

**OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL FOR THE GREAT LAKES
REGION**

**STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING COMMITMENTS ON WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY IN
THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAR	Central Africa Republic
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FFC	Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises/Funds for Congolese women
HOS	Heads of States
ICGLR	International Conference of the Great Lakes Region
LMRC	Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
PSCF	Peace Security and Cooperation Framework
ROM	Regional Oversight Mechanism
RTF	Regional Training Facility
RWF	Regional Women Forum
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation
SESG	Special Envoy of the Secretary General
TSC	Technical Support Committee
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
RWF	Regional Women's Forum
WP	Women's Platform
WPS:	Women Peace and Security

INTRODUCTION

Five years after the signing of the Peace Security and Cooperation Framework agreement (PSCF) by the Great Lakes Heads of States, two years since the adoption of the Goma Declaration (2016) and more than seventeen years after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution SC/RES/1325 (2000), progress in implementing commitments made on Women Peace and Security (WPS) are uneven and women remain under represented in all conflict prevention and peace building initiatives in the Great Lakes Region.

Resolution 2098 (2013), by the UN Security Council, called on the Special Envoy of the Secretary General (SESG), in coordination with the Special Representative for the DRC to *“lead, coordinate and assess the implementation of national and regional commitments under the PSC Framework, including through the establishment of benchmarks and appropriate follow-up measures”*.

More specifically the Special Envoy through his good offices is mandated, inter alia, to mainstreaming gender as well as WPS perspectives in all aspects of Peace and security in the region.

Furthermore, both the Eighth High-Level Meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism on Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region, and Security Council Resolution 2389 (2017) *“encouraged the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, in consultation with the ICGLR Secretariat, SADC and the African Union, to convene regular meetings to review progress in the implementation of the Declaration of the Women’s Platform of the PSC Framework adopted in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo in July 2016. and further “Urges continued regional and international support for initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive dialogue amongst national stakeholders and stresses the importance of opening political space to enable the full and free participation of peaceful political parties, civil society and the media as well as the full participation of both men and women in the political process, respectively.*

It is in response to these calls that the SESG, in fulfilment of his mandate, is developing a Regional Strategy on WPS with a view to infuse a renewed spirit of greater cooperation and coordination between major stakeholders in accelerating implementation of commitments made to WPS, including implementation of the Regional Strategy for RES 1325 -SC/RES/1325 (2000) and the Goma declaration.

FORMULATION OF THE STRATEGY:

This strategy has been developed following a literature review and a wide consultations with stakeholders in the region. These include consultations with the SESG and staff from his Office, past and present leadership of the ICGLR Secretariat, including the Director for Gender, Women and Children at the ICGLR Secretariat; the AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region and Head of Liaison office in Burundi as well as the Advisor on Electoral affairs and Post Conflict

Reconstruction and Development, the AU Special Envoy for WPS, leadership of the Regional Women's Forum and grantees of the Women's Platform, The ICGLR Regional Training Facility, the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for Democracy and Good Governance, members of the Technical Support Committee to the Great Lakes, Government Officials from the Ministry of Women and women machineries, development partners, UN agencies including the leadership of UNWOMEN at regional level (Nairobi) and country representatives in core countries of the Great Lakes, and DPA at HQ .

This proposed strategy aims to guide advocacy and good offices of the SESG in the Great Lakes region towards greater implementation of established gender equality and women rights commitments. It further aims to continue efforts to ensure women across the diversity of civil society and women's organisation's to substantively and qualitatively participate in conflict and violence prevention initiatives including mediation, as specified in existing instruments and frameworks, specifically the WPS UNSC/RES/1325 (2000) and its subsequent Resolutions, and the Goma Declaration (2016).

