

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION



CONFERENCE INTERNATIONALE  
SUR LA REGION DES GRANDS LACS



# REGIONAL GENDER POLICY OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION (ICGLR)

ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY



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# THE MEMBER STATES AND CO-OPTED MEMBER STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION



## Legend

- Member States
- Co-Opted States

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan states
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	Civil society of organization
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East Africa Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HIV / AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Immunodeficiency syndrome
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICGLR / NCM	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region/ National Coordinating Mechanism
IGAD	Intergovernmental authority for development
KD	Kampala Declaration
MD	Millennium Development Goal
MERF	Monitoring, Evaluation and Results Framework
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NGP	National Gender Policy
NPDA	New Partnership for the Development of Africa
NWF	National Women Forum
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RAP	Regional Action Plan
REC	Regional Economic Community
RGP	Regional Gender Policy
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TBD	Transboundary Basin of Development
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for the Population
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the empowerment of Women
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

## PREFACE

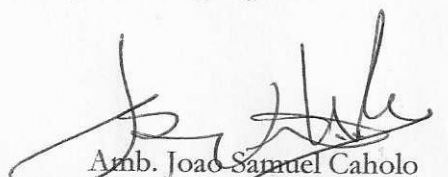
The development of the ICGLR Gender Policy has been inspired by the commitment of the ICGLR Heads of States and governments, who, in the founding document, the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Security, Stability, and Development, commit to "adopt deliberate policies and mechanisms for promoting gender equality at all levels and in all sectors, at the national and regional levels, in accordance with the Millennium Declaration, Resolution 1325 (2000), of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, additional protocols on the rights of Women in Africa, the Beijing Plan of Action and the African Union's Declaration on Gender Equality". The same commitment is recapped in the Pact on Security, Stability, and Development for the Great Lakes Region and its accompanying protocols.

Indeed, all MS have fulfilled their commitments to ensure that gender equality is enshrined in national constitutions. Besides, other programs and policies that promote gender equality, equity and women's empowerment at all levels and sectors exist. Despite many improvements over the last decade, all international and continental gender indices show that gender inequalities persist, and women still suffer discrimination in all spheres of life. According to the Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum in 2021, the overall gender gap for Sub-Saharan Africa is 32.7%. The ICGLR Member States, are ranked at different levels, with Rwanda ranked 7th, the highest of all member states, while the Democratic Republic of Congo has the lowest rank at 151.

It is therefore vital for the ICGLR to develop strategies that provide a clear framework for addressing deeply rooted inequalities in our society and put in place tools and mechanisms to monitor Member States Compliance with the promotion of Gender equality. Therefore, the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy will be used to provide the basis and eliminate barriers to gender equality in the region. It will also guide gender equality actions for the region in implementing other continental and global commitments on gender, including MDG 3 targets.

The present ICGLR Regional Gender Policy builds on the 2017 draft version that was based on a comprehensive desk review and consultations with all major stakeholders. In addition, more recent data, publications and virtual interviews were conducted with representatives from the Ministries of Gender of the Member States as well as with members of the different ICGLR fora (civil society organizations, private sector, parliamentarians) in the period between October 2020 and May 2021 to identify challenges that need to be addressed at the regional and Member states levels.

I am confident that the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy will serve as a point of reference in Policymaking, monitoring and providing overarching leadership in Gender Equality to the Member states and the ICGLR Secretariat's programs.



Amb. Joao Samuel Caholo  
**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Since its establishment in 2006, gender equality is a fundamental principle of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). In the founding document of the ICGLR, the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, heads of ICGLR governments and states of the Republic of Angola, Republic of Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of South Sudan, Republic of the Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Uganda, and the Republic of Zambia commit to “(a) dopt deliberate policies and mechanisms for promoting gender equality at all levels and in all sectors, at the national and regional levels, in accordance with the Millennium Declaration, Resolution 1325 (2000), of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, additional protocols on the rights of Women in Africa, the Beijing Plan of Action and the African Union’s Declaration on Gender Equality”.

This commitment was reiterated in the Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region and its accompanying protocols. In addition, the normative framework related to gender equality and women’s rights consists of a specific Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence aiming to provide adequate protection and response mechanisms for women and children against the impunity of sexual violence. The Protocol on Judicial Cooperation, in which Member States commit to cooperate in matters of extradition, judicial investigation and prosecution, further strengthens the provisions of the Protocol on Sexual Violence particularly with regard to fighting impunity. It also established a legal framework under which Member States shall prosecute and punish the perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence in the region.

The normative framework has been complemented by several policy documents and guidelines, such as the Regional Action Plan on the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325 from the year 2000 and guidelines on gender in the mining sector.

At the national level, constitutional provisions in all ICGLR member states provide for equality and nondiscrimination of women and men, the right to physical integrity, security, the right to social protection and the right to participate in and benefit from economic development.

However, despite many improvements over the last decade, all international and continental gender indices show that gender inequalities persist and women still suffer discrimination in all spheres of life. This is clearly reflected by the ranking of ICGLR member states in international and regional Gender Indices. According to the Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum in 2021, for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole the overall gender gap is 32.7%. Among ICGLR Member States, there are major differences in terms of ranking in international comparison: Rwanda is ranked 7th which is the highest of all member states, while the Democratic Republic of Congo has the lowest rank with 151.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum, 2021; the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Sudan are not included in

Also, in terms of the African Gender Index, our Member States span a wide range with Sudan having the lowest value of 0.316 and Rwanda the highest of 0.761.<sup>2</sup>

Gender inequalities are due to a patriarchal social order which is being reproduced by plural legal systems combining statutory, religious and customary laws and practices, and discriminatory administrative and procedural mechanisms for accessing rights. Plural legal systems accord women some rights through general law and withhold others on the basis of traditional, customary and some religious beliefs and practices, denying women their fundamental rights. Resolving the contradictions between these is crucial for the attainment of gender equality.<sup>3</sup>

Social-cultural norms and values measured by the Social Inequality and Gender Index (SIGI)<sup>4</sup> strongly discriminate against women and girls. According to the 2019 SIGI report on discrimination against women and girls, 3 states, namely Tanzania (46%), Uganda (45%) and the Central African Republic (43%) were rated as having high levels of discrimination. The Democratic Republic of Congo (40%), Kenya (35%) and Zambia (35%) were rated as having medium discrimination and only Rwanda had low levels of discrimination with a score of 28%. Angola, Burundi, Congo, Sudan and South Sudan were not scored but are also dominated by discriminatory social norms.

Discrimination against women and the violation of their rights constitute severe violations of basic human rights enshrined as universal and indivisible in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Convention of the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Maputo Protocol.

Gender inequalities are also very costly for our continent and sub-region. According to the African Human Development Report of 2016 gender inequality is costing sub-Saharan Africa on average \$US95 billion a year, peaking at US\$105 billion in 2014 – or six percent of the region's GDP – jeopardising our continent's efforts for inclusive human development and economic growth. The report estimates that a 1 percent increase in gender inequality reduces a country's human development index by 0.75 percent.

Other reports come to similar conclusions and confirm that Africa is failing to achieve its full growth potential.

A report published by McKinsey found that by narrowing the gender gap, sub-Saharan Africa has the opportunity to add 12%, or an estimated \$300 billion, to annual GDP by 2025. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reports that closing the gender gap in agriculture can increase yields by 20-30%, raise agricultural output by 2.5% to 4% and reduce the number of hungry people by 12%-17%.<sup>5</sup>

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the ranking.

