

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND
THE CULTURE OF PEACE IN CENTRAL AFRICA
AND THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

Libreville, 18 – 20 November 2003

PREPARATORY WORKSHOP OF BUJUMBURA

REPORT

**PANEL N°1: OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
LIBREVILLE:**

**THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION
AND RESOLUTION MECHANISMS IN SOCIETIES OF CENTRAL AFRICA AND THE GREAT
LAKES REGION**

**Immeuble OLD EAST, Salle de Conférence UNOB
18 – 19 September 2003**

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FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT:

- *OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION (Nairobi)*
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Our most profound gratitude goes both to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and the UNESCO Representative in Burundi

Printed in Bujumbura, 10 October 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

The UNESCO Chair, together with the National Bashingantahe Council in Burundi, in consultation with UNESCO's subregional Office in Libreville, collaboratively with UNESCO's BURUNDI and RWANDA Offices, and with financial and material support from the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in the Great Lakes Region both in Nairobi, Kenya, and in Bujumbura, Burundi, organized a preparatory workshop to the *International Conference on Intercultural Dialogue and the Culture of Peace in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region*.

The workshop was focussed around the theme of PANEL N°1 of the Libreville Conference titled: **The role of traditional and spiritual leaders in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in societies of Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region.**

This workshop was held in Bujumbura, in the UNOB Conference Hall, located on the second floor of the OLD EAST Building, on 18 and 19 September 2003.

The following people attended the workshop:

- Burundian traditional wise persons (Bashingantahe) designated by the National Bashingantahe Council in view of their membership of the Institution.
- Representatives of Rwanda, designated in relation to their role within the GACACA, a traditional mechanism delivering justice at community level whose scope of competence has been expanded to judge alleged authors of genocide crime in 1994.

The workshop regretted the absence of the Congolese conference speaker, Professor Mwayila Tshiyembe, who was due to make the keynote statement for sub-theme n°3: **“Policy-makers in the face of conflict prevention and resolution: a synergy between traditional leaders, university experts and policy-makers”**.

II. AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP

As part of the role traditional and spiritual leaders play in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms for a harmonious coexistence between different cultural communities affected by conflicts, and since Rwanda and Burundi are both held as an example, the workshop had to focus on two major points:

- Exchanging views on conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in Rwanda and Burundi through traditional institutions, GACACA (Rwanda) and Bashingantahe (Burundi).
- Pondering over the promotion of traditional values through the rehabilitation of their respective institutions as well as the role of the culture of peace in the Great Lakes Region.

III. CONDUCT OF WORK

III.1. Opening Ceremonies

The opening ceremonies of the workshop were marked by three speeches:

1. The Vice-President of the National Bashingantahe Council, Mr Zénon MANIRAKIZA, made a welcoming speech on a theme connected with, first, the culture of active non-violence, which is one of UNESCO's new central issues for this decade; and, secondly, the efforts being made in the Great Lakes Region towards reaching negotiated solutions and stabilizing States and communities.

- The Conflict in Burundi, which the Arusha Agreement characterizes as ethnic and political, has its roots in manoeuvres of mutual exclusion as well as a 'blood litigation', all of which need a lasting solution. The solution to this crisis will require resorting to mechanisms of dialogue, mediation and arbitration in order to stabilize our community and share power on an equitable basis.
 - Arbitration institutions predate the time when justice was brought within the jurisdiction of and was organized by the State, and thrives where States are weak and fail to use adequately structured mechanisms for restoring the citizens' rights.
 - One major disadvantage is that these institutions are reclaimed by the State itself in its quest for legitimacy.
 - As far as Burundi is concerned, external mediation initiatives must be supplemented by the action, internally, of the Bashingantahe institution which is currently scoring points, through its own rehabilitation, with a view to fully playing its traditional mediation, arbitration and conciliation role in a modern context.
 - Rwanda has just reached a milestone in its way to democracy and can rely on the important role of the AGACACA Institution, which clearly and concretely backs the judicial system.
 - Though it has always been torn apart by all kinds of conflicts, DRC can also resort to traditional arbitration institutions and contribute towards creating a conducive environment for liberating freedom and justice with an eye to helping state structures to work smoothly.
 - The workshop aims at operating a symbiosis between tradition and modernity in order to highlight the role of the reference people that are found within these traditional institutions and take time for due consideration of the possibility of having recourse to traditional mechanisms for the prevention and pacific resolution of conflicts for generating a humanizing synthesis.
2. In his speech, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Burundi, Ambassador NURELDIN SATTI, first indicated that the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Burundi is pleased

