



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Ambassade de Suisse en  
République démocratique du Congo



Ministère du Genre,  
de la Famille et de l'Enfant

## Conference on the Status of Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo

20 and 21 November 2014  
Kinshasa

**The Participants** of this conference will be influential women and men from national and international civil society, the world of politics, donors, international organizations and the private sector.

The event targets as a priority individuals that are involved in the elaboration of gender policies, or in charge of gender programs. Also attending this meeting will be persons responsible for funding gender-related projects in the DRC and those who actively advocate for women's rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Even though the conference will focus on the situation of women in the DRC, its organizers are confident that the lessons learned from the reflection process initiated in July 2013 will also apply to women in other developing countries.

### The Conference

For more than a year now, 20 representatives of Congolese society, amongst whom parliamentarians, leading personalities from civil society and the religious world, former government ministers as well as representatives from government ministries have been meeting regularly to work together for in-depth analyses of the causes and consequences of the declining status of women's rights in the DRC, and to identify solutions that could lead to an improvement of the status of Congolese women and girls.

They found that despite the efforts deployed by the government, including considerable progress on the legislative front as well as significant work done by civil society, the situation of women in the DRC in recent years seemed to deteriorate rather than improve, not only in the conflict-torn east of the country, but throughout the country.

Although sexual violence found in these armed conflict areas remains extremely worrying, domestic violence, sexual exploitation of women and girls, including young students, discrimination in the socio-economic and political contexts, the low level of education and the absence of life choices are all harsh realities Congolese women regularly face.

This conference will be the culminating point of reflections carried out during more than a year by a distinguished group of Congolese citizens. During panel discussions, members of the group will present their findings and recommendations, with a focus on the causes for the situation of women and a particular emphasis on recommendations for international donors and policy makers, national political actors, as well as civil society.





Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Ambassade de Suisse en  
République démocratique du Congo



Ministère du Genre,  
de la Famille et de l'Enfant

Congolese actors who were not involved in the process will respond to the presentations during the panel discussions. International and national conference participants will contribute to the final conclusions and recommendations through discussions in working groups. The conference proceedings will be published at a later date.

### Why this conference?

For a number of years, the activities of both national and international actors have been focusing primarily on sexual violence in conflict areas in the east. These initiatives are highly commendable, as the victims of such violence are in urgent need of assistance.

But is this violence not rather symptomatic of a much more widespread and much less visible social problem?

In order to get to the bottom of this question, the group carried out an in-depth reflection and analysis of the real causes of a situation which has become widespread in the DRC and beyond.

In addition, factors were analyzed that are thought to contribute to the outbreak of violence against women in conflict areas. Similarly, the group gave particular attention to the prevalence of certain practices that contribute to undermine the status of Congolese women, including the lack of opportunities in the political and judicial realm, corruption, the lack of allocation of financial resources to women, early marriage, and harassment at schools, universities and in the workplace, impunity for sexual and gender-based violence.

In recent years, the Congolese government has invested in safeguarding women's rights and the fight against sexual violence, which are prohibited by the Congolese Penal Code, for example the law on sexual violence of 20 July 2006 and the law on Child Protection of 10 January 2009. A national strategic plan to fight sexual violence has also been adopted.

Similarly, Congolese civil society, often with the financial support of the international community, led actions advocating combating violence against women.

Why then this lack of progress? A lack of progress despite millions of dollars invested and commendable efforts of hundreds of NGOs?

### What are the objectives of this conference?

- Presentation and discussion of the findings from the process of reflection on the status of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Presentation and discussion of recommendations from the process of reflection on the status of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Proposal for a new agenda for women, developed by leaders of Congolese society





Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Ambassade de Suisse en  
République démocratique du Congo



Ministère du Genre,  
de la Famille et de l'Enfant

## Who are the organizers?

While the reflection process was initiated and has been made possible by the Embassy of Switzerland, and supported by the Carter Center DRC, the participants have entire ownership of the process and the substantive content it has produced.

Since July 2013, 20 women and men met every other month in plenary sessions and between plenaries in small groups to move the process forward and develop the findings and recommendations that will be discussed during this conference.

As is obvious from the attached list of participants, this group includes distinguished leaders from diverse backgrounds and origins of Congolese society.

This conference is a joint and voluntary effort by the members of the reflection group.

## Logistics

The Conference on the Status of Women in the DRC will take place in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, on 20 and 21 November 2014 at the Beatrice Hotel whose owners generously offer its meeting space as a contribution to the radiance of the status of Congolese women.

The Conference will be held in French. Interpretation into English can be provided, based on the number of English-speaking participants, however.

To attend the conference, please send back the registration form before 25 October 2014. The organizers are unfortunately not able to bear the cost of travel or accommodation for the participants. A list of hotels near the conference venue and a provisional program will be attached to the invitation once your attendance is confirmed. If necessary, the organizers will facilitate reservations in hotels or hostels in Kinshasa.

For further information please contact

### Anny Tengamendite Modi

Communication and Logistics officer  
International Conference on the status of women in DRC  
Kinshasa – Gombe  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
Cell phone +243 (0)854 398 214  
[info@confsfrdc.org](mailto:info@confsfrdc.org)  
[www.confsfrdc.org](http://www.confsfrdc.org)

@statutfemmerdc

statutfemmerdc

### Rino Kamidi

Project Coordinator  
Embassy of Switzerland  
Kinshasa – Gombe  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
Cell phone +243 (0)856 402 331  
[info@confsfrdc.org](mailto:info@confsfrdc.org)  
[www.confsfrdc.org](http://www.confsfrdc.org)

@statutfemmerdc

statutfemmerdc