The document includes (I) A brief background on the context of conflict in the Great Lakes and women's participation; (II) WPS normative frameworks and instruments; (III) Initiatives taken by the O/SESG: progress and challenges; (IV) the Strategy, its purpose, vision, overall objectives, guiding principles, priority focus, expected results; (V) Implementing the strategy, means and mechanisms of implementation (VI) Proposed Activities (VII) Monitoring and Evaluation framework; (VIII) Resourcing the strategy (IX) Next steps.

An indicative Work plan matrix and the Monitoring and Evaluation framework, an outline of the coordination mechanism with roles and responsibilities of each stakeholders and the Advisory Board revised TOR as well as a list of major frameworks and instruments on WPS are in annex 1, 2,3,4,5 respectively.

I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF CONFLICT IN THE GREAT LAKES AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Since the second war in the DRC in 2003, despite initiatives by regional and international stakeholders, there has been a marked increase in political and armed violence in the Great Lakes Region with (i) conflicts related to control of territories and natural resources with a growing number of armed groups with various political and economic links in the DRC and the region and various agendas (Eastern DRC and CAR) - (ii) tensions related to elections and competition for power (Burundi, DRC and South Sudan). Further developments include: stalled political processes in Burundi and the DRC, slow process in the repatriation of ex-combatants and their dependents, civil conflicts in South Sudan and a worsening humanitarian crisis. Of particular concern is the emergence of violent extremism, perpetrated by extremists groups in Eastern DRC and whose actions require particular attention.

Countries which are not at the epicentre of the conflict and are not priority of the PSCF are equally marked by a range of conflicts related impacts e.g. Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and CAR.

The above context not only affects the resolve of Member States to effectively address the implementation of the PSC Framework, it also has a disastrous impact on the lives of citizens of the Great Lakes region, particularly on women and their ability to be active agent of change and transformation. Persistence of gender based violence perpetrated by armed elements to the conflicts and the continuous prevalence of impunity hinders women's ability to engage fully in conflict prevention and resolution. Additional key pervasive challenges are limited political will of regional and national institutions, as well as traditional males/female roles in decision making and very limited technical and financial resources to reinforce women leaders' capacity and to strengthen their advocacy/lobbying activities. These factors are compounded by the continuous shrinking of the political space within which women's organisations are operating.

Due to their low social and political status, women and girls experience disproportionate impacts of violence, displacement and disruption.

Although they mobilise to resist violence and war at various levels, women and girls in the Great Lakes Region, are largely and systematically excluded from conflict prevention and transformation processes set by national and international institutions.

From a gender and women's' rights perspective, this changing context requires a radical change of approach that puts emphasis on an analysis of the gender dimension of this change and the impact on women's position and ability to act on the one hand, and taking bold initiatives to enhance women's contribution and decision making in conflict prevention and resolution on the other.

Such approach will aim to secure a consistent and substantive integration of women's views and decision making in conflict prevention and management as per SC/RES/1325 (2000) and its subsequent Resolutions, and the Goma Declaration (2016).

A number of normative frameworks and instruments related to WPS have been, over the years, developed by the International Community with the aim to ensure women's participation in all processes related to Peace and Security.

II. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY

A comprehensive list of all Resolutions on WPS are in Annex 5. Below are the most important ones.

At Global level:

- The landmark ***Security Council Resolution SC/RES/1325 (2000)*** and its subsequent Resolutions (see documents of all the subsequent Resolutions in Annex 2) urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict, in peace negotiations, in peace operations as soldiers, police, and civilians and as special representatives of the UN Secretary General.
- The ***Secretary General's Seven Points Action Plan*** on SC/RES/1325 (2000), contained in his 2010 Report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding, outlines measures for the UN system to undertake as a whole. (See document in Annex 3). A number of benchmarks have been developed through the Action Plan and as such, it is an excellent tool that will serve as a valuable contribution to the implementation of SC/RES/1325 (2000).
- He ***Secretary General's Vision on Prevention*** (see document in Annex 4) urges the UN to uphold a strategic commitment to a “culture of prevention”, pledged in 2005 but yet to materialize. Calls for a surge in diplomacy for peace. Under the guidance of the Security Council and in accordance with the Charter, the SG should actively, consistently and tirelessly exercise his good offices and mediation capacity as an honest broker, bridge builder and messenger of peace. Full use would be made of the Organization’s convening power, as a forum for dialogue, to ease tensions and facilitate peaceful solutions.