2 For South Sudan, data is not available.

3 African Union, 2021, p. 43

4 The Social Inequality and Gender Index (SIGI) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is an index that tries to measure social norms and values that are behind gender inequalities. The SIGI was first launched in 2009, and then updated in 2012 and 2014. The fourth edition of the SIGI was launched in December 2018 and data published in 2019. The SIGI 2019 consists of the following sub-indices: discrimination in the family, restricted physical integrity, restricted access to productive and financial resources, restricted civil liberties. The 2019 edition of the SIGI covers 180 countries in total. It ranks 120 economies while the remaining 60 countries are not ranked due to missing data for one or more indicators. Based on the SIGI value that was calculated as a combination of all indicators, each country is classified as a country with low, medium, high or very high discrimination against women and girls.

5 African Union, 2021, p. 25 with further references



For Kenya, a report published in 2007 by the World Bank found that eliminating gender-based inequalities in education and access to agricultural inputs could result in a one-off increase in as much as 4.3 percentage points of GDP growth, followed by a sustained year-on-year increase of 2.0 to 3.5 percentage points in GDP growth. A similar study on Uganda published in 2005 by the World Bank concluded that Uganda could gain as much as 2 percentage points of GDP growth a year by eliminating gender inequality in education and employment.

At the current relative pace, it will potentially take up to 121.7 years to close gender gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the Global Gender Gap Report of 2021. This clearly shows that much more efforts are needed to initiate and support a transformational change towards gender-equal and inclusive societies in Africa.

To more effectively address existing gender inequalities in its member states, the Gender Department of the ICGLR Secretariat had commissioned the development of a regional gender policy which was finalized in October 2017, as part of the Pact's commitment to security, stability and development in the Great Lakes Region. Whilst a consultative process took place, the policy was not formally adopted at the time.

Since 2017, the international, regional and national contexts have changed tremendously. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) enables more economic exchange while the increasingly noticeable climate change and the COVID 19 pandemic presents us with new and major challenges with implications for gender equality and women's empowerment. The generation equality launched in June 2021, calls us to accelerate implementation of gender equality commitments while ensuring intergeneration and multistakeholder partnerships. Against this background, the Gender Department of the ICGLR Secretariat commenced a review process of the ICGLR gender policy to adapt it to the new circumstances.

## **1.2 METHODOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY**

The present ICGLR Regional Gender Policy has been developed in two stages. It builds on the draft version that was based on a comprehensive desk review and consultations with all major stakeholders in 2017. To update the policy, data from more recent publications were compiled and additional virtual interviews were conducted with representatives from the Ministries of Gender of the Member States as well as with members of the different ICGLR fora (civil society organizations, private sector, parliamentarians) in the period between October 2020 and May 2021 in order to identify challenges that need to be addressed at the regional and national level of the ICGLR Member States.

## **1.3 PURPOSE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY**

The ICGLR's gender policy aims at facilitating compliance of ICGLR Member States with international, regional and national gender equality commitments. It covers all main areas of work of the ICGLR Secretariat and envisions a harmonization of regional and national approaches and their operationalization. This includes the identification of gaps, the scaling-up of good practices and the provision of technical and institutional support to the Member States. The ICGLR Regional Gender Policy also intends to provide guidance to the Member States on how to integrate a gender perspective in the main areas of the ICGLR. It is based on the core principles of diversity, non-discrimination, and gender as a cross-cutting issue and reflects a process of institutional and cultural transformation towards more gender equal societies in the region in line with the standards set out in the Constitutions of ICGLR Member States and their legal and policy frameworks, as well as international and regional treaties on gender equality such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UNSCR 1325, the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

## **1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY**

The Regional Gender Policy is structured as follows:

After this introduction, chapter 2 briefly outlines the global, continental and regional context of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy and list major international, continental and regional treaties to which it is aligned. Chapter 3 defines the vision, goal and objectives of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy, and chapter 4 its main principles. Chapter 5 outlines the strategic axes and orientations of the policy while chapter 6 discusses implementation arrangements. Chapter 7 focuses on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and the final chapter 8 on resource mobilization for the implementation of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy.

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The year 2020 marked a turning point in recent history. The entire world began to face the Corona virus that forced governments to take a variety of containment measures including social distancing and lockdowns, many of which have further increased gender inequalities. As a result, existing problems, for example in the health and education systems, have been magnified and became more and more visible, and violence against girls and women has increased at an alarming rate.

On the other hand, in 2020 the world celebrated the 75th anniversary of the UN as well as anniversaries of important international treaties and conventions related to gender equality, women's empowerment and the protection of women's rights, namely the 41st anniversary of the Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of the UN Resolution for Women, Peace and Security 1325, and the 5th anniversary of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals with its founding principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB).

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, 111 Heads of State and Government, and 14 Ministers who attended the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on 21st September 2020 adopted the 'Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the UN (A/75/L.1).'

In the Declaration, UN Member States recognize that "while there have been many achievements in the past 75 years, the world envisaged by the UN's founders has not yet been realized: it is plagued by growing inequality, poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, terrorism, insecurity, climate change, and pandemics; people are forced to make dangerous journeys in search of refuge and safety; the LDCs are falling behind; and complete decolonization has not been achieved." Further, Member States recognize that global challenges are interconnected and can only be addressed through reinvigorated multilateralism, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, they agreed that multilateralism is not an option but a necessity, to build back better for a more equal, more resilient, and more sustainable world, with the UN at the center of efforts. They also recognized that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is necessary for survival.

In the Declaration, Member States resolve to:

- Leave no one behind, with particular attention to people in vulnerable situations.
- Protect our planet, including through transformative measures, and by building back better and greener.
- Promote peace and prevent conflicts, including through preventive diplomacy and mediation, and respect for international humanitarian law.
- Abide by international law and ensure justice.
- Place women and girls at the center, and accelerate action to achieve gender equality, women's participation and the empowerment of women and girls in all domains.
- Build trust, by addressing growing inequalities within and among countries, and addressing root causes of inequalities, including violence, human rights abuses, corruption, marginalization, discrimination in all its forms, poverty, and exclusion, as well as lack of education and employment.
- Improve digital cooperation and ensure safe and affordable digital access for all.
- Upgrade the UN, including by supporting ongoing reform by the UN Secretary-General. They also commit to instill new life in the discussions on the reform of the UN Security Council, continue the work to revitalize the UNGA, and strengthen ECOSOC.
- Ensure sustainable financing, including by paying assessed contributions in full and on time; and through the full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on financing for development (FfD).
- Boost partnerships, by engaging with all stakeholders including regional and sub-regional organizations, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, academia and parliamentarians.
- Listen to, and work with, youth.
- Be prepared, including by improving the global crisis prevention and response systems; learning and sharing experiences and information to reduce risks and make our systems more resilient; and accelerating development, production, as well as equitable and affordable global access to new vaccines, medicines, and medical equipment.

The current UN Secretary-General António Guterres identified gender inequality as the “greatest single challenge to human rights around the world”. The importance of gender equality was also recognized by former UN Secretaries General of the UN.

The former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said “to be truly transformative, the Post 2015 development agenda must prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment. The world will never realize 100 percent of its goals if 50 percent of its people cannot realize their full potential.” And former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan emphasized: “Gender equality is more than a goal in itself.

