
In response to the recommendations to strengthen Security Council-civil society relations in the Cardoso Report and the Secretary General's Report, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, wrote an open letter to UN Member States on the integration of the Council's commitments to UNSCR 1325, in light of the recommendations put forward in the reports.

Letter to UN Member States on Security Council-Civil Society Relations

17 September 2004

Dear Ambassador:

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security notes with appreciation the spirit of the Cardoso report, *We the Peoples* (A/58/817), and the *Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations - Civil Society Relations* (A/59/354).

Pursuant to sections 1 (b) (13-14) of the abovementioned Secretary-General's report, we urge you to put forth the following recommendations to the Security Council:

Require that all country-specific and thematic reports and briefings from the Secretariat include a gender analysis and input from women's groups, organizations and networks.

Institutionalize meetings with women's groups, organizations and networks during Security Council missions to the field.

Not only should these meetings be institutionalized, but they should also be structured efficiently to enable women adequate time to prepare. Further, these meetings should be held at appropriate hours and in appropriate venues. Monies should be available to women from the proposed UN Trust Fund (see Section 2 of the SG report), or other regular budget and voluntary funds, in order for the women to travel to meet the Council members. In preparation for UNSC missions to the field, New York and Geneva-based NGOs and UN departments, agencies and programmes should be approached for names of civil society partners in the field.

Hold regular seminars between Council members and civil society organizations in addition to regular Arria Formula meetings.

Council members should insist that the seminars, as well as the Arria Formula meetings, are characterized by Mission participation at the highest level, gender balance among the speakers, as well as an integrated gender perspective in the presentations. Funding should be available to bring women from conflict-affected regions to participate in both the seminars and Arria meetings.

We applaud the work of the Council in recent years to strengthen its relationship with civil society. We further commend the recent initiative of the Philippines to ensure that civil society representatives had the opportunity to speak formally to the Council and the efforts of the United Kingdom, Chile and Canada (non-SC member) in co-sponsoring, with the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, two Security Council-focused roundtables (January and July 2004), which addressed the integration of Security Council thematic resolutions into the country-specific work of the Council.

Yet, we believe that in order for the Council to achieve more effective work on international peace and security, it should pursue a stronger and more systematic working relationship with civil society organizations, and in particular, women's organizations and networks.

Thank you for your careful consideration of our recommendations during your deliberations in the General Assembly.

Sincerely,
NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security