talk about rape endured by women, we rarely talk about the traumatic experience they live through when they survive the rape. They need help to overcome the after-effects. Moreover these women are for the most part illiterate. They do not know their rights and cannot defend themselves. They are also victims of a male dominated culture that still reigns in many African countries. This is why they are asking for help through alphabetisation projects, as well as small projects generating income and adapted to the most vulnerable among them. Moreover, they ask where their Belgian sisters are. They have a privileged link to Belgium but feel abandoned.³⁵

Ms. Nicole Emany. – I am a member of the “Collectif des femmes congolaises pour la paix et la justice” (the “Congolese women collectivity for peace and justice”). I read the book of Mr Luc Huyse and I listened to the comments of Senator Eve Bazaïba. For the Congolese woman, the resolution is only words on paper. Harmed women, subjected to pressures and rape, cannot even

think of their further development without real access to justice. The international community has closed its eyes on what really happens in Congo. Without justice, there is no development. Every day, in DRC, twelve women are raped. Amidst them, one out of two is very young.³⁶

Ms. Khady Koïta. – I am President of “La Palabre”. I would like to come back on what has been said this morning on the subject of FGM/C. We have listened to many beautiful interventions. I am although astonished, after 30 years of fieldwork, to hear that the law is not compulsive. I would like to remind you that the existing laws should be enforced because they constitute a support for the NGO’s on the field and strengthen the work and the efforts that have been accomplished for so many years. Today, we evoke Resolution 1325. Many resolutions have been adopted and many conventions have been signed. The question is how to apply them efficiently in the field. We do not need words anymore, but we must take action. A specific resolution on the global prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation is on the point to be lodged. We only talk about Africa but many other countries have recourse to these practices that are never named. Almost 90% of Indonesian women are mutilated and nobody speaks up. A global prohibition would strengthen the NGO’s work and put into practice the existent legislations. A law on its’ own is useless. It must go hand in hand with prevention. I demand that through AWEPA, all African Parliamentarians, women and men, take this issue into consideration much more than they do now. A European network now groups 37 associations. It can hardly survive because of financial shortcomings and excessive amounts of paperwork. It would be convenient that European Institutions realise that the local associations in Africa need their help. Policies need NGO’s and NGO’s need policies.³⁷

Ms Mary Mugenyi. – Before we conclude, I thought I would take this opportunity to say something about the Pan -African Parliament and its work in the area of peace and security. The Pan African Parliament has existed on the African continent for the last seven years .Each member country of the African union sends five members of its parliament to this assembly. I happen to be one of them and I come from Uganda. The work of the Pan-African Parliament through its permanent committees deals with issues of peace and security and also issues on women’s security and women’s rights. For example, through the permanent committee on human rights and that of cooperation, we have been sending fact finding missions to conflict

33 Question originally in Dutch

34 Question originally in French

35 Question originally in French

36 Question originally in French

37 Question originally in French

areas such as Darfur, DRC, the Ivory Coast etc. Once we get the facts we get the report debated on the floor of the Pan-African Parliament and then we send the resolutions to our heads of state summits. We also hold yearly conferences on what we launched as the platform of action for women and in these conferences in cooperation with AWEPA and other development partners, we speak on topics that are very vital to the lives of women and on topics that are currently affecting the lives of women. Thanks to AWEPA last year we had a conference on FGM/C which was very important, but this is the first time I have ever seen the film that was shown today. I am pleased to announce that since we launched the campaign against FGM/C we have had more and more national parliaments acting against such acts. Indeed, this is an area where the Pan-African Parliament has taken a strong position. To move on to the area of peace and security, this year's women's conference 'Peace and Security for Women' focused in particular on maternal health as an area of insecurity today. It was also a topic that the EU Summit focused on this year. We work with regional and national parliaments, with civil societies and we consider that we are the best platforms for coordinating work particularly with the parliaments on the African continent.

I was intrigued by a question that someone asked on why women are not on the list of candidates for the presidential elections in the DRC next year. Having been a politician for the last ten years in the parliament of Uganda, I have learnt that it is not that easy for women to be presidents of Africa and that is why we need to congratulate Liberia on being the champions in having the first African woman as the head of state, Ellen Johnson-Sirlea. It is not easy for women to be in national parliaments never mind being a president. This is a topic we can discuss another time.

I would like to conclude by thanking everybody who contributed to this meeting, the wonderful speakers and the very focused presentations that have shed light on this area of peace and security, particularly looking at the African women. We are pleased that Europe is in partnership with us and is looking at this issue. Finally, on behalf of everyone I would like to

thank the Belgian Parliament, the Senate and AWEPA who brought us here for a job well done.