to be part of the initiative of gathering traditional and spiritual leaders for the purpose of finding cultural mechanisms for preventing and resolving conflicts.

The role of traditional and spiritual leaders is critical to finding ways and means to achieve peace. The Bashingantahe in Burundi, personalities of the GACACA Court in Rwanda and the INYANGAMUGAYO, as well as members of the Unity and Reconciliation Committee have a great deal to contribute in their country as well as in countries of the Region. In the other countries of Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region, there certainly exists similar institutions and resource people for establishing dialogue between people and societies, preventing conflicts, promoting and consolidating peace after a conflict.

3. In his opening speech, the UNESCO Representative in Burundi, Mr SOW Yacouba, after underlining the origin of this initiative by the UNESCO Subregional Office in Libreville, indicated that this workshop's objectives address highly topical issues of interest to the countries of the Great Lakes Region. Exchanges will focus on the traditional mechanisms for the pacific resolution of conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi in the shape of the AGACACA Institution and the BASHINGANTAHE Institution. The purpose is to identify the internal as well as external causes of the development of conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi; to thoroughly examine the ways of promoting traditional cultural values through the rehabilitation of the AGACACA and the BASHINGANTAHE institutions; to reflect on the promotion of the culture of peace and non-violence in Rwanda and Burundi as well as analyse the ways and means of contributing to restoring peace in the Great Lakes Region.

The UNESCO Representative urged the participants to spare no effort so as to attain these objectives and so that peace would soon become a reality in countries of the Great Lakes Region and that the ongoing development efforts may yield tangible results.

He finally pointed out that, among the results to be attained, there is a need for both men and women to commit to intercultural dialogue and peace. There is also a need for examining the possibility of revitalizing the functioning of the AGACACA and BASHINGANTAHE institutions and establishing a framework for collaboration between both institutions, and for developing, together, suitable strategies for fostering a peaceful socio-political climate that is conducive to sustainable human development.

III.2. Summary of presentations

III.2.1. Presentation n°1 (BURUNDI)

“THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN THE MECHANISMS OF PREVENTION AND PACIFIC RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS: THE BASHINGANTAHE INSTITUTION”

*By Zénon MANIRAKIZA,
Vice-President of the National Bashingantahe Council*

1. Origins of the Bashingantahe

The speaker first set the historical background of this institution which is believed to have appeared during the foundation of monarchy in Burundi about four centuries ago. Through etiological tales, one meets with characters such as ‘NGOMA YA SACEGA’, who settled a dispute between God and ‘death’ by claiming that God was mightier than death. Despite the death’s fatal warning to him, he refused to distort the truth. He died and his death taught and is still teaching wise people to always tell the truth and nothing but the truth.

Another reference is a king’s jester, SAMANDARI, the lessons of whom are quite similar to the fables of La Fontaine. The most famous story is the one in which he forced the king to ask for his forgiveness following an unbelievable scene he had imagined:

“As SAMANDARI, sitting alone with the king around the hearth, was cooking vegetables, he pretended having been called by someone outside. After some time, he returned. As he opened the cooking pot, he exclaimed: Majesty, how come you’ve eaten my vegetables, me, a poor wretch? No, retorted the king, I wouldn’t dare! No, the other maintained, look, the level has lowered so much. Hadn’t you seen the pot was originally full. Yes, I admit it was, but, please, don’t raise your voice, because I risk losing my credibility in the eyes of my people. Only in return for a significant number of cows did SAMANDARI accept to keep silent, yet he concluded by saying to the king: from this day forward, be careful not to decide disputes alone without any incriminating evidence, lest innocent people might be indicted, even unintentionally.”

