



---

# Civil Society and Democratic Transitions in the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda

---

Mashood Issaka and Batabiha Bushoki



## Acknowledgements

International Peace Academy's (IPA) Africa Program gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Government of Finland and the family of Ruth Forbes Young, founder of IPA, for the Civil Society Program.

## The Ruth Forbes Young Civil Society Fellowship Program

IPA initiated the Ruth Forbes Young Civil Society Fellowship program in 2001 to build the capacity of civil society in Africa to engage more actively in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, deepen the understanding of the United Nations (UN) community in New York on the conflict dynamics on the continent, promote networking and experience-sharing among civil society activists and groups and the UN community, and facilitate access by the groups to opportunities outside of Africa. The program sponsors one fellow from a region of Africa for a year in New York.

The civil society dialogue is the capstone event of the fellowship. It brings a number of civil society activists to New York to share experiences on the political and security challenges in Africa with the UN community. The 2005 dialogue, held on 19 April 2005, was the third and featured six activists from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. It focused on civil society perspectives, opportunities and constraints in the democratic transitions in the three countries. It was also a follow-up to IPA's March 2004 dialogue on "The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region," and the June 2004 taskforce meeting in Kenya titled "Civil Society and the State: Partnership for Peace in the Great Lakes Region."

## About IPA's Africa Program

The Africa Program of IPA works with partner institutions to:

- Serve as a useful guide to Africa's regional organizations and actors in assessing their strengths and weaknesses in the area of conflict prevention, management, and resolution;
- Identify the factors required to maximize the potential of Africa's security mechanisms and provide tangible support to regional organizations to strengthen their political and military institutions;
- Share experiences and lessons from the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and Africa's sub-regional organizations;
- Encourage the involvement of civil society actors in developing and shaping Africa's regional security mechanisms and to facilitate the development of civil society networking within Africa;
- Serve as a valuable resource for external actors and donors involved in assisting the development of Africa's security mechanisms;
- Create networks of knowledgeable and interested Africans to influence developments on their continent through interaction among themselves; and
- Provide a resource for scholars and students of conflict management in Africa in light of the paucity of knowledge on the continent's institutions and actors in the field of conflict management.

## About the Rapporteurs

Mr. Mashood Issaka is a Senior Program Officer at IPA and Mr. Batabiha Bushoki is an Associate at Africa Initiative Program (AIP). AIP is a Bunia (Eastern DRC)-based organization with a satellite office in Nairobi, Kenya. Mr. Bushoki was also the 2004-2005 IPA Civil Society Fellow.

# Table of Contents

Foreword .....	1
I. Introduction .....	3
II. The DRC: Civil Society, Democratic Transition and Peacekeeping .....	4
III. Burundi: Transitional Politics – Challenges and Complexes .....	5
IV. Rwanda: Suppression of Dissent, a Reconciliation Tool? .....	6
V. Conclusions .....	7
VI. Recommendations .....	7
Annex I: Agenda.....	9
Annex 2: Great Lakes Region Participants.....	10
Annex 3: Remarks by Ambassador Terje Rød-Larsen, President, IPA .....	11
Annex 4: Remarks by H.E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations.....	13



## Foreword

The International Peace Academy (IPA) is pleased to present this report which summarizes the proceedings from our 2005 Civil Society Dialogue on *the opportunities and constraints of civil society organizations in the transitional efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda*. The report is one of the products from four years of IPA's Ruth Forbes Young Civil Society Fellowship Program. In the last two years, the program – generously funded by the government of Finland and the family of Ruth Forbes Young – has focused on the challenges of the democratic processes in the Great Lakes region and the roles, potential and problems of civil society organizations. It has had three key objectives: (1) to provide an opportunity to civil society activists from Africa to broaden the understanding of the United Nations community on the conflict dynamics in Africa; (2) to explore alternative approaches to preventing and managing regional conflicts more effectively; and (3) to expand and strengthen interactions among civil society actors in Africa and their NGO counterparts in the United States, policymakers in the United Nations, research communities, and funding institutions.