5. Closing session

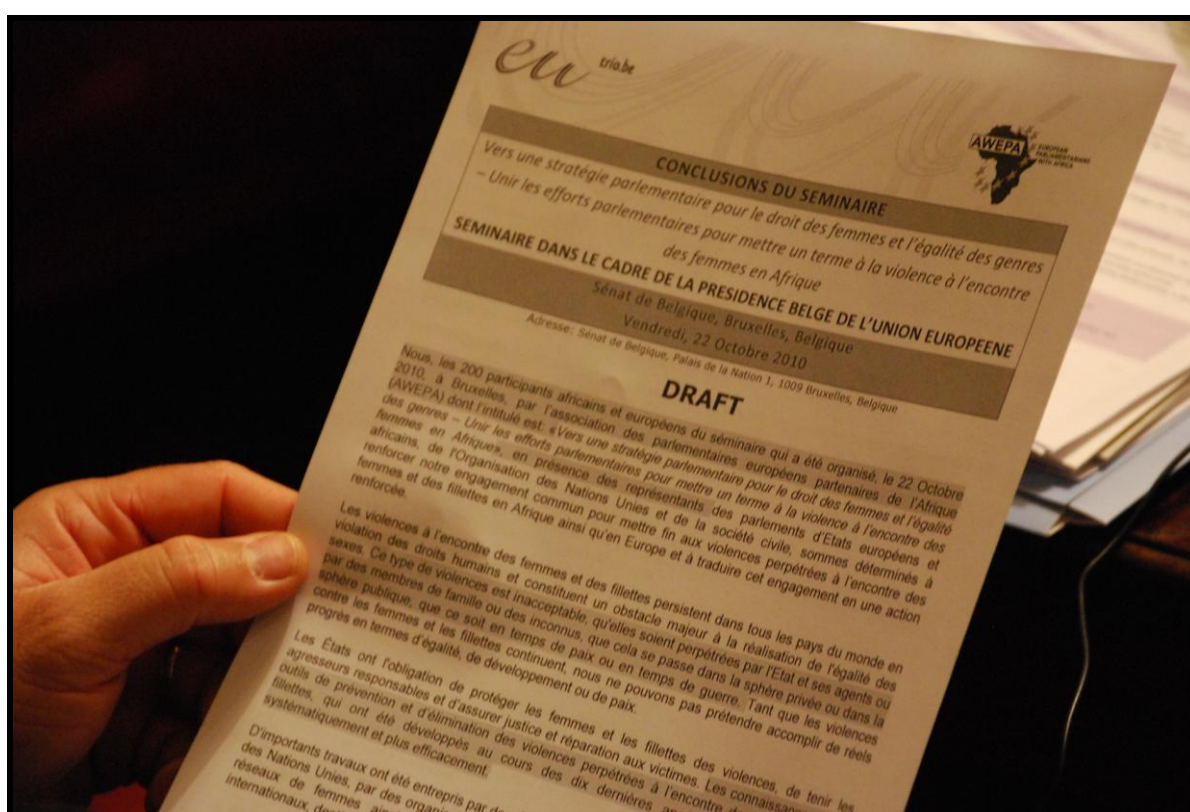


This session was chaired by Hon. Ms. Sabine de Bethune, President of AWEPA Belgian section & Member of the Senate of Belgium.

5.1. Closing session

After a number of confrontational and motivating presentations and speeches, the seminar resulted in a series of conclusions brought forward by participants from 50 countries, who shared their challenges and their best practices in creating legislation and implementing laws. Hon. Sabine de Bethune, President of the AWEPA Belgian section, moderated a concluding debate, which resulted in the seminar conclusions.

The seminar was closed by a moving musical moment by internationally known singer Dhobet Gnahore. The Ivorian artist and Grammy award winner, delighted the audience with two protest songs, one from which was of course dedicated to the strength of women.



5.2. Seminar conclusions

We, the 200 African and European participants of the Brussels AWEPA Seminar entitled: „Towards a Parliamentary Strategy for African Women’s Rights and Gender Equality – Uniting parliamentary efforts to end violence against women and girls in Africa. On 22 October 2010, in the presence of the representatives of parliaments of European and African states, the United Nations and civil society are determined to strengthen our shared commitment to end violence against women and girls in Africa and Europe and to translate this commitment into enhanced action.

Violence against women and girls persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality. Such violence is unacceptable, whether perpetrated by the state and its agents or by family members or strangers, in the public or private sphere, in times of peace or in times of armed conflict. As long as violence against women and girls continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.

States have an obligation to protect women and girls from violence, to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide justice and remedies to victims. The knowledge base and tools to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls developed over the past decade must be utilized more systematically and effectively.

Significant work has been undertaken by states, several entities of the United Nations, NGOs, women’s groups and networks and researchers. International legal and policy frameworks for addressing such violence have been established. We express our appreciation for the progress achieved in the UN Secretary General’s 2008-2015 campaign “UNite to End Violence Against Women, through the development of a framework for action outlining five key outcomes to be achieved along with Millennium Development Goals 3 and 5 by 2015. This is supported, inter alia, by the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM part of UN Women) social mobilization and advocacy platform “Say NO to violence against women”, the United Nations inter-agency initiative “Stop Rape Now: United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict” and the regional components of the campaign.

The adoption of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 on Women, War and Peace are milestones for the achievement of gender equality and for combating violence against women and girls.

At the same time there is a lot that remains to be done to create an environment where women can live free from gender-based violence. Progress in the development of international legal norms and policies has not been accompanied by comparable progress in their implementation at the national level.

