

WPP-Africa (Women Peacemakers Program – Africa) **ADVOCACY TRAINING 2010 FOR WOMEN PEACE ACTIVISTS**

HOTEL Saint Thomas, LOME-TOGO



A cross section of participants at the WPP Advocacy training 2010

Africa continues to witness violent armed conflict coupled with gross human right violations during which women are victims of structural and socio-cultural injustices that perpetuate victimization and violations of their human rights.

Women peace activists, in particular, remain excluded from formal peace initiatives, contrary to the knowledge that cohesive intervention processes that involve women as critical actors in peacebuilding and conflict transformation are key to building sustainable peace in Africa.

Women's participation has been acknowledged globally through the adoption of international instruments such as the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and 1820, and 1888 and 1889 and the Beijing Platform for Action which advocate for the inclusion of women as important actors in peacebuilding processes.

It has been observed that inadequate advocacy skills for women peace activists and a lack of networking are amongst factors hindering their active participation in influencing public policy and re-defining peace.



Participants partake in an exercise on the need for network and coalition-building

In view of this, Women Peacemakers Program- Africa (WPP- Africa), committed to strengthening women civil society actors to promote Gender-sensitive Active Non-violent peacebuilding, partnered WANEP-Togo to hold a one week Advocacy Training for 19 women peace activists selected from 13 African countries namely Cameroun, Congo DRC, Togo, Rwanda, Senegal, Madagascar, Burundi, Mauritania, Benin, Congo Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Mali.

The Advocacy Training was held at Hotel Saint Thomas from the 2nd to the 6th of August 2010, with a view to strengthening the skills of African women peace activists to effectively use advocacy as a tool for influencing public policy and to promote Gender-sensitive Non-violent peacebuilding.

Participants were taken through sessions that included Conflict Prevention and resolution, Legal rights of women to participate Conflict resolution and Peacebuilding processes, development of effective Active Non-Violence advocacy messages and Building successful networks and coalitions.

At the conclusion of this training, participants developed Action Plans tailored on the principles of Active Non-violence for the purpose of changing public policy in their communities, some of which would receive seed funding from WPP-Africa.

Participants expressed extreme optimism at the impact of the training on their work and mindsets and the ripple effect that such training would have at the community and grassroots levels via their (participants') outreach. They were hopeful that such training would be

replicated in their respective countries, as this would ensure that skills and capacities acquired at the WPP Advocacy training would permeate all levels of society, particularly touching their Advocacy target audiences such as policy-makers.

Their capacities to use of advocacy as a tool for influencing public policy, as well as their abilities in identifying policy audiences and developing compelling advocacy messages, grassroots mobilization and organization, and networking and coalition-building were also enhanced.

The training received wide media coverage, which included an article in the 4th August edition of the Lomé-based newspaper *Liberté-Info* that was captioned “Des femmes activites de la paix en formation à Lomé” – which translates into “Women Peace activists undergo training in Lomé”. Internet reference sites include <http://www.republicoftogo.com/Toutes-les-rubriques/Politique/Les-femmes-et-la-paix-en-Afrique>