



Peace in our hands

- regional conference on conflict prevention in Africa

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR
PEACE & FREEDOM



This report is based on the notes taken throughout the regional conference on conflict prevention that took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon the 27th -28th of November. The conference was funded by the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) the Swedish agency for peace, security and development part of the project Inclusive security coordinated by WILPF Sweden in cooperation with WILPF Cameroon, DR Congo and Nigeria.

A special thanks to the WILPF Cameroon team for hosting and coordinating the conference.

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CONFLICT PREVENTION: CONFERENCE REPORT

WILPF AFRICA, 27 - 28 NOVEMBER 2015, Yaoundé, Cameroon

From 27th to 28th November 2015, WILPF Africa Regional Conference was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon on the theme «Women's participation in conflict prevention and crisis management». The conference was organized with the support of WILPF Sweden and The Folke Bernadotte Academy as part of the cross-section cooperation on capacity building and advocacy between WILPF Sweden and the African WILPF sections. WILPF delegations present were from the sections of Cameroon, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Sweden as well as representatives from emerging groups from Chad, South Africa and Burundi and a representative from WILPF's International office. The conference was held under the patronage of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family of Cameroon and the very honorable presence of the country director of UN Women in Cameroon. Other important stakeholders were also present at the conference such as the media, Civil Society Organisations, representatives of ministries (Justice, Defense, Health, Finance, Communication and Social Affairs), representatives of diplomatic institutions (Embassy of the United States and the European Union) and representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Day 1

The following speakers welcomed the participants including the foreign delegates to the conference. In their speeches, they also gave a rundown of the program, stated the objectives, the expectations of the conference and the role that each actor is called to play in conflict prevention.

1. Uppaultine EFFA

- The focal point of WILPF Cameroon in the center Region

While thanking the participants for keeping this appointment, thereby manifesting their interest in peace, Ms EFFA reiterated that it is a very important conference which will go a long way to contribute in consolidating peace in Cameroon, Africa and the world at large.

2. Sylvie Jacqueline NDONGMO

- The President of WILPF Cameroon

Ms NDONGMO started her speech with the history of her connection with WILPF, setting up WILPF Cameroon in January 31, 2014 and its admission as a full section of WILPF at the Centennial Congress in The Hague. She then identified some critical challenges that need to be overcome in order to build a lasting peace, the same issues that this conference must address. For example; the importance of UNSC Resolution 1325 and the urgency of a National Action Plan (NAP) for Cameroon, the atrocities suffered by women and girls in times of conflict and the proliferation of small arms. Conflict prevention such as working for disarmament is key since "it is less costly to prevent conflict than to deal with the effects of war." Men alone are not the solution, weapons alone are not the solution. Women have a key role to play, hence the need for UN member states and all social actors to join hands and take concrete steps in favor of peace.

3. Adama MOUSSA

- The UN Women Country Director for Cameroon

Mr. MOUSSA from the outset said that he was



A conference with a busy schedule. Here the coordinators are sorting out the upcoming presentations of conference day two. From the left: Annie Matundu-Mbambi, President of WILPF DR Congo, Sylvie Ndongmo, President of WILPF Cameroon and Tove Ivergard, International Coordinator of WILPF Sweden. Photo: WILPF Sweden

not surprised by the choice of the theme for the conference and he emphasized the importance of women's participation in peace processes and in building security in our countries. He then presented UN Women, the United Nations entity for women created in July 2010 and its areas of intervention including the involvement of women in peace processes and in building security. He said the conference organized by WILPF falls on this axis and as such, it is an initiative that UN Women should support. He noted that at this time in our country, when the construction and consolidation of peace are constantly challenged by new threats, the involvement of women in conflict resolution was not only a recognition of the importance of their role, but also an intelligent decision to take.

That is why he recommended that it is very important during this conference, to table discussions on the UNSC Resolution 1325. The Resolution, which reached its 15th anniversary in this year 2015, invites Member States

of the United Nations to ensure increased representation of women in all national, regional and international decision-making bodies, as well as mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; emphasizing its five pillars: prevention, protection, participation, peace building and recovery.

