



FP-ICGLR JOURNAL

Issue No. 01

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News from the Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR

University Don tips Parliamentarians on Conflict Resolution

**Some Member-States of the
International Conference on the Great
Lakes Region continue to experience
both intra-state and inter-state conflicts**



About FP-ICGLR

The Forum of Parliaments of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR) is an inter-parliamentary organization bringing together Parliaments of 12 Member States, namely: Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

The FP-ICGLR, hereafter also referred to as the Forum, was established on December 4, 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda, when Speakers of Parliaments of the member states signed and ratified the Inter-Parliamentary Accord. Unlike most Parliamentary Fora, the FP-ICGLR was an initiative of the Heads of States of the Member-states of the International Conference on Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and is therefore a constituent organization of ICGLR that was in turn created when Heads of States and Governments of the member-states signed the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region on December 15, 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Head Office of the FP-ICGLR is in Kinshasa, DRC, where it operates at the level of a diplomatic mission with the Secretary General as Head of the Mission (Ambassador) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Objectives

1. To provide a platform for exchange of experiences, conflict resolution and dialogue between the Parliaments of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region;
2. To reinforce capacity building for the members of the Forum and the staff of the Parliaments of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in the fields of legislation, control of governmental action and representation of the people of the Great Lakes Region;
3. To support the efforts of Governments in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and to contribute to the consolidation of the peace processes and to national reconciliation;
4. To assist in resolving any conflicts that may arise between the Parliaments or between the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region;
5. To promote democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, fundamental rights and freedoms and organization of free, fair, and transparent elections in the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region;
6. To contribute towards the harmonization of national policies with the Programmes of Action, Protocols, and Projects prepared within the framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region;
7. To ensure that all the Protocols of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region are embedded in the national domestic legislation of the Member States;
8. To ensure that the national Parliaments of the Member States are fully involved in the evaluation and follow-up of the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region; and
9. To contribute to the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations on the respect and protection of the rights of women, children and vulnerable persons in periods of armed conflicts.

Vision

The Vision of the Forum of Parliaments is to establish a parliamentary platform working for the Member States of the ICGLR to be a space for Peace, Stability and Development.

Mission

The Mission of the FP-ICGLR is to work for the prosperity and stability of the ICGLR Member States through the establishment and entrenchment of Democracy, Good Governance, the Principle of Rule of Law and the fight against Poverty in the Great Lakes region.

Core Values

Respect
Transparency
Collaboration
Innovation
Coherence
Rigor

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Editorial Team

Amb. Onyango Kakoba
Ronald M. Tembo
Jeni Botha

Scripting

Ronald M. Tembo

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Forum of Parliaments of the Member-States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR),
General Secretariat, Avenue Batetela, Immeuble Crown Tower,
1004-1007, Commune de la Gombe, Kinshasa- R.D. Congo
Email: secretariat@fpcirgl.org
Website: www.fpcirgl.org

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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL



Dear Reader,

It is with profound honour and pleasure that I welcome you to this maiden Journal of the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR). The FP-ICGLR Journal attempts to provide the necessary infrastructure to communicate, interact and engage stakeholders in conveying the institutional brand. The Journal will also serve as a viable advocacy tool to communicate what the FP-ICGLR stands for, its service promise and the organizational personality. Being a corporate bulletin, the Journal highpoints various FP-ICGLR activities with a view to raise the profile, reputation and image of the Forum.

The focus for this edition oscillates around the role of parliamentarians in conflict resolution in the Great Lakes Region. Besides showcasing the activities, innovations and prospects of the Forum, our strategy in this publication is to look inward at institutional logic and distinguished dynamics which can be shared with our stakeholders for sustainable partnerships in conflict resolution and peace building. Our considered view is that by focusing on conflict resolution and peace building, it will help parliamentarians champion for a conflict free Great Lakes Region.

For this edition, we are proud to look back on yet another successful 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly (OSPA) of the ICGLR which was held in Kenya and attracted remarkable participation of the nine member parliaments out of the current eleven, excluding the Republic of Sudan whose Parliament was not yet in place due to the prevailing political instability in that country. The Forum also held all its planned Statutory Meetings and other activities for 2022.

We further wish to announce that the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 was endorsed by the Plenary

Assembly. The strategic plan was developed through a participatory and consultative process. The plan is intended to serve as the main strategic instrument through which the Forum of Parliamentarians seeks to execute its mandate in a more focused, effective and results-oriented manner over the next 5-year plan period. The FP-ICGLR seeks to achieve this by enhancing its strategic focus and direction, within the Great Lakes Region.

As Michael John Bobak said, "All progress take place outside the comfort zone." Thus, management and staff of the FP-ICGLR have continued to challenge the status quo and have developed operational interventions that brand the Forum as a sustainable avenue championing peace, stability and development among member states of the ICGLR. The FP-ICGLR has strived to propel the corporate agenda to greater heights by embracing an open door policy and constructive stakeholder engagements. In the Journal, we are therefore committed to providing content that is informative and educative.

As FP-ICGLR embarks on implementing activities in the new Strategic Plan, we pledge to continue providing you with adequate information on peace, stability and development through the Journal. It is our fervent hope that FP-ICGLR Journal remains relevant and informative to all our readers. We are grateful for your support and wish you a productive 2023.

Onyango Kakoba

Ambassador

Sitting FP-ICGLR President dates EXCO Meeting



The Sitting President of the FP-ICGLR, Rt. Hon. Amason Kingi (Left) and Secretary General of FP-ICGLR, Amb. Onyango Kakoba sharing notes during the Executive Committee Meeting in Kampala, Republic of Uganda

For the first time since the inception of the FP-ICGLR, the Sitting President of FPICGLR and Speaker of Senate of the Republic of Kenya, Rt. Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi presided over the 25th Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee Meeting which was held in Kampala from December 8-9, 2022. Being the new Speaker of the Kenyan Senate, Rt. Hon. Kingi deliberately attended the meeting to abreast himself with the activities and operations of the Forum as he prepared to chair the 13th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly scheduled to take place from March 27-April 1, 2023 in Juba, Republic of South Sudan.

In his maiden speech during the Executive Committee Meeting, Rt. Hon. Kingi stated that the august gathering highlighted yet another milestone in the rich history of the FP-ICGLR, since its establishment on December 4th, 2008 in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda. He reminded the delegates that the FP-ICGLR was set up as a regional legislative entity and tasked to contribute to

the successful implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, signed on 15 December 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Rt. Hon. Kingi noted that since its inception, the FP-ICGLR had grown by leaps and bounds. He stated that the Forum had deployed every necessary strategy and spared no effort in the execution of its core mandate of promoting peace and sustainable development in the Great Lakes Region (GLR).

The Kenyan Speaker of Senate remarked that without fear of contradiction, he commended the FP-ICGLR for rolling out these interventions and making significant parliamentary contribution to the implementation of the Great Lakes Region Pact and its attendant Protocols. He recognised the General Secretariat of FP-ICGLR for being the fulcrum in this great endeavour and demonstrating great commitment to carrying out its work diligently and with utmost commitment to Members States, equally.

The Sitting President of FP-ICGLR stated that the ongoing seamless implementation of the 2022-2026 Action Plan attested to the exceptional work being done by the FP-ICGLR Secretariat and urged all the delegates to join him in giving accolades to the entire team led by the Secretary General Ambassador Onyango Kakoba for a job well done.

Rt. Hon. Kingi reminded the delegates that the august gathering in Kampala accorded them an ideal opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the previous meetings of the Executive Committee, which should then serve as beacons for the next course of action as the FP-ICGLR seek to sustain the growth momentum. He stated that in its many oversight duties, the Executive Committee is responsible for overseeing the daily implementation of resolutions adopted by the Plenary Assembly and maintaining good corporate governance practices.

“The Executive Committee has already Sitting FP-ICGLR President dates EXCO



Rt. Hon. Kingi arriving at Munyonyo Hotel for the Executive Committee Meeting

Meeting The Sitting President of the FP-ICGLR, Rt. Hon. Amason Kingi (Left) and Secretary General of FP-ICGLR, Amb. Onyango Kakoba sharing notes during the Executive Committee Meeting in Kampala, Republic of Uganda MAIN STORY 6 FP-ICGLR JOURNAL organized 24 Ordinary Sessions, the latest having been convened on April 3, 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya. This is no mean achievement. Each of these Sessions has been overtly instrumental and recorded key milestones. These achievements have enabled us to get where we are today as one Big FPICGLR Family. I thank every Member State represented here today for pulling out all the stops and making this possible,” Rt. Hon. Kingi added.

The Sitting President of FP-ICGLR stated that the objectives and expected outcomes of the 25th Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee were many and varied. He said a good number of the expected outcomes ranged from critical policy and administrative issues meant to streamline and strengthen the corporate fabric of FP-ICGLR, while giving it more teeth for its work.

Rt. Hon. Kingi noted that the meeting came against a backdrop of lingering tensions and conflicts in parts of the Central African Republic, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. He stated that the conflicts had continued to displace millions of populations in those countries, rendering

many destitute and denying many more the chance to lead normal lives.

The Kenyan lawmaker underscored that the conflicts were a collective pain and agony for everyone in the Great Lakes Region and therefore, everyone’s responsibility to support every effort to bring the warring groups to the negotiation table and foster peace talks. He further reminded the delegates that they could only get practical solutions to the conflicts if they operated from an informed perspective about the realities on the ground.

Rt. Hon. Kingi stated that the Forum, provided everyone an opportunity to get updates on ongoing conflict resolution initiatives, review previous actions taken, assess their impact and determine whether fresh impetus or insights were needed to make collective efforts more effective.

“The Members States have not just sent in contingents of peacekeepers to help stabilise the conflict zones. They have also maintained the tempo of engagements at the political leadership level, as our eyes remain locked on the single goal of attaining lasting peace,” he noted.

In concluding, Rt. Hon. Kingi stated that going by the agenda that had been tabled, it was evident that a full in-tray awaited everyone in the Forum and it was prudent that everyone got down to work, fast. He expressed optimism that the robust discussions and engagements that had been going on and were bound to continue, should culminate in elaborate action points for the 25th Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee.

The Sitting President of FP-ICGLR firmly believed that the resolutions would be made at the end of the meeting would help propel the FP-ICGLR family forward in its unrelenting quest to make the Great Lakes Region a better home for everyone



Group photo of the Executive Committee Members

12th Plenary Assembly was a success



From Left to Right- Speaker of the Parliament of Zambia, Right Hon. Nelly Mutti and Hon. Ezra John Chiwelesa from the United Republic of Tanzania

The 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly of the FP-ICGLR which was held from 2nd to 6th April 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya, attracted remarkable participation of the nine-member parliaments out of the current eleven, excluding the Republic of Sudan whose Parliament was not yet in place due to the prevailing political instability in that country.

Held under the theme, “The Role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region,” it was the first time that the Plenary Assembly was being held physically by the FP-ICGLR General Secretariat after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the same event, the FP-ICGLR also held other meetings and these were the 4th Statutory Meeting of the Committee on Economic Development, Regional Integration, and Natural Resources and the 4th Joint Statutory Meetings of the Committees on Humanitarian and Social Issues and Gender, Children and Vulnerable Persons, Executive Committee Meeting and Conference of Speakers.

And speaking during the closing ceremony, the President of the FP-ICGLR, Rt. Hon. Kenneth Lusaka said he was truly honoured, to preside over the closure of what had indeed been a successful discourse. He commended the

Secretariat of FP-ICGLR and the Parliament of Kenya for successfully organizing the Plenary Assembly.

Rt. Hon. Lusaka stated that turnout at the 12th Plenary Assembly was a show of immense commitment by Parliaments of Member States of the ICGLR to the principles establishing the Forum. He was glad that no delegation had to depart early from the Assembly.