The Bashingantahe Institution coexisted with the monarchy until the eve of colonization. In the face of such a sacred monarchy, with a downwards (from top to bottom) pyramidal administration, the Bashingantahe embodied upwards power (from bottom to top). They complemented the administration.

2. The evolution of the Bashingantahe Institution

The evolution of the Bashingantahe Institution has been marked by grey areas due to ill-advised decisions. The colonial power, fearing to suffer a setback as it was trying to impose a new legal system, managed to ban the Bashingantahe from settling disputes by means of common law.

Thus, the gracious (free of charge) justice that they should have dispensed was superseded by courts. The Bashingantahe also were humiliated. While they used to be

notables respected by the monarchical power and society, they were not spared chicote. In those days of bitter memory, such beating's primary objective was to put the Bashingantahe on an equal footing with the common run of people.

It should be noted, however, that the Bashingantahe did not submit to the Belgian Law as far as dispute settlement was concerned. They carried on with their gracious justice while cohabitating with court justice.

Post-colonial regimes did not make things easy for this institution. The style of investiture was denatured and no longer rested on moral integrity, equity and social responsibility. The state even went as far as to suppress investiture outright.

3. Rehabilitating the Bashingantahe Institution

Time has come to rehabilitate the Bashingantahe Institution. The rehabilitation program seeks the following goals:

- Putting the Bashingantahe Institution on its feet again by providing it with a structure.
- Building the capacities of the Bashingantahe through the promotion of the Ubushingantahe value and the training of Bashingantahe.
- Advocating for the Institution to be included in the Constitution.

Regarding structure, the Bashingantahe Institution, which includes men and women invested according to Burundian tradition, is structured in such a way that at the hill level there are 10 wise people, 5 of whom are men and the other five women; at the town level: 20 wise people who include 15 men and 5 women; at the provincial level, about 24 wise people, of whom 15 are men and 9 women; and, finally, the national level: 56 wise people, of whom 36 men and 20 women.

In terms of capacity-building, training sessions have been organized, others are underway or forthcoming, in order to enable the Bashingantahe to be more effective in a Burundian society undergoing brutal change and a strong interpenetration of tradition and modernity.

The National Bashingantahe Council is struggling for the recognition, by the post-transition Constitution, of this Institution as one traditional value of great moment in today's Burundian society.

4. The future of the Bashingantahe Institution

The Bashingantahe Institution is one of a few institutions having formed the basis of and served as a reference in Burundi's cultural and socio-political life from time immemorial. For its ups and downs and successive crises, all Burundian people remain strongly committed to this Institution.

This Institution, which used to mark the moral and judicial authority held by the ‘Bashingantahe’ Council of Notables, kept the custom because its members were the sole interpreters thereof.

On all these accounts, this Institution is actually willing to:

- a. Remain a locally-centred institution for the settlement of all land disputes, succession matters, theft, petty crime, and disputes between the population and the authorities.
- b. Modernize and constantly adjust to change while remaining dynamic and functional.
- c. Harmonize the role of the Bashingantahe with that of residence courts by bringing free and equitable justice closer to the citizens and by selecting the cases to be referred to courts.
- d. Take a more active part in the ongoing peace agreements in Burundi in terms, inter alia, of (1) the repatriation and rehabilitation of displaced people and refugees (2) the settlement of land disputes (3) the participation in the work of the ‘Truth and Reconciliation’ Committee (4) the support to the Ombudsman’s work.

