

**INTER-FAITH FORUM FOR COMBATING GENDER
BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) THROUGH ADVOCACY AND
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN EASTERN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

FAITH LEADERS WORKSHOPS REPORT

17th – 21st August 2010

Bukavu and Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Convened by: NCA-Great Lakes

Facilitated by: FECCLAHA and LAV

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Index of Acronyms and Abbreviations	3
2. Background and Introduction	4
3. Devotions	5
4. Brief Overview of the Workshops	7
5. Mapping Exercise	7
6. Combating Gender Based Violence in Eastern DRC: The Role of Faith Communities	10
7. The Tamar Campaign	14
8. The Work of Association Des Femmes Des Medias (AFEM) in combating GBV in DRC	17
9. Internal Women Empowerment Within the Faith Communities	17
10. Interfaith Platform for Combating GBV Through Advocacy and Women Empowerment	19
11. Platform's Organogramme	23
12. Plan of Action and Recommendations	24
13. Closing Remarks	25

INDEX OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFEM	Association des Femmes des Medias
CEBCA	
COMICO	Communauté Islamique au Congo
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
EEC	Eglise du Christ au Congo
ERC	Eglise de Réveil au Congo
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda
FECCLAHA	Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa
GBV	Gender Based Violence
LAV	Laissez l’Afrique Vivre
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
UEIC	Union des Eglises Indépendantes au Congo

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Background

Since 2003 the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) has facilitated a number of consultations among different religious confessions in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to explore possible ways of combating Gender Based Violence (GBV). It is in this light that NCA commissioned the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA) to lead the process towards developing an Inter-Faith Forum for combating Gender Based Violence (GBV) through advocacy and women empowerment in Eastern DRC.

In response to this, FECCLAHA in partnership with Laissez l'Afrique Vivre (LAV) facilitated two workshops in Bukavu on 17th - 18th and Goma on 20th -21st August 2010.

Both workshops were well attended by a total of 72 delegates from Eglise du Christ au Congo; Eglise de Réveil au Congo (ERC); Union des Eglises Indépendantes au Congo (UEIC); Communauté Islamique au Congo (COMICO); Eglise Kimbanguiste; Eglise Catholique; Orthodoxe; Neo - Apostolique; Eglise Adventiste; Nazareen Laissez l'Afrique Vivre- LAV; Association des Femmes des Medias (AFEM); Norwegian Church Aid (NCA); FECCLAHA and some civil society representatives from Eastern DRC.

The Workshops **objectives** were:

- To bring clarity on the role of the faith communities in combating GBV.
- To develop a plan for fighting GBV within and through the faith communities.
- To develop a GBV advocacy strategy.
- To put in place an inter-faith platform for combating GBV through advocacy and women empowerment, in Eastern DRC.

The **methodology** employed in the workshops included prepared presentations, participatory interactions, small groups discussions, and plenary sessions. From these a road map and the structure of the inter-faith platform were developed.

Devotions:

First Biblical Reflection by Pastor Sosthene Kubisa, General Secretary of LAV (Bukavu 14th August 2010)

The Scripture reading was taken from the Gospel of John 20:1-8. Pst Kubisa pointed out that:

- Though the Hebrew culture did not give women equal status with men and that all the apostles were men, Jesus transformed the culture and uplifted the status of women by gradually incorporating them into his ministry. He explained that this was mainly demonstrated at the resurrection, where women were the first to meet Jesus after his resurrection. In addition, it is the three women who delivered the first news of resurrection in a culture where due to their gender; their testimony would not have been taken seriously under normal circumstances.
- In addition Pastor Kubisa pointed out that at the resurrection Jesus provided space for all; youth, women and men. He explained that women were represented by Mary Magdalene who first saw Jesus after the resurrection; the youth were represented by John who ran to the tomb after hearing Mary Magdalene's testimony and men were represented by Peter who together with John responded to the women's message by running to the tomb. Both gender and age differences were connected by the resurrection history.
- He ended by saying that, Jesus provided space for different genders and ages; hence the religious communities in Eastern DRC must provide space for all.

The second Biblical Reflection by Past Hon. Mme Masoka Bwami, from Free Methodist Church (Bukavu, 15th August, 2010).