Therefore, given the need for urgent and sustained action to end violence against women and girls, and given the notice that specific attention is needed in Africa on Female Genital Mutilation and women in armed conflicts, and stressing the key role of parliaments and parliamentarians in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls, we:

Introduction

1. Call upon parliaments to give priority to and raise awareness regarding the causes and impact of violence against women and girls in general and Female Genital Mutilation and women and girls in armed conflict more specifically;
2. Urge governments and parliaments to ratify international and regional instruments pertaining to violence against women and girls, and to ensure full compliance with those instruments and with pertinent United Nations resolutions in national law and in implementation;

On Female Genital Mutilation

3. Call upon parliaments to scale up their efforts to stop Female Genital Mutilation and request their governments to join the global programme “Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change” launched by UNFPA and UNICEF to abandon Female Genital Mutilation in one generation and to push their governments encouraging UN Resolutions and abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation;
4. Call upon parliamentarians to fulfil their legislative role by creating a human rights and legislative framework which supports abandonment of all forms of Female Genital Mutilation and supports policies to stimulate incentives for abandonment;
5. Call upon parliaments to advocate for a community-based approach and prevention strategy, which works with women, civil society, traditional chiefs and religious leaders, women’s and youth movements, health personnel, teachers and local government to ensure a unified approach in working towards the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation, and together with governments, to take measures to raise awareness regarding the issue, and empower women;

6. Call upon parliaments to stimulate and engage in public discussion and debate that highlight the benefits of abandoning all forms of Female Genital Mutilation and provide visibility and give support to those groups and communities that have decided to abandon the practice, thereby encouraging abandonment by all;

On violence in situations of armed conflict:

7. Request parliaments to promote full and effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979), and call for adoption of the indicators of the UN Secretary General, more specifically to ensure this implementation by drafting national action plans which promote women's leadership and participation, women's human rights and protection against violence, including systems to monitor and report violence against women and girls in armed conflict, which describe concrete programmes and which foresee enough resources to implement the action plan;
8. Call upon parliaments and governments, when reviewing their policy to end violence against women, to assure equal participation of women by aiming at equal decision making processes, more participation of women in parliaments, peacekeeping forces, police and diplomacy, and to include the voice of civil society, local communities, women with disabilities and women's movements when drafting or reviewing the national action plan on 1325 (see annex 1);
9. Call upon parliaments to enact better protection of civilians, particularly of women and children, and monitor the enforcement of legislation against the perpetrators of violent practices and acts of violence against women and children, including tough and clear measures to combat recidivism, stop impunity from prosecution, and providing affordable legal services;
10. Call upon governments to ensure prevention of violence by making information (including early warning systems and inter-institutional dialogue), education and training on gender-related violence available to all public agents, especially police forces and the judiciary involved in the prevention of violence against women and girls and in the provision of health care and support services for victims, and address the role of men in society and the empowerment of women to be agents of change;

Role of AWEPA

11. AWEPA is requested to prioritize the issue of violence against women and girls, with a special emphasis on Female Genital Mutilation and violence against women and children in armed conflict. AWEPA should mainstream this issue in all partnerships and programmes in Africa using the structures and network of AWEPA to raise awareness and to share good parliamentary practices for mutual learning in order to stop violence against women and girls;
12. AWEPA is requested to organise an inter-parliamentary dialogue in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, regarding violence against women and girls in conflict areas;
13. AWEPA is requested to organize an inter-parliamentary dialogue among countries heavily-affected by violence against women and girls and harmful traditional practices, focusing on Female Genital Mutilation
14. AWEPA is requested to secure funding from European governments, with the support of European parliaments, in order to implement the above action points.

5.3 Songs by Dobet Gnahoré

The videos of this performance can be seen [here](#) or on www.awepa.org.



Singer Dobet Gnahore & her guitarist & husband performing in the Senate during the AWEPA EU presidency seminar, 22th October 2010

Nsielé

(sung in Bété – Tired)

Tired of the cruelty of mankind.
 Tired of the world's injustices.
 Tired of all those blind politicians.
 Did God make a mistake when he created man?
 Or is it that men can no longer distinguish good from evil?
 I feel terrible when I look at the world.
 I feel terrible when I see the blood flowing.
 I feel terrible when I see all those bruised hearts.
 Go and knock on my parents' door and tell them I'm tired of all those politicians.

©Dobet Gnahoré –Colin Laroche de Féline

Djiguene

(sung in Wolof – Woman)

I admire you, woman of the fields
 You, who cultivates the earth and feed our children
 You, who knows the secrets of plants,
 And heals sickness, I admire you,
 woman of the shadows,
 You, who fights for freedom,
 You, who battles for peace
 To change the world
 You are the future, woman
 You, who knows how to forgive,
 Woman of Africa, woman of Asia
 Woman of Europe, woman of the world
 I admire you, ghetto woman
 You, who becomes loving mother
 To orphans who have lost everything
 You, who bare so sensitive and generous,
 Because of you, these young people can smile
 You are love, you are forgiveness
 You are hope, you are a star
 You, who knows how to speak fine words
 Woman of Africa, woman of Asia,
 Woman of Europe, woman of the world

©Dobet Gnahoré –Colin Laroche de Féline

6. Programme of the seminar

08:30-09:00 Participant registration

09:00-10:00 Opening Session

Chairs: Hon. Ms. Sabine de Bethune, President of AWEPA Belgian section, Member of Senate of Belgium Hon. Ms. Olga Zrihen, Member of Senate
Hon. Mr. Jan Roegiers, Member of Parliament of Flanders

