



WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

For a peaceful and developed Great Lakes Region

United Republic of Tanzania

November 2026

1. Overview

The Great Lakes Region of Africa is endowed with vast natural resources, cultural diversity, and human potential. Yet, it continues to face challenges linked to peace and security, governance, and sustainable development. Women in the region, particularly women parliamentarians, play a critical role in bridging divides, promoting inclusive governance, and addressing root causes of conflict.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) emphasizes the need to eliminate barriers and promote women's leadership and participation. Despite significant progress, women continue to be underrepresented in politics. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) database on women in national parliaments, as of July 1, 2025, women make up an average of 28 % of parliamentarians in the Great Lakes Region.

While significant progress has been made in advancing women's political participation, gender disparities persist in decision-making processes, and the voices of women leaders are not always sufficiently integrated into peace and security agendas. Recognizing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, as well as regional instruments such as the ICGLR Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, and all forms of Discrimination, the FP-ICGLR seeks to provide a dedicated platform for women legislators to shape policy and drive change.

2. Rationale

The Great Lakes Region has historically experienced periods of instability and armed conflict, during which women have been disproportionately affected. In response to this reality, the Conference seeks to strengthen the capacity of women parliamentarians to exercise greater influence within legislative bodies. By enhancing their ability to contribute effectively to legislative processes, the Conference will support the development and adoption of national

policies aimed at conflict prevention, management, and resolution, thereby fostering sustainable peace and stability in the Region.

The organization of this Conference is a direct recommendation from the 15th Plenary Assembly of the Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR, which took place in Luanda, Republic of Angola in April 2025. This assembly, held under the theme “*Inclusive Leadership and Decision-making in the Great Lakes Region*,” endorsed the organization of the conference as a strategic step to enhance the role of women parliamentarians in promoting empowerment of women throughout the region.

The Women’s Parliamentary Conference on Peace, Security and Development will bring together women legislators from the 12 ICGLR Member States, alongside representatives of regional organisations, civil society, and development partners. The aim is to strengthen regional solidarity, promote gender-responsive policymaking, and foster collaboration on key issues affecting the Great Lakes Region.

By convening in the United Republic of Tanzania — a country with a longstanding commitment to regional peace and host to significant ICGLR initiatives — the conference will serve as both a symbolic and practical milestone in advancing the role of women parliamentarians in regional stability and development.

3. Objectives

Overall Objective:

To enhance the capacity, influence, and collaboration of women parliamentarians in the Great Lakes Region in promoting peace, security, and sustainable development.

Specific Objectives:

- Provide a platform for dialogue and experience-sharing among women parliamentarians on peacebuilding, security, and development issues.
- Identify and propose legislative and policy interventions that advance gender equality and women's leadership in conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery.
- Strengthen partnerships between parliaments, civil society, and international partners in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related frameworks.
- Develop a joint action plan to guide regional parliamentary engagement on women, peace, and security beyond 2026.

4. Expected Outcomes

- A **Declaration** on Women Parliamentarians' Commitment to Peace, Security, and Development in the Great Lakes Region.
- A **Regional Action Plan** for women parliamentarians on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- Strengthened networks and partnerships between women parliamentarians and other stakeholders.
- Enhanced visibility of the role of women legislators in regional peacebuilding and development efforts.

5. Participants

The conference will gather approximately **250 participants**, including:

- Women parliamentarians from all 12 ICGLR Member States.
- Speakers of Parliament and selected male parliamentary champions of gender equality.
- Representatives of ICGLR Secretariat, African Union, EAC, SADC, APU and other regional bodies.
- Civil society organisations, especially women's networks and peacebuilding NGOs.
- Development partners and United Nations agencies.

6. Format and Methodology

- The conference will be structured around:
- **High-Level Opening Session** with keynote addresses from regional and international leaders.

Thematic Panels on:

- Women's leadership in conflict prevention and resolution.
- Gender-responsive legislation and best practices for peace and security.
- Socio-economic empowerment of women in post-conflict contexts.
- **Breakout Working Groups** to formulate recommendations and action points.
- **Adoption of the Declaration and Regional Action Plan.**

Approaches will include interactive plenary discussions, case study presentations, and networking sessions to foster peer learning.

7. Proposed Themes

1. **Women as Peacemakers:** Advancing the role of women in conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding.

2. **Parliamentary Leadership for Security and Stability:** Legislative tools for addressing insecurity and promoting inclusive governance.
3. **Development and Economic Empowerment:** Integrating gender perspectives into national and regional development policies.
4. **Partnerships for Impact:** Strengthening cooperation between parliaments, civil society, and international partners.