Pastor Bwami based the day's reflection from Judges 5: 6-7. She focused on Debra and pointed out that:

- Debra was a woman who God used to save Israel. This means that God can use anybody irrespective of gender for both men and women are created in God's image and loved by God.
- As much as Debra was greatly used by God, she remained humble and never boasted because she knew that her strength, authority, position and gifts came from God.
- It is God who places us where we are and gives us authority and power
- "Why fight across sexes yet all of us are from God?" She asked.

- When the DRC women and men come to realise that it is God who gives them authority and tittles then God will use them and save DRC

The Third Reflection by Pastor Gilbert Banywesize, Director of Cabinet ECC/Nord Kivu.

Pastor Banywasize led an interactive contextual bible study on the topic "*the abuse of Tamar*" from 2 Samuel 13:1-22. As participants answered the set questions and discuss various aspects of the text, they were able to, within the context of their own family, communities, churches, workplace and cultural background, identify the similarities between GBV in the biblical times and the present Eastern DRC.

During this guided study, participants answered the following questions:

- **What are the themes?** - Lust; trust; betrayal; selfishness; and physical strength.
- **Who are the main characters and what do we know about them?** - Amnon who rapes and violates his half sister Tamar; Tamar the victim of rape by her half brother; Jonadab, Amnon's friend; Absalom who asks her sister to keep quiet and King David who is unable to act in his own household.
- **What are the various crimes in this story?** - Rape, violation by Amnon; aiding and abetting by Jonadab; complicity by King David; cover up by Absalom.
- **Do you know women like Tamar in your community?** Yes, many are abducted and raped by the rebels; some face domestic violence, some are sexually abused by those they trust and others face incestuous rapes.
- **What can faith communities do to break the culture of silence on GBV?** - Must pray and repent; must preach against it; must support the survivors.

Welcome Remarks by Mr. Joseph Kahayira, NCA Programme Coordinator for DRC

Mr. Joseph Kahayira welcomed the participants and thanked them for taking time to attend workshop. He further reiterated NCAs commitment to faith based initiatives towards fighting gender inequality and Gender Based Violence.

He concluded by wishing the participants fruitful deliberations.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOPS

In both Bukavu and Goma, LAV's Director Pastor Sosthene Kubisa explained that over the years, NCA has had initiatives towards combating GBV in Eastern DRC. However, the need to assist the faith communities establish common ground for advocacy and strategies to work together on the common goal of combating GBV in the region had led to these workshops. Pastor Kubisa then briefly shared the following insights regarding Gender:

- Sex is determined by God and cannot be naturally changed
- Both men and women are made in God's image and therefore equal though different.
- There are some cultural stereotypes that must be transformed if gender equality is to be attained and GBV is to be eliminated.

Plenary Discussions

- It was acknowledged by the plenary that gender discrimination due to cultural beliefs is still very rampant in Eastern DRC. Various examples were given but the most discussed was discrimination against the girl child in education. This was seen as an example of a retrogressive cultural practice that needs to be changed.
- It was pointed out that gender discussions should go beyond rape to include gender discrimination, domestic violence, sexual harassment, women empowerment and masculinity.

MAPPING EXERCISE

In both South and North Kivu provinces, mapping exercise to determine what is already being done by the faith communities was done. Below is the summary of the responses:

South Kivu

ECC-South Kivu:

- ECC-South Kivu is engaged in a diplomatic intervention where they are facilitating a voluntary repatriation of Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) who are notorious rapists in Eastern DRC.

- ECC-South Kivu is also using the Bible through the Tamar Campaign to educate and sensitise their community on GBV.

Union des Eglises Indépendantes au Congo (UEIC):

- Periodically, the Independent Church hold family oriented biblical reflections on family values like; love, mutual respect, faithfulness and equality in marital relationships.

Methodist Church:

The Methodist Church provides space for women in church leadership. This was exemplified by their female participant at the workshop who is both a pastor and a member of parliament.

- Though there is space provided for by the Methodist Church for women to participate in the affairs of the church, most women feel inferior and inadequate to rise to the occasion. This was pointed out as a hindrance to women empowerment that needs attention and action.

Eglise Kimbanguiste:

- Kibanguists give respect to the role of women in ministry and derive their position historically from the time when Kibangu was imprisoned and his wife had to offer leadership to the church. However, they are aware of cultural hindrances that they have to face in their quest towards women empowerment.

Communauté Islamique au Congo (COMICO):

- Islam is guided by its bylaws on all matters including those regarding gender. Though there are no women Imams, women are respected and they can teach in none worship meetings (i.e. Aisha taught disciples). Women are also free to seek equal employment opportunities.

