About the Conference

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About the Conference

The Center for Conflict Management (CCM) of the National University of Rwanda (NUR) organized an international conference on Transitions and Peace Processes in the Great Lakes Region, in collaboration with the Peace and Development Research Institute (PARDIGU) of the Göteborg University (Sweden). Held in Prime Holdings, Kigali, on 31st May – 1st June 2007. This conference was supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), through the NUR–SIDA/SAREC Partnership.

Participants and speakers were from Rwanda, DRC, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa and Sweden. They comprised: Policy makers, members of the Diplomatic Corps, senior military officers, academics, researchers, civil society actors and the media.

Dr Vincent Biruta, President of the Senate and Guest of Honour, officially opened the conference after a word of welcome by Prof. Silas Lwakabamba, the Rector of the NUR, who, by taking advantage of the opportunity underlined the contribution of the NUR to peace, development and the management of conflicts in Rwanda through the CCM. Jonas Ewald, the representative of Göteborg University, emphasized the relevance of the cooperation between the CCM and PARDIGU and the impact of this partnership on research development in Rwanda as well as the importance of peace and security to development, aspects in which PARDIGU is specialized.

In his opening remarks, Dr Vincent Biruta briefly exposed the conflict and post-conflict situation in the Great Lake Region with a specific reference to the horrible 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and emphasized the need to develop habits of peaceful coexistence. He held that each country should set up mechanisms of dealing with conflicts as “there is no universal formula”.


He held that “unless these issues are adequately addressed, durable peace will remain uncertain in the GLR”.

Those PhD students are: Alice Kavekazi, Iseth Mutamba, Christopher Kayumba, Eugene Ntaganda, Ezechiel Sentama, Theugne Bangamihuso.
Presentations made during the two days conference focused on the following issues:

- Electoral process in the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC).
- Electoral process in Tanzania.
- Military integration in Rwanda.
- Demobilization process in Burundi.
- Reconciliation process in Rwanda.
- International Conference on the GLR.
- The question of expulsion of Banyarwanda in Tanzania.
- Gacaca: origin and philosophy.
- The transitional justice and Gacaca in post-genocide Rwanda.

A part from the presentations, six CCM PhD students at PADRIGU\(^1\) presented also partial findings of their work.

After all presentations, the closing ceremony was presided over by the Minister of Education, Dr Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya. In this regard, she thanked all participants and speakers with a specific emphasis on the hardworking for peace and development in the GLR and the active role universities should play in that process.

The following part of this report provides the integral speech by the President of the Senate, Dr Vincent Biruta, the summary of all presentations and conclusions and recommendations that were made by participants during the conference.

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Speech by Dr Vincent Biruta, President of the Senate at the opening ceremony of the Conference

Your Excellencies Ministers,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen the Representatives of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
University Rectors,
Dear Participants from Burundi, DRC, Uganda, Sweden,
Dear Professors,
Dear Students,
Representatives of the Civil Society,
Dear Representatives,

It is a great privilege for me to join in today to open this conference on such an extremely important theme "Transitions and Peace Building in Africa".

I would like here to thank the "Center for Conflict Management" of the National University of Rwanda and the Peace and Development Research Institute (PADRIGU) of the Göteborg University (Sweden) for having