“The Assembly was a learning experience for all of us. We have been fully exposed to and briefed on governance issues in the region. The threat of insecurity, and internal affairs of the Forum, the impact of the

insecurity and conflict in the region have been clearly enumerated and elaborated and our understanding of conflict is indeed enhanced,” said Rt. Hon. Lusaka.

The FP-ICGLR President reminded the Assembly that Parliaments and Parliamentarians were an important conduit for strengthening governance systems and enhancing democratic ideals; which required re-negotiation, cooperation, collaboration, reorganization, and redistribution of resources to ensure that the GLR countries achieved a people-centered stability and sustainable development.



Former Second Deputy Speaker from the Parliament of Angola, Hon. Suzana Augusta de Melo introducing her delegation during the Plenary Assembly

Parliamentarians are voices that
must champion for a
conflict-free
Great Lakes Region



Be voices that champion for a conflict free Great Lakes Region

The then President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, urged parliamentarians to be the voices that champion for a conflict free Great Lakes Region; on which is typified by peace, cohesion, social justice and the realization of the Pan-African dream of the founding fathers.

In a speech read on his behalf by the then Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government, Dr. Fred Matiangi, President Kenyatta was very pleased to join the 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly of the FP-ICGLR which was held from April 2-6, 2022 in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya. He said the Plenary Assembly affirmed the strong alliance of the twelve nations bound together by and shared heritage in the large rift lakes region of Africa.

He noted that the Plenary Assembly was convened at a unique time in the history of the world and region where efforts to build economies back after the COVID-19 pandemic had been slowed down by myriad of events on the international stage, events which had put multi-lateralism under stress.

The former Head of State stated categorically that parliaments were an expression of the sovereignty and majority of the people and through the legislative chambers, the soul and the consciousness of the nation were brought to the fore. He further stated that parliaments were the voice of the citizens, the hands of their will and the guardians of the cherished principle and value that defined who we were and where we wanted to go as nations and peoples.

President Kenyatta said drawing the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, the legislators had a unique role to play by continuously addressing the issues of equitable distribution of resources and economic development. He noted that parliaments were critical in creating and sustaining the enabling environment that guarded against the emergence and escalation of conflict.



Former President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta

“Today, with escalation in commodity prices in the region and around the globe, and severe constraints on supply chains, the challenges we face are ever greater. The road ahead is hard and fraught with uncertainty. However, our individual and collective histories show us that we are up to the task; no matter how seemingly insurmountable those challenges maybe,” he stated.

President Kenyatta proposed a Five-Point Questioning Framework for the participants to guide them in understanding the problem and charting the way forward: “One, is the role of parliament preventive or responsive after the fact? Two, when parliament intervenes, at what stage in the conflict cycle should it intervene and how? Three, and alive to the Latimer House Principles, how should parliament’s intervention’s role be exercised within the context of the Rule of Law and the Separation of Powers and Roles? Four, what collegiate and peer review mechanisms can parliaments in the Region adopt to both support each other and also hold each other accountable? Fifth, how do we inculcate public participation by citizens; bring in civil society, our international partners, and our regional, continental, and global associations; and our built in shared bonds into this conflict prevention and conflict resolution framework?”

He noted with concern that conflict increases

unemployment, especially of young people; fuels sexual violence against women and girls; deepens the indignity of food insecurity and absolute poverty of populations living in areas of armed conflicts; drives their illegal exploitation and trade in natural resources that provides income to armed groups; and gives greater impetus to proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The former Head of State stated that as the world emerged from that torrid past, parliamentarians must not lose sight of the fact that conflict was a scourge which robbed the vast majority of suffering people of immense dividends on opportunities inherent in peace, stability and sustainable development.

He reminded parliamentarians that as they deliberated on very pertinent issues, the eyes, hopes and aspiration of hundreds of millions of people in the region rested firmly on them. President Kenyatta was optimistic that parliamentarians shall lead the region into a bright new dawn that was free of conflict, was bold and responsive to the desire of the people for peace and prosperity, and which breathed life into the unity and common purposes that must be the foundation for individual and collective peace and security.



Strategic Plan 2022-2026 unveiled

The Holy Bible in the book of Proverbs 29:18 states that, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” In view of this, the Forum for Parliamentarians of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR) developed and adopted the new strategic plan 2022 to 2026 to guide its growth.

The strategic plan 2022–2026 builds on the progress and achievements of previous strategic Plan, 2017–2021. The previous plan prioritized nine strategic objectives towards the fulfilment of the Forum’s core mandate to promote, maintain and strengthen peace and security in the Great Lakes Region in accordance with the Pact on Security, Stability and Development.

The current five year strategic plan 2022-2026 is aligned to the Forum’s Regional mandate, and that takes into consideration the input, views and interests of all stakeholders, is an intricate process that requires committed involvement of all key stakeholders. The strategic pillars for the plan are peace and security, democracy and good governance, humanitarian and social issues, economic development, natural resources and regional integration, gender, children and vulnerable persons as well as institutional support. In the implementation of the plan, the Forum will be guided by the core values of respect, transparency, collaboration, innovation, coherence and rigor.

This strategic plan was developed through a participatory and consultative process spearheaded by the Secretary General of the Forum. The plan is intended to serve as the main strategic instrument through which the Forum of Parliaments seeks to execute its mandate in a more focused, effective and results-oriented manner over the next 5-year Plan period. The FP-ICGLR seeks to achieve this by enhancing its strategic focus and direction, within the Great Lakes Region.

South Sudan to host 13th Plenary Assembly

The 12th Session of the Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly which recently convened in Kenya resolved that the Republic of South Sudan should host the 13th Plenary Assembly of the FP-ICGLR. It will be the first time that the South Sudan will host the Plenary Assembly.

This is a testimony of that country’s renewed commitment, support and good will towards the activities of the FP-ICGLR.

It was unanimously resolved that 13th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly will take place from 6th to 10th March 2023.

Looking ahead, it is the expectations of the General Secretariat and the host nation, the Republic of South Sudan and Parliament that the 13th OSPA will attract remarkable participation from the member states and will deliberate on the progress made against the resolutions passed in the previous meeting.

FP-ICGLR mourns Rt. Hon. Oulunyah

The late Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda. Rt. Hon. Jacob L'Okori Oulunyah was a Ugandan Agricultural Economist, Lawyer, and Politician who served as Speaker of Uganda's 11th Parliament (2021-2022), passed away in Seattle on March 20, 2022. His death was confirmed by the President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,

Rt. Hon. Oulunyah was born on March 23, 1965, in the then-Gulu District, to Nathan Lokori and Karen Atwon. For his O-Level and A-Level studies, he attended St. Joseph's College Layibi, Dr. Obote College Boroboro, and Kololo Senior Secondary School. He enrolled at Makerere University in 1988 to study Agricultural Economics. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in that subject in 1991. In the same year, he began studies at Law School at Makerere University, where he earned a Bachelor of Laws Degree in 1994.

In 2001, he entered politics by winning the no-party system, commonly known as the Movement Political System, election for the parliamentary seat of Omoro County in the then-Gulu District. He was, however, a Uganda People's Congress Cardholder (UPC).



He also took part in the Ugandan Government's Peace discussions with the Lord's Resistance Army insurgents. On May 19, 2011, he was elected as the Deputy Speaker of Parliament. Jacob Oulunyah was elected Speaker of Parliament on May 24, 2021.

In the message of condolences during the 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly, the FP-ICGLR President, Rt. Hon. Kenneth

Lusaka said it was with great emotion and deep sadness that he learnt about the death, of the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulunyah.

"On behalf of FP-ICGLR, I send our deepest condolences to Right Hon. Oulunyah's family and the people of the Republic of Uganda at this difficult time. The world mourns with you and celebrates the extraordinary life of this remarkable man who devoted his life to championing human rights, rule of law and democracy," said FP-ICGLR President.

The Kenyan Lawmaker stated that Rt. Hon. Oulunyah lived his belief that everyone had a role to play in creating sustainable peace and just society. He saluted the memory of an exceptional man, known for his strength and his noble engagements which were far reaching.

As regards to the operations of the General Secretariat of the FP-ICGLR, the late Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulunya was a very staunch support of the Forum and remarkable statesman. May His Soul Rest in Eternal Peace!

Strengthening of judicial cooperation critical



The 2nd High-Level Meeting for Ministers of Justice of the member-states of the ICGLR convened in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo on June 16, 2022 at Salle Panorama du Fleuve Congo Hôtel. The FP-ICGLR was represented by the Administrative Assistant and Protocol Officer, Ms. Violette Katya. Its theme was, "Strengthening of Judicial Cooperation."

The Meeting was overwhelmingly attended by high profile delegates with long standing portfolios in society. Among the key personalities that participated in the Meeting were senior government officials from DRC government including His Excellency Prime Minister of State Head of Government, Sama Lokonde Jean Michel, Her Excellency Kiese Mutombo Rose, the Minister of State, Minister of Justice, and Keeper of the Seals. Other high level delegates were: the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Huang Xia, Ambassador Joao Samuel Caholo, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR and Mrs. Gail Malone, Director of Programs at the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law.

The Meeting was officially opened by Her Excellency Madam Minister of State, Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, Kiese Mutombo Rose who further expounded on the need to strengthen to judicial cooperation among member states to foster rule of law, democracy and good governance in the Great lakes Region.

During the meeting, all the Ministers of Justice of the member states of the ICGLR resolved "to bring back peace and lasting security in the Great Lakes Region." It was agreed that all the member states of the ICGLR would take appropriate action and fight against violence and improper speech that incites hatred in people's mind within the region.

The meeting noted that as long as impunity lasted within the governance structures of member states, it would be difficult to establish trust in society once again. The delegates resolved to stamp out any barriers that necessitated impunity in the course of dispensing justice at every level.

Further, the United Nations pledged to support all the initiatives in progress, and the regional mechanisms to fight against impunity and criminal violence with reinforced cooperation adding that only with multiple actions can sustained peace, security and stability be restored in the Great Lakes Region.



Rt. Hon. Sarandji signing the Moratorium

CAR commits to meet its financial obligations

The Central African Republic has pledged to meet its financial obligations to the FP-ICGLR. This follows the adoption and subsequent signing of the revised version of the Moratorium by the Speaker of the Parliament of CAR, Rt. Hon. Speaker, Simplicie Mathieu Sarandji. The signing ceremony happened when the Secretary General of the FP-ICGLR, Amb. Onyango Kakoba and the President of the Adhoc Committee on Financial of the FP-ICGLR, Hon. Sergio Leonardo Vaz, conducted a working mission to the Parliament of CAR in Bangui from June 7-10, 2022.

The mission to the Parliament of CAR was aimed at sharing with the Right Hon. Speaker the operations of the FP-ICGLR, its Achievements, Consideration and the Signing of the adopted version of the Financial Moratorium on annual contribution and arrears owed by CAR to FP-ICGLR. Among the delegation was Mr. Cédric Bueya, the

Translator and Events Coordinator from FP-ICGLR, Ms. Isaura Vicente, the Assistant to the Hon. President Adhoc Committee on Finance from Angola and Ms. Katya Violette the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary-General.

The mission to the Parliament of CAR was aimed at sharing with the Rt. Hon. Sarandji, the operations of the FP-ICGLR, Action Plan 2022-2023, its achievements, consideration and the signing of the adopted version of the Moratorium. Among the delegation was Mr. Cédric Bueya, the Translator and Events Coordinator from FP-ICGLR, Ms. Isaura Vicente, the Assistant to the Hon. President of the Adhoc Committee on Finance from Angola and Ms. Katya Violette the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary-General.

Also in attendance were nine (9) other Members of Parliament (MPs) and Bureau. These were Hon. Jean Sosthène Dengbe, Hon.