Eglise de Réveil au Congo (ERC):

- ERC has been teaching on gender relations for awhile. However, they have noticed that women don't support each other and sometimes undermine each other. In addition, it is their observation that women feel inadequate and therefore decline leadership and public responsibilities. In this light, they appealed to the women to support each other and for faith communities to empower and encourage women.

Armed Forces Chaplaincy:

The chaplain of the Armed forces has been trained by NCA on gender issues. He pointed out that:

- Together with some of his colleagues they are trying to sensitise the armed forces on GBV.
- Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in Eastern DRC is both an internal and a regional problem. He explained this position by saying that though rebels from Rwanda are perpetrators of SGBV in Eastern DRC, the Congolese culture and the armed forces sub-culture also encourage SGBV. The plenary was informed that most soldiers view women as objects to be plundered together with animals and other enemy property during war.
- Women are not accorded prominent positions in the armed forces. This is due to both patriarchal culture and an inherited armed forces culture.

North Kivu

Communauté Islamique au Congo (COMICO):

- The Islamic community in North Kivu has attempted to popularize the message on GBV among their followers but their efforts are not adequate.
- It is their argument that women are left behind due to lack of education opportunities accorded to them.
- They also maintain that women empowerment should not compromise teachings from the sacred texts.

Methodist Church:

- Most of the activities in the Methodist Church are carried out by women except for preaching. They sense more oppression and discrimination at the domestic level more than within the church.

Lutheran Church:

- Positions of responsibility in the Lutheran Church are mainly held by men with a very narrow space given to women.

Kimbanguistes:

- As was shared in South Kivu, women's role in ministry is recognized, affirmed and appreciated within the Kimbanguist Church.

CEBCA:

- CENCA provides scholarships to women in different fields and they are part of the elders' court.

CECA:

- Many women are taken hostage by the culture because a number of them say that there are certain activities that are reserved to men only.

Eglise de Reveil:

- Women are still not empowered enough to adequately participate in church meetings or seminars.

ECC/Nord- Kivu:

- Within ECC–North Kivu, there is gender mainstreaming and women are integrated in almost all programmes. They also equip the women in their community for political leadership. However it was noted that at times women are not able to adequately deliver at their designated positions because they have not received enough training in those fields.

NEO-Apostolique:

- There was an acknowledgment that for a long time women have been discriminated against within the NEO-Apostolique but lately there has been some progress as women are increasingly being provided space.

COMBATING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN EASTERN DRC: THE ROLE OF FAITH COMMUNITIES

Main Presentation by Mr. Fred Nyabera

Mr. Nyabera began the presentation by pointing out that faith community poses a strategic position which provides them with access both to the grassroots level of society and the top government officials and state apparatus.

He then went ahead to list five Comparative Advantages of Faith Communities in Advocacy and in Combating GBV, namely:

- a) A clear mission and message, which resound easily with those belonging to religious communities and often far beyond their traditional constituencies.
- b) A permanent historic and widely spread presence in society at large and local communities in particular.

- c) Well-developed infrastructure, often including communication networks that link local, national, and international offices.
- d) The legitimacy enabling them to make clear and courageous statements during the crises, and
- e) A traditional orientation towards peace and promotion of respectful human relations.¹

Mr. Nyabera then led the participants in identifying some of the duty bearers and right holders on which to address advocacy initiatives as listed below:

Duty Bearers

- Policy Makers
- Law enforcement institutions
- Religious leaders
- Parents and guardians
- Various service providers to survivors of abuse like medical personnel and counselors chief customaries
- Traditional and village elders.

Rights Holders

- Survivors of gender based violence and their families
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged women and children
- Women in armed conflict situations

The following were identified as some **areas where faith communities can play a key role in combating GBV.**

- Fact finding missions.
- Advocacy and lobbying.
- Monitoring Human Rights.
- Capacity Building.
- Women Empowerment.
- Providing emotional and spiritual support- Counselling.
- Providing shelter.
- Provide sanctions and deterrent measures for perpetrators.
- Referrals – referring survivors of GBV to other organizations for different kinds of assistance (legal, shelter, medical etc.).
- Preaching and teaching about the evils of GBV.

¹ Stein Villumstad, Frameworks for Dialogue: Interfaith Action in Times of Conflict, 2004.