5. The ‘Ubushingantahe’ concept and conflict resolution methods

The speaker did not content himself with tracing the origins and relating the evolution of the ‘Bashingantahe’ Institution; he also reviewed the ‘Ubushingantahe’ concept as well as the methods for solving conflicts.

a. The ‘Ubushingantahe’ concept

Some define ‘Ubushingantahe’ as an equity justice. To put it more clearly, the ‘Ubushingantahe’ concept means both bearing witness and act of mediation and arbitration aimed at restoring the veracity of facts as well as conciliatory justice. Others share the definition of the President of the National Bashingantahe Council, Father Adrien NTABONA, to whom the Mushingantahe is *“a man responsible for maintaining order, tranquility, truth and peace within his community. This is so, not by virtue of any power that would have been vested on him by the administrative authorities, but rather due to his very soul and quality of life, which the society readily acknowledges he has by granting him investiture”*.

Starting with the investiture, the speaker specified that future nominees go through an initiation period during which they are kept under strict surveillance and correction by their elders. On investiture day, the Mushingantahe is sworn to be faithful to his society while beating the ground with the stick of wisdom, ‘Intahe’, to call upon his ‘Bashingantahe’ elders who passed away with their reputation intact after fighting for the truth which protects the weak and the voiceless against the capabilities of the strongest.

Ubushingantahe is a condition, not a position. A Mushingantahe, therefore, must :

- have a deeply humane behaviour
- have a good sense of disinterestedness
- have a sense of logic and accountability
- always be development-minded

b. Methods for resolving conflicts

The speaker did not fail to point out that the notion of conflict has several aspects. It may be understood as a disagreement, an antagonism, a discord, a struggle, an opposition, a friction, a war, etc.

A conflict, which is conceived as both a danger and an opportunity, can be either destructive or constructive, depending on how it is settled. The Bashingantahe are aware of this problem. Where a conflict is social, coexistence inevitably brings about frictions. A society's maturity must be measured, not by the number of tragedies it has been through, but by the methods the people use to cope with them and, thereby, avoid the elimination of fellow citizens, foreigners, and the destruction of infrastructure.

The following are the methods used by the Bashingantahe to settle disputes of different nature generated by cohabitation:

a. Active listening

It consists in:

- Not cutting somebody short: let the person voice his troubles, state his worries and protect his interests
- Clarifying all that is said to avoid confusion: ask the person speaking to repeat some words in order to emphasize the facts he recognizes himself.
- Summarizing by gathering all the information; an opportunity for correcting or making a point clearer; bears the risk of compromising oneself.
- Apologizing to the plaintiff and refocusing the reflection.

b. Resort to swearwords

By swearing, the culprit decides alone what the sanction awaiting him must be should the balance of the truth weigh in the opposing party's favour.

c. Gathering evidence

The Bashingantahe can, in case of need, perform a direct examination of the physical expression of the accused: tone, gaze and other revealing signs. They are experts in the direct observation of the movement of the tongue and the eyes, in the analysis of the coherence of words as well as in the physical examination of the contentious property goods.

d. Discreet deliberation

Following the examination, the ‘Bashingantahe’ college decide secretly aside. College members are chosen from amongst the different clans in order to guarantee transparence and impartiality. Only a selected Mushingantahe can return a verdict. It is strictly forbidden to violate the secrecy of deliberations at the risk of being ostracized or relieved from duties, which is most humiliating.

e. Arbitration

Impartiality, which is an integral part of the oath taken during the investiture, is a positive point which stirs the population to seek the help of the Bashingantahe. It works best for conflicts occurring at home where discretion about the motive for the dispute guarantees the couple against becoming the laughing stock of the community. This is actually preventive diplomacy.

f. Conciliation

Conciliation has no coercive power. It helps to lower the level of tension and arrive at a mutually-beneficial compromise protecting each party’s interests.