Kevin Brice Kakpayen, Second vice president Bernard Dillah, Third Vice President André Nalke Dorogo, Cabinet Director of PAN Souroungba, Special Counselor of PAN Mathurin Bimbelet Nakoe, Diplomatic Counselor Dieudonné Kombot Yaya, General Director of Cooperation Rosin Souroungba Bida and Director of Cooperation Severin Vale Faimindi.

During the meeting, the President of the Adhoc Committee on Finance, Hon. Vaz congratulated the Right Hon. Sarandji on his appointment as the Speaker of the National Assembly of CAR. Hon. Vaz stated that the main purpose for the working visit to Bangui was to facilitate the signing of a Moratorium of Payment of the Arrears to FP-ICGLR by the Parliament of CAR. He stated that engaging in the moratorium process would ensure that member states of the FP-ICGLR who were in the same debt situation did the same because the functioning of the Forum depended on the contributions made by respective member states.

In closing, Rt. Hon. Sarandji categorically stated that their aspiration was for the next Secretary-General of the FP-ICGLR to come from CAR. He promised that the Parliament of CAR would pay up their contributions as mentioned in the paper by the Adhoc Committee on Finance and further agreed to sign the Moratorium.

After signing the Moratorium, Rt. Hon. Sarandji was interviewed by the Press of the Parliament of CAR and a Group Photo ensued.



Amb. Onyango Kakoba and Hon. Sergio Leonardo Vaz checking the signed Moratorium

Working visit to Dodoma was successful



Deputy Speaker, Eng. Mussa Azzan Zungu exchanging views with the Secretary General of FP-ICGLR, Amb. Onyango Kakoba during the working visit to Dodoma

In compliance with the Action Plan for the year 2022-2023, the FP-ICGLR led by the Secretary General, Amb. Onyango Kakoba conducted a working mission to the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania in Dodoma, June 20-23, 2022. The mission was aimed at making a courtesy visit to the new leadership of the Parliament of Tanzania to brief them about FP-ICGLR and share with them the Action Plan of the organisation for the year 2022/2023 and mobilize for financial resources. The SG was accompanied by Ms. Katya Violette the Administrative Assistant and Protocol of the Forum.

Due to prior commitments, the Speaker Rt. Hon. Dr. Ackson Tulia delegated the Deputy Speaker Rt. Hon. Mussa Azzan Zungu who received the FP-ICGLR team and the meeting was held on June 21, 2022. In attendance was

Hon. Eng. Ezra Chiwelesa, Hon. Najma Giga, Hon. Christine Ishengoma and the Hon. Deus Sangu. The others were technical staff, namely; Mr. Daniel Eliufoo and Ms. Nesta Kawamala.

In his remarks, the Secretary General thanked the Deputy Speaker and his team for the warm reception and congratulated him and the speaker on their new appointments to the office. He then made a presentation on the background and structure of the FP-ICGLR and shared the Action Plan 2022/2023, achievements, and challenges faced by the Forum, especially on the mobilization of the resources from member parliaments.

In response, the Rt. Hon. Deputy Speaker thanked the SG for the briefing and acknowledged that the Parliament of Tanzania had not paid up their annual contributions. Rt. Hon. Zungu said that they were working on it

and they were going to pay all the international obligations they had, not only with the FPICGLR but with all the organizations they were affiliated to. The Hon. Deputy Speaker stated the arrears they owed the Forum were shocking but was quick to assure the SG that his office would do everything possible to be up-to-date with payment of annual contributions to the Forum.

In all accounts, the meeting with the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania was successful with all the discussions held with the lawmakers in that country. On the second day, which was June 22, 2022, the delegation conducted a Tour of the Standard Gauge Railway Station (SGR) under construction with the Protocol Team from the Parliament of Tanzania.



ICGLR Executive Secretary, Amb. Joao Caholo (Left) and Head of Mission, Amb. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins Gaspar Martins (Next to Him) with representatives from other international EOM in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

ICGLR and FP-ICGLR records success in Electoral Observation Missions

A country cannot be truly democratic until its citizens have the opportunity to choose their representatives through elections that are free, fair and credible. Elections make a fundamental contribution to democratic governance. Critical development efforts cannot succeed without a legitimate and democratically elected government that is responsive and accountable to its citizens. Therefore, elections provide an important opportunity to advance democratization and encourage political liberalization. In the Great Lakes Region, elections play a significant role in democracy and good governance. In ICGLR Member States, these elections are guided by the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

Three member states of the FP-ICGLR went to the polls in 2022 and these are Republic of Congo, the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Angola. The FP-ICGLR and ICGLR Executive Secretariat deployed a Joint Electoral Observation Mission to Kenya from August 1-12, 2022 and from August 18-27, 2022 to the Republic of Angola. The Joint observation Mission did not participate in the legislative elections in the Republic of Congo due to communication and logistical challenges.

The Kenyan Mission was led by H.E. Amb. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, a Diplomat and former Minister of Finance and of External Trade of the Republic of Angola while the Angola Mission was led by Ambassador Prof. Charles Murigande, Chairperson of the Governance Council of the Kepler College, in the Republic of Rwanda and deputised by Hon. Chalain Betty Louke, Member of Parliament, National Assembly of the Republic of Uganda. The FP-ICGLR General Secretariat was led by the Secretary General, Amb. Onyango Kakoba.

In both missions, there were a total of 149 observers deployed and they were drawn from the ICGLR Member States, the Conference Secretariat, the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy and Good Governance (LMRC) as well as the FP-ICGLR. The deployment of the short-term Election Observer Mission signifies our commitment to upholding the spirit of Article Six (6) of the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, particularly the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. It is also indeed, a response to the gracious invitation by the Government of the Republic of Kenya and Angola. Prior to deployment to various polling stations, the

observers underwent an intensive Briefing and Orientation Sessions organised by the ICGLR Secretariat and partners.

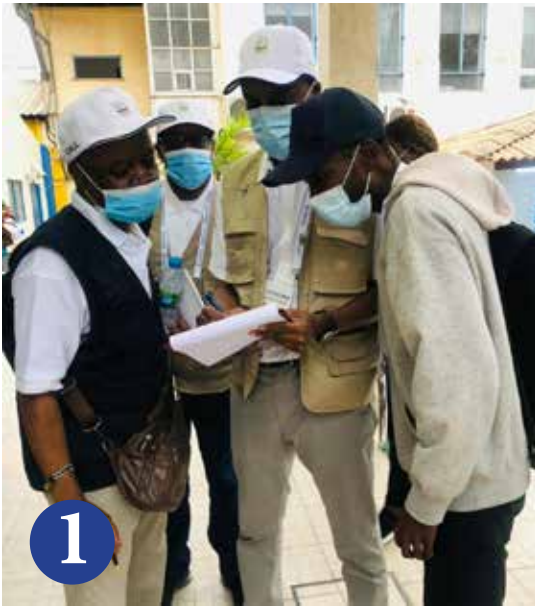
After the poll day, preliminary findings on the ground were officially delivered by the Head of respective Missions. Different media houses were invited to the Joint Press Conference where the Head of Mission shared the findings of the EOM with the local population and the world at large. Preliminary recommendations were also provided by the Head of Missions to the Electoral Body and Government of the two countries on how future elections ought to be made so effective, efficient, transparent, participatory and whole inclusive.

The IEBC and CNE were commended for conducting a peaceful process and for according the electoral observers with accreditation, maps and general information pertaining to the general elections in Kenya and Angola. The Head of Mission congratulated the people, the Government and Electoral Management Bodies of the Republic of Kenya and Angola for the professionally conducted and peaceful elections, which showed their commitment to the consolidation of democracy and rule of law in the country.

Generally, the 2022 general elections in the Republic of Kenya and Angola substantially met Regional and International Standards of conducting elections, especially Chapter 3 of the ICGLR Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. The Missions were satisfied that the people of the Republic of Kenya and Angola had been given an opportunity to freely express their political choices through elections conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner.

Electoral observation is a valuable tool for improving the quality of elections. It helps build public confidence in the honesty of the

electoral processes, promotes and protects the civil and political rights of participants in elections. The political, security and humanitarian situation prevailing in the Great Lakes Region remains dynamic and complex. It therefore, calls for the FP-ICGLR to strongly contribute to peace, security, democracy and good governance by ensuring that there is free, fair, transparent and credible elections in the member states. This can only be achieved through well planned and executed Electoral Observation Missions among other democratic and good governance monitoring tools



1 Director of ICGLR Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy and Good Governance, Jean-Paul Kimonyo (Middle) verifying the voters register with other observers in Luanda, Republic of Angola

2 Head of the Angolan Mission, Amb. Prof. Charles Murigande preparing to deliver the Official Speech on the preliminary findings of the Joint ICGLR/FP-ICGLR EOM at a Press Conference in Luanda, Republic of Angola

3 Verification exercise at a Polling Station in the Republic of Angola

4 From Left to Right- The FP-ICGLR Electoral Observers, Charles Chishimba and Ronald Mwelwa Tembo at a Polling Station in Kisumu district, Republic of Kenya during the Elections Day in August 2022

New Ugandan Speaker meets FP-ICGLR delegation



Secretary General of the FP-ICGLR, Amb. Onyango Kakoba handing over the portrait of the late Speaker, Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah to the newly appointed Ugandan Speaker, Rt. Hon. Anita Among

In compliance with the Action Plan for the year 2022, the Secretary General (SG) of the FP-ICGLR, Amb. Onyango Kakoba conducted a working mission to the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda in Kampala, May 3-6, 2022. The SG was accompanied by Mr. Jules Byabagabo, Procurement and Human Resources Officer and Ms. Violette Katya Administrative Assistant and Protocol.

The mission was aimed at paying a courtesy call on the newly appointed Speaker, Rt. Hon. Anita Among, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Uganda in Kampala. In attendance also was Honourables Arinaitwe Rwakajara, the Ugandan Representative on the Executive Committee of the FP-ICGLR, as well as back-bench members of the Parliamentary Commission namely: Honourables Esther Afoyocan, Solomon Silwany, Prossy Akampulira.

The SG thanked the Rt. Hon. Speaker for meeting the delegation and took the moment to congratulate her on taking on the position of Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. He then went on to give the background of the Forum and thanked the Ugandan leadership for supporting the ICGLR process.

Amb. Onyango said that, the Forum was established in 2008 and was an initiative of ICGLR Heads of State. He went on to describe the structure of the Forum with the Plenary Assembly meeting once a year with the Bureau being the Past President, Current President and the in-coming President. The other structures being the Conference of Speakers, Executive Committee and the five (5) Permanent Committees.

In addition, the SG said an Ad-hoc Committee on Finance was formed to look at strategies for resource mobilization whose composition is made of Parliaments of Angola, Kenya, Uganda, Central African Republic and Zambia replacing Sudan. He then thanked the Parliament of Uganda for their continued support to the Forum by payment of contributions and arrears.

He said the Forum had been involved in various activities citing fact-finding missions, election observation missions and the statutory meetings held every year, among others. He also informed the Speaker on the upcoming activities, namely the plenary assembly which would be held in March, 2023, in Juba, Republic of South Sudan, and

he took the opportunity to informally invite the Speaker to attend the meeting personally.

The SG handed over the book of condolences of the late Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, the former Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda which was signed by delegates during the 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly of the FP-ICGLR held in Kenya. Amb. Kakoba also handed a portrait of the late Speaker to Right Hon. Among.

In her remarks, the Rt. Hon. Among thanked the SG and delegates who participated in 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly of the FP-ICGLR for honouring the former late Speaker Jacob Oulanyah. She assured the delegation, of Uganda's commitment in supporting the Forum of Parliamentarians and other international entities. The Hon. Speaker informed the delegation that quick action would be taken by her office; to fill in the vacancies that needed Ugandan Members of Parliament to occupy in the different organs of the FP-ICGLR.

Parliamentarians urged to contribute towards conflict resolution

The Executive Secretary (ES) of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Amb. Joao Caholo has reiterated that parliamentarians are perfectly positioned to promote cooperation in society by contributing towards conflict resolution and peace building.