Mr. Nyabera proceeded to give examples of other **faith based experiences from other countries** on advocacy issues:

- Acholi Religious Leaders Initiative.
- Inter Religious Forum of Kenya.
- Tanzanian Religious Leaders.
- Sierra Leon Religious Leaders.

Mr. Nyabera concluded his presentation by sharing some of the **lessons learnt** from his peacebuilding work through faith based communities. He stated that:

- In Africa, religious leaders are critical actors. On one hand they are actors who can bring about positive change if well equipped and mobilized, as it happened in the DRC during the last general elections, and on the other hand they can also bring about negative influences as the case in Rwanda during the genocide and Kenya during the 2007 post elections violence; in essence, religious leaders are actors who cannot be ignored.

Plenary Discussions

There was a general consensus that faith communities and religious institutions have enormous potential and comparative advantages that would greatly enhance their ability to combat GBV in Eastern DRC. To illustrate this potential and authority that faith communities have, the following examples were given:

- When General Laurent Nkunda wanted to overrun Goma, the government and the Special UN envoy sort the intervention of the church which prevailed on him to restrain.
- When a rape convict in Goma was about to be released due to corruption in the system, the women of faith protested and the decision was reversed.
- Opinion shapers and policy makers attend worship places every week and this accords a good platform to advocate and teach against GBV.

Concern was raised that these comparative advantages and potential have not been fully utilised. Some of the pitfalls identified include:

- Some faith communities and leaders don't consider combating GBV as their calling and mission.
- Some faith leaders fear being targeted and harassed by the perpetrators from the police and the armed forces.

- The religious leaders themselves may be guilty of domestic and sexual violence and hence lack credibility.
- Some religious leaders are convicted of their calling to combat GBV but lack the right skills and recourses to respond appropriately.
- The church is divided and hence its voice cannot be heard. With unity comes strength.
- Some religious leaders would not confront the structural systems that encourage GBV due to fear of losing favour with the politicians who grand them favours.
- Some religious leaders and communities give stronger allegiance to their traditional cultures than the sacred texts and teachings that call for action against GBV. This was seen as an issue to be further reflected on.

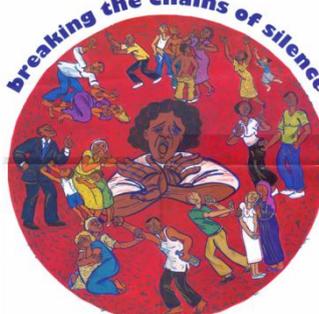
In addition to the above pitfalls the following were made as considerations for the faith communities to consider when responding to GBV:

- The capacity of the wives of the religious leaders should be enhanced so as to support their husbands in combating GBV.
- Right teaching on gender relations that go beyond pre-marital counselling should be introduced or strengthened within the faith communities.
- An interfaith platform for combating GBV should be created as this will enhance unity, develop a coherent message and strengthen the advocacy voice of the religious communities.

TAMAR CAMPAIGN

Main Presentation by Mr. Fred Nyabera

TAMAR CAMPAIGN



STOP VIOLENCE

"Don't my brother, do not force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing".
2 Samuel 13:12

Mr Nyabera started his presentation by explaining that the name and basis of the Tamar Campaign is derived from the Story of the rape of Tamar by her half brother Amnon in 2 Samuel 13:1-21. He further stated that Tamar is a symbol of strength as she did not keep silent when she was violated. She protested.

Tamar Campaign, he explained seeks to acknowledge the existence of Gender-Based Violence in our society, with particular focus on sexual and domestic violence, and to challenge churches to address the problem.

Mr Nyabera proceeded to point out that the church is uniquely placed to play a decisive role in the prevention and elimination of the different forms of violence against women and children:

- It has the moral authority, responsibility and capacity to minister to the needs of those who have been abused, as well as deal with the perpetrators.
- It can provide opportunities for healing for victims, for example, by providing emotional and spiritual support, counselling, and shelter. This would complement the efforts of hospitals, civil society organizations, and the police.

It can also provide sanctions and deterrent measures for perpetrators, for example, by holding them accountable for their deeds, and providing them with counselling.

- It can play a proactive role through its preaching and teaching about the evil of Gender-Based Violence, thereby setting standards for societal values that will protect the well-being and dignity of women and children.

The Campaign's vision is *a continent, which is free from Gender-Based Violence, in which men and women relate as equal partners made in God's image.*

In addition, the Campaign's mission is *to demonstrate God's compassion and justice to women and children who suffer indignity and violation through sexual and domestic violence.*

The Campaign's primary goal is therefore, to work towards the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence.