4. Jean Pierre MAKANG

- The representative of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and family

On behalf of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family, Mr. MAKANG, Director of women's promotion thanked and applauded WILPF for such an initiative. He stated that considering the importance of this conference, the government would be more than willing to support this cause as the participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts gives a chance for peace which is a value so dear to our country.

That is why the peace initiatives of women must be encouraged, supported and accompanied by all the political, economic and social actors. In this regard the Ministry is willing to receive all contributions to 1325 NAP and the involvement of women in peace processes, for lasting peace in Cameroon. Before concluding his speech, he urged participants at the conference to work in a spirit of cohesion and experiences sharing so that proposed recommendations will work in favor of the participation of women in preventing and manage conflicts. Before the official opening of the conference, Mr MAKANG once again thanked WILPF Cameroon and its partners for choosing Cameroon to host this regional conference.

5. Maria MUNOZ MARAVER

- The representative of WILPF International Office

Ms MUNOZ MARAVER Director of the Human Rights Program represented WILPF's International office in Yaoundé. She gave a brief history of WILPF, the first ever women's organization to work for peace. Created in The Hague in 1915 WILPF just celebrated its

centenary in April 2015. WILPF's international President Jane Adams and WILPF's first international Secretary Emily Greene Balch have received the Nobel Peace Prize. There are 35 sections of WILPF in the world, two International offices (New York, USA and Geneva, Switzerland).

WILPF's mission is the promotion of peace and human security in the world, the fight against disarmament with women as strategic actors. For WILPF, it is important that the Women, Peace and Security agenda is implemented at an early stage in order to prevent conflict.

WILPF was one of the first organisations in the world that was granted consultative status within the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This access is essential for WILPF's advocacy as it allows the organization to influence decision-makers at the highest international level by delivering statements, participating in negotiations and holding side events at the UN.

WILPF has had many great achievements through the years among them are; the participation in the adoption of the Arms Treaty reassuring that the linkage between the illicit flow of weapons and Gender Based Violence was included in the treaty and WILPF's successful advocacy for women to be included in the Colombian peace process.

After viewing a video on WILPF Centennial celebrated in The Hague in April 2015 the following presentations were made (page 6).

The conference provided great space for sharing experience and strengthening the collaborations among sections in the region. From the left: Ayo Ayoola-Amale President of WILPF Ghana and Olivia Ndidi Oseji Vice President of WILPF Nigeria planning future cross-section activities during a conference break.

Photo: WILPF Sweden





The inspiring presentations on women, peace and security, disarmament and gender equality among others invited to a number of interesting discussions among the prominent conference participants. The conference room was filled with experts with different backgrounds representing civil society organizations, academia and the government. Photo: WILPF Sweden

Presentations of history and national work

Presentation of WILPF Africa by Ms Sylvie Jacqueline Ndongmo

WILPF Africa Regional Working Group was created during the Costa Rica Congress in 2012 by WILPF Nigeria and the DRC. Presently, there are four official WILPF sections in Africa: WILPF DRC, WILPF Nigeria, WILPF Ghana and WILPF Cameroon. Recognized group in WILPF Africa is Uganda. The emerging groups are Chad, CAR (Central African Republic), Burundi, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Kenya, Congo Brazzaville and South Africa.

Presentations of WILPF sections and groups

WILPF DRC by Madame Annie Matundu Mbambi, President of WILPF DRC

WILPF DRC was founded in July 2007 thanks to WILPF United Kingdom at a conference in Kinshasa, in a turbulent context of war, massive violations of human rights, sexual violations, IDPs and refugee crisis etc. WILPF DRC is currently pursuing the implementation of Resolution 1325 in the country and the fight against the illicit arms trade and the proliferation of small arms.

WILPF Nigeria by Olivia Ndidi Oseji, Vice-President of WILPF Nigeria

The section is currently working on the WPS program, climate change, the implementation of women situation rooms by women to ensure peaceful elections, lobbying activities, the setting up of peace education clubs to promote the culture of peace and so on.