Opening speeches

Hon. Ms. Helga Stevens, Vice President of Senate of Belgium
H.E. Ms. Viviane Reding, Vice President of European Commission European, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship – *Video message*
Hon. Mr. Abdirahin Haithar Abdi, Speaker of East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
H.E. Ms. Miet Smet, President of AWEPA, Minister of State

10:00-10:30 Coffee/tea Break

10:30-12:30 Session 1: Violence against women: ending Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Africa

Chairs: Hon. Ms. Magda De Meyer, Vice President AWEPA Belgian section, former Member of House of Representatives of Belgium
Hon. Ms. Safina Kwekwe, Chair of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Women's Forum, Member of National Assembly of Kenya

Short film: UNICEF dvd on FGM/C

Keynote speeches:

Accelerating abandonment of FGM/C: evidence and opportunities: Ms. Francesca Moneti, Senior Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF
Prevalence and Policy on FGM/C in Africa: Hon. Ms. Safina Kwekwe, Chair of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Women's Forum, Member of National Assembly of Kenya
Role of Civil Society: Doctor Ms. Bogaletch Gebre, Executive director Kembatta Women's Self-Help Center, gynaecologist, Ethiopia
Challenges and good practices of the abandonment of FGM in Europe, Pr. Ms. Els Leye, Senior researcher & team leader of Sexual and gender based violence unit at ICRH (International Center for Reproductive Health)

Panel: Good parliamentary practices

EP: Hon. Ms. Isabelle Durant, European Parliament Vice President
Austria: Hon. Ms. Petra Bayr, Member of National Council
Belgium: Hon. Ms. Olga Zrihen, Member of Senate
Uganda: Hon. Mr. Chris Baryomunsi, Member of Parliament
Burkina Faso: Hon. Ms. Blandine Sawadogo, Member of Parliament

Discussion

12:30-12:45 Group Picture (in PERISTYLIUM) and "Stop rape now" action picture

Book stand: Books by Prof. Mr. Luc Huyse

Promotional/sales stand: Woman's Non Government Organization's (NGO's) and other organizations

[12:45-14:00 Lunch offered by the President of the Belgian Senate](#)

[14:00-15:00 Session 2: Violence against women: Women, peace and security](#)

Chairs: Hon. Mr. Alain Destexhe, Vice President AWEPA Belgian section, Member of Parliament of the French Community of Belgium, Member of the Brussels Regional Parliament
 Hon. Ms. Mary Mugenyi, Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP)

Keynote speeches:

Violence against women in conflict areas: Ms. Dagmar Schumacher, Director of UNIFEM (part of UN Women) - Brussels Office

African common action plans for women in conflict: H.E. Ms. Vabah Kazaku Gayflor, Minister of Gender & Development, Liberia

Civil Society involvement: Prof. Ms. Katlijne Malfliet, University of Leuven, President of Dutch speaking Women Council, Belgium

[15:00-15:30 Coffee/tea break](#)

[15:30-16:30 Session 2 \(part 2\): Violence against women: Women, peace and security](#)

Panel: Good parliamentary practices

Burundi: Hon. Ms. Fidès Sinankwa, Member of Senate

Ireland: Hon. Ms. Katharine Bulbulia, former Member of Senate

Ivory Coast: Hon. Ms. Bamba Massany, Member of National Assembly

Discussion

[16:30-17:15 Closing session: Recommendations and conclusions](#)

Chair: Hon. Ms. Sabine de Bethune, President of AWEPA Belgian section, Member of the Senate of Belgium

[17:15 Closing musical performance: Ms. Dobet Gnahoré](#)

Dobet Gnahoré is a singer, dancer and percussionist from the Ivory Coast, where she started her musical career. She now lives between Europe and Africa. Through her music, she honours Africa and its cultures by singing in various African languages about the challenges of the African society (women, children ...). This year she won the Grammy awards for Best Urban/Alternative Performance along with the famous American soul singer India.Arie.

7. Side event- Field visit of Amazone, centre for women and women's organization

7.1. The field visit

On Saturday 23 October the delegates made a field visit to Amazone, a centre for women and women's organisations in Brussels, Belgium. Monique Chalude, Head of Amazone, and Ariane Dierickx, Director, opened the meeting by presenting the role of Amazone among Belgian women's associations.



On the left, Ms. Monique Chalude, Head of Amazone. On the right, Ms. Magda De Meyer, AWEPA political coordinator for the RFPAC programme

Following the opening, representatives from Femmes Prévoyantes Socialistes (Socialist Feminist Movement) and the Katholiek Arbeidersvrouwen (Catholic Working-Class Women), presented the history of their organisations. This was an opportunity for the delegates, in particular MPs from Africa, to pose interesting questions and exchange their experiences. The visit was followed by a lunch.

We would like to thank H.E. Joëlle Milquet, Belgian Minister of Employment and Equal Opportunities, for attending and funding the event.



Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister for Employment and Equal Opportunities,
Charged with Migration and Asylum Policy



On the left, Ms. Joëlle Milquet, Minister of Employment and Equal Opportunities, Charged with Migration and Asylum Policy; on the right Ms. Julie Standaert, AWEPA responsible for the RFPAC Programme



www.amazone.be



www.kav.be



www.femmesprevoyantes.be

7.2. Programme of the field visit

09:30-10:00 Welcome breakfast

10:00-10:45 Amazone – a unique concept

Welcome speech – Ms. Monique Chalude, Head of Amazone

Presenting Amazone - a support structure for women movements and a resource centre for gender parity - Ms. Ariane Dierickx, Director of Amazone

Q/A

10:45-11:30 Presenting social and cultural women's movements in Belgium

Femmes Prévoyantes Socialistes (FPS), Socialist women group – Ms. Dominique Plasman, Secretary general

Katholieke Arbeiders Vrouwen (K.A.V), Catholic working women group – Ms. Annemie Janssens, General director

Q/A

11:30-12:00 Guided tour of the Amazone house

12:00-13:00 Lunch

8. Press release

Parliamentary dialogue for Abandoning Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

Published on Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (<http://www.eutrio.be>)

Organizing biannually parliamentary seminars on Africa in the Parliament of the EU-Presidency country, AWEPA is for the Belgian EU-Presidency seminar focusing on the Parliament's role in Ending FGM/C in Africa and Europe. The seminar will therefore gather European and African parliamentarians as well as women's parliamentary networks, international experts, media and civil society in order to propose new parliamentary action frameworks and strategies to act as a catalyst to accelerate change and launch our "Abandonning FGM/C" parliamentary campaign.

AWEPA was founded in 1984 as an anti-apartheid advocacy network. Today it works from a development perspective to support the well functioning of parliaments in Africa and to keep Africa on the political agenda in Europe. AWEPA strives for the realization of human rights, democracy, poverty reduction, gender equality and sustainable development in Africa. AWEPA does this by supporting capacity building for African parliaments and by promoting a better understanding of African development among European parliamentarians.

AWEPA focuses on key programmes: Capacity Building in African Parliaments, Thematic programmes (such as FGM/C), Activities in European Parliaments and Research. Within these programmes AWEPA organizes conferences, workshops and exchange visits for regional and national parliaments in Africa. AWEPA works closely together with national parliaments and regional parliamentary institutions like the Pan-African Parliament and the East African Legislative Assembly, UN organizations like UNDP and UNICEF and a variety of NGOs and networks.

Among our donors are European governments, the European Commission, UN organs and various organizations. At the request of the Pan-African Parliament Women's Caucus, AWEPA has initiated a campaign among parliamentarians to champion the eradication of FGM/C, with as patrons Graça Machel and Mary Robinson, respectively the Chair and Member of AWEPA's Eminent Advisory Board.

AWEPA organizes on a regular base, parliamentary seminars on Africa in the Parliament of the country holding the EU Presidency. At the request of the AWEPA Partnership Council, co-chaired by Graça Machel and AWEPA President Miet Smet, the theme selected for priority during the Belgian EU Presidency seminar will be the role of Parliament in Ending FGM/C in Africa and Europe. The seminar will include among the participants members of parliament from European and African countries, from the Pan-African Parliament and the European Parliament, and from regional parliamentary bodies and women's parliamentary networks, as well as international experts, media and civil society representatives.

This initiative will entail a series of pre-consultations around the PAP-AWEPA parliamentary guidelines on Parliament and FGM/C, and will align with international efforts such as the Joint UNFPA-UNICEF Programme, Accelerating Change, launched in 2007. The Brussels seminar will also take stock of progress in achieving the programme objectives, review what role parliamentarians have played, and propose new parliamentary action frameworks and strategies to act as a catalyst to accelerate change faster. Participants will receive an update on current practices and enjoy the opportunity to exchange experiences and lessons learned. The proceedings will enable parliamentarians to develop a better understanding of the remaining obstacles to ending FGM/C, and to work out concrete action programmes to support their initiatives for eradication and care. A monitoring network will also be established to enable the sharing of information as the campaign proceeds.

9. List of participants

<u>Title</u>	<u>First name</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Institution/organization/function</u>
Mr.	Gani	Azemi	Councilor at Embassy of Kosovo in Belgium
Ms.	Elizabeth	Barinda	Staff, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Ms.	Sophie	Colignon	Assistant to Hon. Laurent Louis, Belgian Parliament
Ms.	Pernille	Falck	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA)
Hon.	Therese	Frösch	MP, Parliament of Switzerland, member of AWEPA Governing council
Prof.	Luc	Huyse	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Ms.	Maria Luiza	Ionescu	The Senate of Romania
Ms.	Marie	Isabelle	Asbl Masuwa
Hon	Inge	Jäger	Programme Consultant, The North-South Dialogue of Parliaments, Austria
Mr.	Mamour A.	Jagne	Embassy of Gambia in Belgium
Ms.	Lut	Joris	of Sensoa
Ms.	Pamela	Kazekare	Communications Student and member of the APENS : Association pour la Promotion des Echanges Nord-Sud Solidarité Protestante
Mr.	Johan	Maertens	
Hon. Mr.	Averof	Neofytou	Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus
Ms.	Gabrielle	Ngalula	
Mr.	Gervais	NZIKORURIHO	
Mr.	Peter	Saverys	Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Ms.	Chantal- Christiane	Sino	MP member of Gabon
Ms.	Viviane	Teitelbaum	Présidente, Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique
Ms.	Zahra	Ali Cheik	GAMS Belgium Asbl
Hon.	Diarra	Alima	MP of the Central African Republic
Ms.	Samira	Al-Zwaini	Plan Nederland
Hon. Ms.	Léontine	Andeme	MP member of Gabon
Mr.		António	Second secretary of Embassy of Angola in Belgium
Ms.	Valérie	Arend	Rédactrice, Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique
Mr.	Vassiliki	Avgoustidi	Gide
Mr.	Jeff	Balch	Director Research and Evaluation of Embassy of Saint Marin in Belgium
Mr.	Gian Nicola Filippi	Balestra	
Ms.	Gertrude	Bamba	AWEPA Project officer
Mr.	Thomas	Barankitse	of Embassy of Burundi in Belgium
Hon. Mr.	Chris	Baryomunsi	Member of Parliament , Uganda
Ms.	Béatrice	Bashizi	Caravane pour la paix et la solidarité
Ms.	Jet	Bastiani	Plan Nederland
Hon. Ms.	Petra	Bayr	Member of National Council of Austria
Hon. Ms.	Eve	Bazaiba	Member of Senate of D.R.C.