Objectives:

Tamar Campaign's objectives were outlined as follows:

- a) To raise awareness on the prevalence, magnitude and consequences of sexual and domestic violence.
- b) To encourage churches to speak out against the abuse of women and children.
- c) To promulgate teaching that will build right relationships between men and women as equal partners made in God's image.
- d) To promote Bible studies and curricula on violence against women/children for use in theological institutions and churches.
- e) To build the capacity of churches to provide support and opportunities for healing for victims of sexual and domestic violence.
- f) To encourage churches to hold perpetrators accountable for their acts of violence and help them to come to terms with the issue and reconcile them to society.
- g) To collaborate with churches on violence prevention, for example, through programmes for men and youth.
- h) To strengthen churches' networking and collaboration with civil society organizations, health service providers, schools, the police, judiciary, local administration, media, other faiths, and other stakeholders in addressing the problem of sexual and domestic violence.

Tamar Campaign and UN Security Council Resolution 1325

Mr. Nyabera stated that the major strengths of the Tamar Campaign is its versatility and therefore;

- It is a tool that offers the Church a safe space to reflect on the 3Ps discussed in UNSC Resolution 1325;
- The Contextual Bible Studies and theological reflections help to draw out examples in the Bible of women who have been involved in peace building;
- The Tamar Campaign offers an advocacy tool that can be used by the Church in the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 (3Ps)

Mr. Nyabera concluded by saying that in addressing its core business of conflict transformation and peacebuilding in the region, it has become evident to FECCLAHA that the plight of women and children in the conflict and post-conflict situations cannot be ignored. They are the battle field and silently bear the brunt of war; rape, incest, and other attacks. Hence, through the Tamar Campaign FECCLAHA seeks to challenge the church as God's instrument to speak out against any form of gender based violence.

Plenary Discussions.

- There was consensus that the Tamar Campaign is a timely tool that can be used by the religious leaders to combat GBV in Eastern DRC. In addition, Muslims were encouraged to identify and highlight verses that address GBV in the Koran.
- Concern was made regarding the Tamar's Campaign sixth objective (f) which reads *"To encourage churches to hold perpetrators accountable for their acts of violence and help them to come to terms with the issue and reconcile them to society."*

Some participants felt that it was for the law enforcement agencies to hold the perpetrators legally accountable and not faith communities. The work of faith communities, they argued was reconciliation and rehabilitation. On the other hand another group argued that all perpetrators should face legal justice.

After some debate in both Bukavu and Goma a consensus was reached that any kind of reconciliation and rehabilitation should never encourage impunity and that justice should never be relegated to the periphery. It was further pointed out that justice and grace must go hand in hand and each case must be handled within its own context after thorough investigation.

THE WORK OF ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES DES MEDIAS (AFEM), IN COMBATING GBV IN DRC

Main Presentation by AFEM Bukavu, 17th August 2010

The representative of AFEM gave a general overview regarding the work of AFEM in advocacy against GBV and how faith communities can collaborate with them. In her presentation she pointed out the following:

- AFEM responds to GBV through the media.
- Through their work they have contributed towards breaking the chain of silence regarding sexual gender based violence within the DRC society.
- They have been involved in international advocacy that led to the visit by the USA Secretary of State, Mrs. Hillary Clinton to Goma.
- They have organised several trainings on how to combat GBV, including the training of the military personnel.
- They work in seven provinces in the DRC
- They collaborate with other organizations like Panzi Hospital.
- They are ready and willing to work with faith based institutions and religious leaders towards combating GBV in DRC.

Plenary Discussions.

Participants received AFEMA's invitation to collaborate with the religious leaders but pointed out that such collaboration must respect the religious values and teaching.

INTERNAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT WITHIN THE FAITH COMMUNITIES

The participants were divided into groups in both Bukavu and Goma and they all addressed the same questions. Below are the questions and summary responses.

Question 1. How can women be empowered internally in the different faith communities?

- Women should be given space to use their gifts and talents within religious institutions.