Since its inception, the civil society program has sponsored three fellows. The first fellow, Mr. Augustine Toure, former deputy director of Liberia Democracy Watch, devoted the 2001/2002 year to an assessment of the conflict situations in the Mano River region of West Africa.

The second fellow, Mr. Arthur Bainomugisha, currently head of the peace and conflict program at Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) in Uganda, focused on the democratic transitions in the Great Lakes region and the Horn.

Mr. Bainomugisha had an intense year during which he organized the 2004 civil society dialogue on the theme "The Role of Civil Society and Peacebuilding in the

Great Lakes Region." The dialogue brought together participants from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda. He also organized several policy fora including the October 2003 event on the topic "Civil Society and Democratic Transitions in the Horn of Africa." Since returning home, Mr. Bainomugisha has been collaborating with other civil society activists to address the challenges of Uganda's complex transition to representative government and the resolution of the war in the north of that country.

This year's fellow, Mr. Batabiha Bushoki, has used his term to deepen understanding of the centrality of the DRC to the conflict dynamics of the Great Lakes. He is co-founder and associate of Africa Initiative Program of the DRC, which partners with community organizations to increase awareness on the conflict issues in the DRC, and also links local groups with regional and international organizations.

In September 2004, Mr. Bushoki represented IPA at the "Regional Preparatory Committee Meeting of NGOs" in Arusha, Tanzania, in advance of the United Nations' *International Conference on the Great Lakes Region*; organized the IPA policy forum in New York on "Post-Conflict Challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," in November 2004; and the 2005 civil society policy dialogue from which this current report is written.

IPA plans to continue its close collaboration with ongoing efforts by the African Union, African regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society actors to move the continental agenda towards durable peace and representative governance. The organization is committed to remaining engaged with civil society groups in its future programming.

Through this current report, IPA wishes to pay tribute to all those in the United Nations, the African Union, regional organizations and civil society groups who are working to promote a better future for Africa. It also wishes to thank its donors for their generous support for the program.



## 1. Introduction

On April 19, 2005, the International Peace Academy (IPA) Africa Program convened the third of its annual capstone civil society dialogues in New York. For a second consecutive year, the dialogue concentrated on civil society's role in peacebuilding and democratization in the Great Lakes region. Titled "Civil Society in the Great Lakes Region: Opportunities and Constraints," this year's dialogue centered on the transitional processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Burundi. These three countries are at the core of the conflicts that have ravaged the Great Lakes throughout the last decade, and are currently at various stages of transition from war to peace and from dictatorships to representative governance. The dialogue preceded three related IPA forums on Africa, which have now been held in New York and Vienna.<sup>1</sup> The key objectives of this year's dialogue were:

1. To assess the status of the ongoing transitions to representative governance and of the post-conflict reconstruction;
2. To examine the roles, opportunities and constraints of civil society in the transformation processes in the three countries;
3. To facilitate greater understanding within the diplomatic, academic and policy communities about the key factors influencing each of these transitions; and
4. To provide recommendations to assist civil society groups and the international community in accelerating these processes.

To achieve these ends, IPA brought a critical set of six civil society activists from DRC, Burundi and Rwanda



Ambassador Terje Rød-Larsen, President, IPA.

with backgrounds from human rights, humanitarian action, local level development, opinion polling and the media, to New York to share their experiences with the United Nations community.

Among the key issues that framed the dialogue were:

1. The level of confidence among civil society actors in the transitional processes, particularly about prospects for elections and enhanced security in the DRC and Burundi, and improvements in governance and human rights practices in Rwanda;
2. Local perceptions regarding the efficacy and professionalism of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), in light of the recent disclosures of massive sexual abuse and other problems, and of the UN Operations in Burundi (UNOB);
3. The experiences of civil society groups in their interactions with governments in advancing the transitions; in particular, how receptive governments have been to the proposals of civil society