Hon. Ms.	Kimasi Francine	Bekeli	MP National Assembly of D.R.C.
Ms.	Madeleine	Bitshilwalwa Lwakabwanga	Kinupasbl "Let's Make A Better Place kin for Our Children"
Ms.	Liselot	Bloemen	AWEPA Programme manager
Mr.	Innocent	BOKELE WALAKA	Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Hon. Mr.	Adam	Boni Tessi	MP of Benin
Ms.	Najwa	Borro	
Mr.	Clément	Boutillier	AWEPA Project officer
Hon.	Leo	Brincat	MP House of Representatives Malta & Contact Person for the Malt Section
Ms.	Femke	Brouwer	AWEPA Programme manager
Mr.	Klaus	Brueckner	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
Hon. Ms.	Ann	Brusseel	Member of Flemish Parliament (Belgium)
Hon.	Katharine	Bulbulia	Former Senator, Ireland & Honorary Member of AWEPA Governing Council
Hon. Ms.	Dora Kanabahita	Byamukama	MP Uganda and Member of EALA Women's forum
Ms.	Els	Candaele	of Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Lord	David	Chidgey	Member of The House of Lords, UK Parliament, Head of section and member of AWEPA Governing council
Hon.	Ingrida	Circene	MP, Saeima The Latvian Parliament
Hon.	John	Corrie	Former Member of the European Parliament, United Kingdom and Honorary Member of AWEPA Governing Council
Mr.	Dónal	Cronin	Irish Aid
Hon.	Maria Antónia	de Almeida Santos	MP, Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, Head of section and member of AWEPA Governing council
Ms.	Lies	de Backer	Ministry of Justice
Ms.	Nele	de Backer	Platform Handicap en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (PHOS)
Hon. Ms.	Sabine	de Bethune	Belgium senator and Head of the AWEPA Belgian section
Mr.	Michel	de Bock	Manager of Dobet Gnahoré
Hon. Mr.	Herman	de Croo	MP and Former Speaker of Belgian Parliament
Mr.	Stijn	de Geest	Assistant to Hon. Jan Roegiers, MP, Flemish Parliament & Head of the Flemish Section
Ms.	Sara	De La Pena Espin	Unifem
Hon. Ms.	Magda	De Meyer	Former MP, Belgium and Vice-President of AWEPA Belgium section, RFPAC Political Coordinator for AWEPA
Ms.	Kaat	de Nijs	Coördinator Nationaal Actieplan 1325 'Vrouwen, Vrede en Veiligheid' FOD Buitenlandse zaken, buitenlandse handel en ontwikkelingssamenwerking
Ms.	Marieke	de Sonnaville	Netherlands Permanent Representation to the EU
Dr.	Vera	de Wit	Feminenza
Hon. Ms.	Bianca	Debaets	Member of Brussels Regional Parliament (Belgium)
Hon. Ms.	Myriam	Delacroix-Rolin	Member of Chamber of Representative of Belgium
Hon. Ms.	Els	Demol	Member of Chamber of Representative of Belgium