Here, the Bashingantahe’s job is to enable the emergence of a solution and ascertain the amicable settlement of disputes referred to them.

g. Mediation

The Mushingantahe’s role is to help the conflicting parties, locked each in their monologue, to meet and talk to each other again. It tries to get the parties themselves to find solutions that protect their interests.

Regarding specifically this method, the Speaker pointed out that genocide and other crimes against humanity entail an emotional and affective strain that the Bashingantahe are not able to control based on the fact that most of them have suffered these vices. Other skills should therefore be applied to solve the conflict on the basis of constant objectivity and neutrality.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Speaker pointed out that the subject on the ‘Bashingantahe’ Institution was chosen and developed to show that this traditional framework for preventing and resolving conflicts is still alive in Burundi today. Having suffered blows from the colonizers and post-colonial regimes, it now aspires to being revitalized. He concluded his talk by calling for this Institution to be given support by the population, the government and the International Community. He is confident that the Conference of Libreville will hopefully acknowledge this Institution as a protective tradition, for not only the specifically Burundian

traditional values, but also the universal values that protect human rights for a harmonious coexistence of different cultural communities.

III.2.2. Presentation n°2 (RWANDA): The GACACA INSTITUTION

By Augustin NKUSI, Advisor at the Supreme Court

Like the first Speaker, this lecturer followed a nearly identical frame, that is, the ‘GACACA’ institution from origins to nowadays, its principles or concepts and, finally, its current situation in a modern State and after the 1994 genocide tragedy.

1. Origins of the GACACA Institution

The origins of the GACACA can be traced back around the 13th century AD only. It’s a lawful and popular institution. In ancient Rwanda, the judicial system was made up of three levels:

- a. The GACACA, which comprised persons from the nuclear family, next the extended family, and finally neighbours who did not necessarily belong to the same clan. It was charged with administering justice at community level. It settled disputes of variegated nature: marriage, family, contracts and land. It more specifically handled minor matters. A blood-related case was never brought before this institution.
- b. At the second level were ‘Batware’ chiefs, representing royal power
- c. At third and last levels, there was the King’s court responsible for important affairs which had not found a solution through the lower jurisdictions.

The GACACA institution was thus recognized by the king. It has to be noted, however, that unlike Burundi, members of the GACACA were not ceremoniously invested.

From the colonial and post-colonial eras, the GACACA lost its force with the advent of written law. Western-type courts, which were introduced by the colonizers, superseded tradition and, consequently, common law as well.

2. The GACACA in the wake of the 1994 tragedy

a. Background

The situation became so complex with the 1994 genocide that a system had to be devised for delivering justice in the face of a totally inoperative judicial system. Some people then thought of looking into the past and resorting eventually to the traditional system of GACACA.

Studies were carried out which led to the enactment of a law establishing the 'GACACA' institution, with the precise mandate of trying essentially presumed guilty persons of the 1994 genocide crime.

b. Structure

Rwanda now has 9011 'GACACA' cells nationally, with 258,208 judges, including men and women. These had been voted into office at elections organized by the political authorities. They sit in hierarchical jurisdictions in relation to the gravity of the offence; crimes, in turn, are divided into different categories.

The current GACACA structure is such that (1) the cell GACACA is being said to hear only minor criminal offences, that is, of the 4th category, (2) the sector GACACA, 3rd-category offences, (3) the district GACACA for second-category offences and (4) provincial GACACA for first-category offences.

c. Mission

The mission of the GACACA in modern Rwanda is to pursue and make the truth known about the genocide.

Another mission is to search for effectiveness by speeding up trials in the face of the heaviness and slowness of the classical judicial system.

Finally, the GACACA is responsible for eradicating the culture of impunity and definitively reconciling the Rwandan people by strengthening their unity.

d. Achievements and Future Prospects

The Institution has just been put in place in every administrative area of the country. For the time being, inquiries are still performed by pilot cells, yet there is every hope that the system will operate effectively so that its mission would be extended, beyond genocide crimes, to other purposes the most important of which is reconciling the Rwandan people for a lasting peace.