It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance”.<sup>6</sup>

2020 also marked the 41st anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which is the international Bill of Women's Rights that was adopted on 18th December 1979. CEDAW pursues the twin objectives of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and ensuring women's empowerment. To date, it has been ratified by 189 states, including all ICGLR Member States.

As a preparation of the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing in 1995 and the adoption of its outcome document, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, ICGLR Member States prepared country specific reports to account for what has been achieved in the 12 priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action and to identify where further efforts are needed.<sup>7</sup>

2020 also marked the 20th anniversary of the UN Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325) on women, peace and security that reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Over the last 20 years, the UN Resolution 1325 was complemented by the following nine additional resolutions: Resolution 1820 (2009); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2010); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); 2242 (2015); 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019). They emphasize and reinforce different aspects of Resolution 1325. In addition, they help to respond to the emerging global peace and security threats that undermine the protection and promotion of women's rights. To date, 10<sup>8</sup> out of 12 ICGLR Member States have elaborated a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in addition to laws and policies that generally support the advancement of the WPS agenda.

Last, but not least, in 2020 the Action Agenda 2030 with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) celebrated its 5th anniversary. Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment is a stand-alone SDG (SDG 5), and it is widely recognised that the achievement of all the other SDGs requires transformative shifts, integrated approaches and new solutions, also in terms of gender equality.

On the occasion of these different anniversaries, UN Women launched its campaign "Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future", aiming to bring together generations of women's rights activists to accelerate gender equality actions.<sup>9</sup> The campaign led to the establishment of the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) a global gathering for gender equality that was held in Mexico City in March and in Paris from 30 June – 2 July 2021, convened by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico, in partnership with civil society. The implementation framework for the GEF is organized around Action Coalitions, as global, multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector. The Generation Equality Forum calls to accelerate implementation of gender equality commitments while ensuring intergeneration and multistakeholder partnerships and launched a 5-year action journey to achieve irreversible

7 <https://www.uneca.org/africa-regional-review-twenty-five-years-implementation-beijing-declaration-and-platform-action-bp-0>

8 ICGLR member states with a NAP include; Angola (2017) Burundi (2012 revised in 2017) Central African Republic (2014) Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010, revised in 2018); Congo (nd) Kenya (2016, revised in 2020) South Sudan (2015) Sudan (2020) Rwanda (2009, revised in 2018) Uganda (2008, revised in 2020)

9 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/beijing-plus-25>

progress towards gender equality, founded on a series of concrete, ambitious and transformative actions, including \$40 billion in financial commitments.

## 2.2 CONTINENTAL CONTEXT

At the continental level, Member States of the African Union have established a normative framework which demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

### 2.2.1 AU AGENDA 2063

The promotion of gender equality is one of the principles of the African Union Constitutive Act 2002 (Article 4 l). The AU recognises gender equality as a fundamental human right and an integral part of regional integration, economic growth and social development. The AU is, therefore, committed to removing all forms of gender inequalities at the regional and national levels through a series of policies, goals and actions derived from legally binding international, continental and regional instruments. The ultimate goal of the African Union is for Africa to be a peaceful, prosperous and integrated continent.<sup>10</sup>

In 2013, during its 50th anniversary celebrations, the AU adopted the Agenda 2063, a roadmap for the next fifty years. Gender is integral to all the seven aspirations and twenty goals, even where these are gender neutral in their formulation.

<sup>10</sup> See AU Gender Policy, 2018 – 2027, p. 1 with reference to the AU website



Aspiration Six provides for development that is people-driven, and goal 17 sets out the bold vision of gender equality in all spheres. It calls for:

- Including women in decision-making regardless of gender, political affiliation, religion, ethnic affiliation, locality, age or other factors.
- Fully empowering women in all spheres, with equal social, political and economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign contracts, register and manage businesses.
- Enabling rural women to have access to productive assets: land, credit, inputs and financial services.
- Eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination (social, economic, political) against women and girls.
- Attaining full gender parity, with women occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels and half of managerial positions in the public and the private sectors.

In total, 12 of the 94 objectives of Agenda 2063 relate to the social and economic well-being of women. To monitor these objectives the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) of the African Union produces an annual African Union Gender Score Card on different themes, in collaboration with UNECA and the AfDB.

Among the RECs, SADC has a Monitoring, Evaluation and Results Framework (MERF) for the SADC Gender Protocol that is aligned to SADC's overall MERF Framework. The ECA, COMESA, ECOWAS and IGAD have general M and E metrics and tools with specific gender indicators aligned to strategic goals and objectives managed by the data reporting centres of the RECs. A survey of 22 national gender action plans by WGDD found that only seven have specific targets and indicators. Therefore, the efforts at AU, REC and national level, on setting targets, indicators, data collection, analysis and dissemination need to be effectively harmonised.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.2.2 AFRICAN UNION STRATEGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (GEWE) 2018-2028**

In line with the Agenda 2063, the African Union has drafted the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) for the period of 2018 to 2028. The Strategy was adopted at the 31st Summit of Heads of State and Government in July 2018 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, and was launched in January/February 2019. The Strategy articulates a clear and comprehensive roadmap for the implementation of gender-related commitments.

The GEWE Strategy is based on an inclusive and multisectoral approach and builds on the lessons learned from the 2009 gender policy. It is transformational in that its outcomes aim to mitigate, if not eliminate the major constraints hindering gender equality and women's empowerment, so that women and girls may participate fully in economic activities, political affairs and social endeavours.

<sup>11</sup> African Union, 2021, p. 46

Following revisions to the original draft strategy, the GEWE strategy was officially launched on 26th February 2021 in a meeting which was attended by Ministers in Charge of Gender and Womens' Affairs in Africa, Regional Economic Communities, International Partners and Civil Society Organisations (CSO's).<sup>12</sup>

The vision of the gender strategy 2018 to 2028 is built on an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena (Agenda 2063). The impact of the strategy is envisaged as an "Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African people; especially its women and youth, and caring for children" (Aspiration 6).

The following four strategic pillars have been defined:

- Maximizing opportunities, outcomes and E-TECH dividends
- Dignity, Security and Resilience;
- Effective Laws, Policies and Institutions; and
- Leadership, Voice and Visibility

Overall, the GEWE Strategy is a framework document to strengthen women's agency in Africa and ensure that women's voices are amplified and their concerns are fully addressed through, among others, effective implementation of legislation and proper financing of gender equality work. It is a guiding document on the implementation of the AU's GEWE commitments and is to be used to design transformational programmes that bring results for African women and girls on the continent and in the diaspora.

To ensure implementation of the Strategy, the WGDD initiated the development of three additional key documents: The Operational Plan, the Results Framework and the Harmonization Matrix. These documents aim at consolidating and capitalizing the orientation of the GEWE strategy, strengthening its operationalisation and implementation modalities, while taking into account the specific contexts and priorities of Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The documents were validated at a workshop held in June and will be presented at the upcoming Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in October, where African Union Ministers in charge of gender and women's Affairs will consider and adopt the documents.

### **2.2.3 PROTOCOL ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA (MAPUTO PROTOCOL)**

As of January 2018, all ICGLR Member States have signed and 9 ICGLR Member States have also ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), also known as the Maputo Protocol in 2004. The Maputo Protocol was adopted on 11th July 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique, at the Heads of State Summit of the AU. The instrument entered into force on 25th November 2005 after it was ratified by 15 nations of the AU. The Protocol strengthens the African Charter's provisions on gender equality and is an important advance in the protection and promotion of the rights of women in Africa.