Speaking when he addressed distinguished parliamentarians during the 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly of the FP-ICGLR, Amb. Caholo stated that there was no doubt that parliamentarians had the ability to cooperate to realise peace, stability and development in the region.

“Our people are in need of a better region, and they are prepared to work for it. They elect you in office because they trust that you will meet their aspirations. Let us cooperate to bring peace, stability and sustainable development in our region. In this way, our region will experience meaningful and lasting stability,” he said.

Amb. Caholo stated that strong parliaments contributed to strong democracies. He however, indicated that without peace, security and development, democracy could not flourish stating that the role of parliaments in building peace and conflict prevention was crucial. He further stated that a democratic

and representative political system not only helped prevent unrest, but was also key to restoring peace after conflict.

The ES stated that his present position had provided him an opportunity to become even more familiar with issues and problems which frequently created conflicts and how these conflicts became difficult to resolve if cooperation was absent. He noted that cooperation of the action of people or agencies working together to the same end was very important for not only conflict resolution but also sustainable development.

Amb. Caholo reminded parliamentarians that the natural resource-rich region was faced with numerous challenges namely: the negative impact of COVID-19, high levels of poverty, inequality and youth unemployment, the threat of climate change, existence of armed conflicts, emergence of terrorism and radicalization and illegal exploitation of natural resources in some parts of the region just to mention a few. He said these multiple and complex challenges required cooperation and not confrontation.

The ES challenged parliamentarians to play a key role in conflict prevention, resolution and more importantly reconciliation adding that the root causes of conflict in the region was often found in constitutional, electoral systems, illegal exploitation of natural resources and in the way that public resources were used and abused. He urged parliamentarians to be an important conduit for building and maintaining democratic societies as well as mitigating conflicts in societies.



Ambassador Joao Caholo

Strengthening women's representation in EMBs



Group photo of the participant during the Lusaka Meeting, Republic of Zambia

The Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy and Good Governance (LMRC), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Office of the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region (O/SESG-GL) and the African Union (AU) organized, on July 19-20, 2022, a Regional Peer Learning Event on Strengthening Women's Representation in Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) in the Great Lakes Region. The event was held in Lusaka, Republic of Zambia.

The objective of this event was to bring together key stakeholders, mainly Representatives of Electoral Commissions, Parliamentarians, Civil Society, the ICGLR Regional Women Forum and partners in order to share good practices and set strategies to advance the representation of women administrators in EMBs. The Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR (FP-ICGLR) was invited to participate and was represented by the Secretary General, Amb. Onyango Kakoba accompanied by the ICT and Communications Officer, Mr. Jeni Botha Toko. The FP-ICGLR also played key role in mobilizing Honourable Parliamentarians.

From September 2021 to July 2022, a study, conducted by Levy Mwanawasa Regional Center for Democracy and Good Governance and the Office of the Special Envoy, showed that the women are well represented numerically as Commissioners in EMBs, exceeding the threshold of 30% in the majority of the countries. In spite of this numeric representation, the study revealed that the women are regularly excluded from the

leadership positions in Electoral Management Bodies. The study also showed that currently, there was no woman who was serving as a Chairperson of any Electoral Management Body in an ICGLR Member-State.

However, six countries that was: Burundi, Central African Republic, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia; had a woman as Vice-Chairpersons of the EMB. Management Body. The study further showed that the women continued to be underrepresented in key positions at both the political and technical levels in the EMBs in the Great Lakes Region despite being well represented numerically in commissions. Unfortunately, the status quo reduced their decision-making power.

It was therefore brought to the fore that the reasons for under-representation included among others the lack of dedicated gender departments or units which led the treatment of gender mainstreaming in EMBs ; lack of technical skills and low self-confidence inhibited women from reaching their full



A delegate from the Democratic Republic of Congo making her submission during the Conference in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

potential in the EMBs in terms of their positive contribution to policy development and implementation as well as eligibility for promotion; low educational attainment by the majority of women; socio-cultural attitudes which perceived women as not fit for strenuous tasks such as vote counting, tallying and announcing; political challenges such as fragile political environment especially during elections, where women became vulnerable to electoral violence and also the nominations biases in EMBs were made according to political weight, thus pushing parties to favour men to the detriment of women, believing that women did not have enough competence.

At the end of the meeting, the participants recommended that in order to advance the representation of women administrators in EMBs, there was need to address the gaps by reviewing Electoral Legislation with a view to create a more enabling environment for participation of women in EMBs including establishing quotas for female Commissioners and at technical level; raise awareness to political parties on gender equality and build their capacity in developing gender-responsive policies to facilitate nomination of women Commissioners capable of influencing policy formulation in EMBs and scaling up efforts to mainstream gender by developing and implementing EMBs Gender Policies.

The plenary also took the initiative to launch a Régional Network for sharing experience and promoting women's representation in EMBs in the ICGLR Member-States.



From Left to Right: FP-ICGLR Secretary General, Amb. Onyango Kakoba, Speaker of Parliament of the Republic of Zambia, Rt. Hon. Nelly Mutti and ICGLR Executive Secretary, Amb. Joao Caholo after the Regional Workshop

IPU Special Session on Disarmament

At the invitation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the FP-ICGLR participated in the Virtual Conference on the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament. The Conference took place on September 6, 2022. The FP-ICGLR was represented by the Programme Manager in charge of Peace and Security, Democracy and Good Governance, Mr Ronald Mwelwa Tembo.

The one-day Online Conference was organized by the IPU and Strategic Concept for Removal of Arms and Proliferation (SCRAP Weapons) with support from the SOS, University of London. The theme of the Conference was dubbed, "Acting a UN Special Session on Disarmament." The event took place at Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, University of London. The Conference comprised talks, round-table discussions and Q&A sessions with the audience. Speakers included representatives from national governments and international organisations, as well as leaders from non-governmental organisations and religious groups from around the world.

The main objective of the Conference was to raise awareness about the disarmament agenda and promote the activation of a Fourth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, highlight the role of Parliaments and parliamentarians as key stakeholders of the disarmament efforts on the international scene and share good practices and perspectives relating to disarmament from a multitude of stakeholders.

Prof. Dan Plesch, Conference Chair and Director of SCRAP Weapons warmly welcomed the delegates from around the globe who participated in the hybrid meeting organized by SCRAP Weapons and IPU. He said the SCRAP proposal began as a provocation to those who believed that multilateral and comprehensive disarmament, both conventional and nuclear, was impossible.

The Director of SCRAP explained that the



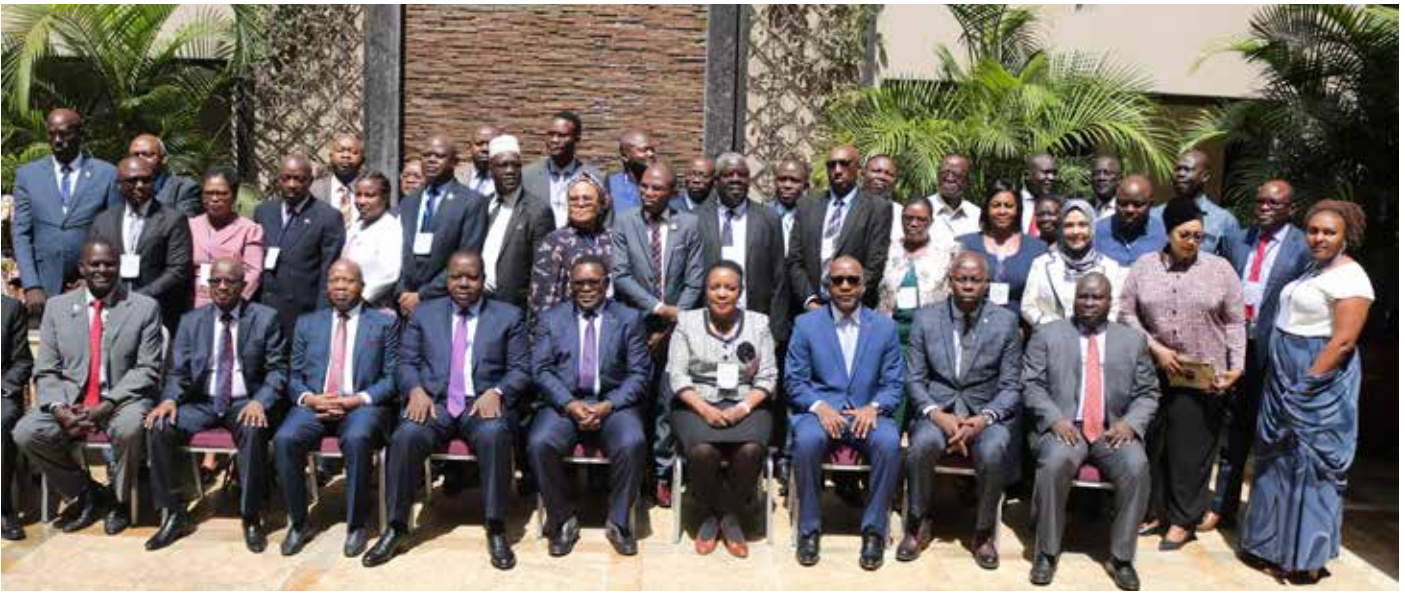
SCRAP Proposal contained draft negotiating text and an explanatory memorandum concerning the basic elements of an internationally legally-binding arrangement for general and complete disarmament within a ten year implementation period. He added that the proposal was developed from Chapter 5 of Dan Plesch's Beauty Queen's Guide to World Peace (2004).

He claimed that a major push was needed, not just to control the conventional weapons trade, but also to "reduce holdings of major weapons systems, ordnance stocks and production. Prof. Plesch further referred to the longstanding legal commitment in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to "general disarmament" of all weapons apart from those needed for internal policing."

The climax of this important Conference were the speeches and presentations delivered by experts drawn from across the globe. Also representatives from churches and religious groupings in the world had a fair share of the presentations. They provided different

perspectives and insights on the fundamental role of inter-religion dialogue for peace and disarmament. As regards the keynote speeches, all the keynote address were centered on what actions should all the stakeholders take to encourage establishment of the next Special Session on Disarmament. After the keynote addresses, there was a Round Table Discussion facilitated by SCRAP Weapons Assistants. Prof. Dan Plesch, Conference Chair and Director of SCRAP Weapons closed the Conference.

In a context of increasing international tensions combined with steadily growing global military expenditures surpassing an annual US\$ 2 trillion in 2021, contemporary global trends are beginning to paint a worrying picture. This situation demands focused, efficient, and multilateral commitments to disarmament and non-proliferation to avoid the escalation of conflicts and offer protection not only to populations already impacted by armed violence but also to safeguard the future of the planet.



▲ A Group Photo during the 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly (OSPA) of FP-ICGLR in Nairobi, the Republic on Kenya



▲ Some delegates in attendance during the 12th OSPA in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya



▲ Rt. Hon. Eddy Mundela, First Deputy Speaker of Senate from the Democratic Republic of Congo adding his voice during the 12th Plenary Assembly



◀ Modeste Mafuta Mafwala , the Finance and Administration Manager from the General Secretariat making a presentation on the financial situation of the FP-ICGLR during the Conference of Speakers in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya



▶ Dr. Fred Matiangi, the then Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government (Left) and Amb. Joao Caholo, ICGLR Executive Secretary shaking hands after the Official Opening of the 12th OSPA, as Rt. Hon. Kenneth Lusaka, the then FP-ICGLR President (Centre) looks on



▲ From Left to Right- Hon. Kevin Brice Kakpayen and Hon. Jean Sosthene Dengbe from the Parliament of Central African Republic following the proceedings during the 12th OSPA in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya



▲ From Left to Right- Secretary General of FP-ICGLR, Amb. Onyango Kakoba and the then Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Hon. Samuel Poghiso during the Executive Committee Meeting in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya



▲ Dr. Christine Ishengoma signing the Book of Condolences for the late Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulunyah during the 12th OSPA in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya



▲ The then FP-ICGLR President, Rt. Hon. Kenneth Lusaka presiding over the Conference of Speakers in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya



▲ Delegation from the Republic of South Sudan during the Statutory Meeting of the Committee on Gender, Social Issues and Vulnerable Persons in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

▼ President of the Adhoc Committee on Finance of the FP-ICGLR, Hon. Sergio Leonardo Vaz (Left) and Rt. Hon. Simplicie Mathieu Sarandji during the Mission to the Parliament of the Central African Republic



▲ A Tour of the Standard Gauge Railway Station (SGR) by the FP-ICGLR delegation during the Mission to Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania in June 2022

RCSF

hold its 3rd General Assembly

“The General Assembly was organized in order to reflect on the strategies which needed implementation to support the effective, efficient and sustainable functioning of the RCSF; including its active participation in the consultative processes of the ICGLR...”

In collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Regional Civil Society Forum (RCSF) of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) organized its 3rd General Assembly in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, on October 5-6, 2022. The Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR has been invited and represented by the Secretary General, Amb. Onyango Kakoba accompanied by the ICT and Communications Officer, Jeni Botha Toko.

The ICGLR RCSF was established in July 2011, in Bujumbura, Burundi by the signing of the Accord of the Forum by regional civil society representatives from ICGLR Member States. Some of the achievements of the Forum include institution building and operationalization of the Accord, through the development of its regional strategic plan, establishment of national fora in Member States and projects development.

However, in the discharge of its mandate over the years, RCSF has been confronted with the financial and human resources challenges which are essential for the proper functioning

of an organization. It was in this context that the General Assembly was organized in order to reflect on the strategies which needed implementation to support the effective, efficient and sustainable functioning of the RCSF; including its active participation in the consultative processes of the ICGLR.

During the meeting, the Guest Honor, Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Hon. Dr. Damas Ndumbaro presented eight areas which the RCSF should work and these were peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development, regional integration, war litigation social issues, environmental issues and cross-cutting issues in the Great Lakes Region. In his concluding remarks, he stated that the RCSF should

strive to be the partner of the Government and that its role should be advisory.

During the deliberations, the FP-ICGLR was cited as a good example regarding the resources mobilization and general operatives. The delegates also made recommendations aimed at ensuring an effective, efficient and sustainable functioning of the RCSF such as defining a statutory and legal framework in order to benefit from external funding; the independence of RCSF and becoming a member of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The Assembly ended by the renewal of the bureau members of RCSF comprising the President, six Vice-Presidents and the Secretariat.

“The Assembly resolved that the RCSF shall define a statutory and legal framework in order to benefit from external funding; strive for the independence of RCSF and becoming a Member of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)...”

Towards gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments

In line with the Action Plan 2022-2023, the FP-ICGLR participated in the 145th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly which was held at Kigali Convention Centre in Kigali, Rwanda from October 11-15, 2022. The Forum was represented by Secretary General, Amb. Onyango Kakoba and the Assistant to the Secretary General, Ms. Katya Violette.

Held under the theme, “Gender Equality and Gender-Sensitive Parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world,” the IPU General Assembly was graced by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. The mission was attended by parliamentarians from all over the world who debated issues that were hampering the proper and sustainable functioning of parliaments. There were over 178 Members of Parliaments, 14 Associate Members, and 1200 Participants in attendance. The 145th IPU General Assembly provided a platform for participants to openly deliberate and exchange views on the stated theme.

In his inaugural speech, President Paul Kagame stated that women were the backbone of resilient and peaceful societies. He stated that the IPU needed a strong legal and policy frameworks in place, with an

emphasis on implementation and driven by results. President Kagame revealed that in the Republic of Rwanda women played a critical role in the liberation struggle and remain a fundamental part of Rwanda’s transformation journey with many participations across the African Continent.

The Rwandan President went further urged lasting collaboration between parliaments and work on all the challenges to criminalize all forms of dehumanization and racism worldwide. President Kagame cited peace, democracy, and cooperation as very important topical issues to be addressed by the IPU. He concluded by categorically stating that there was no individual country, there was no region, there was no part of this world, that could claim to have it all.

The IPU Member Parliaments pledged to implement the 10 Actions in the next 10 years including measures such as adopting formal rules to establish gender balance in parliamentary leadership positions and introducing stringent policies to eliminate violence against women, sexual harassment, and bullying in parliament.

EMBs implored to ensure participatory and inclusive electoral process

At the invitation of the Executive Secretariat of the ICGLR, the FP-ICGLR participated in the Regional Workshop on Strengthening the Integrity and Inclusiveness of the Electoral Process through the Enhancement of the Capacity of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs). The Conference was held from October 25-28, 2022 in Dar-es-salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. The FP-ICGLR was represented by the Programme Manager-in-charge of Peace and Security, Democracy and Good Governance, Mr Ronald Mwelwa Tembo.

The four-day Workshop was co-organized by the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD) of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and facilitated by ICGLR Secretariat. The theme of the Conference was dubbed, “Enhancing the Integrity and Inclusivity of Electoral Processes in the ICGLR Member-States.” The Conference took place at Four Point Hotel within the city of Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania. The workshop was attended by more than 50 delegates drawn from distinguished institutions with the Great Lakes Region.

The main objective of the Conference was to provide a venue for EMBs and other stakeholders from the Great Lakes Region to share experiences and good practices on how best to strengthen the credibility, inclusivity and peacefulness of their elections and the need for increased democratic participation of voters including women, youths and persons with disabilities. The ICGLR Executive Secretariat is closely coordinating with the UNDP to help strengthen the credibility,

inclusivity and peacefulness of elections for EMBs in the region. This is in the wake of declining integrity and confidence of the EMBs in the recent past. The idea is to restore the past glory and ensure EMBs are capacitated to effectively, efficiently and competently conduct the electoral processes in their respective countries in a free, fair and credible manner.

In his welcoming remarks, the Minister of Country, Office of the Prime Minister (Policy, Parliament and Coordination) Hon. George Simbachawene stated that without inclusiveness and integrity in the electoral process, confidence and participation from the public became weak and the Government of the day lacked requisite legitimacy. He added that inclusivity and integrity allowed for peaceful resolution of conflict, open dialogue, debate, and information sharing among different political players and the voters.

The Minister of Country pointed out that it was not enough to reform institutions; but rather the citizens needed to be convinced that the changes in the electoral process were real and deserved their confidence. Hon. Simbachawene called upon the delegates to fully participate in the workshop, share experiences and best practices to enhance the integrity, inclusiveness and voter participation in the electoral process in the ICGLR member states.

In view of the above, the participants resolved that there was need for continuous registration of voters spearheaded by the EMBs and journalists trained in electoral

process reporting. This would help inform the general public impartially and objectively adding that an active and vibrant media was vital towards having a free, fair and credible electoral process. The participants resolved that the continue using Information and Communications Technology by the EMBs. However, they emphasized that ICT alone could resolve electoral challenges but through well thought reforms and policy changes by the legislators and EMBs. Other resolutions were that the EMBs should put in place mechanisms and systems to effectively utilize social media and enhance the electoral process in their countries and voter apathy was proving to be a challenge in most ICGLR member states and thus more research needed to be conducted in order to encourage participation and inclusiveness by all the citizens to take part during elections.

In closing, the Chairperson of the National Election Commission, Judge of the Court of Appeal, Hon. Jacobs Mwambegele thanked all the participants for their input and valuable contributions during the workshop. He stated that to ensure integrity and equal participation of all social groups in the electoral process, the EMBs should endeavour to ensure an increased participation of persons with disabilities and other special groups in the political process through provision of voter education. Judge Mwambegele underscored the importance of EMBs to focus on providing awareness of the legal and institutional framework as well as processes involved in registration and entire electoral processes to all citizens.



Group photo of the participants at UNDP-ICGLR Regional Workshop



Impact of illegal exploitation of natural resources on conflicts in GLR

It is abundantly true that great natural resource wealth lies underground in some member states of the ICGLR such as Gold, coltan and wolframite. Yet the benefits are rarely felt by local communities, as these resources, for which there is substantial international demand, are often extracted and traded illegally, depriving the countries concerned of tax revenue and economic development opportunities. Instead, the profits often flow to criminal organisations and armed groups, which use them to fund brutal conflicts. As a consequence, the entire Great Lakes Region suffers.

During the 5th Statutory Meeting of the Committee on Economic Development, Regional Integration and Natural Resources held from October 25-26, 2022 in Bujumbura, Republic of Burundi and chaired by the host country (Burundi), standing in for members the bureau, the Committee held robust discussion and engagements on the impact on illegal exploitation of natural resources on conflict in the Great Lakes Region. The meeting was organized by the General Secretariat of the FP-ICGLR and the Parliament of the Republic of Burundi.

The central objective of the meeting was to assess the impact of the illegal exploitation of natural resources on conflicts in the Great Lakes Region under the topic “The Impact of illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources on Conflicts in the Great Lakes Region”. The meeting also evaluated the implementation

of resolutions by the Plenary Assembly of FP-ICGLR over the years at the initiative of the Committee as well as considered and adopted the report of its 4th Statutory Meeting.

Previously, the Committee Meeting on Natural Resources took place in April 2016, in form of a Capacity Building Workshop on strengthening control on policy frameworks, fairness of contracts, and transparency of revenues in natural resource governance, held in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya. On this occasion, the consultant enlightened the Members of Parliament on the illegal exploration of natural resources in the Great Lakes Region.

The Great Lakes Region is abundant in natural resources, including high-valued minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold, which are essential components of everyday products like cell phones, iPods, refrigerators, jewellery, airplane components, automobiles, and more. For decades, artisanal miners in the Great Lakes Region have used these minerals as a primary source of income. The informal artisanal sector is also prone to corruption and criminality, and for years minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold have been used by armed groups as a source of financing. Furthermore, controlling these lucrative natural resources has become a source of conflict, with armed groups fighting to retain access.

Countries such as the Democratic Republic

of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR) are the most affected by illegal mining. The effects of illegal exploitation of natural resources on economic, political, and social spheres are widely noticed. Acknowledging the impact of the illegal exploitation, the Heads of State of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) have committed to take action through the Regional Initiative against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (RINR).

Despite the above initiatives, illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes Region still thrives. In a region characterised by conflicts, the illegal exploitation of natural resources has impacted on the conflicts. Accordingly, in line with the 2022-2023 Action Plan, the 5th Statutory Meeting of the Committee on Economic Development, Natural Resources and Regional Integration was successfully held in Burundi and considered the draft resolution on “The Impact of the illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources on Conflicts in the GLR. It is the hope of every stakeholder that the stated draft resolution would be adopted by the 13th Plenary Assembly in South Sudan. After the resolution is passed, a huge and further task for the ICGLR member states was to harmonise national legislation and effectively implement the provisions whose purpose was to curb the illegal trade in natural resources in the GLR.



IMAGE: julie-ricard

FP-ICGLR assesses plight of refugees and IDPs

According to the South African News, over Seven million Internally Displaced People (IDPs) live in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo hosts more than 5.5 million alone. Central Africa is host to the largest community of internally displaced persons in Africa. The countries in this region include Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda. Just four of these account for more than 7 million internally displaced people. At the top of the list, the DRC alone hosts more than 5.5 million. The main cause of these high numbers is conflict, both national and international. Conflicts have tormented the Great Lakes Region for decades.

At its 5th Joint Statutory Meeting of the Committees on 'Humanitarian and Social Issues' and 'Gender, Children and Vulnerable Persons' of the FP-ICGLR held from October 27-28, 2022 in Bujumbura, Republic of Burundi, the Committee discussed 'The Challenge of the Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Great Lakes Region. and reflections on the status of the participation of women in Governments and Political Institutions, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Member States Constitutions.

