

Civil Society Open Letter in Advance of the 15th Anniversary of SCR 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security

To: Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, and UN Senior Leadership

20 April 2015

Excellencies,

As you prepare to mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 (2000) and the establishment of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, we call on you, all UN Member States and agencies, to recommit to the principles and transformative potential of WPS and develop effective and sustained implementation strategies.

Despite the repeated commitments, the WPS agenda is far from being comprehensively implemented in policy and practice. To achieve effective and sustainable mechanisms for preventing and resolving conflict, UN Member States and the UN system must take concrete action in terms of women's meaningful participation in all peace and security processes; national and regional implementation of WPS obligations; delivering funding; implementing the prevention pillar; ensuring accountability; and leading by example.

Women's Participation

The equal and full participation of women and women civil society including women human rights defenders, in all efforts to create international peace and security, and the protection and respect for their human rights, are imperative to prevent or resolve conflicts and build lasting peace. The exclusion of women and the lack of gender analysis lead to a failure to adequately address the full drivers of conflict, threatening the sustainability of agreements and forcing women to have to fight even harder for representation and justice.

We call on Member States and the UN to: establish formal consultative forums with civil society and incentives for parties in all conflicts to include women and gender experts in all negotiation teams; fund the attendance of women civil society at international and regional peace and security meetings including donor conferences; and increase the recruitment, retention, and professionalization of women across all justice and security sectors.

National and Regional Implementation

The WPS agenda requires full integration within the governing structures and programs of all Member States and regional bodies. This necessitates a commitment to the development, implementation, and review of existing national and regional gender strategies including National Action Plans (NAPs) and Regional Action Plans (RAPs). Such strategies should: increase coordination and mobilization of inter-agency decision makers and resources; institutionalize a civil society engagement process; include the development of strong, results-based monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with clear indicators and timeframes; dedicate specific funding for implementation; comply with international human rights and humanitarian law standards; and commit to gender-sensitive laws, policies, practices and institutions. Member States are also encouraged to hold WPS parliamentary debates before the 1325 High-Level Review that demonstrate cross-party support for the agenda, provide an update on gender strategies and commit to regular engagement with civil society.

Delivering Funding

Increased political support must be matched with greater and more sustained funding for the WPS agenda. Women must have equal access to direct funding as well to resource allocation in decision-making processes.

Member States must: pledge multi-year large-scale financial support for WPS including programs and for civil society organizations at national, provincial and local levels; ensure core funding within the UN for gender and WPS experts in missions and UN Headquarters; and reduce military spending and redirect this expenditure as called for in the Beijing Platform for Action, which links gender equality and the call for the control of excessive arms spending.

Implementing the Prevention Pillar

Conflict prevention lies at the core of the WPS agenda, yet too often is not considered with the same level of urgency as conflict resolution and post-conflict rebuilding. The full implementation of SCR 1325 and subsequent WPS resolutions, the promotion of the Beijing Platform for Action, and adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other international human rights standards provide the roadmap for the prevention of armed conflict and the integration of gender equality across all peace and security efforts.

Member States and the UN must: address the root causes of violence; promote gender equality and invest in women's human rights, economic empowerment, education and civil society; call on States to stop exporting arms where there is a substantial risk they will be used to commit serious violations of human rights; ratify and implement the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and CEDAW without reservations; support women's leadership as well as women's voices and perspectives in efforts to combat, reduce and prevent terrorism and violent extremism; and ensure WPS recommendations are integrated into all multilateral review processes including the Peace Operations Review, Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, World Humanitarian Summit, Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals.

Ensuring Accountability

Accountability must be insisted upon for atrocities and human rights violations—including for sexual and gender-based violence and civilian casualties—committed by all non-state armed groups, security forces including UN mandated troops, and contractors. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) must be urgently tackled as the perpetrators often enjoy complete immunity.

Member States and the UN must: ensure all investigations and prosecutions are survivor centered and conducted in accordance with international standards; mandate pre-deployment training and vetting of all personnel; and recruit and train all Women's Protection Advisors (WPAs), prioritizing the recruitment of WPAs with previous experience in gender-based violence response.

Leading by Example

The highest echelons of UN leadership, within the Secretariat, specialized agencies, programs and funds, as well as peacekeeping and political missions, must be directly responsible and accountable to ensure more consistent and systematic attention, action and follow-up on WPS. In order to advance these efforts, Member States and the entire UN system must support a strong UN structure to deliver on WPS over the next decade with gender expertise built into operational and policy-making entities, field missions, inter-agency initiatives and groups, and in technical expert rosters. These actors must also ensure those entrusted with the office of Secretary-General, as well as all members of the Senior Management Group, Special envoys and representatives, and Senior Mediators have a responsibility in their respective fields to advance a gender perspective and women's participation.

