

‘Framework of hope’ launched to equip women in transparent use of DRC resources

Addis Ababa, 28 January 2013 (ECA) - At the Official Launch of the Women’s Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes, dubbed, the ‘framework of hope’, Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa underscored that women, who make up the majority of the population must participate in conflict resolution and sustainable peace building processes, as it is fundamental to restoring their dignity and their basic human right.

Recognizing the recurring cycles of conflict and violence that permeate the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, eleven African countries signed a cooperation framework in 2013. The women’s platform will equip women with the modern tools, information and strategies they need to shape the reconstruction and the transparent management and use of the region’s vast mineral and natural resources.

He said the DRC alone has 80 percent of the world’s coltan reserves; more than 60 percent of the world cobalt and the world’s largest supply of high grade copper. In addition, the country is endowed with many other mineral and natural resources such as manganese, uranium, timber leading to naming DRC as the richest patch of earth on the planet. Yet, stressed Mr. Lopes, the role of women in managing these assets is not often recognized, financed or facilitated.

“Their strength and resilience, their role as sole care takers of families, their ingenuity in managing resources in the most complex of situations and their influence in peace building efforts has until now been under-valued and gone unrecognized,” he said.

He underscored the importance of the framework, which he said offers an opportunity to start changing the region’s narrative by harnessing the collective potential of the women in the region.

“Women are key agents of change and the engine of the social and economic reconstruction of the DRC; their contributions in shaping an inclusive and comprehensive peace agenda in the region will save the lives of millions,” he stated and added that transforming Africa requires addressing women’s socio-economic and political rights.

“The Great Lakes Women’s Platform is an integral step in that direction as women have the solutions,” he said.

The Executive Secretary congratulated the efforts of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General to the Great Lakes region (OESG-GL); the Global Fund for Women (GFW); Femme Africa Solidarite (FAS); The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG); and Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises. He also hailed Special Envoy, Mary

Robinson for what he described as her ‘pivotal role and contribution to bringing human rights and in particular women’s human rights at the forefront of the global governance and development agenda.’