The two-day meeting organised by the General Secretariat of Fp-ICGLR and Parliament of the Republic of Burundi, also made a follow-up on the status of women in leadership positions, especially in politics, as previously presented at the 2nd Statutory meeting of the Committee held in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2019.

Every year, millions of people are forced to leave their homes due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, persecution, and disasters. While some cross borders do find safety, many seek refuge within their home countries, often in camps or informal settlements. The number of forcibly displaced persons continued to rise in 2021, calling for increased humanitarian assistance.

The Great Lakes is one of the African regions that has been affected by a high number of refugee and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) related problems. Conflicts, famine, and violence have pushed millions of people away from their places of origin. The region has also been engulfed in violent intrastate and proxy interstate conflicts for several decades. The civil strife in South Sudan, Sudan, Central African Republic (CAR) and the conflict in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are still deadly conflicts that have caused an irregular migration of refugees and IDPs in the region, and presents

a tremendous challenge to host countries like Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Angola, and Zambia. In the past, there were civil wars in Northern Uganda, Burundi and the Rwanda genocide which all resulted into emergence of refugees and IDPs.

Displaced people are a highly vulnerable group. They're forced to live in crowded and unsanitary camps. They're also fleeing violence and are surrounded by active fighting situations. For example, in February 2022, in Plaine Savo camp (DRC), a militia group killed more than 60 civilians. All over the world, the management of internally displaced people can be a challenge. It requires resources (for example, food and tents) and political will.

All things considered, the draft resolution on 'The Challenge of the Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Great Lakes Region' shall be adopted during the 13th Plenary Assembly. We remain hopeful that the Governments of the member states of the ICGLR would adopt a specific regional protocol that could ease the management of refugees and IDPs in the GLR.

Parliamentarians reflect on their role in graft fight

In the ICGLR Member States, corruption is understood as a scourge that contributes to maintaining poverty and inequality. In fact, corruption is a global scourge that particularly hits developing countries. In the absence of effective measures, it can significantly undermine a country's efforts to establish good governance and considerably reduce the resources available for poverty reduction. Its multiple misdeeds (Waste of limited financial resources, decrease in growth, increase in transaction costs, decrease in quality, increase etc.

From November 7-8, 2022, in Brazzaville, republic of Congo, the General Secretariat of the FP-ICGLR and the Parliament of the Republic of Congo organized the seventh Statutory Meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Good Governance. The meeting adopted the report of its 6th Statutory Meeting, conducted a 'Follow up of the Implementation of the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the FP-ICGLR in the areas of Democracy and Good Governance' and a 'Reflection on the Responsibilities of the Member-Parliamentarians in the fight against corruption and related issues.' Draft Resolutions were presented to the Committee members and considered. They will be submitted to the 13th OSPA for adoption. Member-Parliaments present shared their country experience in the progress of the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations as well as steps taken to tackle corruption, challenges faced and suggest mechanisms that could be used where no progress has been made.

Therefore corruption is a global scourge which also constantly strikes the States of the ICGLR. When it becomes systemic, it can significantly undermine a country's efforts to establish good governance and considerably reduce the resources available for poverty reduction related issues. Corruption has developmental effects. Indeed, corruption contributes to slowing down private investment, in particular by increasing the costs and risks associated with it. In addition, the state may record a decline in its tax revenue and therefore its ability to deploy in the territorial space.

The countries of the ICGLR are strongly affected by corruption. The results of the ICGLR Corruption Perception Index in 2020 are quite evident. The two ends of the 2020 CPI indicate that Rwanda has a score of 54/100 as the least corrupt and South Sudan with a score of 12/100 as most perceived corrupt. As a reminder, a score of 0/100 means systemic corruption while 100/100 can result in an absence of corruption.

Article 43 of the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance specifies the normative framework for the fight against corruption in the ICGLR area. In fact, the disposition is such that member states recognize that corruption is an offence and a major obstacle to development, peace and stability in the region. To this end, Member States undertake to fight corruption and ensure transparency in the management and equitable distribution of resources. In this context, Member States undertake to strengthen and/or establish

independent anti-corruption bodies with adequate resources and to adopt effective policies and laws to address the problem of corruption at the national and regional levels. Further, member states undertake to cooperate in order to guarantee the return of stolen goods and misappropriated funds at the expense of a state or member state. To this end, Member States shall secure the cooperation of the African Union and other relevant organizations.

During its 7th Statutory Meeting, the Committee on Democracy and Good Governance also considered proposals of the mechanisms to support the roles and responsibilities of the member Parliamentarians in the fight against corruption and related issues. Several recommendations we made and these are to enhance the cooperation of ICGLR Member States for creating a conducive environment to the eradication of corruption in the Great Lakes region; conduct a field investigation on the implementation of the laws and rules of the fight against corruption; organize workshops of capacity building of parliamentarians in the area of good governance in general and in particular in fighting corruption and continue to organize the 'national integrity workshops' which bring together all the stakeholders: public authorities, business circles, magistrates, journalists, academics, associations, to propose means of repression or prevention of corruption, to promote and strengthen measures aimed at preventing and combating corruption more effectively; among others.

IMAGE: jesus-monroy-lazcano



FP-ICGLR gives peace and security top priority



Senator Ntumba Mbuyi Flory from the Democratic Republic of Congo making his submission and recommendations on ways to strengthen the DRC-Rwanda relations during the Executive Committee Meeting in Kampala, Republic of Uganda



President of the Committee on Peace and Security of the FP-ICGLR and Member of Parliament from the Republic of Uganda, Hon. Geoffrey Ekanya making his submission on the strategies to improve the security situation in the Great Lakes Region

For decades now, the Great Lakes Region with its abundant natural resources of great value remain a developed region in prospect. The region faces political, security and humanitarian challenges emanating mainly from the activities of various armed groups operating in parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR) Republic of South Sudan and Republic of the Sudan. It continues to experience repetitive intra-state and inter-state conflicts.

These unremitting conflicts have plunged the GLR into a region of endemic instability and insecurity thus interfering with the efforts to implant both the rule-of-law and substantial socio-economic development. The armed conflict and violence, have forced millions of civilians to flee and seek asylum in the neighbouring countries and creating a deteriorating humanitarian situation. The armed conflicts have led to serious consequences for the majority of people - many of whom have been killed, wounded, traumatized and their households burned and fields destroyed; thereby leading to massive population displacement.

As a consequence of armed and violent conflicts, the security situation in the region remain volatile and continues deteriorating to unsustainable levels. The declining security situation has prevented the displaced majority from enjoying their fundamental human rights and living a normal life. Worse still, our natural resource-rich region is faced with numerous challenges namely: the negative impact of COVID-19, the threat of climate change, existence of armed conflicts,

emergence of terrorism and radicalization and illegal exploitation of natural resources in some parts of the region just to mention a few. These multiple and complex challenges require cooperation, constructive engagement and serious reflections among key stakeholders. Limited cooperation and rivalry have a negative impact on our regional efforts to promote peace, stability and prevent conflict in the Great Lakes Region.

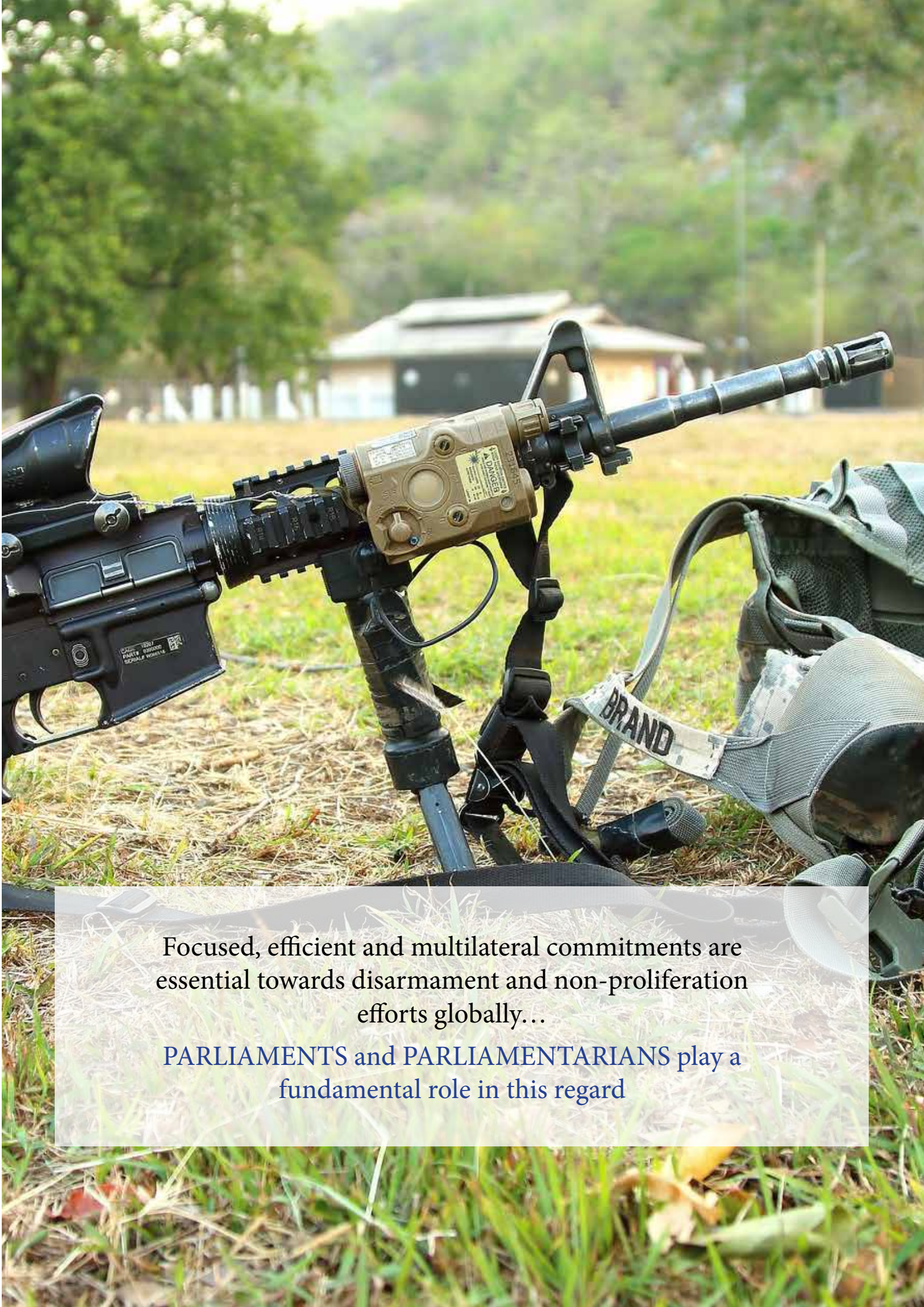
The Great Lakes Region continues to face threats from terrorism and mercenary phenomenon emanating from global and regional terrorist groups who continued to recruit, radicalize, plan, and execute attacks. Terrorism remains of security concern attributed to the activities of Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Eastern DRC, Al Shabaab (AS) terror group in Kenya and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Sudan. It is therefore imperative for all Member States of the FP-ICGLR remain vigilant and continue information sharing of experiences in a bid to curb the activities of these terrorist groups in the region.

In line with the Action Plan for 2022, the General Secretariat of the FP-ICGLR and Parliament of the Republic of Congo organized the 9th Statutory Meeting of the Committee on Peace and Security, from November 9-10, 2022, to reflect on the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Member States of the ICGLR. The Meeting made appropriate recommendations to foster peace and security in the region as they deeply reflected on the sector draft resolutions that were referred by the 12th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly to the Executive Committee for

further scrutiny and update. The Meeting also made a follow up of the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations Adopted by the FP-ICGLR in the areas of Peace and Security as well as considered and adopted the report of its 8th Statutory Meeting. Overly, the Committee deliberates on the resolution that shall be submitted to the 13th OSPA for adoption in South Sudan.