<sup>1</sup> The annual New York Seminar, whose 2005 theme was "Partnership for Peace in Africa," was held from May 2–5, 2005; a policy forum in New York on the topic "African Perspective on the UN High-level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change," was held on May 6, 2005; and the annual Vienna seminar on the theme "Developing Peace Partnerships in Africa," was held in Vienna, Austria, from July 10–13. Reports from these meetings are available on IPA's website, [www.ipacademy.org](http://www.ipacademy.org). Please also access reports from our last civil society task force meeting, "Civil Society and the State: Partnership for Peace in the Great Lakes," Nairobi (June 2004), and civil society dialogue, "The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region," New York (March 2004), on the Africa Program pages of the IPA website.

groups and how open the channels of communication have been among governments and civil society;

4. Recommendations on future steps to be taken by the international community to ensure greater receptivity to civil society view-points on institutional reforms, promotion of human rights, and the guarantee of domestic and external security; and
5. Steps which civil society organizations can take to enhance their capacity and credibility.

This report synthesizes the discussions and summarizes the key recommendations.

## II. The DRC: Civil Society, Democratic Transition and Peacekeeping

Following the *Global All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* in April 2003, subscribed to by most Congolese parties as well as civil society groups, the interim government committed itself to implement a calendar leading to national elections by June 30, 2005. The local, legislative, and presidential elections – which will bring an end to five years of a conflict that became known as “Africa’s First World War” because it enmeshed all regional countries and claimed almost 4 million people<sup>2</sup> – have now been postponed until November 2005 and May 2006. The many factors accounting for the postponement included:

1. Challenges to the legislative calendar;
2. Delays in ratification of the electoral and amnesty codes;



Mr. Batabiha J. Bushoki, 2004–2005 IPA Civil Society Fellow.

3. Delays by the international community in providing the \$422 million estimated to meet election costs;<sup>3</sup>
4. Mistrust among the coalition of parties forming the interim government;
5. Lag in the integration of the army and in security sector reforms, which are to cost \$547 million;<sup>4</sup>
6. Continuing fighting in the Kivu and Ituri regions in the east and insufficient peacekeepers to deal with that violence; and
7. A weak national communication network and poor geographical access to many parts of the vast country, which is the result of prolonged neglect of infrastructure development by the Mobutu government.

There have also been deep concerns that the interim government might use the military, police, media and government finances to manipulate the process.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, the slow pace of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettle-

<sup>2</sup> International Rescue Committee and Burnet Institute report, “Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Results from a Nationwide Survey,” July 2004: iii.

<sup>3</sup> UN Secretary-General’s “Eighteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” (S/2005/506), August 2, 2005: 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Henri Boshoff, “Establishing A New Army for the DRC: Update on the FARDC,” *African Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (2004): 53.

<sup>5</sup> This view, including those echoed in the preceding points, was expressed by DRC panelists at the IPA 2005 Civil Society Dialogue. They are in large part corroborated in the “Special Report of the Secretary-General on the Elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” (S/2005/320), May 26, 2005: 4.

ment (DDRRR) program being undertaken by an amalgam of partner organizations, including MONUC, has led to cautious optimism in the transition. The program should, among other activities, be dealing with an anticipated return of some 8,000 Banyamulenge refugees from Rwanda and Burundi, demobilization of about 150,000 former combatants, and repatriation of another 40,000 foreign combatants (mostly elements of *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR)) and their dependents from the North and South Kivu regions to Rwanda.<sup>6</sup>

Inevitably, government-civil society relations remain tense as civil society groups have criticized government's actions in the above-listed areas. There is a widespread view that the government wants to delay the elections to ensure it gains broader grounds in advance of any polls. The competitive atmosphere has narrowed the channels of communication between government and other stakeholders, which does not bode well for the future.

### III. Burundi: Transitional Politics—Challenges and Complexes

Since June 2004, when UNOB took over from the African Union (AU) Mission in Burundi, which had been the AU's first-ever continental peacekeeping force, UNOB has worked with a coalition of regional heads of government called the *Regional Initiative for Peace* and the *Facilitation of the Government of South Africa*<sup>7</sup> to bring the various Burundian parties to accept the provisions of the Arusha agreement of August 2000, which included a power-sharing formula. That agreement is intended to end twelve years of a war that

has claimed over 300,000 lives.

