



WILPF Report on DRC UPR

13th session, Thursday, March 18, 2010

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H.E.Mr. Luzolo Bambi Lessa, Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Mr. Luzolo Bambi Lessa, takes the floor mentioning that 124 recommendations have been accepted by the DCR. Most of these recommendations have been applied, or will be by next spring, e.g. the parity law on men-women. Mr. Lessa states DRC will ratify the Human Rights Convention. In the east of the country, a new program on peace is being promoted, in addition to a pacification of the armed troops.

Sexual violence is a big issue against which DRC struggles. Regarding sexual violence, DRC introduced a new program designed to:

- Heighten public awareness on the topic through audiovisual campaigns;
- Fight impunity for sex-crimes;
- Ensure prosecution of soldiers and policeman who commit sex-crimes
- Create a special agency to fight violence against women and girls
- Promote ECOSOC Rights

Recent achievements:

- Construction of hospitals;
- Improved supply of electricity;
- Improvement and development of business;

Struggle against poverty

The struggle against child soldiers: a program unit for the disarmament and demobilization of troops has been created. This program, assisted by Caritas and the FAO, has contributed to the demobilization of more than 5000 men and children.

Struggle for Justice

DRC is trying to improve the ratio of cases handled by justice courts. A global plan on Justice Improvement and Renovation is being implemented throughout the country. There is one magistrate for 30'000 inhabitants; this is insufficient. To correct this discrepancy, 2000 new magistrate candidates have been nominated, and will be assigned to the specific issue of

peace maintenance. 145 tribunals will be implemented throughout the country to provide greater judicial coverage. As part of a plan to lessen the congestion of the system, new jails are being constructed, and rehabilitation of old prisons is underway; a special unit for women has been constructed in Goma.

Progress has been made against Army and Police impunity; all officers who have abused women or children will be prosecuted. A mixed Justice commission was created, and a special structure for civil society is in progress. The Ministries of Justice, and Human Rights have been merged to increase their power, and facilitate collaboration.

Observer States:

(Algeria, Cuba, USA, China, Senegal, Italy, Belgium, Cameroun, Morocco, Congo):

Most countries approve and congratulate the DRC for adopting 124 of the UN recommendations. However, there is still a way to go, especially regarding human rights, in particular those of women and children.

Most countries call for help from the International Community to support DRC financially and technically, and encourage its move towards democracy.

NGOs :

(FIDH, Franciscains International, IPD-Action International pour la Paix et le Développement dans la Région des Grands Lacs, ICJ, CIRAC, Interfaith International, VIDES, IMA, International Salesians, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Amnesty International)

Most of the NGOs disagree that progress has been made in DRC regarding human rights, especially those of women and children. They argue there is a real risk for the destabilization of the entire region. Furthermore, regarding the specific rights of women and children, sex-crimes, the harassment and killing of child witches, and other injustices are still rampant. The lack of power in the Institutions of Justice, Education, and Health is stressed: there are neither sufficient Tribunals, nor Magistrates to make them function properly; many crimes go unpunished, especially sex crimes committed by police and military personnel; schools are not free, and most parents are too poor to pay the education fees; and there is a lack of health care infrastructure.

In some regions, like Katanga, there is still a situation of economic- and sexual- exploitation of children (mine working, forced enrolment, etc.), and systematic violation of the UN Child's Right Convention has been observed. Special Reporters still have trouble gaining access to some jails, while the government pretends this not the case.

Minister Lessa's comments on countries and NGO's comments

Mr. Lessa thanks the different countries and NGO's for their comments. He stresses that all the accepted recommendations will be implemented. He emphasizes that particular attention will be shown sex-crimes. Finally, he promises zero tolerance regarding any type of infractions committed, and reiterates his government's commitment to eradicating all forms of impunity.