WILPF Ghana by Ayo Ayoola-Amale, President of WILPF Ghana

The section was created in 2011 by a small group of women, with the support of WILPF Nigeria. WILPF Ghana works in partnership

with the Kofi ANNAN foundation for peace education in schools with young people as well as the implementation of Resolution 1325 in collaboration with the media.

WILPF Sweden by Elin Hedkvist, President of WILPF Sweden and Tove Ivergard, International Coordinator of WILPF Sweden

WILPF Sweden works on advocacy on women's rights, peace and disarmament. They collaborate with other women and peace organisations at the national level. Sweden, being the fourth weapons exporter in the world, WILPF Sweden is advocating for a shift from military spending to other sectors such as the development sector. Sweden has experienced a history of violence and war. However the country recently celebrated 200 years of peace.



Part of the WILPF delegation together with Honorable Vincent Emah Etoundi, Delegate of the National Assembly to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and member of Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Photo: WILPF Sweden



WILPF members filled with inspiration after a successful conference on conflict prevention, which significantly strengthened the regional WILPF network in Africa, which will benefit our local and national work.
Photo: WILPF Sweden

WILPF Chad Group by Hermine TARNDOLEMBAYE, Secretary general of WILPF Chad

WILPF Chad was created by a small group of women in October 2014 with the support of WILPF Cameroon. WILPF Cameroon's President visited Chad to share the vision of WILPF. The group works on the rights of women and the promotion of peace through advocacy, capacity-building activities among others.

WILPF South Africa by Micheline MUZANEZA founder of WILPF South Africa

South Africa is a country that would benefit greatly from the presence of WILPF. The country has a history of apartheid and sexual violence and xenophobia is currently a huge problem in the country. South African were in the forefront of the antiapartheid movement and they are demanding to be involved in conflict resolution in their country.

WILPF Burundi by Charlotte Bazira, Action Aid

The Burundi representatives got in contact with WILPF at the Centennial Congress in The Hague. Burundi experiences a vicious cycle of violence and Burundian women are requesting to learn from the experience of WILPF to enable them to participate in the peace process in their own country.

WILPF Cameroon by Nathalie FOKO Secretary General of WILPF Cameroon

Created on January 31st, 2014 with the technical support of WILPF DRC and financial support of WILPF Sweden, WILPF Cameroon became a Section in 2015. WILPF Cameroon works mainly on the sensitization of UNSC Resolution 1325, the Arms Trade Treaty, advocating for its ratification and implementation in Cameroon.

PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION 1325

BY Annie MATUNDU

UNSC Resolution 1325 was Adopted in October year 2000 after decades of advocacy by women's organisations. Resolution 1325 is a policy framework for the implementation and monitoring of the United Nations Program on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). It contains 18 articles consisting of five interrelated areas and is based on four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery. Its key players are:

- Member states of the Security Council;
- UN agencies;
- NGOs working on Women, Peace and security (eg. WILPF).

The resolution recognizes women as crucial and significant actors before during and after conflict in order to achieve sustainable peace.

Group discussion about possible recommendations on conflict prevention in the African region with;

Eric Ugochukwu Onwukwe-Operations Manager WILPF Nigeria, Olivia Ndidi Oseji-Vice President WILPF Nigeria, Tove Ivergard-International coordinator WILPF Sweden and Ayo Ayoola-Amale-President WILPF Ghana.

Photo: WILPF Sweden



Day one of the conference ended after enriching discussions and experience sharing, out of which important recommendations were made. See the detailed recommendations in appendix.



Sandra Kambala Reporter WILPF DR Congo. In back ground: Charlotte Bazira-emering WILPF Group Burundi and Micheline Muzaneza-Founder WILPF Group South Africa. Photo: WILPF Sweden



Day 2

Day two of the conference started with three thematic presentations.

Gender Equality -Engaging men

by Micheline Muzaneza, representative of Sonke Gender Justice, South Africa

Through this presentation, participants were educated on gender issues, which affect both men and women. Sonke Gender Justice, created by a man working for gender equality in South Africa, raises awareness against rape and all other forms of gender- based violence. Through the “Men engaged for gender equality” program, men commit themselves alongside women in raising awareness and advocating for gender equality. Hence, the call for greater commitment on the issue by men, only by working together we can reach a world free of violence, where all human beings have equal rights and equal opportunities.