In addition to coordinating the ceasefire and facilitating the electoral process, UNOB is arranging the return of some 300,000 refugees from Tanzania.<sup>8</sup> Between December 2004 and April 2005, UNOB also disarmed and demobilized 7,300 former combatants as part of the DDR program.<sup>9</sup> It is currently working to reintegrate thousands of displaced persons into civilian life, including some 30,000 to 40,000 people around Bujumbura Rural Province.<sup>10</sup> To improve living standards, UNOB is working with donors to secure large development assistance for Burundi; in August 2005, Burundi qualified to receive \$1.5 billion relief under a World Bank debt reduction program, and \$58.4 million assistance from bilateral and other donors.<sup>11</sup> The peaceful outcome of local and legislative elections held in June and July 2005, respectively, and the presidential



Ms. Francesca Bombelenga Bomboko, International Center for Research and Consulting (BERCI), DRC

<sup>6</sup> See Henri Boshoff, "Establishing A New Army for the DRC: Update on the FARDC," *African Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (2004): 9.

<sup>7</sup> See communiqué from 12th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, July 4, 2004, Communiqué no. PSC/MIN/Comm.(XII): 3.

<sup>8</sup> See Jennifer Clover, "Burundi Beyond the Transition? The Challenges of a Return to Peace," *African Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2004): 71.

<sup>9</sup> See report, "BURUNDI: Thousands disarmed since December, UN official says," of Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), April 26, 2005, electronic version.

<sup>10</sup> See OCHA Regional Support Office for Central and East Africa, "Report on the Scenario Development and Humanitarian Analysis Workshop for the Countries of the Great Lakes Region," prepared from workshop held in Nairobi, Kenya from December 14–15, 2004: 13.

<sup>11</sup> See World Bank Press Release No: 2006/047/PREM, and OCHA Financial Tracking Service R24, A659 of August 20, 2005.



H. E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addresses the panel.

election of August 2005 (which Pierre Nkurunziza won) have already proven the country as the first transitional success in the region. But the continuing violence from the renegade *Palipehutu-Front National de Libération (FNL)* rebels<sup>12</sup> has the potential to create problems in the future. The international community was called upon to address the *Palipehutu-FNL* obstacle so that it could not act as a “spoiler” in the new political dispensation.

Participants highlighted a number of other critical policy challenges which remain to be addressed: given concerns that perpetrators of atrocities might end up in public office, how should questions of impunity be tackled if the painful political process is not to be perceived as legitimizing heinous crimes? How should the exclusion of the minority Twas (who constitute 1% of a population that comprises 85% Hutu and 14% Tutsi) from government be handled? Participants also expressed concern that the continuing insecurity from small arms in private hands, sporadic insurgencies from across the Rwandan and DRC borders, pervasive poverty,

and the occasional stifling of civil society voices in the name of reconciliation, could all pose threats to the nascent democracy in Burundi.<sup>13</sup>

#### IV. Rwanda: Suppression of Dissent, a Reconciliation Tool?

In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, which resulted in more than 800,000 deaths, reconciliation within Rwanda has remained very difficult while peace with its neighbors has also remained problematic. The gradual purge from government of leading figures (including former president Pasteur Bizimungu, former prime minister Faustin Twagiramungu, and speaker of the transitional national assembly, Joseph Sebarenzi),<sup>14</sup> the outcome of the 2003 elections in which Paul Kagame won with 95% of the votes,<sup>15</sup> and the repression of dissent, or what civil society groups describe as “silencing of the critical elements,”<sup>16</sup> cast severe doubts about the actual character of the highly-publicized transition program in Rwanda.

At issue, for instance, is the *gacaca* code. The *gacaca* law stipulates that the hearing of *all* war crimes committed between 1990 and 1994 come before those traditional courts.<sup>17</sup> So far however, only the cases of alleged genocide perpetrators are brought before the *gacacas*, while atrocities committed by Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers during the same period are being tried in the conventional courts. This, according to some observers, has created a deep perception of inequity in the reconciliation process, which a panelist characterized as a “victor’s justice.”<sup>18</sup> Channels of dissent are blocked and disagreements met with harassment. Most civil

<sup>12</sup> The *Palipehutu-FNL* resumed their attacks soon after the elections. See “Burundi MPs appoint new President,” British Broadcasting Corporation news report of August 19, 2005, electronic version.