Worth mentioning is that the ICGLR is exerting efforts, together with the East African Community (EAC) and African Union to address the situation in member states of the ICGLR facing security challenges. The Forum of Parliaments of FP-ICGLR remain optimistic and hopeful that the ICGLR process together with the EAC process led by H.E Évariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi in his capacity as the Chairperson of the EAC as well as by the facilitator, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of the Republic of Kenya will bear fruits for the good of not only the people of the DRC but also for the whole Great Lakes Region.

Kudos goes to the General Secretariat of the FP-ICGLR for continuing to place on its agenda the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes Region even during the 13th OSPA. The Assembly will allow distinguished Honourable Members of Parliament to apply their mind on, and remain seized on matters concerning the region. As FP-ICGLR, we restate our confidence that there is sufficient capacity amongst the leaders of region to reach compromises that can lead to further peace, stability and sustainable development.



Focused, efficient and multilateral commitments are essential towards disarmament and non-proliferation efforts globally...

PARLIAMENTS and PARLIAMENTARIANS play a fundamental role in this regard

University Don tips Parliamentarians on Conflict Resolution

The Great Lakes Region (GLR) - and particularly the Member-States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) - continues to experience both intra-state and inter-state conflicts. These incessant conflicts have plunged the GLR into a region of endemic instability thus interfering with the efforts to embed both the rule-of-law as well as rapid and substantial socio-economic development.

Making a Presentation on the “The Role of Parliament in Conflict Resolution” and addressing the Conference of Speakers organized by the FP-ICGLR held in Nairobi, Kenya on 4th April 2022, Professor Yasin Olum (PhD) stated that whereas the member-states of the ICGLR had acknowledged the issue of conflicts in the region, and had tried a number of initiatives to restore lasting peace and security in the region, the parliaments had not been fully involved in the process and yet parliaments were extremely critical in conflict resolution in the region.

Prof. Olum recommended that parliaments should mobilize the necessary resources to deal with conflicts which had turned violent. This was especially so in secessionist conflicts where interests of other countries were involved as well. Although the Executives of the GLR countries had to step in during violent conflicts, he stated that parliaments were crucial in terms of granting post-facto control over the legitimacy of the actions of the Executives in, say, adopting amnesty laws.

The Fulbright Scholar said that since rule-of-law was critical in embedding good governance which, in turn, was essential for peace and stability; there was urgent need for the Parliaments to exercise heightened vigilance regarding rule-of-law, as part of their government oversight mission. Rule-of-law was critical in embedding good governance which, in turn, is essential for peace and stability.



The FP-ICGLR Consultant stated that parliaments should ensure accountability and transparency for their own Parliaments as well as other institutions, to reduce the risk of corruption. He added that corruption robbed the countries of the necessary resources to invest in conflict resolution not only within states but across states as well as legislate human rights;

On instilling political parties with the spirit of tolerance, discipline and respect for electoral verdicts; Professor Olum pointed out that parliaments should ensure that political parties instill amongst their members a spirit of tolerance, discipline, and respect for electoral verdicts, and to keep them well-informed on issues of national interest and potential causes of violence. Accordingly, in order to make the political system more operational, he explained that they should ensure democratic alternation by establishing a transparent electoral system and reordering political party culture to accommodate increased participation by key actors with mechanisms to facilitate regular elections;

He said to avoid creating enabling environment for conflict escalation, parliaments should guard against the creation of an enabling environment that can escalate conflict. By addressing issues of poverty, equitable distribution of resources, and economic development, Prof Olum stated that parliamentarians could attempt to guard against the creation of an enabling environment that was prone to the escalation of conflict.

As regards to termination of intrastate conflicts and enforcement of peace accords, Prof. Olum stated that as representatives of their citizens, parliamentarians could contribute to the termination of intrastate conflicts and the enforcement of peace accords. Through international parliamentary institutions and national parliaments, he clarified that parliamentarians could act as mediators and facilitators through a variety of means towards the resolution of conflicts.

To engage in conflict prevention, Prof. Olum stated that parliaments should take measures and enact laws which did not provoke conflicts. “They should also ensure that they are not weak in relation to the Executive by behaving as if they are secondary bodies which only exist to ‘rubberstamp’ its decisions. They should behave professionally with clear working sessions,” he added.

Prof. Olum was engaged by the FP-ICGLR to develop a research paper highlighting the Role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region. The paper also mentions the root causes of conflict in the GLR. It can be noted that GLR countries have similarities that explain their interconnected endemic violent conflicts. Therefore, the parliaments of the ICGLR should take the initiative to de-escalate the conflicts by playing the various roles mentioned in the paper. Without using the appropriate mechanisms for conflict resolution, the conflicts will continue unabated. If the conflicts persists, then the people of the GLR will be the losers.



THE TWELVETH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE FORUM OF PARLIAMENTS OF MEMBER-STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION

RESOLUTION 12 OSPA/01/2022

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

The Plenary Assembly,

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 17 of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (GLR) which provides that “The Member States undertake to ensure lasting peace and security in the whole Region of the Great Lakes, in the Framework of the Programme of Action for Peace and Security”;

Aware of the provisions of Article 2 and 6 of the Inter-Parliamentary Accord establishing the Forum of Parliaments of Member States of the International Conference on the GLR signed on 4th December 2008 in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda;

Cognizant of the negative consequences of conflicts and insecurity on the lives and properties of citizens in the Great Lakes Region;

Further Considering that the persistent conflicts and insecurity have caused many loss of lives and immense suffering to the peoples of the GLR;

Affirming that the conflicts continue to affect the socio-economic conditions of the people as well as political and economic stability of countries of the GLR which are critical in the development process;

Re-affirming that regional organizations and, in particular the FP-ICGLR, have a crucial role to play in resolving and managing the perennial conflicts in the GLR;

Adopts the following resolutions:

- 1. Strongly condemns** the violent conflicts that have resulted into loss of lives and caused immense suffering, and displacements to the population leading to forced migrations whereby many people have become refugees in the GLR;
- 2. Further condemns** acts of terrorism in the Great Lakes Region and calls for concerted efforts to design realistic strategies of combating the scourge in the region;
- 3. Welcomes** all efforts by ICGLR Member-States and other stakeholders at national, regional and international levels towards diplomatic and peace-building measures aimed at resolving and managing conflicts in the GLR;
- 4. Urges** all the governments of the ICGLR Member-States to ensure that all the conflicts in the region are resolved peacefully and that they will work strenuously towards implementing the objectives of the Peace,

Security and Cooperation Framework in order to attain stability and development;

5. **Invites** all political leaders and other stakeholders at national, regional and international levels to support all mechanisms aimed at resolving conflicts which have far reaching adverse impacts on their economies and countries;
6. **Appreciates** the commitment of governments, and regional and international actors to work together to reduce the proliferation of all forms of arms and to improve natural resource management to curb the incessant conflicts;
7. **Stresses** the significance of ensuring that the most vulnerable groups in society such as women, children, the youth, people with special needs, and the elderly are protected against the adverse impacts of the perennial conflicts in the GLR;
8. **Reaffirms** the FP-ICGLR Member Parliaments' unreserved commitment to strengthen Parliamentary cooperation in the GLR in the areas of conflict resolution and management as well as local and foreign peace-building initiatives to address all the conflict related challenges;
9. **Calls** for urgent interventions through bilateral and multilateral co-operation to address the different conflicts and insecurity affecting the GLR to create peace and security;
10. **Further calls** for a paradigm shift in the conventional thinking that resolution of interstate conflicts is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the executive arm of government in order to allow FP-ICGLR play a more effective role in their resolution;
11. **Further urges** Member-Parliaments to commit themselves to pay their dues to the FP-ICGLR to enable the organization implement its planned activities on conflict resolution and management;
12. **Remains** resolute in resolving the conflicts and security situation in the GLR by committing themselves to adopting and adapting peaceful means of conflict resolution and management; and
13. **Mandates** the Secretary General of the FP-ICGLR to observe and monitor closely the conflicts and security situation in the GLR and to report to the next Plenary Assembly on the current status.

Done in Nairobi, on April 6, 2022
Right Honourable Kenneth M. Lusaka, EGH, MP
Sitting President of FP-ICGLR



THE TWELVETH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE
FORUM OF PARLIAMENTS OF MEMBER-STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION

RESOLUTION 12 OSPA/02/2022

**RESOLUTION ON STRATEGIES TO JUMP-START ECONOMIES POST COVID-19 IN THE
MEMBER STATES OF THE ICGLR**

The Plenary Assembly:

Considering the provisions of Article 4 and 22, paragraph 1 of the “Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region” signed on 15th December 2006 in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya;

Considering the provisions of Article 2 and 6 of the inter-Parliamentary Agreement Establishing the Forum of Parliaments of Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region signed in Kigali, Rwanda on 4th December 2008;

Recalling the provisions of the “Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region: relating to economic issues;

Acknowledging and recognizing the economic and related challenges found in the Member States of the ICGLR due to the COVID-19 pandemic;

Mindful that the 11th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly adopted resolutions in relation to this very topic on "Strategies to Jump-Start Economies of the Member States of ICGLR Post COVID-19 Pandemic";

Adopts the following additional resolutions:

Calls upon Member-States of the ICGLR to:

1. **Address** the potential social and economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic by injecting capital in the economies through loans and grants and creating new opportunities for jobs;
2. **Consolidate** the economic industrial gains by injecting capital into their respective banking systems to spur investment;
3. **Increase** investment through Public Private Partnership structure;
4. **Concentrate** on attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and stemming the loss of outgoing FDI;
5. **Reduce** debt, **improve** debt sustainability and **stimulate** growth.

Done in Nairobi, on April 6, 2022

Right Honourable Kenneth M. Lusaka, EGH, MP

Sitting President of FP-ICGLR



**TWELFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE FORUM OF
PARLIAMENTS OF MEMBER STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE
GREAT LAKES REGION
(FP-ICGLR)**

FINAL DECLARATION

Pursuant to the provisions of Articles 4 and 22, paragraph 1 of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, signed on 15th December, 2006 in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya;

Aware of the provisions of Articles 2 and 6 of the Inter-parliamentary Accord establishing the Forum of Parliaments of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region signed on December 4th, 2008 in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda;

Having considered and deliberated, during the Twelfth ordinary session held on 6th April, 2022 in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya, on items of its agenda;

The Plenary Assembly:

1. Took note of:

- a) The update by the Executive Secretary of ICGLR on the recent evolution of the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes Region;
- b) The presentation by the Secretary General on the current financial situation of FP-ICGLR;
- c) The presentation on the Role of Parliaments in Conflict Resolution in the Great Lakes Region;
- d) The Activity Reports of the Committees of FP-ICGLR for 2021.

2. Adopted resolutions on:

- a) Strategies to Jumpstart Economies post Covid-19;
- b) The role of parliament in conflict resolution in the Great Lakes Region.