In his conclusion, the lecturer felt that one cannot do without the tradition which consists of considering how much culture remains a precious source where solutions to conflicts, including those currently tearing apart the so-called modern states, can be sought.

The Libreville Conference should, in turn, arouse minds to the protection and promotion of traditional cultural values.

III.3. Exchanges on the current situation

III.3.1. About the Bashingantahe Institution (BURUNDI)

As a result of the exchanges and considerations on the role of traditional and spiritual leaders in cultural mechanisms for conflict prevention and management in Africa, the participants reached the following conclusions about the current situation of the Bashingantahe Institution:

1. The 'Bashingantahe' institution has been and will continue to be both independent and neutral. Its origins are rooted in the birth of the Burundian nation with the advent of monarchy, about 4 centuries and a half before. Both went the same way, with the 'Bashingantahe', as a solid Institution, managing social conflicts free of charge. The 'Bashingantahe' institution was a fully-fledged counterpower the advice of which were respected by rulers. This institution was hard-hit by the colonizer and the successive republican regimes, based on the fact that the objective was to cut the link between power and citizen. Despite all this, this institution has kept its vitality not least in our modern State.
2. The Bashingantahe Institution, while defending values specific to Burundi, protects also universal values. The 'Bashingantahe' are the legitimate guardians of these values. They are the guarantors of human rights, of other people's property, and of the infrastructure and the environment.
3. The institution's weapon remains, today just as yesterday, moral integrity, the cult of the truth, the permanent concern about justice and reconciliation. This is why it has played an overriding role in the prevention and pacific resolution of conflicts without having recourse to police mechanisms.
4. The Bashingantahe institution is both a positive value, since it is related, on the one hand, to the individual's behaviour, and a functionality, due to the pacific resolution of social conflicts, on the other hand. This makes it different from other institutions in societies in which the resolution of conflicts is performed under the umbrella of State mechanisms.
5. While the traditional power used to recognize the 'Ubushingantahe' values, today's power grants only little importance to this institution.
6. The Bashingantahe institution is sometimes viewed by the younger generation as a structure for old, untrained and illiterate people, unfit for today's times, and within which intellectuals have no place. Yet, there has been some progress, since lawyers, physicians and other high-profile persons have been invested since 2002 and more especially in urban areas.
7. For its undisputed role in preventing and handling conflicts during the monarchical regimes, the public authority has not met the colonizer's challenge to minimise, or even suppress, the role of the Bashingantahe institution.

8. The Bashingantahe institution is now organized from the lowest level of the Hill to the upper level of the nation. It is the only structure capable of censoring and criticizing itself.
9. A traditionally invested Mushingantahe remains a virtuous citizen, a moral and patriotic leader who stands out from the mainstream citizen for he places himself above ethnic groups, regions or whatever considerations which might hinder his/her action as a social regulator.
10. The Bashingantahe institution is currently faced with conflicts of a new type connected with the existence of the modern state. This concerns conflicts of political nature or various social conflicts within the public, semi-public and private administrations related to the management of material, financial and human resources.

III.3.2. About the GACACA Institution (Rwanda)

1. The GACACA is an institution for preventing and resolving conflicts in traditional Rwanda the origins of which are to be found very long time ago in the country's history. This institution used to be recognized by the king and required no ceremony whatsoever for investing its members as was the case for its Burundian counterpart. It comprised wise persons morally and intellectually honest.
2. The Gacaca used to be competent for settling disputes of a marriage and family nature, in the restricted sense of the word, as well as social and land disputes, in a broader sense.
3. The Gacaca was not competent for hearing blood-related criminal offences. The Gacaca's guiding principle was the search for the truth with a view to reconciliation and maintaining social harmony.
4. The traditional Gacaca lost its strength with the advent of written law. It nevertheless remained latent. It was recently rehabilitated following the 1994 genocide and institutionalized by an act setting it the precise mandate of seeking the truth over everything that had occurred pertaining to the genocide in order to fight against impunity and restore social order through reconciliation.
5. Its birth stems from a critical analysis of the Rwandan judicial system, completely destroyed for that matter, which turned out to be incapable of judging hundreds of thousands of people assumed to have been perpetrators or instigators of the genocide. The Gacaca seeks to transform negative energies into positive energies in order to dispel fear, sorrow, desolation, etc., with the aim of mending the threads of the social fabric and rebuilding the Nation.
6. Nowadays, the Gacaca is organized nationally at cell and provincial levels. The so-called 'Inyangamugayo' are elected by the population at the cell level, the cell being the smallest administrative entity in the country. Their organizational