<sup>12</sup> <https://au.int/en/articles/african-union-strategy-gender-equality-womens-empowerment>



The Protocol guarantees comprehensive rights to women including the right to partake in political processes, social and political equality with men, reproductive health, and an end to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). It also recognises the African women's right to peace and calls for women's inclusion in peace processes and protection from violence during situations of conflict. The protocol requires African Union member states to ensure women's participation in conflict prevention, management, and resolution at local, national, regional, continental, and international levels.

However, implementation and the enforcement of the standards remains a major challenge. There are no guidelines, resulting in individual states choosing the mechanisms that best suit them, with varying degrees of success. So far, only 4 AU Member States have submitted their reports to the Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights in Africa.<sup>13</sup>

### **2.2.4 SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA**

The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa was adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit in July 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Declaration is an important African legal instrument for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as it strengthens African ownership of the gender equality agenda. It commits all bodies of the AU, the regional economic communities, and all levels of government to the principle of gender equality, including by setting up and supporting gender-promoting institutions. It also addresses issues such as gender-based violence, gender-specific measures against HIV/AIDS, the gender gap in primary school education, and recruitment of child soldiers, including girls.

### **2.2.5 AU R1325 CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORK**

In July 2016, the African Union (AU) launched the "Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa" report. This report "outlines member states and regional economic communities' implementation of UNSCR 1325 as an entry point to assessing the state of implementation of the broader Women, Peace and Security Agenda on the continent."<sup>14</sup>

The African Union committed to 50% of AU member states<sup>15</sup> having a NAP by 2020, during the Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2019. This commitment has been surpassed as 30 African states have adopted a UNSCR 1325 NAP as of September 2020. In 2020, Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Sudan and South Africa adopted NAPs. Six<sup>16</sup> African regional bodies have also adopted a regional plan including ECOWAS (2010), IGAD (2013), SADC (2017), EAC (2018), ECCAS (2018) and the ICGLR (2018). The African Union has further led the continent in implementing the agenda including by appointing a Special Envoy on WPS and instituting innovative strategies and programmes such as creating a network of women mediators (FEMWISE), holding annual PSC session on WPS and developing a continental accountability framework through which AU member states make annual reports on the implementation progress.<sup>17</sup>

13 African Union, 2021, p. 42

14 UNDP Africa Report 2016, page 41

15 <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/103695>

16 AU, 2019 report on the WPS agenda in Africa

17 Njeru, 2020, p. 12

## 2.2.6 AFRICAN WOMEN ´S DECADE ON WOMEN ´S FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSIONS

In December 2008, the African Union Ministers for Gender and Women's Affairs called on the AU to declare 2010-2020 as African Women's Decade under the Theme: Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs in Maseru, Lesotho. This remarkable effort has been translated into the Declaration of the new Decade (2020-2030) of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion, by African leaders in February 2020. This declaration is the result of African leaders' commitment to scale up actions for the progressive gender inclusion towards sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels. 2020 also marks the AU theme for the year "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development" decided by the Executive Council during the AU Coordination Summit in Niamey, Niger, in July 2019 and adopted during the 33rd AU Ordinary Summit in Addis Ababa in February 2020.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.3 REGIONAL CONTEXT

Most ICGLR Member States also adhere to other Regional Economic Communities (REC), e.g. the EAC<sup>19</sup>, COMESA, IGAD and SADC. These RECs have their own respective gender policies.

SADC has a Protocol on Gender and Development (2008, updated in 2016); the EAC has a Gender Equity and Development Bill (2015); COMESA has a Gender Policy; ECOWAS has a supplementary Act on Equality and Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development (2015). IGAD has a Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan 2016 to 2020.<sup>20</sup>

All the sub regional organizations recognize that the sustainable economic and social development of the respective region calls for the full and equitable participation of men, women and young people in all fields such as agriculture, industry, trade, etc. Therefore, they all have Gender Units within their structures.

The Regional Action Plans, particularly those of IGAD and SADC, focus on security issues specific to their region, which may or may not be related to conflict.

IGAD recognizes the opportunities inherent in the region that will help advance the WPS agenda such as deepening democratization, improving education and literacy, and reaffirming commitments to the advancement of women gender equality and women's empowerment in regional policies, strategies and normative frameworks. Key lessons on WPS need to be shared on local, national and regional experiences, implementation strategies, as well as monitoring and evaluation of NAPs. IGAD provided a framework for Member States that had not yet developed NAPs in 2012.

18 <https://au.int/en/documents/20201127/africa-young-women-beijing25-manifesto>

19 Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda

20 African Union, 2021, p. 44

SADC strives to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the projects it manages, and that Member States align their NAPs with the regional strategy and continues to encourage them to devote resources to the development of the NAP.

Like other regional bodies, these subregional frameworks recognize the need to strengthen global and regional monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

The ICGLR Regional Gender Policy is aligned with the respective gender policies of these regional entities and their fundamental values and principles.

## 2.4 THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ICGLR

At the level of the ICGLR, the 2004 Dar es Salaam Declaration contains a strong commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. The core founding instrument of the ICGLR, the Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region of December 2006 which was amended in November 2012 firmly reiterates this commitment. In its Article 11, the Pact stipulates that "(t)he Member States undertake, in accordance with the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children, to combat sexual violence against women and children through preventing, criminalizing and punishing acts of sexual violence, both in times of peace and in times of war, in accordance with national laws and international criminal law".

The Pact includes 10 Protocols and 4 programmes of action with 33 priority projects. The Protocols, which are legally binding, are the following: Protocol on Non-aggression and Mutual Defense in the Great Lakes Region, Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, Protocol on Judicial Cooperation, Protocol for the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and all forms of Discrimination, Protocol Against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources, Protocol on the Specific Reconstruction and Development Zone, Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children, Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, and Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons.

The Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children (2006) aims to fight the impunity of sexual violence in the region including by establishing a legal framework under which Member States undertake to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence. It defines sexual violence and makes provision for the establishment of a regional mechanism for providing legal, medical, material and social assistance, including counselling and compensation to victims and survivors of sexual violence. The protocol annexes a Model Legislation on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence to guide member countries in domesticating and implementing the Protocol, including in establishing institutional arrangements for the prevention and suppression of SGBV at national level.

The Kampala Declaration on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2011) was adopted during a Special session on the issue of SGBV in the region during the Summit of heads of ICGLR Member States convened in Kampala, Uganda in December 2011. The Declaration expressed concern that SGBV remained pervasive despite "...the existence

of institutional, policy and legal frameworks for the prevention of SGBV and the punishment of perpetrators.” The declaration echoes commitments under the Pact and its attendant Protocol on Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children. It set time bound targets for preventing SGBV, ending impunity and establishing support mechanisms for survivors of SGBV.

Commitment to eradicate SGBV is also addressed in other protocols<sup>21</sup>, including the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance; Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons; Protocol on Non-Aggression and Mutual Defence in the Great Lakes Region; Protocol on Judicial Cooperation, Protocol on Management of Information and Communication, and the Protocol for the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity.