At Regional level:

- The ***Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*** adopted by the AU assembly, in July 2003 in Maputo Mozambique, better known as the ***Maputo Protocol***, guarantees **comprehensive** rights to women including the right to take part in the political process, to social and political equality with men, improved autonomy in their reproductive health decisions, and an end to female genital mutilation.
- The ***Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)*** was adopted by AU Heads of State and Government at their July 2004 Summit. In the SDGEA, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to: the principle of gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as other existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women’s rights. They also committed themselves to continue, to expand and to accelerate efforts to promote gender equality at all levels, and the determination to build on the progress that have been achieved in addressing issues of major concern to the women of Africa.

The AU's approach to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality has been informed by the UN frameworks and specific needs of the continent.

At sub regional level

The ICGLR ***Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region*** (2013) and its ***ten Protocols***. Signed by eleven countries of the Great Lakes Region, it aims to provide a legal framework governing relations between its signatories, through additional protocols and programmes of action in the following areas : non-aggression and mutual defence, democracy and good governance, judicial cooperation, prevention and punishment of the crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and all forms of discrimination, struggle against the illegal exploitation of natural resources, specific reconstruction and development zone, prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children, protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, property rights and returning persons, management of information and communication. It also establishes follow-up mechanisms comprising the Summit, a Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee and a conference secretariat.

- The ***Dar as Salam Declaration (2004)***: Parties to this declaration affirm their collective determination to transform the Great Lakes Region into a space of sustainable peace and security. They support all the national peace processes in the region, and commit themselves to strengthen their cooperation in the areas of defence, arms trafficking, DDR, and struggle against terrorism. They shall promote democracy, good governance and human rights, as well as political participation and gender equality. The parties also commit themselves to cooperate in supporting economic development, especially through regional integration. They shall address the humanitarian problems of the region, especially concerning internally displaced persons, land-mines, child soldiers and HIV/AIDS.
- The ***Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*** (2006)

INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE O/SESG, ICGLR, AND MEMBER STATES: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS:

To implement WPS's commitments the O/SESG and ICGLR have undertaken a number of initiatives. These have included:

Advocacy

- In partnership with MONUSCO and UNWOMEN, provided support to women to develop and draft the Goma Declaration (2016), which is in line with the Maputo Protocol and AU Gender Policy, demanding women's inclusion in meetings of all organs of the O/SESG and calling on AU, ICGLR and SADC to set up policy on monitoring and evaluation (July 2016).
- The fielding of a fact finding mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to assess women's involvement and participation under the PSCF (July 2016).
- Production of a monthly newsletter/Gender updates in consultation with UN Women, AU and SADC, all guarantors of the PSC-F in 2017,

Grant Making

- Setting up a grant making programme for grassroots women's organisations with a focus on economic security and to facilitate their participation in Peace and Security decision making at community level.
- Between 2014 and 2018, the Global Fund for Women, who is managing the Grants in collaboration with the O/SESG has raised a total of 1,380.348 USD which provided 66 grants to 44 women's organisations in Burundi (12 grants), DRC (39), Uganda (5) and Rwanda (8) and to 2 grants to Regional Organisations. In addition, the GFW provided funds to the Fonds pour les Femmes Congolaises, to enable them provide funds to 33 organisations in the DRC. Average grants are between 5000-25000 USD.
- Grants were attributed along four thematic areas (1) Peace building, (2) GBV; (3) Property Rights; (4) Access to Natural Resources.