After the presentation there was a lot of questions from the floor. A great discussion among the conference participants followed. One of the topics discussed was the alternative to use mediation in court, since imprisonment has shown its limits.

The importance of ATT and the UNPoA

by Guy Blaise Feugap, Communication officer WILPF Cameroon

This theme enlightened the participants on what the ATT and the UNPoA are. The aim was to raise awareness on the dangers of the illicit circulation of arms and draw attention to the damage they cause to the society and the population, particularly to women. He also highlighted the recommendations of the first Conference of States Parties in Cancún in Mexico, especially the one which stipulates that States must overwhelmingly ratify the ATT, control their borders in order to protect civilians

under the global security context marked by the resurgence of violence.

WILPF's work on transnational companies and their commitment to Human Rights

by Maria Muñoz Maraver, Director of the Human Rights Programme, at WILPF International.

The program aims at denouncing the misdeeds that companies are causing (especially multinationals) the local population.

Enterprises, especially transnational are very powerful in their financial operations and sometimes become more powerful than the states in which they operate. This can result in massive violations of human rights. WILPF sections must therefore carry out advocacy and persuade states to commit themselves in the establishment of a treaty in regards the respect of human rights by these companies and access to justice for victims.

Preventive strategies

Following the discussions, participants were divided into groups to discuss 4 different topics and come up with recommendations on conflict prevention.

Group 1: Contributions to the proposed timetable of elaborating the draft of Resolution 1325 National Action Plan in Cameroon.

Adjustments were made to the timetable proposed by WILPF Cameroon. This process was launched in October 2014 in Yaoundé with UN Women, the Minister of Women's

Empowerment and the Family, UNDP, UNHCR and WILPF Cameroon. This was followed by the following activities:

A retreat in Douala to consolidate outcomes of conference launch.

A study to assess the degree of awareness of the UNSC Resolution 1325 in the East Cameroon.

- Outreach workshops on SCR 1325 with various stakeholders.
- A Meeting to Consolidate recommendations of the two previous encounters and validation of the roadmap, during this conference.
- The said roadmap will run from January 2016, with the following main activities among others.
- A workshop to identify the key actors and their roles and set up a coordinating committee as well as identify main thematic.
- Workshops and training of trainers on R.1325 and NAP.
- A second study to evaluate the degree of awareness on Resolution 1325 in the regions of the Far North, North, Littoral and Centre.
- Follow up meetings of various stakeholders, including governments, development partners, CSOs and others.
- Drafting and validation of the National Action Plan.

According to this timetable, the NAP should be adopted by the government in September 2016 and transmitted to the United Nations.

Group 2: The illegal circulation of arms

The group focused on three issues: how to restrict illegal circulation of arms; How to control home made weapons and the role of civil society to prevent illegal circulation of arms.

The following recommendations were made by the group:

- Conduct systematic marking and tracing of

arms, identification of all those who possess arms at country level.

- Strengthen territorial surveillance measures to prevent the entry and circulation of weapons in the country.
- Ratify and ensure effective implementation of the ATT.
- Regulate the manufacturing sector of artisanal weapons, develop regulatory measures, marketing and use of these weapons at the local level, including a traceability system.
- Sensitize and involve women in public awareness raising campaigns on the dangers of weapons.
- Educate grassroots on the culture of nonviolence and tolerance.
- Educate families against the purchase of gun and war toys for children, distributing leaflets in public places for this purpose.

Group 3: Corporate Accountability and Human Rights

In order to avoid massive violations of human rights, the recommendations targeted businesses, communities, governments, CSOs. Each group should work towards the adoption of a binding treaty on business, companies. The following recommendations were made by the group:

- Companies must guaranty their social responsibility and take into account communities' interest.
- Companies must ensure their social responsibility and take into account the local communities.
- The local population must actively participate in public audits that facilitate the environmental assessment.
- Governments should inform and consult the population before implantation businesses, establish mechanisms for communication with the population, CSOs, media; practice good



Opening remarks by our prominent speakers; Adama Moussa, UN Women Country Director for Cameroon, Sylvie Ndongmo President of WILPF Cameroon and Jean Pierre Makang, representative of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Family.