In addition to the ICGLR Pact and protocols, there are other key strategic documents that constitute and strengthen the ICGLR gender normative framework. These include:

- The ICGLR Regional Action Plan 2019-2024 (RAP) that was adopted in November 2018 by ICGLR Gender Ministers. It is a strategy that aims to accelerate the implementation of commitments made on WPS in the Great Lakes Region in support of the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. It builds on the four cornerstones of the international WPS agenda: prevention, protection, participation of women in post-conflict and peacebuilding efforts as well as relief and recovery. The RAP is complementary and mutually supportive to Member States’ own National Action Plans (NAPs) and aims at strengthening their implementation, by providing clear benchmarks against which ICGLR MS will gauge their own responses and respective NAPs with set targets. In line with the UNSC encouragement<sup>22</sup> in 2019 to regional organizations to consider reviewing the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in their respective regions in the lead up to the 20th commemoration of the UNSCR1325 the ICGLR Secretariat commissioned a status report of WPS implementation in ICGLR Member States.<sup>23</sup> It identifies practical and measurable steps for supporting MS to fully implement the agenda. Based on the result of this status report, the ICGLR RAP is currently being revised in order to facilitate its operationalization.
- The Model Legislation on the Establishment of Special Courts and other mechanisms to Fast Track the Trial of Sexual Violence against Women and Children, provides a guiding legal framework for member states to enact national legislation to establish and strengthen special courts, sessions and procedures. It facilitates to fast-tracking of SGBV cases in the police and the judiciary as a means to end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence, among others.
- The ICGLR Regional Guide for the acceleration of criminal procedures of sexual and gender-based violence, provides a legal framework that officials in charge of prosecuting SGBV cases can rely on to speed up the process at the level of the penal chain. The Regional Guide is organized

21 2011; The International Refugee Rights Initiative accessed at [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/F\\_R\\_480.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/F_R_480.pdf)

22 S/RES/2493 (2019)

23 See Njeru, 2020

into four chapters corresponding to the main pillars of the Kampala Declaration, which have been transformed into implementation action areas for each Member State in order to meet their needs in the eradication of SGBV through prevention, the fight against impunity, the protection of victims and witnesses and assistance to victims.

## 2.5 THE FRAMEWORK AT THE LEVEL OF ICGLR MEMBER STATES

In the aftermath of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, ICGLR Member States elaborated national gender policies and plans of action and established national gender machineries. However, gender ministries or units typically receive 1% or less of national budgets; they lack clout and analytical capacity to do their work effectively.<sup>24</sup>

Some ICGLR Member States, e.g. Kenya and Rwanda, recently revised their gender strategies/national action plans to adapt them to new circumstances and align them with the AU GEWE Strategy.

With regard to the WPS agenda, 10 of the 12 Member States of the ICGLR, have adopted a NAP as shown in the figure below. The two remaining states (Tanzania and Zambia) have committed to develop a NAP, although Tanzania has already integrated UNSCR1325 provisions in the Zanzibar Gender Policy of 2016.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 1: WPS NAPS in ICGLR MS**

First Generation NAPs	Second Generation NAPs	Third Generation NAPS
Angola (2017)	Burundi (2012 revised in 2017)	Uganda (2008, revised in 2020)
Central African Republic (2014)	Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010, revised in 2018)	
Congo (ibid)	Kenya (2016, revised in 2020)	
South Sudan (2015), Sudan (2020)	Rwanda (2009, revised in 2018)	

Source: Njeru, 2020

A number of ICGLR Member States, e.g. DRC, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, are also undertaking NAP localization which is an approach of customising NAPs into the local context.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> African Union, 2021, p. 46

<sup>25</sup> Government of Tanzania (2019) Country Report on The Review and Progress Made in Implementation of The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Beijing +25

<sup>26</sup> African Union (2019) Status of the WPS agenda in Africa.

## 3. VISION, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY

The elaboration of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy falls within the scope of the Covenant's Missions in its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which recommends the establishment of “an appropriate mechanism and a regional policy based on the gender approach to promote women's rights and eliminate all forms of harmful, degrading and discriminatory practices against them in accordance with national, regional and international standards in force”.

Viewed in this light, this policy responds to the ICGLR Heads of State's global vision of “making the Great Region a space for shared growth and development, a space for cooperation based on strategies and policies convergence in the framework of a common destiny that we are determined to achieve in accordance with the aspirations of our peoples” in a framework of non-discrimination.

### 3.1 VISION OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY

The vision of the ICGLR regional gender policy is to create an integrated, prosperous and peaceful region where every human being is respected, has the same opportunities and lives a quality life free from gender-based discrimination in inclusive communities.

### 3.2 GOAL OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY

An inclusive community which guarantees equal rights and opportunities for every human being and a life free of discrimination and violence.

### 3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY

The general objective of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy is to strengthen the ICGLR gender normative framework and to facilitate the compliance of member states' interventions with the international, regional and sub-regional normative framework related to gender equality, women's empowerment, and the protection of women's rights.

Specific objectives are to:

- Urge member countries to align all national policies and strategies with the goals of non-discrimination set out in the Covenant and its protocols.
- Enhance the mainstreaming of gender concerns in the planning and budgetary processes of all sectors at the levels of the ICGLR Secretariat and ICGLR Member States
- Focus on an integrated, participatory and multi-dimensional approach that takes gender into account in all ICGLR programs, sub-programs and projects.

- Support Member States to align their national gender policies and National Action Plans with international, regional and sub-regional gender equality standards
- Promote the coordination, harmonization and reporting on gender equality commitments by the ICGLR Secretariat and ICGLR Member States.
- Promote the capitalization of national and regional achievements, and the exchange of experiences and good practices as driving forces through collective and concerted actions
- Promote women's participation in decision-making at all levels
- Strengthen measures that eliminate gender-based violence and harmful cultural practices
- Enhance processes that include women at all levels in peace and security prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery
- Provide the necessary technical and institutional support to national stakeholders and ICGLR projects.
- Facilitate the implementation of the RAP 1325

### 3.4 EXPECTED RESULTS

Expected results are as follows:

- ICGLR member countries are geared towards achieving the goals of non-discrimination set out in the Covenant and its protocols.
- The ICGLR Secretariat and Member States develop an action plan with concrete measures for the implementation of an integrated, participatory and multi-dimensional approach that takes gender into account in all ICGLR programs, sub-programs and projects.
- The national and regional achievements are capitalized in acting forces by collective and concerted actions.
- Technical and institutional support needed by national stakeholders and ICGLR projects is provided.
- Good practices of equity and human dignity between men and women in the workplace and in the community are reinforced.
- Sustainable people-centered development, with special attention to food security and the management and conservation of natural resources and the environment, is promoted.
- Implementation and M+E mechanisms of ICGLR RAP 2022-2024 are in place

## 4. MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY

**The ICGLR regional gender policy is a reference guide for each Member State. The process of establishing women's equality and non-discrimination must be built on a number of common values and rights as enshrined in key international and regional frameworks.**

The Regional Policy is based on a number of the core principles, such as equality and equity, diversity, non-discrimination, LNOB and gender as a cross-cutting issue and reflects a process of institutional and cultural transformation within the region. It is also guided by the principle of good governance, rule of law and people-centeredness as enshrined in the Pact and its Protocols. These principles will help to achieve the overall and specific objectives and address the challenges of which have been highlighted by the situational analysis.

### **GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY**

The ICGLR Regional Gender Policy subscribes to the principles of equal opportunities and equitable distribution of programmes, services, and resources. It also endeavors to promote processes that enhance equitable access to socio-economic opportunities and political participation for women.