structure includes a general assembly, next seats, and finally coordinating committees.

7. In terms of achievements, the Gacaca is already operational as far as the steps towards the truth over what happened during the genocide are concerned, and is now in the process of preparing files for the alleged perpetrators and instigators of the genocide crime. A long way is still to go before the completion of this action, since it only started in 753 cells out of the 9011 Gacaca cell jurisdictions.

III.4. Recommendations

The participants in the meeting first acknowledge with appreciation UNESCO's initiative which has enabled the Great Lakes countries to exchange on the cultural mechanisms for preventing and resolving conflicts, and recommend what follows :

III.4.1. Regarding the qualification a Mushingantahe should possess with respect to the prevention and pacific resolution of conflicts, the participants in the workshop recommend that :

1. Only a Mushingantahe with the required moral, social and intellectual qualities, acknowledged by his/her direct entourage, be invested.
2. A Mushingantahe's behaviour must be exemplary. He/she must thus avoid everything that might jeopardize its relationships with his/her human environment.
3. Women must be directly involved in the prevention and pacific resolution of conflicts since they are the first victims.

III.4.2. Regarding the promotion of the institution's effectiveness, the participants in the workshop recommend to :

1. Bring back peace and social security within the Bashingantahe's remit.
2. Invest Bashingantahe who deserve being so.
3. Promote education for all, for an illiterate people will never be able to protect their rights, much less meet their obligations.
4. Stage series of training and documentation sessions for the 'Bashingantahe' aimed at literate intellectuals - to enable them to master traditional mediation, arbitration and conciliation mechanisms - as well as non literate or less learned people, to help them master modern procedures for the pacific resolution of conflicts. This will require sourcing and financing both human and material resources.
5. Integrate the institution into the Constitution and capitalize its social and moral values.

6. See that the environment is respected; for it has an impact on the ecosystem and economic development, and, therefore, on the self-fulfilment of the man as the prime mover of social justice, peace and development.
7. Protect mores against heinous crimes, more particularly rapes of women and violence on children. The same applies for juvenile and senile delinquency which generates street children with unparalleled harmfulness.
8. Get the Bashingantahe conform to the culture of the truth and the defence of justice as well as public property.
9. Revive the prohibitions and taboos through swearwords.
10. Set up a multidisciplinary framework for meeting all the challenges and distinguishing oneself by positive viewpoints in circumstances of opportunity.
11. Promote the conciliation of traditional values with modernity
12. Prevent and resolve the various conflicts of a social nature within the political and administrative realm.
13. Prevent and resolve conflicts arising from the sharing of national resources.
14. Seek, as much as practicable, independence and neutrality to party politics.
15. Involve the Institution in different committees, including the land committee and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.
16. Integrate ritual ceremonies of investiture into the Gacaca Institution along the same lines as Burundi's Bashingantahe for strengthening and maintaining the moral and social integrity of the 'Inyangamugayo' and for inspiring confidence to the people under their jurisdiction.
17. Extend the modern Gacaca's mission at the end of their term so that they may retrieve their traditional competences.
18. Educate young people in the traditional mechanisms for attaining social peace through the discovery of traditional cultural values. And, in this respect, countries in the subregion should design and develop a course on cultural mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution to be delivered in our respective universities. Thus, there is a need for a reflection committee to be set up for reviewing the contents of the program.
19. Explore the existing solidarity mechanisms to find solutions to the problem of peace and development in the subregion. Visits in both aspects for sharing experiences would be a valuable asset.
20. Start studies on cultural mechanisms for preventing and resolving conflicts in the Great Lakes region. This is all the more useful since the scientific approach

underpinning those studies will enable us to transcend our sentiments and solve our peace and development problems in a sustainable way.

