

## Women Participation in Post Conflict Governance, Decision Making and Planning

Presentation By:  
Leymah R. Gbowee  
Executive Director  
WIPSEN - Africa

## Introduction

- Advocacy for women full and active role in decision making have increased over the last decades.
- This is evident by the passage of numerous resolutions, instruments and protocols on women's rights and roles in decision making.
- All of these instruments are geared towards giving women the voice and prominence they deserve during and after conflict

## International instruments on women rights

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Beijing Platform for Action
- MDGs 3
- UNSCR 1325
- UNSCR 1820, 1880, 1889

## Regional (African Instruments)

- AU Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Rights of Women.
- AU Constitutive Act
- Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality
- AU Gender Policy
- Declaration of 2010 -2020 as the "Decade of the African Women".

## Roles in Post Conflict Planning and Decision Making

- That women bear the greatest burnt during conflict hence they will receive the highest benefits in post conflict humanitarian efforts.
- That women role in conflict resolution automatically guarantee their involvement in post conflict processes. (Peace talks, Pre assessment missions, DDR and related processes and post conflict electoral process).
- That given women's role in the community based peacebuilding processes, communities and local authorities will make available positions of leadership for women.

## Assumptions

- That legislations and policies promoting women's rights will be passed without question given their roles in the peace process.
- That funding priority will be given to women's issues and concerns
- That grassroots women efforts will be encouraged, supported and strengthened.

## Current Realities

Though a number of global norm-setting regimes have been adopted to acknowledge and support women's participation in post-conflict peace processes, the reality is that women are still far from attaining 30% in most post conflict context.

## Current Realities Governance

- In Africa, our two key examples of success in governance are Liberia (female president) and Rwanda 50% in parliament.
- In Sierra Leone, Cote d' Ivoire, Congo DRC and other parts the situation is not as exotic.
- A major gain however, in the area of political governance and decision making is the level of awareness, advocacy, mobilization and participation. There is a general understanding that women's involvement in political processes is key to empowerment.

**Current realities**  
**Governance and decision**  
**Making**

- Women's roles at decisions making level in the security, justice and education sectors are virtually low.
- Advocacy, awareness and mobilization in these sectors for women involvement is virtually non existent.
- In Liberia for example, of the over 2,000 enlisted men and women in the restructured army, only 79 are women, of this number, only one is a senior officer. In Cote d' Ivoire, according to a survey done of the police in March of 2010, there 1,887 women in the police representing 11.14% of the overall number, with in the national Gandermerie there are no women, statistic for women in the army was unavailable

**Current realities**  
**Governance and decision**  
**making**

- In Sierra Leone there are 303 women in the army out of 8,528, 6 women in the maritime (navy) out of 271 men and 1 woman in the air wing (force) out of 40 men
- As it relates to education the number of women in senior level positions at universities and higher institutions of learning is very low. E.g Of the 29 instructors of a high school in Liberia only 2 are females.
- The situation is similar when it comes to women in the justice sector, this also serve as a barrier to accessing justice for women in post conflict situation.

**Current Realities**  
**Planning**

- In planning for peace missions and other post conflict nation building processes a phrase that has been used as an excused to avoid consulting with women is "Cross Cutting".
- When women issues become Cross Cutting during planning, we have failed to plan for their promotion and participation in leadership and decision making at all levels and in all sectors.

**Challenges**

- Why are women not excelling giving the number of instruments?
- Reestablishment of cultural and tradition - going back to the way things were... this in most cases is used by political group to manipulate cultural and hold on to political control
- Structural repression - unequal laws, lack of policies (girls education backed with resources, sexual harassment in workplaces)

## Challenges

- International assistance - working with structured institutions and educated individuals, continuous portrayal of women as the victim as a means of calling attention to the conflict and accessing donor's funding, stereotyped empowerment activities.
- Double standards - empowerment in words and not actions.

UN - UNIFEM & CEDAW

## Way forward

- Planning - invest time and resources on women's issues. Research, consultations, partnership and funding.
- Governance and decision making - support local initiatives, early intervention as a means of promoting empowerment, designing appropriate strategies (backed by resources) as a means of increasing the number of women in governance and decision making.

Small group of women 300 women 300 dollars  
Local initiatives -> They want to  
have a person into  
the legislature.

## Conclusion

- The UN and other international bodies have made key strides in writing on the issues of Women's leadership in post conflict governance, planning and decision making.
- Our Politics is Now!!!! It is now time that we move beyond the rhetoric of women's participation.