

Empowering Women for Peace



We will maintain a gender parity mindset

#PressforProgress



We will challenge stereotypes and bias

#PressforProgress



We will celebrate women's achievements

#PressforProgress



UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE-GREAT LAKES AFRICA

JANUARY-MARCH 2018 NEWSLETTER

Women's Day Celebrations within the URI Great Lakes Network

- CCs in the URI-Great lakes network had a robust participation in celebrating women's achievements from their different locations, From South Sudan, Rwanda, DRC,. In Uganda, the URI-GL Secretariat join hands with some Ugandan membership to join the campaign to "Press for Progress".
- We proudly commend **Wipe my Tears Foundation (WTF)** in South Sudan with support from UNMISS on the drive for "empowering Women for Peace on the Cessation of Hostilities. (Their drive on our cover picture tells it all). **The RESEAU CULTUREL SANGWA (RCS)-CULTURAL NETWORK SANGWA-Rwanda** did an amazing work in winning the continued government support in promoting a poverty free generation for women and their families. **In DRC, the Misercorde** women in Minembwe embarked on a community campaign calling upon members of the society to respect women by giving them equal treatment in all spheres of life. **In Uganda, some of our CCs namely, Action for Fundamental Change and Development (AFFCAD), Restoring and Empowering Communities (REC), PROMETRA Uganda, Body and Soul Development and Interfaith Youth Partnership (IYPA), joined their network friends in Mayuge (Friends of Community Health) and Jinja's Latter Glory of Religions in Busoga,** to Press for women's inclusion in Property Ownership. These are amazing efforts from our membership, and we believe, a life or two is saved from the social injustices that face a conflict stricken region like the Great Lakes. We thank our CCs for their solidarity in uniting for peace. We also thank our master and mistress of ceremony, Mr.Jaffer Nnyombi (AFFCAD) and our local community facilitator from Jinja, Ms. Mukyala Monica Katenderi respectively for keeping the function lively. **We celebrate every woman anywhere in the world and all the men that make women's issues their interest. The cover picture is a moment shared by Wipe my Tears Foundation CCs based in South Sudan, during their campaign supported by UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for putting women at the fore for Peace in the cessation of Hostilities in that region.**

Celebrating Women the Great Lakes Way



Top left & Bottom right are members of Wipe my Tears Foundation CC in South Sudan during their peace campaign with UNMISS. The rest are scenes of the women's day celebrations CCs in Eastern and Central Uganda

Celebrating Women the Great Lakes Way



Scenes of Sangwa CC women during their women's day celebrations in Rwanda (Top left & Bottom right). At the top right corner are children in Minembwe during Misercorde CCs Women's Day event & At the bottom left corner are Ugandan women marching for progress.

The World Interfaith Harmony Week Celebrations



It was one of those days during the WIHW celebrations, that surprise came knocking on the Secretariats doors. It was the team of PAMOJA CCs coming to celebrate interfaith harmony with the URI-GL secretariat Staff and in their words in part, "...we know you work day your hearts out to see to it that CCs make relevance in the communities they serve, but its very rare for you staff to be rewarded for the enormous work you do. That is why we have decided (as Pamoja team) to come and celebrate this day with you as a token of appreciation for mentoring the entire Great lakes Network..." A cake was shared among the Pamoja and the Secretariat staff, with the Regional Coordinator going back in time on the journey and essence of World interfaith harmony, which was a definitive learning for most of the members. The memories of this courteous gesture will live to stay in our hearts. We thank Pamoja CC members (led by Shabnam Olinga & Patrick Teko) and the entire tea for their loving hearts and choosing to celebrate this interfaith harmony cause with us. Across the border, we had two of our CCs groups, the National Coalition of Religions and Communities Together Burundi and the Central Africa Conflict Prevention Association (CACOPA) in DRC join the world for their first time ever to celebrate the World Interfaith Harmony Week. Our religious based group in Burundi brought different religious leaders together to awaken for the cause of interfaith harmony as a way of working with them to introduce it to their communities. For CACOPA CC, it was a gesture of humility visiting prisoners in Munzenze prison and provided them with basic necessities and made some motivational talks to help them face the challenges while in prison.



Scenes of the World Interfaith Harmony week celebration. Top: Some of Pamoja CC members during their surprise visit and cake in celebration of the with URI-GL staff. Bottom: A cross-section of faith leaders convened by the National Coalition of Religions and Community Together in Burundi

URI Africa All Congo Interfaith Platform (ACIP) in Kinshasa, DRC

- URI-Africa Director met with All Congo Interfaith Platform (ACIP) in Kinshasa, DRC. During his peace mission to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the URI-Africa Regional Director Amb. Mussie Hailu met with the Leaders of All Congo Interfaith Platform (ACIP) a URI's Cooperative Circle (CC) and Commission for Integrity and Electoral Mediation on March 14th 2018 at the Headquarter of the *Catholic Conference of Bishops (CENCO)* in Kinshasa.
- The agenda of the meeting was to inform ACIP on the structures of URI at different sub regions, the development of the work of URI in Africa and the rest of the world and to enhance more the working partnership of ACIP with URI to promote a culture of peace, inter-religious harmony and peaceful election, to resolve the problem of the illicit small arms and to address the problem of gender based violence and hate speech in DRC. The purpose of the visit was also to learn more on the work of ACIP at national level, to reflect together on how best URI could enhance the work of ACIP and foster more working participation for ACIP in the region and beyond through the network URI-Africa established over the years and to further encourage and motivate ACIP great work. He also expressed the greetings of peace in the name of URI global family, URI-Africa and on behalf of Ms. Despina Namwembe, URI Sub regional coordinator in the Great Lakes region. **To next page**



URI Africa All Congo Interfaith Platform (ACIP) in Kinshasa, DRC



The Regional Director of URI-Africa also commended the remarkable work being done by the Platform, whose work the URI continues to receive with high appreciation through Mr. Richie Lontulungu. He encouraged them to continue with the same pace and to pursue joint efforts, regardless of the hardship working conditions. Amb. Mussie Hailu echoed URIs mandate and scope of action in Africa especially striving to strengthen social cohesion and harmony among peoples of different religions, cultures and ethnicities for peaceful coexistence and harmony to prevail and to address the issue of violent extremism, hate speech and radicalization and to upholding human dignity through the teaching of the Golden Rule and promoting universal declaration of human rights.

He also shared in detail the upcoming plan of URI in Africa and invite the CC in DRC to work actively in close partnership with the sub regional office of URI in Great Lakes region and the rest of Africa. He also kindly asked them to work in addressing the issue of small arms and light weapons in DRC which is a big challenge for peace and security. **(more details can be found in the report)**



URI Trustee Nominations

During this quarter we had a robust participation of our members in the nomination of Trustees from Africa to serve on the URI Global Council, which serves as URI global governing board. The Trustees of URI are called to manifest the vision and values of the Preamble, Purpose, and Principles and model leadership and service by their actions, and to help secure URI's financial sustainability. Most of the contacts within the region (especially those with difficulties in internet access) had to move to urban places to make their CC certification and trustee nominations. Majority of our CC members in Uganda found the Secretariat an easier way, where as those across the border from DRC, South Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi used the same strategy of visiting internet cafes to have their forms sent. Kenya CC members had a convention in Nairobi to agree on supporting one candidate for the Trustee position. As we stand today, all ears are on the ground to know who the lucky members are to becoming Africa's next trustee representatives on the URI Global council for the next four years.