<sup>13</sup> These concerns were strongly echoed by the participant from Burundi, Jean-Marie Hicuburundi, during the IPA 2005 Civil Society Dialogue.

<sup>14</sup> See “The Rwandan Political Opposition in Exile: A Valid Interlocutor Vis-à-vis Kigali?” in Institute for Development Policy Management, University of Antwerp, Discussion Paper, 2004-1: 7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*: 30.

<sup>16</sup> Noel Twagiramungu, at the IPA 2005 Civil Society Dialogue; also see L. Danielle Tully, “Human Rights Compliance and the Gacaca Jurisdiction in Rwanda,” at [http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/lawreviews/meta-elements/journals/bcicl/26\\_2/09\\_TXT.htm](http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/lawreviews/meta-elements/journals/bcicl/26_2/09_TXT.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Noel Twagiramungu, at the IPA 2005 Civil Society Dialogue.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

society groups do not participate in government activities for fear of compromising their independence and neutrality, while others have been quieted completely. Some leading members who refused to be co-opted into government or the RPF have fled the country.<sup>19</sup>

## V. Conclusions

In sum, the full potential of civil society organizations in supporting international and African efforts in the transitional processes in the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda remain challenged by profound difficulties from the three governments. These governments have supported civil society groups only insofar as this has served their purposes, but they have stifled the groups when reciprocal support has been required. Yet, there remains a consensus that NGOs must continue to play a role in bridging the conceptual and institutional gaps in the transition from the end of armed conflict to the resumption of development activities.

## VI. Recommendations

### *I. On achieving the goals of the transitional processes:*

1. Vast human and material resources have thus far



From left to right: Ms. Francesca Bomboko; Mr. Georges Mata; Mr. Jean Eudes Bisonga; Mr. Mashood Issaka, Senior Program Officer, IPA; H. E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen; Dr. Necla Tschirgi, Vice President, IPA.



Mr. Stefan Delfs of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations during Q&A.

been invested in the three transitions by the international community. Intensified efforts therefore need to be made to provide the remaining financial and material resources required to meet the last benchmarks; otherwise the cost of any reversals in the processes could be much higher.

2. The UN should prosecute the MONUC troops who have been found culpable of sexual abuse in the DRC. This will help to restore the image, credibility and integrity of the UN.
3. The willingness of Burundian society to make compromises and accommodate their differences, a result due in large measure to war-weariness, is an opportunity for the international community to accelerate efforts to bring the renegade *Palipehutu-FNL* group to the peace table.
4. The Rwanda government should refrain from using intimidation as a tool of “compliance.” Rwanda’s recent painful experience requires the government to take actions that build bridges and create an environment for mutual dialogue and exchange rather than further divisiveness.

### *II. On enhancing civil society effectiveness*

1. Civil society groups have played vital roles in these arduous transitions. In light of their severe financial and resource limitations, international

<sup>19</sup> “The Rwandan Political Opposition in Exile.”

donors and the UN should continue to provide the needed support to reduce their dependency and to increase their neutrality and credibility. Civil society groups themselves should devise new resource mobilization strategies including soliciting support from private sector groups, but be careful not to compromise their autonomy.

2. On common issues, civil society groups should network among themselves across national borders, coordinate their activities to avoid duplication, share resources especially in technology and information, and transact their business transparently and accountably. This will help maintain their credibility with donors and governments. In addition, strong collaborations and networks will help provide the capacity to hold

governments responsible to the various peace agreements underpinning the transitions.

3. The three governments should consider civil society organizations as collaborators and partners in the advancement of peace and democracy and not as antagonists, as they all hold stakes in the security and peace of their countries and the region.
4. In light of the profound recognition that civil society organizations have enjoyed from the international community, it would be inauspicious to permit such crucial confidence to wane. To this end, civil society organizations in the three countries should harmonize their priorities in ways that accelerate the progress of the transitions.