- Women should not be discriminated against, from holding leadership positions that complement their ability, training and gifts within religious institutions.
- Ensure participation of women in different meetings and seminars.
- Women should be represented at all sectors and levels of religious institutions.
- Women should be given relevant education at all levels from basic literacy to university education.
- Ensure participation of women in decision-making processes.
- Women's self esteem and self confidence should be strengthened. In addition, they should be assured that just like men, they have what it takes to deliver;
- Men should be educated on women's rights and challenged to respect women.
- Gender seminars should be conducted as a way of dealing with retrogressive cultural beliefs and practices that oppress women.
- Women should be educated on their rights and potential.

Question 2. How can the message of women empowerment be transmitted to the people on the ground?

- Through radio and television;
- Through women groups;
- Through grassroots worship places;
- Through the village leaders;
- Through developmental structures at the grassroots level;
- Those already trained, should come up with a strategy of transmitting the messages to their colleagues at the grass root;
- Women should be empowered and assisted in carrying out sensitization activities to their colleagues on the ground;
- Organising projects that target people in the grassroots;
- Seminars on women empowerment should be organized for the grassroots churches;
- The grassroots women should be invited to various seminars.

Question 3. How can Faith Based Institutions contribute to the fight against GBV?

- Pastors should strongly preach and teach against GBV as sin;
- Fight against impunity and stigma of rape;
- Provide space for women to use their gifts and qualifications;
- Commit themselves to regularly pray against GBV;

- High level advocacy targeting Churches, local chiefs and government;
- The church should lead by example on women empowerment and in the fight against GBV;
- The achievements of women should be recognized and rewarded as an incentive;
- Ensure women representation in different national and international meetings and activities;
- Creation of a platform that combats all kinds of gender violence and discrimination;
- Provide space for women to exercise their rights;
- Provide leadership space for women in accordance with their level of competence;
- Ensure adequate training for women;
- Men to consider women as their partners created in the image of God.

INTERFAITH PLATFORM FOR COMBATING GBV THROUGH ADVOCACY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Main Presentation by Mr. Fred Nyabera

Mr Nyabera began by reaffirming the need for an interfaith platform for combating GBV through advocacy and women empowerment. A comment was made that the proposed platform needed to be well thought through to stop it from becoming a source of conflict within the faith communities in itself. It was also pointed out that the sustainability of such a platform should be considered when it is being formed.

Mr. Nyabera made the following clarifications:

- The proposed platform was not a new organization but a forum on member organizations.
- The proposed platform shall be inclusive.
- The proposed platform had a clear specific task of combating GBV through advocacy and women empowerment.
- The proposed platform was to be created and owned by the faith communities in South and North Kivu.

He then proceeded to facilitate the formation of the platform as shown bellow.

BACKGROUND:

Eastern DRC Interfaith Forum for Combating GBV through Advocacy and Women empowerment is an initiative of South Kivu and North Kivu Faith Communities. The Platform is a response to the GBV issues that the South and North Kivu provinces are faced with. It is also a bid to provide an advocacy platform and harmonise faith based Gender Based Violence activities in the Eastern part of the DRC for greater impact. The forum's geographical focus is South and North Kivu in the DRC.

The forum's **purpose** is:

1. To heighten awareness on the gravity of GBV in Eastern DRC, in a bid to lobby and advocate for GBV-related policies and interventions within Eastern DRC.
2. To promote dialogue between various key stakeholders, through instructive presentations, meetings and other events.
3. To disseminate information about actions and activities being carried out by members.
4. To share an analysis of all developments related to GBV and advocacy in the region.
5. To reach a common understanding of priority issues related to GBV in Eastern DRC and how to respond to them effectively.
6. To provide space for discussing complimentary faith-based approaches and options towards combating GBV.

The Forum shall be guided by the following **principles**:

1. A commitment to integrity and clarity in analysing and addressing challenges of GBV. The platform will only be productive and worthwhile if it is perceived and designed to launch a multifaceted approach to address the structural as well as the proximate causes of GBV in the provinces.
2. Recognition that GBV is an impediment to peaceful coexistence and sustainable development and will, therefore, work for a just society where men and women can participate equitably in all decision making that affects their wellbeing, including allocation of resources.
3. A belief that this work is strengthened by collaborating with like-minded stakeholders and will strive to build alliances within the provinces, country, region, the continent and globally superseding interdenominational and religious differences.
4. Noting that the origins of GBV in Eastern DRC lie both within DRC and the region as a whole.

The Forum's **structure** shall consist of the Conference and Two Boards.