### **DIVERSITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The policy promotes the principle of non-discrimination, based on gender, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, political affiliation, language or birth. It calls for the elimination of violence, stereotypes, prejudices and other negative practices against any person.

### **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

The Policy advocates for the creation of a supportive socio-cultural, economic and political environment that will empower women to be active partners in key decision-making processes in the political, economic and socio-cultural development of the region.

### **LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND (LNOB)**

In line with the SDGs, Leave No One Behind is a guiding principle of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy. It accounts for the fact that gender identity in many circumstances intersects with other inequalities and excluding mechanisms amplifying the impact on women that face multiple discriminations and face specific risks, e.g. women living in remote rural areas, female IDPs and refugees, migrant women, women with disabilities, or elderly single women.



## **INVOLVEMENT OF MEN AND BOYS AND OVERCOMING HARMFUL CONCEPTS OF MASCULINITIES**

Overcoming discrimination that is grounded in a patriarchal social order and harmful cultural practices necessitates transformational change and a new concept of masculinity that is not based on male dominance over women. To achieve gender equity and equality will, thus, not be possible without the active involvement of boys and men. The 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2004 recognised that men and boys can and do make contributions to achieve gender equality. Dismantling patriarchy is no longer seen by all men as a win-lose proposition. They look to the history and experience of the women's movement to inspire them in their own struggles.<sup>27</sup> Many men in our region engage for a transformational change of gender relations and thereby act as new role models and change agents. Campaigns like HeForShe or civil society organizations such as ISOKO or Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) are impressive demonstrations for this change.

## **GENDER AS A CROSSCUTTING ISSUE**

Gender equity and equality is not limited to one sector but has to be achieved in all sectors. The ICGLR Secretariat and Member States will therefore systematically mainstream a gender equality perspective in all policies, strategies, programs and projects, and closely monitor gender-equality results.

## **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION**

In addition to gender mainstreaming and as long as gender inequalities persist, the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy calls for the adoption of temporary special affirmative action measures to level the playing field in social, political and economic spheres. Overwhelming evidence on women's political participation shows that this is the only way to change the status quo. Such efforts now need to move into other spheres, such as economic and social.

## 5. STRATEGIC AXES AND ORIENTATIONS

The Regional Gender Policy aims to contribute to the achievements of the objectives of the ICGLR Pact and its protocols. Based on a situation analysis in the main intervention areas of the ICGLR a number of strategic axes and orientations have been identified.

The axes, the strategic directions, objectives and results are proposed as an indication and are not restrictive. They serve as a basis of support for open, more detailed strategic planning, short-term operational action plans, and medium- and long-term goals.

### 5.1 PEACE AND SECURITY

#### **SO 1: PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND GOVERNANCE.**

##### **Objective:**

Emphasize the equitable participation of women and men in all their diversity in the management of issues affecting peace and security

##### **Expected result:**

National laws and policies of Member States are aligned with international, national and regional standards

##### **Actions:**

- a. Elaborate NAP for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 and the ICGLR RAP 1325 or align existing NAPs with revised RAP 1325
- b. Establish robust RAP and NAP 1325 M+E systems
- c. Adhere to the UN's funding target to ensure 15% of peace funding is allocated to gender work
- d. Ensure that women are equally involved in peace agreement negotiations and that their needs and perspectives are not left out
- e. Provide support to peace building initiatives by local women organizations as they are able to reach out to local populations
- f. Build a pool of female and male mediators
- g. Ensure that women are equitably represented in border security, police and military, conflict analysis and conflict early warning, arms control and management
- h. Strengthen coordination and cooperation with civil society organisations working in the WPS area

## SO 2: ERADICATION OF ALL FORMS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

**Objective:** To end all forms of SGBV in the region and impunity for all perpetrators

**Expected result:** ICGLR Kampala declaration on SGBV of 2011 implemented at MS level

### **Actions:**

- a. Align national legislation and policies of MS with ICGLR Kampala declaration on SGBV
- b. Revise gender guidelines in the mining sector
- c. Align national legislation and policies of MS with revised gender guidelines in the mining sector

## SO 3: PROTECTION OF DISPLACED WOMEN AND GIRLS

**Objective:** Ensure protection and participation of displaced women and girls (IDPs and refugees) in decision-making, policy development, planning, programming, implementation and monitoring.

**Expected result:** ICGLR rules and standards to protect displaced women and girls implemented at MS level

### **Actions:**

- a. Cooperate and coordinate with organisations representing displaced women and girls
- b. Establish projects to improve social and economic rights of displaced women and girls

## SO 4: PROMOTION OF FAVOURABLE ATTITUDES TOWARDS EX-COMBATANTS, PARTICULARLY FEMALE EX-COMBATANTS

**Objective:** To improve the understanding of female ex-combatants' situation and needs

**Expected results:** Freedom and non-stigmatization of women and girls ex-combatants

### **Actions:**

- a. Collect qualitative and quantitative data and identify specific problems and needs of female ex-combatants with regard to their social reintegration
- b. Develop a civic re-education program for community reconciliation
- c. Develop guidelines for re-integration programmes of female ex-combatants

## 5.2 DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

### SO 5: STRENGTHENING A DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS INCORPORATING GENDER ISSUES IN ECONOMIC PLANNING AND BUDGETING

**Objective:** Increase democratization and transparency through gender-sensitive economic planning and budgeting

**Expected results:** Increased awareness and competences in terms of gender-sensitive economic planning and budgeting

#### **Actions:**

- a. Build capacity in terms of gender-sensitive economic planning (fiscal policies, monetary policies, trade policies)
- b. Develop ICGLR gender responsive budgeting guidelines at regional and national level
- c. Implement ICGLR gender responsive planning and budgeting guidelines at MS and ICGLR Secretariat level
- d. Ensure equal participation of women in decision making on economic policies and public finance

### SO 6: EQUAL PARTICIPATION AND DEMONSTRATED INFLUENCE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN ALL LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS.

**Objective:** Increase women's participation in all leadership and decision-making positions

**Expected result:** At least 30% female representation at all political levels

#### **Actions:**

- a. Establish and implement quota systems at all levels in MS
- b. Enact and enforce legislation to comply with the 'not more than two thirds gender principle'
- c. Apply the gender parity principle at all political levels
- d. Support and encourage active and meaningful participation of women in political and decision-making processes from the grassroots level.
- e. Implement campaign against (sexual) harassment and hate speech against female politicians

- f. Promote women to women mentoring for female politicians
- g. Strengthen female parliamentary networks
- h. Conduct a Gender Score Card exercise at ICGLR

## SO 7: PROMOTE THE RESPECT FOR CIVIL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS OF ALL

**Objective:** Enforce constitutional and legislative provisions for the realization of civil, political, economic and social rights of all ICGLR citizens

**Expected result:** All international and continental human rights treaties that ICGLR Member States have ratified, especially those on gender equality, are implemented

### Actions:

- a. Put in place measures to ensure that multiple forms of discrimination are dealt with (e.g. gender, disability, age, ethnic adherence, geographical place of residence)
- b. Support evidence-based generation of data on the extent, effects and implications of different inequalities presented by intersectional and multiple discrimination;
- c. Develop targeted measures to address intersectional and multiple inequalities.
- d. Develop awareness raising campaigns to overcome stereotypes

