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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the DRC



Literacy course organized for counselors in Miti, Kabare in South Kivu

Since 2002, USAID has been a lead bilateral donor to respond to severe and widespread Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). USAID/DRC's GBV program aims to improve access to care and treatment services for survivors, fight impunity for perpetrators through support for legal reform, promote community awareness of GBV, and prevent future acts of violence.

USAID/DRC implements programs in North and South Kivu, Ituri District of Orientale Province, and Maniema Province through cooperative agreements to international NGOs that provide capacity-building to local NGOs and community-based organizations. Local organizations then identify and deliver services to rape

and abuse survivors. USAID also assists hospitals to provide fistula repair services. All programming adheres to the four main protection principles: confidentiality, security, non-discrimination, and treating people with dignity.

Provision of Care and Treatment Services for GBV Survivors

USAID/DRC supports improved access to essential services for GBV survivors, including:

- *Medical Care*—Confidential medical care for GBV survivors, including 72-hour post-rape post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), health care provider training, and stronger referral links between health centers, particularly for fistula repair;
- *Psychosocial Support*—Training of counselors to provide support at “listening houses,” referral of victims who need advanced care, and family mediation and reunification;
- *Social and Economic Reintegration*—Vocational and literacy training, income generating activities (IGAs), and community discussion groups to reduce stigma against survivors.

Fighting Impunity through Legal Reforms and Advocacy

USAID/DRC supports national and community advocacy and legal reforms, including:

- *Legal reform*—Advocacy and technical expertise on key draft laws, including the Law against Sexual and Gender Based Violence, passed in July 2006;
- *Legal services*—Assistance to NGOs that provide legal services to GBV survivors who wish to pursue prosecution of perpetrators;
- *Promotion of rights*—Promotion of human rights and social protection through public awareness, advocacy, and training activities;
- *Access to Justice*—Mobile courts that improve access to justice for GBV survivors and other targeted vulnerable groups;
- *Support of equity for women*—Radio magazine programs, radio soap operas, posters, participatory theater, and other communication approaches that condemn GBV.

Promoting Protection through Community Awareness and Mobilization

USAID/DRC supports community sensitization activities and information campaigns, including:

- *Community Education*—Education and mobilization of local communities, including traditional leaders and women's groups, to promote women's rights, acceptance of rape survivors, and protection of the whole community;
- *Information Sharing*—Dissemination of information about the availability and importance of services for GBV survivors and their families.

For more information about USAID's program to address Gender-Based Violence in DRC, please contact Sara Rasmussen-Tall at srasmussentall@usaid.gov or Allyson Gardner at agardner@usaid.gov.