

## Statement at Security Council Arrria Formula on Women's Participation in Peace Processes

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Excellencies and dear colleagues,

On behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, allow me to thank Ambassador Løj and the Permanent Mission of Denmark for organizing this important meeting with civil society representatives on the occasion of the 5th Anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325. I would also like to thank the Permanent Mission of Romania for organizing the upcoming Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security.

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, a coalition of ten organizations, was formed five years ago to advocate for the equal participation of women and the inclusion of a gender perspective in conflict prevention, reaction, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Since the unanimous adoption of resolution 1325 in October 2000, we have worked in partnerships with other civil society organizations, governments and the United Nations to monitor and support comprehensive implementation of this resolution. Over the past five years we have made a number of recommendations to the Security Council.

I will limit my comments today to **three** specific points regarding the UN and national implementation of the resolution and women's participation in peacebuilding processes.

- First, in order to ensure the integration of resolution 1325 into its ongoing work, we recommend that the Security Council establish a focal point and an expert level working group on women, peace and security.
- Second, we urge Member States to develop national strategies and action plans for the coordinated integration of women, peace and security issues at the national level.
- And third, we stress that women and a gender perspective should be included in all peacebuilding processes and institutions including in the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

It is our sincere hope that **these recommendations will be reflected in the Presidential Statement to be adopted at the close of the Open Debate this Thursday.**

Madam chair,

Security Council Resolution 1325 is a landmark decision. It makes gender perspectives and women relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and rebuilding war-torn communities. Since the adoption of the resolution there has been an increasingly strong recognition that **sustainable peace cannot be built without the participation of women.** The Security Council's reputation and relevance ultimately rest on the results its resolutions achieve.

By adopting resolution 1325, the Council has committed to include references to women and gender issues in all of its resolutions, mission mandates and reports. **Unfortunately, the Council has been extremely slow in turning these commitments into action.** The mainstreaming of a gender perspective in Security Council resolutions remains inadequate. The 2005 Secretary-General's Report [1] states that from July 2004 to July 2005 language on women and gender issues was included in 9 out of 63 Council resolutions or 14.2 percent. From January 2000-June 2004 only 15.6 percent of all Council resolutions included language on women and gender issues [2].

In order to ensure the systematic integration of resolution 1325 in its own work, **we urge the Security Council to develop a working group on women, peace and security.** It is important to note that the 2005 Secretary-General's

report also notes the need for an "accountability mechanism" within the Council. Developing such a mechanism now is especially timely, given the creation of a UN system-wide action plan on resolution 1325, which needs to be regularly updated, monitored, and reviewed.

Madam Chair,

While resolution 1325 can advance gender mainstreaming in the United Nations, Member States also play a critical role in implementing the resolution by incorporating policy on women, peace and security at the national level. Even though the 2004 Presidential Statement on women, peace and security called for the development of National Action Plans, to date only six Member States have begun work on such action plans. The Working Group **urges Member States to develop adequately funded national action plans and strategies on women, peace and security based on consultations with civil society organizations, and with specific time-bound targets, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.**

On my third point Madam Chair,

The marginalization of women from equal participation in peace negotiations and peacebuilding denies half the population equal access to the political process and denies all people the benefits of having a female perspective in political decision-making. Such marginalization is pervasive at all levels including within the UN system. Five years after the adoption of resolution 1325, there are only two women serving as the Secretary General's Special Representatives. This situation must be addressed and priority should be given to achieving gender parity in the appointment of women as Special Representatives and Envoys by 2015, beginning with a minimum of 30 per cent in the next three years.

The Security Council should call on international and regional organizations and all participating parties involved in peace processes to ensure gender parity, maintaining a minimum 30 percent representation of women, including women most affected by the conflicts, in all such agreements. **It is not enough to have some "token women", however capable, at the highest levels of decision-making. What we need is a critical mass of women with a comprehension of social justice and gender equality.**

Finally, the Security Council should request that the mandate of the proposed Peacebuilding Commission include an explicit commitment to partnerships with civil society, including women's organizations, through formal mechanisms at headquarters and at the country level. **In its establishment, mandate and programming, the Peacebuilding Commission should seek to implement the commitments of resolution 1325.** Advancing the solid foundation of UN-civil society partnership and including a gender perspective in peace and security issues will lead to more effective and sustainable peacebuilding.

In closing, I would like to draw your attention to the additional recommendations we set forth in our report From Local to Global: Making Peace Work for Women as well as a resolution 1325 Checklist [3].

The Working Group understands that there are numerous pressures and time constraints facing the Security Council and that gender concerns may not be foremost in the minds of its members. However, history has demonstrated--that until and unless women's voices are heard and their contributions recognized and supported, we will not achieve collective security and peace. Thank you for your attention.

- [1] Women and peace and security, report of the Secretary-General, 10 October 2005, Paragraph, 23.
- [2] Women and peace and security, report of the Secretary-General, 13 October 2004, Paragraph, 6.
- [3] Women's Participation and Gender Perspectives in Security Council Resolutions Checklist, developed at a roundtable co-hosted by the NGO Working Group, the Permanent Missions to the UN of Canada, Chile and the United Kingdom. January, 2004.