

#### D. Partnership with Civil Society/Women's Groups

One of the hallmarks of FFRP's work in Rwanda has been its use of consultative processes—both internally and externally—with constituents, and other women's organizations. The *Collectifs Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe* (a collective of 41 different associations), the Rwandan Women Leaders' Caucus, the National Council of Women, and the Ministry of Gender and Women Promotion, have all been active partners of the FFRP.<sup>14</sup> Some of the achievements of the FFRP and its partners are:

- The 1999 Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities, and Successions which established women's rights to inherit land for the first time. Women parliamentarians worked in close concert with the Women's Ministry and women's CSOs to develop and adopt the law.
- The 2001 Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child Against Violence, which defines a child as anyone under the age of 18, and identifies both the rights and responsibilities of children. It criminalizes murder, rape, the use of children for "dehumanizing acts", exploitation, neglect and abandonment, and forced or premature (before the age of twenty-one) marriage. These three landmark pieces of law were made possible by the commitment of women parliamentarians in shaping them, on the basis of extensive research in the country, and in consultations with everyday women regarding the type of security threats they and their children face. The process of developing the Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender-based Violence demonstrates the FFRP's participatory approach.

The Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender-Based Violence, a gender-based violence law adopted by the Rwandan Parliament on August 3, 2006, defines gender-based violence and addresses crimes committed during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 as well as crimes perpetrated after the genocide. The law identifies various types of gender-based violence acts against women, children and men and it specifically highlights polygamy as a cause of violence. Moreover, for the first time under Rwandan law, the law provides a legal definition of rape and marital rape and prescribes punishment for these offenses. It bears noting that the law is gender neutral and therefore applies to both adult women and men.

**Advocacy for budgetary appropriation** for gender legislation requires a solid, sustained partnership between MPs, particularly women legislators, and CSOs - specifically women's groups. An example of an effective partnership between the parliament and civil society is **South Africa's WBI, which was a coalition of parliamentary committees, two non-governmental organizations (NGOs), CASE, and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa.** The WBI made a significant contribution to budget reform by conducting analyses of budget allocations from a gender perspective. One of the outcomes was a report prepared by the Ministry of Finance for the Parliamentary Committee on the Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women. Among the significant findings of the report are: 1) the tax policy was discriminatory on the basis of gender and marital status; 2) the pension fund laws had income differential implications. Women contributed six percent while men contributed eight percent of their salaries towards their pensions, which implied a higher

13. Delgado, B., 'Mexico's Committee on Equality and Gender and CEDAW,' in 'The Role of Parliamentary Committees on Mainstreaming Gender and Promoting the Status of Women', IPU, 2006, 66.

14. Pearson, E., 'Demonstrating Legislative Leadership: The Introduction of Rwanda's Gender-Based Violence Bill', The Initiative for Inclusive Security, April 2008.