Capacity Building

- Providing support to the Regional Women Platform participation to the 16th TSC meeting and the 8th ROM meeting held on October 2017 respectively.
- Convening Women's organisations to the meeting on Natural resources.

Partnership

- Enhanced cooperation with AU gender focal points and ICGRL Secretariat through their respective Senior Programme Adviser for Gender.
- Engagement with the Panel of the Wise through their initiative Femwise and with guidance from the AU gender desk, has contributed to strengthening the advocacy component with plans to hold joint solidarity missions especially for CAR and South Sudan being considered. This engagement has also resulted in the Special envoy to be invited to the Fem Wise General Assembly meeting in Algiers in
- Provided support to ICGLR for the development of a Regional Action Plan for implementation UNSCR 1325 (2000).

Resources

- Improved resources through secured funding from the EU to contribute strengthening of the RWF's capacity to engage in regional initiatives for women and which will allow close collaboration with UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA.

Communication and Information:

- Production of a monthly newsletter/Gender updates in consultation with UN Women, AU and SADC as well as all Guarantors of the PSC-F, to ensure that women are fully informed of initiatives taken by various stakeholders and identify entry points for their positive engagements.

Despite these several initiatives however major challenges needs to be addressed. In particular:

- Engagement of the Great Lakes Women's Organisations and the Women's movement and their participation in political decision making bodies at community level has not been fully recognised by major institutions in the region nor have their experience been validated.
- The fragmentation of women's organisations/movement in the Great Lakes Region, reflected in the existence of two entities i.e. the Women Regional Forum and the Women Platform hinders the possibility to define common advocacy goals to advance WPS agenda and is contrary to the principles of coherence and efficiency.
- The coverage, mandate and funding resources of these two entities is perceived to be an unhelpful mode of operation that leads to competition rather than complementarity. The uneven character of engagement, of the RWF and the WP at regional and community level respectively, and the lack of linkages between these organisations does not lead to their strategic positioning in the Great Lakes search for Peace and Security.
- The minimal availability and/or total absence of human and financial resources contribute to weaken institutions in the Great Lakes
- Past practices reveal that women were mere "observers" and "advisors" in major political initiatives rather than full participants in decision making.
- The prevalent deficit of actions by the security and justice systems to stop impunity, protect women and ensure their security, limit the latter full participation in matters related to WPS
- The mechanisms of governance for monitoring implementation of the Framework Agreement and the PACT do not facilitate women's participation nor are they accountable to ensure this participation
- The absence of a monitoring and accountability framework to report on implementation of commitments, achievements and challenges faced by all stakeholders in the Great Lakes Region, prevents reporting on results and giving qualitative assessment of women's participation and contribution.
- Uneven attribution of resources to the RWF and the WP further deepen the lack of a coherent approach to Peace and Security

It is against the above context and background, and in order to address the challenges described above, that the Regional Strategy on WPS has been developed.

THE STRATEGY

(I) PURPOSE

The main *purpose* of this strategy is to ensure women full agency and political participation in preventing conflict and achieving Peace and Security in the Great Lakes Region.

It places women at *the centre* of the search for Peace and Security in the Great Lakes, by suggesting a participatory process supported by an institutional framework that will facilitate women's *access* and *participation in decision making* in **all** processes and mechanisms set by all institutions addressing peace and security in the Great Lakes i.e. talks, missions, negotiations and mediation.

It *underscores* not only the immense benefits of ensuring women's empowerment and participation in the search for peace and security but the inherent value of women's rights as a political imperative.

It is informed and aligned with key global and regional intergovernmental norms and standards including the Secretary General Seven Points Action Plan on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding and his vision on prevention

(II) VISION

A Great Lakes Region where women are at the centre of Peace and Security processes and are effective decision makers in conflict prevention and management.

(III) OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To ensure that women participate and are decision makers in all Political and Security processes and mechanisms to prevent conflict in the Great Lakes Region.