21. Include, at last, both institutions within the world's cultural heritage for they convey a message of peace, justice and conciliation.

On the basis of the recommendations above, and since they are fully aware of the role both institutions can play for peace in the subregion, our respective states should take advantage of the cultural mechanisms for preventing and resolving conflicts while capitalizing on the positive experiences gathered on both sides.

III. 5. Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony, which followed the reading of recommendations, was marked by three statements:

1. The President of the National Bashingantahe Council, Father Adrien NTABONA, started saying that the Bashingantahe Institution is a springboard for a necessary ethical burst.

The Bashingantahe's presence in Burundian society is grounded on the quest for a flawless virtuous life, a total conversion, a deep love of the truth and justice, a little extra for a society in disarray.

The President of the National Bashingantahe Council went on saying that the Bashingantahe should not be perceived as a prestige, a moral power. It is all about the ambition to contribute to rebuilding society on an ethical plan, that is, where it has mostly been damaged. It's just a matter of wondering about the genocide-type mass killings and all kinds of systematic deeds of vandalism committed without any qualms. As result of all this, every value characteristic of a good and virtuous man has been shaken.

It has to be noted that the Bashingantahe Institution left by our ancestors must operate within a tradition-modernity framework in order to create a 'synthetic humanism' in an environment of adapted and contextualized interculturalization.

Since our society is broken, shattered and bruised, it needs resource people in rural as well as urban areas to contribute to community harmonization for preventing and resolving conflicts.

2. Having listened to the recommendations and commitments resulting from the deliberations, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Burundi, Ambassador Nureldin Satti, expressed his satisfaction. Mechanisms that stem from culture have the advantage of proceeding from the population itself, and this has just been demonstrated by the work performed jointly by the BASHINGANTAHE Institution in Burundi and the GACACA Institution in Rwanda.

It is crucial, he added, that the search for conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms be matched by all this entity, given the secular links that exist among Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries of the same region.

He finally expressed the wish that both the BASHINGANTAHE Institution and the GACACA Institution enter into collaboration and cooperation relations and take advantage of the findings of the research carried out, and encourage research focused on the consolidation of peace and security for all.

3. In his closing speech, and quoting the well known words from the UNESCO Constitutive Act preamble, which holds that it is in the heart and spirit of people that the defences of peace must be sought, the UNESCO Representative in Burundi, Mr SOW Yacouba, said that the solution to conflicts that break out within and amongst the different cultures must be sought inside culture itself and inside its integrating force.

The cases of Burundi and Rwanda, where conflicts have been characterized by an instrumentation of ethnicity and politics, are clear illustrations of that.

For their part, delegates have placed particular emphasis on the need for opening up the BASHINGANTAHE, in Burundi, and the GACACA, in Rwanda, to modernity by extending their role to all social components in both countries, including gender requirements, and also by opening them up to the windows of opportunity provided by globalization.

Special emphasis was also placed on the importance of education and literacy for all, which are some elements among the conflict regulating mechanisms.

The problems currently confronting us were also addressed: peace and security, rape of girls and women, violence on women and children, the protection of the environment, etc.. The solutions that will be found will represent other regulating elements for conflicts within the society.

Among the results of this workshop are mutual working visits of the BASHINGANTAHE Institution and the GACACA Institution with a view to establishing cooperation links and learning from their respective experiences as well as contributing, together, to the search for solutions to internal problems in the Great Lakes Region and even beyond.