



Emerging Women's Leadership in the Great Lakes Region

Thursday, March 29, 2012
9:30am-11:30am

Johns Hopkins SAIS
Rome Building
1619 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Forum Details:

The armed conflicts that have swept through the Great Lakes Region have taken a particular toll on the region's women. Yet, in recent years, women across the region have come to play an increasingly prominent role in public life as opinion leaders and decision-makers. Within communities, within governments, and within civil society, women are taking on new leadership roles. In honor of Women's History Month, we invite you to a special Great Lakes Policy Forum that will explore how the role of women in the Great Lakes Region is changing and discuss the challenges that remain.

Speakers:

Veronica Isala Eragu Bichetero

Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow, October 2011-April 2012, USIP; Lawyer and senior consultant with EDG Venture Consult

Nita Evele

President and Co-Founder Coalition of Pluralists and Patriots of Congo

Moderator:

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele

Writer, foreign policy analyst and independent journalist

Bios:

Veronica Isala Eragu Bichetero

Veronica Isala Eragu Bichetero is a lawyer and an advocate of the Courts of Judicature of Uganda. She is a senior consultant with EDG Venture Consult and is deeply involved in women's rights, children's rights, vulnerable person's rights, conflict resolution and peace-building in Africa. Bichetero currently works with the World Bank as Gender and Conflict Advisor, focusing on a special program, Learning on Gender in Conflict Affected Areas in Africa (LOGICA) Trust Fund. Veronica also does consultancies in Human Rights, Governance and Rule of Law for UNDP and IDLO. Her project focuses on promoting women's participation in conflict resolution and peace-building in the Great Lakes Region. Bichetero will share her personal experiences as an observer, negotiator and mediator at the local and national level during the Ugandan conflicts, and at the regional level where she has implemented best practices in developing women's substantive participation in mediation in Africa. She will write about the challenges to women's participation in peace-building and practices

that promote women's involvement in peace-building processes. She will also compile a comprehensive data-bank of women involved, or with the potential to be involved, in peace-making to improve the network of female mediators in the Great Lakes Region and the whole of Africa. Bichetero previously held an international position with UNICEF and served as Commissioner at the Uganda Human Rights Commission, a national human rights institution in Uganda. Her experience at the negotiation table and peace-making forum dates back to 1985 when she contributed at the Government of Uganda peace talks with the National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) as a researcher on the Government team. In 1999, she was in Lome, Togo at the peace negotiations between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front as the UNICEF representative, advocating for the early release of women and children. From 2006 to more recently she was involved in the Juba peace process between Government of Uganda and Lord's Resistance Army, first as a representative of the Human Rights Commission and later at the mediation table providing technical expertise and advice. Bichetro has worked in Juba supporting the Government of Southern Sudan on post-conflict issues, especially the empowerment of women and human rights. She participated as a technical expert in the April 2010 Sudanese elections and the South Sudan Referendum.

Nita Evele

Nita Evele is the president and co-founder of the **Coalition of Pluralists and Patriots of Congo (COPPAC)**, an advocacy group that brings together Congolese from different background whose members are dedicated to a free and equal opportunity for all Congolese but also the advancement of DRC sovereignty. Mrs. Evele is currently serving as the vice-chair and Regional Coordinator of **Congo Global Action**, a global alliance of humanitarian, human rights, environment, faith based organizations, students, Congolese Diaspora and grassroots movement to advocate with one voice on behalf of the Congolese people around the world.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele is a writer, foreign policy analyst and independent journalist. Dizolele is the Peter J. Duignan Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Stanford University Hoover Institution. He is the author of a forthcoming biography: *Mobutu: the Rise and Fall of the Leopard King* (Random House UK). His analyses have been published in the *Journal of Democracy*, *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, *The New Republic*, *Forbes*, *St Louis Post-Dispatch* and other outlets. A frequent commentator on African affairs, he has been a guest analyst on PBS' *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* and *Foreign Exchange with Fareed Zakaria*, NPR's *On Point* and *the Diane Rehm Show*, the BBC World News, Al Jazeera and the Voice of America. Dizolele was a grantee of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting and covered the 2006 historic elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. With the Pulitzer Center, he produced *Congo's Bloody Coltan*, a documentary report on the relation between the Congo conflict and the scramble for mineral resources. He served as an election monitor with the Carter Center in the run-off between Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba. He was also embedded with United Nations peacekeepers in Congo's war-torn Ituri and South Kivu provinces as a reporter. He holds an International Master of Business Administration and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Chicago. He graduated *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and French from Southern Utah University. Dizolele served in the United States Marine Corps Reserve for eight years. He is fluent in French, Norwegian, Spanish, Swahili, Kikongo and Lingala, and is proficient in Danish and Swedish.

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