(IV) THREE YEARS STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOCUS

- A. Undertake Preventive diplomacy¹
- B. Consolidate the Great Lakes Women's Movement's engagement in PS
- C. Securing sustainable financial resources for WPS in the Great Lakes

¹ Preventive diplomacy refers to diplomatic action taken to prevent disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of conflicts when they occur (UN definition)

(V) APPROACH AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In line with existing instruments available at global, regional and sub regional levels, the strategy on WPS

- Reinforces support to and *ownership of priorities* set by the Great Lakes Member States through the ICGLR, the African Union and SADC.
- Reclaims and strengthen the political mandate of the SESG
- Follows a *Human Rights Based approach* that provides support to duty bearers (States, Organisations and Institutions) and right holders (women's organisations) and ensures accountability by each party.
- Places women *at the centre* of the Peace and Security agenda of the Great Lakes region, gives visibility to their contributions, support their growth.
- Is focussed on, delivered and resourced through *partnership, coordination and coherence* with Regional and Sub Regional Institutions, the Private Sectors and the UN system.
- Commits to a systematic and regular communication and focussed consultations to ensure coherence of purpose.
- Commits to monitor and assess progress and results in line with International and Regional Norms and Standards.

(VI) MAJOR OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGY

- Initiatives on prevention in the Great Lakes are up scaled.
- Women Advisory Board is expanded and plays a prominent political advocacy role; their support to women's effective engagement in conflict prevention in the Great Lakes are strengthened.
- Coordination, collaboration and communication between all stakeholders are enhanced and streamlined
- Strategic alliance between Women Regional Forum and Women Platform is built
- Women's capacity to engage in negotiations and discussions at all levels of decision making in the Great Lakes region is strengthened
- At least 30% of women participation in all major political processes and institutional mechanisms in/on the Great Lakes region is secured
- Sustainable resources to implement the Strategy on WPS increased and secured.

(VII) MECHANISM OF IMPLEMENTATION

The mechanisms of implementation proposed in this strategy reflects the guiding principles and the transformation it sets to achieve.

It outlines the integrated relationship between major stakeholders and their respective roles and responsibilities in implementing the Strategy.

These roles and responsibilities are defined below and in the attached graphic in Annex iv.

- Member States: Ensure existence of policies and processes to ensure Women's participation in decision making.
- Gender Ministers : Define policies and processes for women's participation and decision making in partnership with key Ministries in Government and the Women's Movement
- SESG: Leads, convenes stakeholders and assess progress of implementation
- SESG, AU, and ICGLR: Jointly define policies and political actions and accountable for ensuring women's representation, participation and decision making in all initiatives in the Great Lakes.
- ICGLR: Develop programmes to respond to strategic priority focus through its organs such as the RTF and the MLRC
- AU: Monitor compliance of initiatives with main regional instruments and frameworks and engage in initiatives to support the vision and overall objective Applies an Accountability Framework in accordance with its mandate.
- Advisory Board to undertake political advocacy for women's participation in decision making, in support of Women's organisations position.
- UNWOMEN facilitate access to the women movement/organisations and provide technical and financial support for their engagement.
- UN system, contribute to the realisation of the overall objective through the Strategic Framework Programme for the Great Lakes region
- Women's organisations (Regional Women Forum and the Women Platform) to be main stakeholders in political decision making and influencing policies.
- Development partners, Multilateral and Regional Development Banks, Private Sector, to leverage financial and technical support for the implementation of the Strategy.