## 5.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

### SO 8: STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

**Objective:** Improve working conditions for women in all sectors

**Expected result:** Gender-sensitive business environment reforms implemented

### Actions:

- a. Promote career counselling for young women especially with regard to male dominated future oriented professions (e.g. green economy, Artificial Intelligence, STEM, ITC)
- b. Integrate women in hitherto non-traditional trades, i.e. construction, mining, infrastructure development

- c. Increase decent employment for women and other vulnerable groups through skills development programs and projects
- d. Promote mentoring programmes for female entrepreneurs
- e. Develop platforms to regularly promote and showcase successful women entrepreneurs at national and regional levels (e.g. Digital Empowerment initiative for women and youths called 50 million African Women Speak Platform<sup>28</sup>)
- f. Develop programmes for female start-ups
- g. Ensure equal pay for women
- h. Develop Gender Diversity Management guidelines
- i. Enhance compliance to the 'not more than two thirds' gender principle in recruitment, appointment and promotion of women and men in all spheres for greater inclusion and visibility;
- j. Develop guidelines on gender-lens investing and gender-responsive financial products
- k. Recognize unpaid care (for children, older persons, the sick, and persons with disabilities) and domestic work to ensure shared responsibility within women and men, and invest in social services and infrastructure provision and social protection policies to reduce the burden on women
- l. Promote gender-equitable sharing of care work and new forms of masculinity (e.g. caring fatherhood)

## SO 9: DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM OF SECURITY AND PROTECTION FOR WOMEN ENGAGED IN CROSS-BORDER TRADING

**Objective:** To facilitate cross-border trading of women

**Expected result:** Increased economic welfare through cross-border trade facilitation

### **Actions:**

- a. Dissemination of information about trade rules and procedures and new opportunities by continental trade agreements, e.g. ACFTA
- b. Increase women-friendly infrastructure at borders especially sanitary facilities and washrooms that can be easily accessed by people with disabilities
- c. Collect quantitative (e.g. number of women and men in cross-border trading, number of SGBV cases among cross-border traders) and qualitative data (on both women in the formal and informal sector) and identify needs of cross-border traders of both sexes
- d. Facilitate access to credit for women
- e. Ensure policies integrate incentives and special measures for more women accessing finances

## 5.4 HUMANITARIAN, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (HEALTH, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND HUMANITARIAN)

### SO 10: ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL DISASTERS

**Objective:** Treat victims of natural disasters in a fair and equal manner

**Expected results:** Gender issues are taken into account in disaster risk management

#### Actions:

- a. Develop risk management plans that account for different needs of women and men, especially of those who are most vulnerable (e.g. people with disabilities, old and sick persons, single mothers with young children)
- b. Constitute balanced teams of women and men tasked with the provision of assistance to people who are victims of natural disasters
- c. Advocate for inclusive participation in natural disaster management, protection and assistance
- d. Develop and approve do-no-harm guidelines for disaster risk management

## 5.5 NATURAL RESOURCES

### SO 11: ESTABLISHMENT OF RULE OF LAW AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**Objective:** To ensure that women and men benefit equally from natural resources

**Expected result:** The living situation of women and men has improved by enjoyment of natural resources

#### Actions:

- a. Organize and support sessions strengthening the process of democratization incorporating gender issues into the exploitation and commercialization of natural resources
- b. Establish gender units in ministries responsible for natural resources
- c. Ensure equal participation of women and men in policy formulation
- d. Integrate a gender perspective as an integral part of natural resource policies
- e. Develop and review environment, and other natural resources (including forests, water, mining, petroleum and energy) management laws, policies and programmes to ensure gender and equity compliance
- f. Ensure women participate in and benefit equitably from investments in various natural resources development initiatives

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ICGLR REGIONAL GENDER POLICY

**Transformational change necessitates the engagement of all societal actors. The achievement of the results of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy will depend on the degree of involvement and fulfillment of the commitments of the various actors involved in its implementation. The definition of the responsibilities of each one makes it possible to constitute a framework whose interdependence justifies the necessity of synergy in the interventions.**

The ICGLR Regional Gender Policy, therefore, adopts a multi-actor and multi-sectoral approach cutting across state and non-state actors (e.g. CSOs, private sector) at all levels. A Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Regional Gender Policy will be developed in close collaboration with key stakeholders. The action plan will define clear roles and responsibilities as well as targets and timelines for each actor.

The main actor is the Executive Secretariat of the ICGLR, which acts as coordinator and guide through the Gender Directorate which plans, communicates, and organizes the meetings and the assessments on which are determined the priorities of future actions and the modalities of their execution.

The responsibility of the Secretariat is directly shared with the public institutions of the ICGLR Member States in which the Ministry of Gender is taking the lead in collaboration with other ministries directly responding to ICGLR programs.

The Regional Women's Forum comes in the same way as the other centers such as the Lusaka Center as Observatory, the Kampala Training Center, and the Goma Centers.

The above-mentioned mechanisms are in turn supported by other internal institutions such as the national fora (National Women's Forum, Youth Forum, Forum of parliamentarians, Forum of the Private Sector), committees in both houses of Parliament, the gender units or the gender focal points of the sectoral ministries, the Commissions and Diversified Committees, Project Steering Committees, and local administrations.

While governments are primarily responsible and accountable for the advancement of gender equality, all other social actors, public and private, and all sectors of cultural, economic, social and political life are equally responsible and accountable and must be involved in the pursuit and realization of equality as a common responsibility and in the process of social and cultural transformation that this requires.

This category includes the parapublic sector, technical and financial partners, civil society organizations, research centers and universities, communication professionals, religious confessions, research and publication groups, planning and statistics institutes, and beneficiaries. Their contribution is oriented towards supporting the elimination of inequalities and discrimination in all their forms.



The Gender Directorate of the ICGLR Secretariat and the gender machineries of ICGLR Member States have the main responsibility to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy. They will facilitate integration and mainstreaming of gender concerns in policies, programs and projects as part of their mandates in implementing the policy.

## 6.1 ROLE OF THE ICGLR SECRETARIAT

In 2014, the ICGLR established the Gender Directorate as part of the ICGLR Secretariat with a mandate to

- Strengthen and support the implementation of the normative framework on Gender, including Sexual and Gender Based Violence,
- Strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, political and electoral processes and
- Ensure that the implementation of the Pact takes into account aspects relating to Gender, women and children.

Thus, the gender directorate is the core institutional mechanism to lead ICGLR efforts on gender equality at the secretariat. The directorate is to work collaboratively with all other organs and institutions of the ICGLR.

The role of the ICGLR Secretariat is as follows:

- The ICGLR gender directorate shall serve as the secretariat for the day to day coordination of activities for operationalising the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy. In order to fulfill this task, the ICGLR gender directorate will set up an ICGLR implementation team and establish a body to implement the action plan.
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall coordinate and guide the overall implementation of the Regional Gender Policy and its related Regional Action Plan
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall report annually to the High-Level Meeting of the Ministries of Gender
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall provide technical support on the integration of ICGLR policy priorities in ICGLR programmes and processes to other ICGLR programmes and Gender Machineries of ICGLR Member States.
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall mobilize external resources and coordinate externally funded projects in the area of gender equality, women's empowerment and WPS to avoid duplication of efforts
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall work on enhancing the capacities of both ICGLR programme managers and the national gender machineries of ICGLR Member States in terms of gender-inclusive planning, budgeting and monitoring, reporting and evaluation of public policies, programmes and projects
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall support the development of sector specific guidelines and

tools for facilitating gender mainstreaming activities in all ICGLR priority areas

- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall closely cooperate and coordinate with the national gender machineries, the fora of civil society, youth, parliamentarians and the private sector and support the creation of strategic alliances to promote gender equality and equity
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall elaborate a communication strategy as a prerequisite for informing and sensitizing the different categories of audience. For this purpose, it will closely work with different media.
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate will establish a team to promote communication and visibility of innovative gender equality initiatives initiated by the ICGLR and the MS.
- The ICGLR Gender Directorate shall support the sharing of experiences and dissemination of research to enable evidence-based policy making and decisions.