3. Mandated the Executive Committee to re-examine the resolutions on the political, security and humanitarian situation in:

- a) The Central African Republic;
- b) The Democratic Republic of Congo;

-
- c) The Republic of South Sudan;
 - d) The Republic of Sudan
4. **Approved** the combined Report of the Executive Committee, hence adopted the:
 - a) Annual Activity and Financial report for the year 2021 of FP-ICGLR;
 - b) Strategic Plan for 2022-2026;
 - c) Action Plan and Budget of FP-ICGLR for 2022.
 5. **Further approved** the proposal by the Executive Committee to transform the Ad hoc Committee on Finance of FP-ICGLR into a Permanent Committee;
 6. **Noted with concern** the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in the Republic of Sudan and **called** upon ICGLR member-states and the International Community to undertake further interventions aimed at addressing the situation;
 7. **Welcomed** the progress made towards normalization of bilateral relations between some ICGLR Member States and diffusion of tensions as evidenced by the reopening the Gatuna-Katuna land border between Rwanda and Uganda, and the ongoing bilateral efforts to normalise relations between Rwanda and Burundi;
 8. **Further welcomed** the gradual and careful lifting of confinement measures by ICGLR Members-States, and **called** for further actions designed to re-open economies and foster trade with a view to recovering from the social, economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic;
 9. **Registered** its appreciation to Member-Parliaments of FP-ICGLR that have paid their annual contributions and arrears and **called upon** those with outstanding balances to fulfil their financial obligations for the proper functioning of the organization;
 10. **Commended** the commitment by Honourable Parliamentarians of FP-ICGLR to see to it that appropriate action is taken, by their respective Parliaments, to ensure that resolutions adopted by the Plenary Assembly of FP-ICGLR that are yet to be implemented are acted on promptly and in full;
 11. **Extended** its deepest condolences to the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, and through it, to the Government and People of Uganda for the demise of Rt. Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, then Speaker of Parliament;
 12. **Expressed** appreciation to His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, for having graced the opening ceremony with the opening remarks that was read out on his behalf by Interior Cabinet Secretary Hon. Fred Matiang'i, and for having enriched with his guidance, the fruitful deliberations of this Plenary Assembly;
 13. **Further expressed** its sincere appreciation to the President of the Republic of Kenya, as well as the Parliament and People of the Republic of Kenya for their hospitality and support to the organization of this Plenary Assembly;
 14. **Determined** the dates and venue of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly as March 6-10, 2023 in Juba, Republic of South Sudan.

Done in Nairobi, on April 6, 2022
Right Honourable Kenneth Lusaka
President of FP-ICGLR

Join us in welcoming the following members of staff to FP-ICGLR General Secretariat:



RONALD MWELWA TEMBO
**Program Manager-Peace and Security,
 Democracy and Good Governance**

Ronald’s role with FP-ICGLR commenced on March 14, 2022. Before his appointment, he worked as Group Corporate Communications Manager with Madison Financial Services Limited, Head of Corporate Communications with Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency and Manager Public Relations with Examinations Council of Zambia. Ronald also worked with Transparency International Zambia as Information and Communications Programme Officer where he did a lot of advocacy on public accountability, democracy and good governance.

Ronald is a seasoned and experienced professional with a vast wealth of leadership experience in advocacy, strategy and corporate communications. He has demonstrated leadership credentials with great enthusiasm and passion to lead the FP-ICGLR’s interventions on peace, Security, democracy and good governance in the Great Lakes Region. The Forum is confident that Ronald will build on the legacy established by his predecessors in spearheading the designing and planning the implementation of the program, especially in relation to peace, security, good governance, human rights, democracy and elections;

Ronald has nearly 20 years of professional work experience in advocacy and corporate communications with a proven track record of strategy and organisational success. He holds the Bachelor of Mass Communications Degree and a Master of Science in Business and Economics. Ronald has been at the helm of innovations and change management at senior management level. We have no doubt that Ronald will bring his tenacity and penchant for success to FP-ICGLR in the capacity as Program Manager.



ISAURA TCHISSOLA MATEUS VICENTE
**Program Manager – Economic
 Development, Regional Integration and
 Social Issues**

She officially commenced her roles as a Programme Manager at the General Secretariat of FP-ICGLR on September 8, 2022. Prior to her appointment, Isaura worked at the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola for over 11 years. While at the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola, she worked as a Proofreader for the Hansard, assisted Standing Committees, the Ad-Hoc Committee for Tax Revision. Isaura also assisted in several interparliamentary groups such as the CPLP-PF, SADC-PF and, for six years, the Forum of Parliaments of ICGLR. Isaura is a Linguist Enthusiastic and she speaks Portuguese, Kimbari, English and Spanish. Indeed, Isaura is a great addition to the Programme Management Team and the FP-ICGLR General Secretariat is optimistic that she will accomplish amazing things in her arena of jurisdiction.



VIOLETTE KATYA
**Administrative Assistant and Protocol
 Officer**

For four years, Katya worked served as a volunteer in the Salvation Army Johannesburg with refugees and displaced persons from African countries with a background of a political instability and insecurity from 2016-2020.

Katya’s role at FP-ICGLR commenced on March 10, 2022 as Administrative Assistant and Protocol Officer of the Secretary General. Her education journey started at William Booth University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Private and Judicial Law 2008 in Democratic Republic of Congo. Short course in Refugee Law and Humanitarian Support at UNISA (VerLoren van Themaat Centre) 2013, Cyber law or Cybercrime in Witwatersrand University (Mandela Institute) in South Africa 2016 and still completing her Master’s Degree coursework in Information Technology Law at UNISA.’

Katya has trained in Home Basic Care, First Aid level 1 for any kind of emergency in Red Cross Society. She was trained as a housekeeping, food and beverages. All these achievements and knowledge in Refugee Law and Humanitarian issues, Cybercrime, Information Technology Law and so on will bring change and will contribute to the growth and vision of the FP-ICGLR.

She is also the National Coordinator of the Non-profit Organization called “Appui aux Initiatives Socio-éducatives de Développement”, Support for socio-educational development initiatives since October 2021 until date. Her goals is to improve the educational level, health and social well-being of our community.

Reasons to get more SLEEP



Getting a good night's sleep is incredibly important for your health. In fact, it is just as important as eating a balanced, nutritious diet and exercising. Though sleep needs vary from person to person, most adults require between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night. Sleep deprivation can put your health and safety at risk, which is why it is essential that you prioritize and protect your sleep on a daily basis. There are a number of reasons why a human being should get more sleep.

Sleep may help you maintain or lose weight. Numerous studies have associated short sleep—defined as sleeping fewer than 7 hours per night—with a greater risk of weight gain and a higher Body Mass Index (BMI). The effect of sleep on weight gain is believed to be affected by numerous factors, including hormones and motivation to exercise. For instance, sleep deprivation increases levels of ghrelin and decreases levels of leptin. Ghrelin is a hormone that makes us feel hungry while leptin makes us feel full. This may cause us to feel hungrier and overeat. So, prioritizing sleep may support healthy body weight.

Sleep can improve concentration and productivity. Sleep is important for various aspects of brain function. Cognition, concentration, productivity, and performance are all negatively affected by sleep deprivation. A specific study on overworked physicians provides a good example. Getting enough sleep can improve academic performance in children, adolescents, and young adults. Further, good sleep has been shown to improve

problem-solving skills and enhance memory performance in both children and adults. Good sleep can maximize problem-solving skills and enhance memory. In contrast, poor sleep has been shown to impair brain function and decision making skills.

Sleep may strengthen your heart. Low sleep quality and duration may increase your risk of developing heart disease. One analysis of 19 studies found that sleeping fewer than 7 hours per day resulted in a 13% increased risk of death from heart disease. Another analysis found that compared with 7 hours of sleep, each 1-hour decrease in sleep was associated with a 6% increased risk of all-cause mortality and heart disease. What is more is that; short sleep appears to increase the risk of high blood pressure, especially in those with obstructive sleep apnea—a condition characterized by interrupted breathing during sleep. Interestingly, excessive sleep in adults—more than 9 hours—was also shown to increase the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure.

Sleep affects sugar metabolism and type 2 diabetes risk. Short sleep is associated with a greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance—which is when your body cannot use the hormone insulin properly. It's thought that sleep deprivation can cause physiological changes like decreased insulin sensitivity, increased inflammation, and hunger hormone changes, as well as behavioural changes like poor decision making and greater food intake—all of which increase diabetes risk. Plus, sleep deprivation is associated with a higher risk of developing obesity, heart disease, and metabolic

syndrome. These factors also increase your risk of diabetes.

Sleep supports a healthy immune system. The lack of sleep has been shown to impair immune function. In one study, participants who slept fewer than 5 hours per night were 4.5 times more likely to develop a cold compared to those who slept more than 7 hours. Those who slept 5–6 hours were 4.24 times more likely. Some data also suggests that proper sleep may improve your body's antibody responses to influenza vaccines. Recently, preliminary data shows that getting enough sleep before and after receiving a COVID-19 vaccination may improve vaccine efficacy. Still, more research is needed to better understand this possible connection.

From the foregoing, the bottom-line is that lack of sleep can be dangerous. Not getting enough sleep can be dangerous for yourself and others. Along with nutrition and exercise, taking care of your sleep is one of the pillars of health. Lack of sleep is associated with many negative health effects, including increased risk of heart disease, depression, weight gain, inflammation, and sickness. Though individual needs vary, most research suggests that you should get between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night for optimal health. Just like you prioritize your diet and physical activity, it is high to give sleep the attention it deserves.

References
www.livehealthily.com
www.healthline.com

Make sports and exercise your lifestyle



When you hear the word sports, you probably think basketball, baseball, or football. When you read fitness you may imagine intense daily workouts at a gym. As a person with a bleeding disorder you may not be able to participate in these activities.

The next time you hear the words sports and fitness, consider that physical activity—through safe sports and exercises—will strengthen your musculoskeletal system and reduce extra weight. The real benefit is that your joints will become more stable and you will be less likely to have bleeds and pain.

There are a lot of benefits of being physically fit. It increases the energy levels in the body. Energy fuels the body's internal functions, repairs, builds and maintains cells and body tissues, and supports the external activities that enable you to interact with the physical world. Water, your body's most important nutrient, helps facilitate the chemical reactions that produce energy from food.

It boosts your mood and attitude. Sport

reduces stress and depression. At the same time, physical activity stimulates production of endorphins. These are natural mood lifters that can help keep stress and depression at bay. Endorphins may also leave you feeling more relaxed and optimistic after a hard workout on the field.

Sports and exercise boosts cardiovascular health, which allows you to have greater endurance throughout the day. When it's easier to do your daily activities, you will have energy left over and not feel so tired when work is done. For overall cardiovascular health, the American Heart Association recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity at least five days a week. For lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, aim for 40 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity three to four times per week.

There is also evidence suggesting that sport and exercise improves night's rest. When you get high-quality sleep, you feel more refreshed during the day. A study published in April 2015 in the *Journal of Sleep Research*



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looked at people with insomnia who engaged in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity spread over the course of a week. Researchers found that this amount of physical activity was associated not only with a significant reduction in the severity of insomnia symptoms, but an elevation in mood as well.

When we consistently conduct sports and exercise, it may lead to sharper focus. Mentally, we feel more energized and ready to tackle the world after a good workout because endorphins have boosted our physical energy level. According to a study of older adults published in April 2016 in *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity*, a program of 24 weeks of moderate aerobic exercise improved cognitive function, including concentration. While some researchers have speculated that

higher intensity workouts might not have the same positive effect, a study published in February 2014 in the journal *Perceptual and Motor Skills* found that a session of high-intensity training improved cognitive function with respect to attention and short-term memory tasks.

The question that arises is that how much sports and exercise should a person do to become health? A study published in September 2018 in the journal ‘*The Lancet Psychiatry*,’ which analyzed data collected from 1.2 million adults age 18 and older in 2011, 2013, and 2015, found that individuals who reported exercising also reported having fewer days of poor mental health in the month preceding the survey, and that all types of exercise (including running, cycling, It is important to maintain a healthy diet, cut out

the sweets, and increase protein to rebuild muscles to reap the most benefits from your workouts. Pick something that you enjoy. Play a game of basketball, football, or tennis. Go jogging or walking with a friend, or go for a bike ride. Take some time for yourself and rock out to music or watch a favorite TV show while you step away the miles on an elliptical or stair-climbing machine at the gym.

You can decide to go for a hike, or take your kids outside to the park and play with them. You can also try aerobic classes — a kickboxing or other martial arts class, a spinning class, or any aerobic fitness class offered by a local gym. The key is to find what you enjoy, stick with it, and reap the ongoing benefits of a regular workout routine.



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