(VIII) MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

On Advocacy:

- Analysis and mapping of progress made, what agreements were honoured which ones were not and why
- Agreement on advocacy messages on preventive diplomacy with ICGLR, AU and SADC on women's political engagement
- Revised Terms of Reference of the Advisory Board putting emphasis on its political advocacy function on preventive diplomacy
- Mechanisms for advocacy on relevant issues agreed with Member States
- Women Champions that have access to HOS and convince them

On Building Partnership and inclusion:

- Programmatic partnership with and in support to the ICGLR secretariat
- Working relationship with the AU and its Special envoy for Women Peace and Security as well as with FEMWISE

- Leadership capacity to enable joint collaboration between WP and the RWF with facilitation of the SESG with Gender Advisor's contribution
- Joint programmes by the two women entities, under the leadership of ICGLR
- MOU with UN women on accessing and supporting women's organisations
- Cooperation agreement with financial institutions and the private sector to provide ethical support to women's organisations

On Convening:

- Mechanism which enable exchanges, discussions, analysis and concrete actions of engagement by the Women Platform and the Women forum in preventive diplomacy in crisis countries. (I.e. solidarity missions, seminars on women and natural resources).
- A framework to enable joint cross border activities by the Women Platform and the Regional Women forum
- Joint programming by the UN System within UNDAF and the UN Great Lakes Strategic Framework

On Capacity Strengthening on issues of prevention and mediation

- A communication strategy to support women's advocacy work
- INGO or academic institution, to support and enhance women's knowledge and mediation capacity for their political engagement in prevention and mediation
- Accountability mechanisms with qualitative indicators of progress to be reviewed at each meetings of the Advisory Board
- A resource mobilisation strategy

(IX) ACTIVITIES

Activities are detailed in the Action Plan Matrix in Annex 1

(X) MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The proposed monitoring and evaluation framework in annex 2 of this strategy, lays down the principles, objectives, system, and tools on reporting mechanisms that will support implementation of decisions taken. It will

- Measure progress and achievements as understood by the different stakeholders
- Ensure accountability to all stakeholders by demonstrating progress
- Identify the need for corrective or remedial actions
- Links with existing frameworks and measure the extent to which actions undertaken are in line with these frameworks.

XI RESOURCE MOBILISATION

In compliance with the Secretary General Seven Points Action Plan (3,b), the resource mobilisation approach to fund the implementation of this strategy will be to work towards a goal

that ensure that at least 15 per cent of UN managed funds are dedicated to address women specific needs, advance gender equality and empower women.

Funds to implement this Strategy should also be secured through existing channels of funding mainly the Multi Partners Trust Fund.

New partnership with Regional Bank and the Private Sector will be sought and a re-mobilisation of the Friends of the Great Lakes is being proposed.

XII. NEXT STEPS:

1. Seize the opportunity of the next TSC and ROM meeting as well as the 5th Anniversary of the PSC Framework to present the Strategy on WPS for the Great Lakes Region and seek commitments for its implementation.
2. In close collaboration with UNWOMEN, ICGLR&AU gender advisors, provide technical and financial resources for the development and establishment of new modalities of collaboration and cooperation between the Regional Women Forum and Grantees of the Women Platform to enable them build a solid alliance and use their comparative advantage, experience and strength to influence political decision making on Women Peace and Security within the ICGLR political and geographical space; to identify minimum common objectives and concerted strategies/ activities on conflict prevention and management (February/March 2018)
3. Plan and undertake Solidarity missions to CAR, South Sudan, and Burundi with the express objective of conflict prevention (April/May 2018).
4. Sign an MOU with UNWOMEN to facilitate access to women's organisations at national and regional levels, and enable UNWOMEN to provide technical support to the alliance of women's organisations described above and to develop programmes in support of women participation in decision making.(March 2018)
5. Recruit a dedicated Gender adviser in the O/SESG to provide gender analysis and support the process of implementation of this Strategy (July /August)
6. In coordination and collaboration with the ICGLR Secretariat, the African Union, ECCAS and SADC, and the Women movement define political initiatives on preventive diplomacy to be taken in crisis countries (March /April).
7. Develop an innovative incentive and accountability framework that ensure Member States' accountability to commitments they have made on WPS and that work for women (May/June 2018).
8. Ensure availability of resources for implementation of this Strategy (March-November 2018).