H.E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen and Ambassador Terje Rød-Larsen (fifth and sixth from left) with IPA and Permanent Mission of Finland personnel and African civil society activists at the dialogue.

## ANNEX I: Agenda

### Civil Society in the Great Lakes Region: Opportunities and Constraints

Tuesday, 19 April 2005

Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

150 East 42nd Street, 34th Floor

New York

8:45 am - 9:10 am	Registration and Breakfast
9:10 am - 9:20 am	Welcome Remarks
	Ambassador Terje Rød-Larsen, President, International Peace Academy
	H. E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations
<i>Dialogue Moderator</i>	<i>Dr. Stephen Jackson, Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum</i>
9:20 am - 10:00 am	Dialogue I:  “Whither the Peace? Taking Stock of Security and Governance in the Great Lakes”
10:05 am - 10:45 am	Discussion
10:45 am - 11:00 am	Coffee Break
11:00 am - 11:40 am	Dialogue II:  “Finding Civil Society’s Role in the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda”
11:40 am - 12:30 pm	Discussion
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm	Recommendations and Way Forward
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Lunch

## ANNEX 2: Great Lakes Region Participants

1. **Mr. Batabiha Bushoki**  
2005 Ruth Forbes Young Civil Society Fellow  
International Peace Academy  
New York
2. **Ms. Francesca Bombelenga Bomboko**  
Project Coordinator  
International Center for Research and Consulting (BERCI)  
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
3. **Mr. Georges Tshionza Mata**  
General Secretary  
Service de Renforcement des Appuis aux Communautés de Base en Afrique  
(SERACOB)  
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
4. **Mr. Jean-Eudes Oderhwa Mulume Bisonga**  
Country Coordinator  
Swisspeace Foundation  
Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo
5. **Mr. Noel Twagiramungu**  
Researcher and Former Executive Director  
League of Human Rights in the Great Lakes Region  
Regional Office  
Kigali, Rwanda
6. **Mr. Jean Marie Vianey Hicuburundi**  
Deputy Director  
Radio Publique Africaine  
Bujumbura, Burundi

### ANNEX 3:

## Remarks by Ambassador Terje Rød-Larsen

President, International Peace Academy

- Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends, welcome and good morning.
- On behalf of the International Peace Academy, it is my great pleasure to especially welcome these civil society activists from Burundi, Rwanda, and the DRC to New York.
- IPA is especially grateful to the Government of Finland for very generously supporting this important program and also to the family of Ruth Forbes Young for their support.
- I also thank the Australian Mission for once again hosting an IPA event. As many of you may know, IPA works on issues of peace, security, and development. It has programs on the High-level Panel, security and development, state-building, the Middle East peace process, Kashmir, and Iraq.
- IPA has a commitment to working closely with civil society representatives. It is also an objective of the Africa program to bring to the fore civil society perspectives, which are not often heard. The Civil Society Dialogue is the capstone event of IPA's Civil Society Fellowship, where one African civil society fellow spends a year at IPA. This gives IPA the chance to increase its understanding of civil society in Africa. However, it also provides the civil society fellow with the opportunity interact with the UN community and other policy groups.
- Batabiha Bushoki of the DRC is the current civil society fellow. Mr. Bushoki is IPA's third civil society fellow. He is an associate of Africa Initiative Program, an organization based in Bunia (Eastern DRC), with a satellite office in Nairobi. The Africa Initiative Program works on issues of peacebuilding in the Great Lakes Region. Our previous fellows have come from Uganda and Liberia.
- This year's civil society dialogue reinforces the work the Africa program has done on the Great Lakes region. Over the past eighteen months, the Africa program has held meetings on peace, security, and civil society in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. The civil society dialogue also furthers IPA's work on supporting peacebuilding processes in Africa.
- It is particularly important to discuss the Great Lakes today for three reasons:
  1. First, the conflict in the sub-region, referred to as "Africa's First World War" – because it involved as many as seven countries – is now at various stages of peace transitions. Appreciating the role of civil society, its difficulties and opportunities, improves our understanding of the nature of post-conflict transitions. Democracy now has the chance to take root in the Great Lakes region.
  2. Second, in November 2004, the UN launched the *International Conference on the Great Lakes Region*, which aims to develop, over time, a stability, security and development pact for the sub-region. Civil society has been singled out as an important contributor to the *International Conference*. In September 2004, the *International Conference* organized a meeting of civil society representatives in Arusha,

Tanzania. But there are questions about the degree and quality of civil society involvement – and this meeting will seek to assess these issues.

