

REPORT

FORUM FOR WOMEN'S RIGHT IN CONGO

MARCH 21, 2025

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INTRODUCTION



As part of the celebration of International Women's Rights Day, the Kaani Assistance association, with the support of the French Institute of Congo, organized a forum dedicated to women's rights in Congo.

This forum, themed "Knowing Your Rights: A Challenge for Women," aimed to raise participants' awareness of the legal texts and mechanisms for protecting their rights, as well as to strengthen the network for the defense and protection of women's rights in Congo.

The event brought together women leaders, students, male allies, as well as partner institutions and organizations.

This report highlights the highlights of the Congolese Women's Rights Forum. It aims to inform stakeholders about the achievements, challenges encountered, and future prospects for strengthening the promotion and protection of women's rights.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony featured welcoming remarks from the Kaani association coordinator, Ms. Luce Bénédicté Gangoue, and opening remarks from the French Ambassador to Congo, Ms. Claire Boboni. Both invited participants to actively participate in the discussions during the forum.

Furthermore, the Ambassador underlined the global nature of the issue of women's rights and highlighted the feminist diplomacy put in place by the French State to advance equality between women and men.



This moment was enhanced by musical breaks with singing and slam performances offered by the artists Oupta and Jazz Slam.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

To begin, Ms. Merveille DIBANTSA, Notary, introduced the audience to the forum's theme: "Knowing Your Rights: A Challenge for Congolese Women," reiterating the importance for Congolese women to know their rights, which protects them against all forms of abuse.

Ms. Glad ONOUAMBOU, Magistrate, then presented the fundamental rights of women under Congolese law, immediately highlighting Article 17:

"Women have the same rights as men. The law guarantees parity and ensures the promotion and representation of women in all political, elective, and administrative positions."



Ms. Bernadette MIASSOUASSOUANA, President of the Action of Women Educators for Development, and Ms. Jany ITOUA, gynecologist at Talangai Hospital, then addressed the topic of violence against women. They raised participants' awareness of the different types of violence, particularly those related to widowhood and inheritance, as well as physical, verbal, emotional, and psychological violence.

They recalled the need to strengthen awareness-raising actions and community involvement in order to change mentalities and put a stop to violence.



Divided into working groups, the participants were called upon to resolve practical cases relating to legal mechanisms for protecting women's rights and access to legal aid structures.

These workshops were facilitated by Ms. Monica Ngalula, head of the Legal Assistance for Victims program at the Center for Action for Development. After these group discussions, the participants presented a restitution in plenary and defined awareness-raising and community mobilization actions to promote women's rights.

ROUND TABLE



The round table on strengthening women's involvement in citizen control was moderated by Mesdames Monica Ngalula, legal manager at the Center for Actions for Development, Chandrelle Mountoula, executive director of the Congolese Women's Embassy Association, Luce Bénédicté Gangoue, coordinator of the Kaani Assistance Association, and Princilia Peres, writer and moderator of the event.

The speakers emphasized the importance of strengthening women's education and training so that they have a better understanding of their rights. They also called for greater commitment from both women and men to the promotion and defense of human rights, particularly women's rights.

The forum was attended by 75 people.

At the end of this day, it was decided that the promotion of women's rights in Congo and in the world must not remain a simple debate or a question linked to March 8, but must be translated into common and concrete actions, starting with

"Breaking the silence":

- Break the silence to change things
- Break the silence to raise our voices loudly and uphold women's rights

Thus, it is time to strengthen our commitments and create synergies between stakeholders in order to rigorously ensure the implementation and monitoring of defined actions.

Among the various recommendations made, we identified:

- Strengthen awareness-raising efforts to disseminate existing texts on women's rights
- Involve local and national authorities in CSO actions for greater impact
- Encourage victims to report violence and contact the relevant authorities
- Train and inform women about their personal and professional empowerment
- Involve men in the fight for women's rights, particularly by promoting positive masculinity
- Identify and respect the specific rights needs of each community
- Integrate the needs of women in rural areas and women with disabilities



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our deep gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of this event. To the Kaani team and all the dedicated volunteers, as well as to our valued partners: the French Institute of Congo, the Center for Actions for Development, the Embassy of Congolese Women, GPO Art Work, Zed Lebon Photographer, and all the people who participated in the success of this forum, we thank you for your support and your trust.



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