THE WPS AGENDA AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Challenges and best practices from Burundi, CAR and Guinea Bissau

Background

Election periods are often tensed periods presenting risks in the raise of violence and potential fraud, continuing to have adverse impact on the country's stability, this is in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbating and confronted by its citizens. But beyond this instability, it is the participation of women to the political process that is still subject to debate. It appears that women are less involved in the public spheres, due to several causes particularly the persistence of harmful gender norms. Development programs aim at supporting local organizations toward more gender equality. Working towards women's inclusion is beneficial for peace and state-building, studies suggesting that women's involvement into decision making processes influences stability of political agreements.

The 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 presents an occasion for activists to share their concerns on this topic, raising the attention of the international community participating to the WPS open Debate. The resolution has highlighted the particular impact of fragile contexts on women's marginalization from public spheres. It is the occasion to keep pressuring the international community to continue its efforts to achieve SDCs 5 and 16.

Objectives

During the event, we will bring together 3 women activists working on political participation in Burundi, CAR and Guinée Bissau who will share their experiences

Guinée-Bissau held elections in 2019 and Burundi earlier this year. The Central African Republic is currently entering electoral period, with a first round planned for the 27th of December. The three countries are encountering similar challenges regarding tensions related to the transparency of the electoral process and its outcomes; but also as to women's political participation, their legitimacy and their opportunities in voicing their political opinions. Especially, touching upon on how the elections are heightening polarization and potential relapse of instability in their countries, and how the lead up to the elections could have the potential to affect women political participation and risks of violence, including (S)GBV.

DATE: Wednesday 21 October
TIME: 9 EST / 15 CET
ZOOM REGISTRATION
They will exchange on their experiences as women and activists on the specific topic of political participation, the challenges they encounter in their work, identify markers and roots of this phenomena, as well as the different already existing solutions to increase women's representation, such as quotas regulations. The event aims at informing the participants of the WPS Open Debate, during which they need to make decisions which consider the different facets of the importance of women's participation to the political life, but most importantly the reasons for their exclusion. Following the presentations of the three main speakers, international actors, potentially the African Union and international observants of electoral processes, will reflect on them during a Q&A session in order to formulate recommendations addressed to the participants to the open debate so as to strengthen the engagements of the international community towards women's inclusion in decision-making processes.

- To identify the challenges and obstacles to women's political participation;
- To share good practices, activities that have a direct impact in increasing meaningful women participation;
- To draw clear recommendations towards the participants to the Open Debate;
- To increase coordination of the international community and civil society organizations towards inclusive politics.

Speakers

Marie Concessa BarubiKe, programme coordinator and head of the Project on Lobbying and Advocacy within the Association of Repatriated Women of Burundi (AFRABU). She is dedicated to strengthening women's leadership at the community level, very involved in lobbying and advocacy activities for better participation of women and youth in decision-making bodies.

Rosalie Koudougueret-Mologbama is the president of Cercle, an Central African civil society organisation working on tackling sexual and gender-based violence and women empowerment. She is working on increasing the political participation of women through trainings, awareness-raising campaigns. She also translated and vulgarizes bills and legal dispositions to facilitate their comprehension by communities.

Udé Fati is a social activist who works on issues related to peace building and peace consolidation; gender equality and equity as well as citizen participation in governance. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and State Strengthening and New Deal CSO Focal Point for Guinea-Bissau. She works with Voz di Paz, an NGO that works in the field of Research-Action-Participative Research in issues related to conflict and peacebuilding, with the approach of strengthening the culture of dialogue, participation and inclusion of all in the construction of peace.

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