

## Statement for International Women's Day

8 March 2014

“The occasion of International Women’s Day provides an opportune moment to reflect on the achievements made and obstacles that remain in the advancement of women’s rights and gender justice,” said Jane Akwero Odwong, Programme Officer, Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice, Uganda.

The Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice is an international women’s human rights organisation that advocates for gender justice through the International Criminal Court (ICC) and through domestic mechanisms, including peace negotiations and justice processes. It works with women most affected by the conflict situations under investigation by the ICC.

According to Brigid Inder, Executive Director of the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice, “[i]n the past 20 years, we have seen important and unprecedented progress including: the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which identified the impact of armed conflict on women as a critical area of concern and called for a reduction in excessive military expenditures and control of the availability of arms; the first convictions under international law for rape and other forms of sexual violence as torture and as acts of genocide; the codification of the broadest range of sexual and gender-based crimes in history under the ICC Statute; and the adoption of seven Security Council Resolutions on issues of women, peace and security, which emphasize, among other issues, the particular impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the responsibility of States to prosecute persons responsible for such crimes, and the invaluable role of women’s civil society organizations in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict peace-building”.

Jane Akwero Odwong added that “[t]he adoption last year by the UN General Assembly of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty, which regulates the international trade in conventional arms, is also highly significant.”

“In Uganda, we have experienced first-hand the impact on our communities of the illegal sale and trafficking of arms across our border. We hope that the UN will monitor the activities of States Parties to the Treaty regarding the risk of arm sales being used to commit or facilitate the commission of serious acts of gender-based violence,” Jane Akwero Odwong stated.

“This week, which also marks the ten year anniversary of the establishment of the Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice and our programmes in Northern Uganda, we are emboldened to continue to work with a large number of partners and allies towards the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and promoting accountability for those who perpetrate these crimes through the ICC and domestic legal mechanisms,” said Jane Akwero Odwong.

**Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice**