3. Third, Africa's post-conflict states are directly affected by the reforms taking place at the UN – an area in which IPA is very much involved. In particular, the *High-level Panel Report* holds specific recommendations on peacebuilding and security threats that affect Africa, such as AIDS and poverty.
- The Civil Society Dialogues specifically aim to enable civil society activists and other participants to share experiences and expertise, reinforce networks and take stock of their capacities, challenges, and opportunities. Just as important, the civil society dialogue facilitates interaction with vital policy audiences such as the UN Secretariat and its community of Permanent Missions.
  - We are very grateful to the civil society representatives for their participation in this meeting. The information they provide will be an integral component of IPA's work. We are also appreciative of their courage to persevere in oppressive political, economic, and social environments.
  - More generally, IPA is committed to keeping the spotlight on Africa and on the agenda of the international community. We continue to follow developments in Africa with great concern – especially in light of the Sachs Report.<sup>20</sup> We aim to deepen the commitment of the international community to supporting Africa.

---

<sup>20</sup> UN Millennium Project report, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, UN Development Programme, 2005. Informally referred to as the “Sachs Report,” (after Jeffrey Sachs, the director of the Millennium Project), *Investing in Development* outlines the core recommendations and operational framework that could achieve the eight key goals of the Project by 2015. Many observers are concerned about the reality of achieving these goals by that date, considering the dire and pervasive poverty and health crisis in poor countries.

**ANNEX 4:**  
**Remarks by H.E. Ms. Kirsti Lintonen**  
Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and honor for me to address the 2005 International Peace Academy (IPA) Civil Society Dialogue, which is on the theme: *Civil Society in the Great Lakes Region: Opportunities and Constraints*. It is also my great pleasure that the Permanent Mission of Australia has agreed to provide the venue for the dialogue as the premises of the Mission of Finland are not adequate enough for this big event.

Finland has supported IPA's Civil Society Fellowship Program for a number of years now. We believe strongly that civil society has an important role in facilitating democratic transitions and post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. The Great Lakes region has been affected by several violent conflicts, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) being especially critical. In the circumstances the role of the civil society in facilitating peace and stability has been crucial but difficult.

Civil society groups, including local NGOs, trade unions, churches, media, and students organizations, are the life wires of states, and states have a responsibility to guarantee security, good governance and possibilities for development for its citizens. Developing countries, especially those in Africa, have needed such support more than any others in order to achieve their development goals, but conflicts have been stumbling blocks in the development processes.

In his report, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposes the creation of an international Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission will be a way of addressing the conceptual and institutional gap in the transition between the end of armed conflicts and the resumption of development activities. One cornerstone in the work of the Commission should be a viable interaction with the civil society organizations.

In Africa, the development of this connection with civil society groups especially in the Great Lakes region is essential for the future of the countries in that region. Governments in the region should see civil society actors as vital partners in the implementation of the peace agreements and the construction of the organized society.

Additionally, the capacity of the civil society organizations in the region needs to be strengthened by development partners. But most importantly civil society groups themselves should commit to crossing ethnic, religious, gender and other barriers in order to create the right atmosphere for peace and rebuilding. National, regional and international networks are also needed, and I hope that today's dialogue will encourage the process in this respect.

Having recently arrived in New York from posting in South Africa, before which I was in several other countries in the southern Africa region, I am encouraged by the work of civil society groups, especially in South Africa, where they helped to remove apartheid and institute democratic order. This achievement signifies the strength of popular power and popular struggle. I hope today's dialogue similarly contributes to peace in the DRC and the Great Lakes region as a whole.

I thank you.





## **International Peace Academy**

777 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017-3521

Tel: (212) 687-4300

Fax: (212) 983-8246

[www.ipacademy.org](http://www.ipacademy.org)