Conference:

- Shall consist of all the Forum members.
- The Forum Conference shall be convened by the Board.
- The Conference shall meet once a year funds permitting.
- The venue of the Conference shall be decided on by the Board with considerations being paid to advocacy opportunities.
- It is envisaged that the Forum will be necessary as long as there are SGBV challenges in any Eastern part of the DRC. If there are major shifts in SGBV concerns, the status of the platform shall be reviewed.

Board:

- The Forum will have two Boards, one in Bukavu (South Kivu) and another in Goma (North Kivu).
- Shall comprise of representatives from the Forum's constituencies.
- Shall steer and offer prophetic leadership to the process.
- Shall provide a link between the Secretariat and the Conference.
- Shall coordinate the activities of the two provinces, enhance advocacy, information sharing and learning. In addition, they shall liaise with each other.
- Shall ensure ownership of the process.
- Shall prepare and set the agenda of the Conference and appoint facilitators where necessary.
- Shall review progress and monitor developments between the Forum's Conferences.
- Membership of the Board shall reflect and represent the ownership of Forum. It shall comprise of the representatives from the following constituencies.

South Kivu Board:

- Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC): 2 Representatives
- Eglise de Réveil au Congo (ERC): 2 Representatives
- Union des Eglises Indépendantes au Congo (UEIC): 2 Representatives
- Communauté Islamique au Congo (COMICO): 2 Representatives
- Eglise Kimbanguiste: 2 Representatives
- Eglise Catholique: 2 Representatives
- Laissez l'Afrique Vivre (LAV): 1 Representative

- Association des Femmes des Medias (AFEM): 1 Representative

North Kivu Board:

- Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC): 2 Representatives
- Eglise de Réveil au Congo (ERC): 2 Representatives
- Union des Eglises Indépendantes au Congo (UEIC): 2 Representatives
- Communauté Islamique au Congo (COMICO): 2 Representatives
- Eglise Kimbanguiste: 2 Representatives
- Eglise Catholique: 2 Representatives
- Neo - Apostolique : 1 Representative
- Eglise Adventiste : 1 Representative
- Nazareen : 1 Representative
- Laissez l'Afrique Vivre (LAV): 1 Representative.

The Moderator of the Board shall be appointed during the first board meeting. This meeting will also decide on the Moderator's tenure. A Moderator may only serve for one term; the post shall rotate; however, a former Moderator can be re-appointed after a break of one term.

The frequency of the meeting and the secretariat if any shall be decided in the first Board Meeting.

The Board may invite resource persons to its meetings at its discretion.

Membership will be drawn from: Eglise du Christ au Congo, Eglise de Réveil au Congo (ERC), Union des Eglises Indépendantes au Congo (UEIC), Communauté Islamique au Congo (COMICO), Eglise Kimbanguiste, Eglise Catholique, Orthodoxe, Néo - Apostolique, Eglise Adventiste, Nazaréen Laissez l'Afrique Vivre- L'Association des Femmes des Medias (AFEM) among others.

Other faith and faith-related organizations and individuals, as identified by the Board.

In the spirit of Principle 3, the Platform will develop working relationships with other organisations and individuals as deemed necessary.

The Forum will strive to ensure that the following are **mainstreamed** in all its initiatives and activities:

