

WOMEN ADVOCATING FOR RESOLUTION 1325 IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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The accomplishments of women in the DRC towards implementation of Resolution 1325 have taken place despite huge barriers. Within the government, and among the participants in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, there is still little awareness about Resolution 1325. There continues to be a serious lack of political will among the principal players in the peace negotiations, for whom the inclusion of women is simply not a priority. In addition to their direct exclusion from the negotiations, Congolese women face other kind of constraints including limited funding, limited access to information, and technological resources, a lack of media coverage, and a lack of dialogue and information sharing among Congolese women, due to tensions between women in government and civil society.

1. Women as Partners for Peace in Africa DRC chapter (WOPPA-DRC) and Femmes Africa Solidarite (FAS) organized the Nairobi Training Workshop to build Congolese women's capacity for and technique of negotiation in preparation for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Sun City, and to harmonize the views of women from all sides in order to engender the peace process. The organizers distributed Resolution 1325 in pamphlet form to all of the participants (Nairobi, Kenya, 15-19th, February 2002).
2. Women distributed copies of 1325 and the Nairobi Declaration to all the delegates and experts –both men and women- at the Inter-Congolese dialogue (pamphlets and Nairobi Declaration were placed in every delegate's dossier) (Sun City, South Africa, March-April 2002).
3. Members of the Congolese Women's Caucus, an initiative of the Nairobi Workshop and Nairobi Declaration, participated in a debate on national TV and a debate on a UN radio station called "Dialogue between the Congolese" addressing the contribution of the Congolese Women's Caucus in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, raising awareness about Resolution 1325, and advocating for the use of 1325 as an instrument for women's participation in the peace process (May-September, 2002, Kinshasa, DRC).
4. The Congolese Coalition of Protestant Women held a 3-day conference about the contribution of women in the peace process, including a workshop about 1325 where they distributed copies of the resolution to all participants (September 2002, Kinshasa, DRC).
5. Based on the demands of women at the grassroots level, Resolution 1325 and the Nairobi Declaration have recently been translated into the four local languages (an initiative of the UN peacekeeping mission in DRC-MONUC -and in collaboration with the DRC Ministry of Culture).
6. WOPPA-DRC wrote to UN agencies, USAID, foreign embassies and other international organizations to request funding to support women's participation at the

peace table.

7. Congolese women in collaboration with MONUC gender advisor's office of have had frequent informal meetings with young women to encourage them to organize and be instruments of change in their communities, and to be part of the peace process.

8. Women and men leaders of civil society, in collaboration with MONUC gender advisor's office, organized a meeting to discuss how to move forward with the peace process and how women and men can work together in partnership (Kinshasa, DRC, August 2002).