## 6.2 ROLE OF THE REGIONAL TRAINING FACILITY (RTF)

The Regional Training Facility (RTF) is responsible for capacity building on SGBV prevention and response. It will train leaders and decision makers on basic gender concepts, gender budgeting and gender discrimination.

## 6.3 ROLE OF ICGLR MEMBER STATES

ICGLR States shall set up effective institutional structures and mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the implementation of the ICGLR Regional gender policy, align national policies with its objectives, and allocate adequate financial and human resources to facilitate the implementation of the regional and gender agenda.

The responsibilities of ICGLR Member States are as follows:

- a. The Ministries of Gender shall ensure the alignment of national policies with the ICGLR Gender Policy, monitor its implementation and annually report to the ICGLR Gender Directorate through the ICGLR focal persons
- b. The Ministries of Gender shall provide gender sensitivity and mainstreaming training within government departments and ministries in order to ensure a thorough understanding of gender dimensions in the ICGLR priority areas, Gender Responsive Budgeting, and the Leave No One Behind principle
- c. The Ministries of Gender shall review human resource policies to ensure that gender diversity management principles are respected in recruitment, retention and career development of staff in all public institutions concerned
- d. The Ministries of Gender shall promote and monitor the nomination and strengthening of gender focal persons at all levels and ensure gender parity/equity in departments
- e. The Ministries of Gender shall establish and strengthen strategic collaboration, networking and partnership between the national fora of the Private Sector, youth, CSOs and parliamentarians
- f. The Ministries of Gender shall develop and implement a national gender action plan for the

implementation of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy with a strong M+E framework and adequate budget allocations

- g. The Ministries of Gender shall ensure the implementation of national gender action plans by all stakeholders at the national level
- h. The Ministries of Gender shall support strategic resource mobilization for implementation of gender policies, and action plans at regional and national level, including RAP/NAP 1325

## **6.4 ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

Development Partners will work closely with the Gender Directorate of the ICGLR Secretariat, the Gender Ministries of ICGLR Member States, Civil Society Organisations, including women's and youth organizations, Private Sector Organizations and parliamentarians to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy.

## 7. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The visibility of RGP actions must be supported by both short- and long-term follow-up and evaluation. The development of databases containing regularly updated data on the situation of men and women in various fields is essential. To be effective and to lead to the desired effects, monitoring must be continuous and operated everywhere by actors committed to the cause of success.

The implementation of the Regional Gender Policy will be monitored based on key performance indicators as part of a results-based monitoring system. The ICGLR Secretariat and ICGLR Member States shall institutionalize tools for effective monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and initiatives resulting from this policy in order to facilitate timely reporting, decision-making and direction on progress of implementation at regional and national level, respectively.

Strategies will include:

- Facilitate the development of a monitoring plan taking into account short-term, medium term and long-term key performance indicators in the ICGLR priority areas
- Build capacity of statistical institutions in the collection of quantitative and qualitative gender disaggregated data and gender analysis
- Support the design of a regional tool to track progress in the implementation of the policy
- Support harmonization of reporting on gender equality progress; and
- Development of formats to exchange information and best practices among ICGLR Member States

Impact evaluations of the ICGLR Regional Gender Policy are planned every five years, for the first time in 2026.

The ICGLR Gender Directorate will ensure periodic, consistent and harmonized reporting on progress in implementation of gender policy action plans with a view to provide accurate information to Member States on the achievement of gender equality on the occasion of ICGLR regional meetings (Council of Ministers and Summit of Heads of States). The reporting will be based on the commitments made in this policy as well as in other ICGLR gender instruments (namely the RAP 1325).

## 8. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES

The successful implementation of this policy will require adequate financial resources to ensure the achievement of desired policy outcomes. Funding is expected to come from different sources.

### 8.1 GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

At the national level, concerned sector ministries shall be responsible to ensure that sufficient budgets are allocated to achieve policy goals outlined in this policy. Gender Responsive Budgeting has become the internationally acknowledged approach to ensure that public expenditures contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Several ICGLR Member States, such as Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia have started to implement Gender Responsive Budgeting processes at the national and local level since many years. Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia have approved Gender Budgeting Guidelines, Uganda adopted the Public Finance Management Act, and Rwanda introduced Gender Budget Statements at sectoral and local level. Besides these efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in public finance, ICGLR governments are also making increasing efforts to finance specific gender-related policies and actions, e.g. related to WPS. A recent assessment<sup>29</sup> found that Burundi has maintained NAP funding as a standing item in the national budget since 2010 and channels the funds through the ministry responsible for gender and women issues<sup>30</sup>. In Kenya, the government allocates specific funds to further the WPS agenda since 2017. In the 2018/2019 financial year, the government of Kenya financial commitment to the agenda rose by 29.8% from USD 620 000.00 in the 2017/2018 financial year to USD 800 000.00 in the 2018/2019 financial year.<sup>31</sup> In DRC, a trust fund for Resolution 1325 has been set up to pool funds for NAP implementation and enhance donor coordination

The Gender Directorate of the ICGLR Secretariat will:

- a. Support Member States with the development of gender budgeting guidelines and implementation plans and facilitate an exchange of experiences and best practices among MS;
- b. Support capacity building of Ministries of Finance with regard to gender budgeting to facilitate in-depth understanding of the importance and advantages of Gender Responsive Budgeting
- c. Coordinate fundraising from different sources (public funding from Governments, Official Development Assistance, private sector funding)
- d. Undertake a gender budget audit of the ICGLR Secretariat with a view to enhance GRB within the organization

29 Njeru, 2020

30 FINANCING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325: CRITICAL FOR ADVANCING WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS, PEACE AND SECURITY accessed at [https://www.cordaid.org/media/medialibrary/2014/10/FinancingUNSCR1325\\_2014\\_27oct.pdf](https://www.cordaid.org/media/medialibrary/2014/10/FinancingUNSCR1325_2014_27oct.pdf)

31 UN Women Annual report 2018 accessed at <https://www.genderinkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Annual-Report-2018-digital-final2-1.pdf>

## 8.2 SUPPORT FROM TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS

In recent years, the ICGLR Secretariat has established partnerships with UN WOMEN, the UN Office of the Special Representative of Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, GIZ, the Swiss cooperation, the African Union, ACCORD, CARE international and COCAFEM in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment in general, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda in particular.

The ICGLR Secretariat counts on the continuation of support from its technical and financial partners, both in terms of technical advice and the provision of financial resources. The Gender Directorate of the ICGLR Secretariat will ensure the coordination of support from different partners.

## 8.3 PRIVATE SECTOR FINANCING

The private sector is encouraged to contribute to the closure of existing financing gaps. New forms of financing for gender equality will be explored, e.g. blended finance, gender-lens investing and gender bonds.