Hon. Mr.	Alain	Destexhe	Vice President AWEPA Belgian section, Member of Parliament of the French Community of Belgium, Member of the Brussels Regional Parliament
Hon. Dr.	Luc	Dhoore	Former MP, Belgium, Honorary Vice-President of AWEPA and member of AWEPA Governing council
Mr.	Áine	Doody	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
Hon. Ms.	Isabelle	Durant	Vice President, European Parliament
Hon. Ms.	Clementina	Edayong Ndong Mabale	MP of Equatorial Guinea
Ms.	Nicole	Emany	Collectif des femmes congolaises pour la paix et la justice
Ms.	Mila	Font	Contact Person for the Spanish Section
Mr.	Christoph	Füchs	Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
Hon. Ms.	Brigitta	Gadient	MP, Parliament of Switzerland and AWEPA Head of Section
Dr.	Judith	Gafundu Faïda	Université Libre de Bruxelles
H.E. Ms.	Vabah Kazaku	Gayflor	Minister of Gender & Development, Liberia
Dr. Ms.	Bogaletch	Gebre	Executive director Kembatta Women's Self-Help Center, gynaecologist, Ethiopia
Mr.	Theodissis	Georgiou	President of the Greek Association for Atlantic and European Cooperation (GAAEC), head of section and member of AWEPA Governing council
Ms.	Viviane	Gerard	Parlement de la Communauté Française de Belgique
Ms.	Yolande	Gisèle	of Embassy of RC in Belgium
Ms.	Dobet	Gnahoré	Singer, Dancer and Percussionist from the Ivory Coast
H.E. Mr.	Carlos	Gómez-Mùgica Sanz	Ambassador of Spain in Belgium
Ms.	Gart	Goorden	Wereldvrouwenmars
Mr.	Parasram	Gopaul	Counsellor at Embassy of Mauritius in Belgium
Ms.	Cécile	Gréboval	Global inventory, Representative of The European Women's Lobby
Hon.	Carina	Hägg	MP, Parliament of Sweden - Riksdagen, member of AWEPA Governing council
Hon. Mr.	Abdirahin	Haithar Abdi	Speaker, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Hon.	Jan	Hamáček	MP, Parliament of the Czech Republic - Chamber of Deputies and AWEPA Head of Section, member of AWEPA Governing council
Ms.	Silke	Hansen	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
Hon. Mr.	Abdul Karim	Harelimana	MP & Member, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Ms.	Kristen	Heim	AWEPA Programme manager
Ms.	Tine	Hemelings	AWEPA Programme manager
Hon. Mr.	Marc	Hendrickx	Member of Flemish Parliament (Belgium)
Mr.	BMJ	Hennekam	
Mr.	Ivan	Hermans	Deputy Director UNFPA, Belgium
Ms.	Michèle	Hirsch	HIRSCH & HIRSCH Advocats
Hon. Dr.	Elisabeth	Hlavac	MP National Council of Austria
Ms.	Geertje	Hollenberg	Department Director
Baroness	Valerie Georgina	Howarth	Member of House of Lords of United Kingdom
Hon. Mr.	Brendan	Howlin	Deputy Speaker, The Houses of the Oireachtas, Ireland and AWEPA Head of Section

Ms.	Prerna	Humpal	END FGM Campaign, Amnesty International
Ms.	Swanee	Hunt	Unifem ambassador
Ms.	Rachel	Ilboudou	Centre de Planning Familial des FPS du Brabant
Mr.	Bano	Innocent	International University –Vienna/Doctorate Candidate in Diplomatic and Strategic Studies
Hon. Mr.	Ewout	Irrgang	Member of Parliament of The Netherlands
H.E. Ms.	Milquet	Joëlle	Minister of Employment and Gender Equality
Ms.	Standaert	Julie	RFPAC AWEPA responsible
Ms.	Marjorie	Kaandorp	Violence Against Children Werkgroep (UNICEF NL)
Mr.	José	KABAMBA LUBULA	Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Hon. Ms.	Hélène	Kaïne	MP of the Central African Republic
Ms.	Julie	Kakiese	Réseau contre FGM
Hon. Ms.	Dersou	Kalbansou Dagadang	MP of Chad
Ms.	Alizia	Kamani	Communication assistant
Ms.	Aziza	Katanga	Carrefour des Jeunes africains (chargée des affaires sociales)
Ms.		KAZAL-A-RUKAN	Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Ms.	Jutta	Kepplinger	Programme Director, North-South Dialogue & Contact Person for the Austrian Section
Hon. Ms.	Marie-Claire	Kikontwe	Member of Senate of D.R.C.
Hon.	Kimmo	Kiljunen	MP, Parliament of Finland - Eduskunta, member of AWEPA Governing council
Ms.	Coraline	KIMBETO	Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Mr.	Henri-Paul	Kindoki	Carrefour des Jeunes africains (chargé des relations publiques)
Ms.	Muliwavyo	Kirikughundi	Ecole de Santé Publique (ESP/ULB)
Hon.	Krista	Kiuru	MP, Parliament of Finland - Eduskunta, head of section and member of AWEPA Governing council
Ms.	Stasa	Kobi Smid	Representative National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia & Contact Person for the Slovenian Section
Hon. Mr.	Jeppe	Kofod	MP, Parliament of Denmark - Folketinget and member of the AWEPA Executive Committee
Ms.	Khady	Koita	La Palabre (présidente)
Hon. Ms.	Colette	Kouakou Akissi	Member of National Assembly, Ivory Coast
Mr.	Theo	Kralt	Chief Administrative Officer
Mr.	Félix	Kubwayo	President of the Organisation de la Diaspora Burundaise / Benelux (ODIBB)
Ms.	Nathalie	Kumps	HIRSCH & HIRSCH Advocats
Mr.	Sheuneni	Kurasha	Democracy and Governance Officer, Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF)
Hon. Ms.	Safina	Kwekwe Tsungu	Chair of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) Women's Forum, Member of National Assembly of Kenya
Mr.	Thomas	Lally	AWEPA Section, Ireland
Mr.	Colin	Laroche de Feline	Guitarist
Ms.	Stéphanie	Lecharlier	Solidarité Protestante