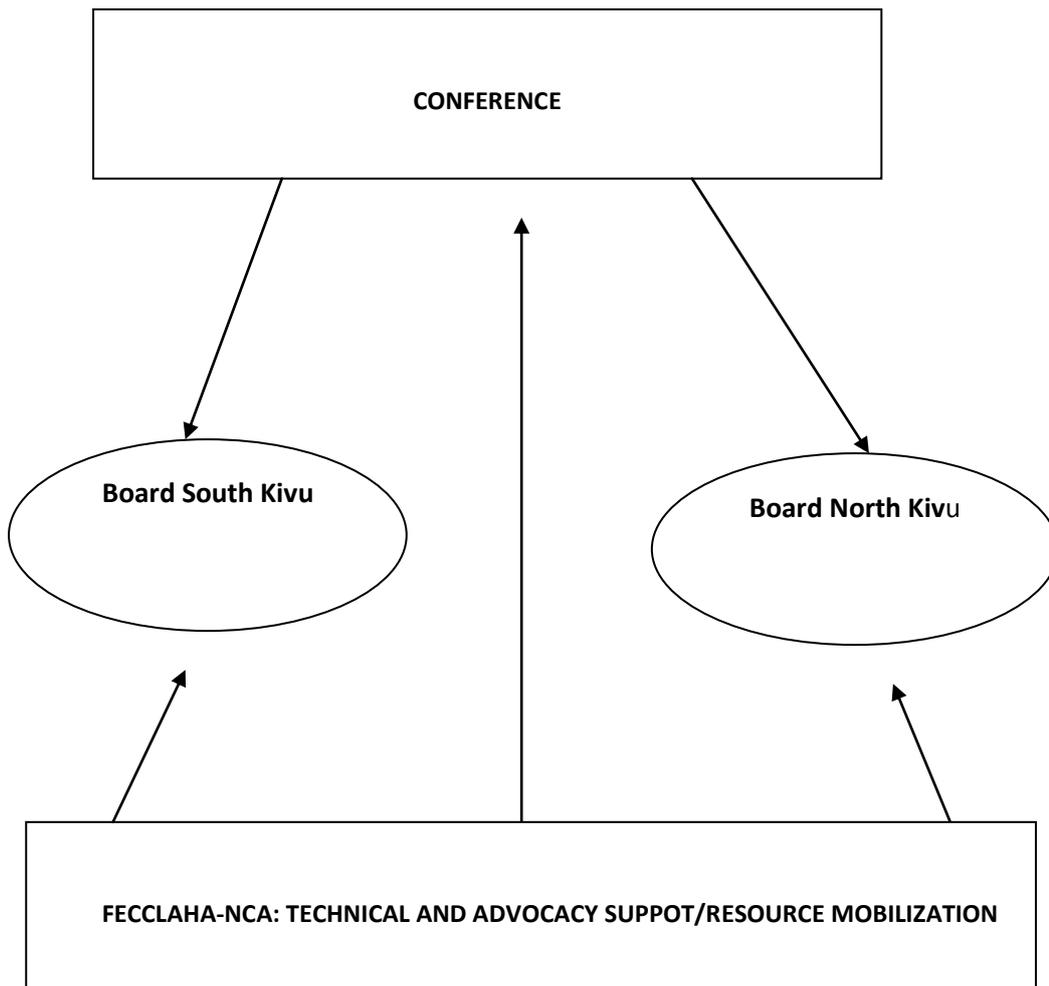
1. Equitable participation of women.
2. Involvement of youth.

3. Integration of faith based teachings and values.
4. Promotion of interdenominational/religious dialogue and cooperation.
5. Non-partisan interventions that cut across borders.
6. Commitment to integrity, clarity and gender-sensitivities in analysing and addressing issues related to GBV.
7. Cooperation and complimentarity with existing initiatives from likeminded stakeholders.

FECCLAHA Shall provide technical and international advocacy support to the Forum.

NCA Shall provide technical support, international advocacy support and assist in mobilizing resources.

Platform’s Organogramme



PLAN OF ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Inter-faith Platform:

- It was decided that names of those nominated by different confessions and denominations should be passed on to Pastor Kubisa of LAV by 30th August, 2010
- It was agreed that LAV will call the first Board Meeting of South Kivu Inter-Faith Forum by mid September 2010.
- It was agreed that EECC-North Kivu together with LAV will call the First Board Meeting of North Kivu Inter-Faith Forum by mid September 2010.
- It was agreed that FECCLAHA will draft the agenda of the first board meetings.
- It was agreed that the office bearers and the frequency of the board meetings shall be decided during the first board meetings.

Themes:

The following themes were adopted for future discussion and implementation:

- Tamar Campaign;
- Advocacy and Lobbying Techniques;
- Gender Mainstreaming;
- Transformative Leadership;
- Women in Leadership;
- Redemptive Masculinity;
- The nexus between GBV and HIV/ AIDS;
- Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict.

Strategies:

- FECCLAHA was tasked to facilitate the development of a GBV advocacy strategy.
- FECCLAHA was tasked to facilitate the development of plan for fighting GBV within and through churches.
- The above strategy and plan shall be discussed at the second board meeting and tabled for approval by the conference in late October or early November 2010.
- FECCLAHA shall provide technical and international advocacy support to the Forum.

- NCA shall provide technical support, international advocacy support and assist in mobilizing resources.

CLOSING REMARKS

On behalf of NCA Mr. Joseph Kahayira, NCA Programme Coordinator for DRC expressed sincere thanks to all the participants of the workshops and the facilitators and gave an assurance of continued accompaniment and support of the process by NCA.

Both the Bukavu and Goma Workshops ended with prayers led by the respective religious leaders.