We were grateful to have the support from the UN and the Government and to hear that conflict prevention in the African region is a prioritized issue. Photo: WILPF Sweden

governance and fight against impunity; sign contracts with companies that oblige them to respect human rights and facilitate victims' access to justice.

- CSOs should get involved in sensitizing the population on their rights (sensitizing on international laws and treaties), help and accompany victims to access justice.

Group 4: Conflict Prevention in the African Region

The following recommendations were made by the group to effectively prevent conflicts in the region.

- Strengthen capacity of leaders and members of CSOs at the national and international levels.

- Sensitize and inform the community of business activities, promote collaboration between the operating companies and exploited communities.

- Ratify and implement the Arms Trade Treaty with effective monitoring of CSOs and popularize the UN Program of Action on Small Arms (UNPoA).

- Establish women situation rooms, a platform to ensure peaceful elections, as experienced by Nigeria during their last elections. This room included election observers from different CSOs specially trained for this purpose. Their role was to observe the participation of women, cases of violence, the vote proper on election day.

Closing ceremony

The closing was punctuated by speeches and votes of thanks to the participants and organizers. The following people took the floor:

- Sylvie Ndongmo, President of WILPF Cameroon
- Elin Hedkvist, President of WILPF Sweden
- Maria Muñoz Maraver, Director of the Human Rights Programme at International Office
- Honorable Vincent Emah Etoundi, Delegate of the National Assembly to the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The closing speech was given by Mr Makang, representing the Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family in Cameroon. He promised that the government will seize the opportunity of the conference to advance the process of developing the National Action Plan of Resolution 1325 in Cameroon.

WILPF conference participants

Sylvie Jacqueline Ndongmo - President WILPF Cameroon

Nathalie Wokam Foko –Secretary General WILPF Cameroon

Mariane Nonbo -Deputy Secretary General WILPF Cameroon

Myriam Georgie Megnijo- Treasurer WILPF Cameroon

Guy Blaise Dongmo Feugap- Communication Officer WILPF Cameroon

Uppaultine Kenfac Effa- Focal Point Center Region WILPF Cameroon

Béatrice Arimoh SAMA - Focal Point West Region WILPF Cameroon

Armelle Tsafack-WILPF Cameroon member (Center Region)

Donald Nguepi Ndongo - Young WILPF Cameroon (Littoral Region)

Franklin Tsague - Young WILPF Cameroon (Est Region)

Eric Ugochukwu Onwukwe-Operations Manager WILPF Nigeria

Olivia Ndidi Oseji-Vice President WILPF Nigeria

Annie Matundu Mbambi- President WILPF DR Congo

Sandra Kambala- Reporter WILPF DR Congo

Ayo Ayoola-Amale-President WILPF Ghana

Tove Ivergard-International coordinator WILPF Sweden

Elin Hedkvist-President WILPF Sweden

María Muñoz Maraver- Programme Director WILPF International

Micheline Muzaneza-Founder WILPF Group South Africa

Hermine Tarndolembaye -Secretary General WILPF Group Chad

Jeanne Mpfayo Guhora emerging WILPF group Burundi

Léa Ngabire emerging WILPF group Burundi

Pascalie Barampama emerging WILPF group Burundi

Charlotte Bazira-emerging WILPF group Burundi

Beata Musabyemariya- emerging WILPF group Burundi



Annie Matundu Mbambim President of WILPF DR Congo in the midst of her presentation on UNSC Resolution 1325. Thanks to Annie WILPF DR Congo was in the forefront of the process to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSC Resolution 1325 in DR Congo. Today she's a pioneer in the field of women, peace and security and she supports other countries to develop their own 1325 NAPs. Photo: WILPF Sweden

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) with National Sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations (UN).

Since our establishment in 1915, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means and promoting political, economic and social justice for all.

Our approach is always non-violent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualise and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

Our strength lies in our ability to link the international and local levels. We are very proud to be one of the first organisations to gain consultative status (category B) with the United Nations, and the only women's anti-war organisation so recognised.



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