Ms.	Emilie	Lembrée	Amnesty Belgique (Collaboratrice de Françoise Guillitte Chargée des relations presse et des relations publiques Responsable du Programmes Droits des Femmes Amnesty International Belgique francophone
Hon. Ms.	Nele	Lijnen	Member of Senate of Belgium
Hon. Mr.	Jean-Pierre	Lola Kisanga	Member of Senate of D.R.C.
Ms.	Jessica	Longwe	Director Partner Relation
Ms.	Christine	Loudes	END FGM Campaign, Amnesty International
Hon. Mr.	Laurent	Louis	Member of Chamber of Representative of Belgium
Mr.	Patrick	Luabeya	AWEPA Programme manager
Ms.	Barty	Lührman Fuchs	Former director of AWEPA and Honorary Member of AWEPA Governing Council
Mr.	Zwelethu	Madasa	Clerk, Pan-African Parliament (PAP)
Ms.	Basila	Maembo	
Hon. Mr.	Philippe	Mahoux	Member of Senate of Belgium
Prof. Ms.	Katlijne	Malfliet	University of Leuven, President of Dutch speaking Women Council
Hon. Mr.	Bertin	Mampaka	Member of Brussels Regional Parliament (Belgium)
Hon.	Marianne	Marthinsen	MP Parliament of Norway, Stortinget and Contact Person for the Norwegian Section
Hon. Ms.	Ms. Fifi	Masuka Faini	MP National Assembly of D.R.C.
Ms.	Hilde	Mattelaer	President, Mamas for Africa vzw
Ms.	Lydia	Maximus	Former MP, Belgium, Honorary Vice-President of AWEPA and member of AWEPA Governing council
Hon. Ms.	Antonia	Mbang Ndong	MP of Equatorial Guinea
Ms.	Julie	Mbiye Kanku	Collectif des femmes congolaises pour la paix et la justice
Hon. Mr.	Boris	Mbuku Laka	Vice President National Assembly of D.R.C.
Mr.	John	McKendy	Director Programme Development
Ms.	Beryl	McNamee	
Ms.	Petra	Meier	Gender expert, Department of Politics, University of Antwerp
Hon.	Silver	Meikar	MP, Parliament of Estonia - Riigikogu, member of AWEPA Governing council
Ms.	Isabel	Mercedes da Silva Feijó	of Embassy of Angola in Brussels
Hon. Ms.	Nita	Mihai	Member of Senate of Romania
Ms.	Pascasie	Minani	of Embassy of Burundi in Belgium
Hon. Ms.	Elena	Mitrea	Member of Senate of Romania
Dr. Prof.	Aliki	Mitsakos	WIIS (Women In International Security) – HELLAS, President GAAEC, S.G. Soroptimist Union of Greece, President 2006-2008 Kernels of Our Future Founder & Director Civil Society activist M.D., Ph.D., Anaesthesia
Ms.	Francesca	Moneti	Senior Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF
Ms.	Suzanne	Monkasa	CCAEB/RVDAGEB
Ms.	Maria	Montesrat Moman Pampillo	Embassy of Spain in Belgium
Mr.	Jacques	Moudoute-Bell	Director of the Bureau, Pan-African Parliament (PAP)
Hon. Mr.	Pius	Muabilu Mbayu Mukala	MP National Assembly of D.R.C.

Hon. Ms.	Mary	Mugenyi	Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP)
Hon. Mr.	Bernard	Mulengani	MP & Member, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Ms.	Caroline	Murigi	Office and logistics coordinator
Mr.	Simon	Murtagh	Policy Officer of the Irish AWEPA section
Mr.	Richard	Muyej Mangeze	Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Ms.	Bernadette	Mwadi	Carrefour des Jeunes africains (Présidente)
Hon. Ms.	Esperance	Mwiza	MP of Rwanda
Hon. Mr.	Sebtuu	Nassor	MP & Member, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Hon. Ms.	Khadija	Nassour	President of RFPAC, MP of Chad
Hon.	Denis	Naughten TD	MP, The Houses of the Oireachtas - Ireland, member of AWEPA Governing council
Mr.	Francisco Arnau	Navarro	Former MP, Spain, member of AWEPA Governing council
Hon. Dr	James	Ndahiro	MP & Member, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Hon. Mr.	Norbert	Ndihokubwayo	Member of National Assembly of Burundi
Ms.	Carolina	Neira Vianello	GAMS Belgium Asbl
Hon.	Frederic	Ngenzebuhoro	MP & Member, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)
Mr.	Egide	NGOKOSO	Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
H.E. Mr.	Joel	Nhleko	Ambassador of Swaziland in Belgium
Ms.	Margriet	Nieuwenhuis	Cordaid
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Towards a Parliamentary strategy
for African women's rights and
gender equality - Uniting
parliamentary efforts to end
violence against women in Africa
gender equality



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Group picture of participants of the AWEPA EU
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AWEPA MISSION STATEMENT

AWEPA works in cooperation with African Parliaments to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Africa, to keep Africa high on the political agenda in Europe and to facilitate African-European Parliamentary dialogue.

Objectives:

AWEPA's overall objective is to support the realisation of human rights and development in Africa via strengthening democratic institutions. With the help of parliamentarians and elected officials worldwide, AWEPA actively supports human resource development and institutional capacity building within parliaments made up of decentralised authorities.

AWEPA concentrates on:

- The key role of parliaments in facilitating democracy, human rights, peaceful conflict management, poverty reduction and sustainable development
- The attainment of gender equality at all levels of political decision-making
- The common interests of African-European parliamentarians
- Building parliamentary networks and experience sharing at national, regional and inter-regional levels

It aims to achieve this objective by promoting:

- Parliamentary competency and authority
- Good governance based on separation of powers
- Increased participation of women in decision-making (increased participation)
- Participation of civil society in the political process
- Independent and qualified media.



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