



Declaration from Women of the East

Women's Initiatives
for Gender Justice

Collective of Indigenous
Women and Vulnerable
Households (EFIM)

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 5 and 6 June 2009 we, the Women from the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), along with delegates from different women's organisations from North and South Kivu and Ituri gathered in Goma to review and reflect on the two Peace Agreements signed on 23 March 2009 between the Government of DRC and the CNDP (*Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple*)¹ and between the Government and other armed groups² for peace in the Kivus.

The workshop was organised by the Collective of Indigenous Women and Vulnerable Households (EFIM) and the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice.

Following an analysis of the Agreements, we note the following observations:

- 1 Women have not been sufficiently represented in the preparation and the conclusion of these Peace Agreements although they mention the reconciliation of both boys and girls in the DRC;
- 2 Some armed groups maintain their status as political and military movements leading to the continuation of abuses on the ground despite the signing of the Agreements;
- 3 The failure to integrate some armed groups has led to upheavals amongst those who have accepted integration into the (Congolese) regular armed forces;
- 4 The current amnesty law enshrines impunity and discrimination;
- 5 The government has made a commitment to create a specific ministerial structure, responsible for homeland security, local affairs and reconciliation;
- 6 The proposal for the creation of a special police unit within the Congolese National Police (CNP) comprised of former militia combatants to assist IDPs returning to their villages;
- 7 The slowness of the government in the return process, the social reinsertion, the reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons in their respective surroundings;
- 8 The proposal by the CNDP for division of the national territory;
- 9 The new strategic orientation for the fundamental reform of the Congolese army and security services;
- 10 The government's commitment to prioritise widows, wounded and orphans of the former CNDP combatants, to the detriment of other victims of war;

1 National Congress for the Defence of the People

2 The Republican and Federalist Forces (FRF), the Yakutumba Group, the Zaboloni Group, Mai-Mai Kirikicho, PARECO South Kivu, Raia Mutomboki, Mai-Mai Ny'kiriba, Mai-Mai Kapopo, Mai-Mai Mahoro, Mai-Mai Shikito, Mudundu 40, Simba Mai-Mai and Mai-Mai Shabunda.

- 11 The government's commitment to recognise the ranks of CNDP members, thus favoring them over some armed groups who have yet to integrate;
- 12 The failure of some armed groups to respect commitments relating to national sovereignty, territorial integrity, the inviolability of State functions, human rights, and the republican character of the armed forces; and
- 13 The failure of the government to provide social welfare services and the payment of salaries to the Congolese Army.

As a result of these concerns and observations, we recommend the following:

- 1 The effective participation of women in the implementation of these Agreements at all levels;
- 2 The respect of commitments by all parties concerned and the acceleration in the implementation of these commitments;
- 3 The implementation of integration for all armed groups prior to the integration of any groups into the regular army;³
- 4 The amnesty law must be applied in a general and unbiased manner;
- 5 The revision of the amnesty law is required so that it does not allow for impunity;
- 6 Strengthen the capacity of the Congolese National Police (CNP) and ensure it is not weakened through the integration of 'police' from the CNDP militia into the Congolese police force. The authorities must provide training and vet all members of the CNDP police in relation to the past commission of gender-based crimes prior to their integration into the 'community police' or the Special Police Unit which is to be assembled for the purpose of assisting the return of refugees and IDPs to their homes;
- 7 That the government makes efforts towards the effective implementation of these Agreements, whilst revisiting the earlier peace agreements;
- 8 That the government fully respects the constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- 9 Requesting the partners of the DRC to become effectively involved in the reform of the republican army and to advocate for an acceleration of the process;
- 10 That the government defines and establishes programs for the reintegration and social reinsertion of victims of war;
- 11 That the government stops promoting criminals to high ranks in the Army or public offices;
- 12 That the government exercises its responsibilities to oversee, monitor and ensure effective pay mechanisms for civil servants and the military. In addition, the government should hold to account those who embezzle public funds;
- 13 The re-establishment of the authority of the State and of the customary power of traditional leaders;
- 14 That the government acts responsibly in economic reform and takes into account the interests of the population;
- 15 That the government provides sufficient, accurate and clear information and is transparent in all matters relating to the governing of the country.

³ Such integration must be in compliance with international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1820.



*Peace
sustains
itself on
Justice,
and Justice
builds
Peace.*

The participants

AFPDI – Bunia
AMIE – Bunia
Association Femme et Développement (AFD) – Fizi
Association des Mamans Chrétiennes pour l'Assistance aux Vulnérables (AMCAV) – Uvira
ASSOMARA – Bunia
ATELIER – Kiwanja
Collectif des Associations des Femmes Pour le Développement (CAFED) – Goma
Encadrement des Femmes Indigènes et des Ménages Vulnérables (EFIM) – Goma
Encadrement des Femmes Indigènes et des Ménages Vulnérables (EFIM) – Masisi/Katanga
FVMX – Sake/Masisi
GRAADE – Walikale
Initiatives des Femmes pour le Développement, l'Auto Promotion et la Paix (IFDAP) – Uvira
L. Féminin pour la Paix – Uvira
MUMALUKU – Lubero
ODTI – Bukavu
Réveil des Femmes pour le Développement Intégré (RFEDI) – Goma
Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral (SOFEPADI) – Beni
Solidarité Féminine pour la Paix et le Développement Intégral (SOFEPADI) – Bunia
SVA – Butembo
TCJP – Bukavu