It is equally important that the Security Council, as the UN body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, leads by example and address its current lack of consistency in implementing the WPS agenda. The Security Council must: ensure WPS is considered as a cross-cutting issue across all of its work by including specific provisions related to women's rights and women's participation in all mandates and requesting information and recommendations on issues related to WPS from missions in reports and briefings; call for gender-sensitive conflict analyses, which identify not only the differentiated impact of conflict on women, girls, men and boys, but also barriers to women's participation in political, electoral and transitional justice processes, security sectors, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, to be at the basis of planning and reporting in all missions both internally and externally; and institutionalize briefings by civil society, the Executive Director of UN Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict during meetings on both country-specific and thematic agenda items.

In October, we expect more than a ceremony. We need real action, political will and follow through.

Yours Sincerely,

1. 1325 Network Finland	2. 1325 Policy Group	3. ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality, Lebanon
4. ABANTU for Development, Ghana	5. Affirmative Action Initiative for Women (NCAA) Nigeria	6. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)
7. African Woman and Child Features, Kenya	8. African Women's Development & Communication Network (FEMNET)	9. Alliances for Africa
10. Amnesty International	11. Association for the improvement of living and culture BONAVENTURA	12. Association for Women's Rights in Development
13. Athena	14. Bulgarian Armed Forces Women Association	15. Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
16. CARE International	17. Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University	18. centre d'éducation pour les droits de la femme, Maroc
19. Centro de Educación e Investigación para la Paz	20. Citizens' Voice for Justice and Peace	21. Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC) Nigeria
22. Coalition for Eastern NGOs (CENGOS) Nigeria	23. Coalition for the International Criminal Court	24. Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights
25. Eastern African sub Regional Support Initiative for Advancement of Women (EASSI)	26. Echoes of Women in Africa Initiative	27. Enlightened Egypt Foundation
28. EVE Organization for Women Development - South Sudan	29. Femmes Africa Solidarité	30. Femmes et droits Humains Kati/Mali
31. Finn Church Aid	32. Forum for Women and Development, Norway	33. Forum for Women in Development, Democracy and Justice
34. Forum Norway 1325	35. Forum of women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan	36. Gender Awareness Trust, Nigeria
37. Gender Equity, Citizenship, Work and Family, Mexico	38. Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights	39. Global Gender Program of the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University
40. Global Justice Center	41. Global Water	42. Human Rights Watch
43. IANSA Women's Network	44. Impact for Change and Development, Nigeria	45. Institute for Inclusive Security
46. Institute for International Women's Rights at The University of Winnipeg Global College	47. Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy	48. International Center for Research on Women
49. International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect	50. International Federation for Human Rights	51. International Federation of University Women

52. International Peace Bureau	53. International Organization for Victim Assistance	54. Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange
55. Kantha Shakthi Organization, Sri Lanka	56. Karama	57. MADRE
58. Mécanisme pour l'Initiative de la Recherche de la Paix et le Développement	59. Moroccan association against violent towards women	60. Mothers Legacy Project
61. Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV)	62. National Council of Jewish Women	63. National Organisation for Women, Sierra Leone
64. NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security	65. Norwegian Church Aid	66. Norwegian Refugee Council
67. Okogun Odigie Safewomb International Foundation	68. Oxfam International	69. PAX for Peace
70. Plan International USA	71. Positive Change for Cambodia	72. Poverty Action Network in Ethiopia (PANE)
73. Promundo	74. Saferworld	75. Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF)
76. Society for International Development	77. South Professional Women Association	78. Union de l'Action Feminine
79. Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA – International Association of Lawyers)	80. United Nations Association - Greater Philadelphia	81. Unites Nations Association of the United States of America
82. Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights	83. US National Committee for UN Women	84. West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP -LIB)
85. Widows for Peace through Democracy	86. WILPF-España	87. Women's Action for New Directions
88. Women and Youths Environmental Safety and Empowerment Organisation	89. Women Enabled International	90. Women for Afghan Women (WAW)
91. Women for peace, Germany	92. Women Graduates-USA	93. Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRDIC)
94. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)	95. Women Engaged in Action on 1325, c/o Center for Peace Education, Miriam College, Philippines.	96. Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice
97. Women's international league for peace and freedom Norway national section	98. Women's Learning Partnership	99. Women Legislators' Lobby
100. Women News Network	101. Women Peacemakers Program	102. Women Thrive Worldwide
103. Women, Peace and Security Academic	104. Women's Refugee Commission	105. Women Thrive Worldwide

Collective		
106. WOMEN'S UN REPORT NETWORK	107. Women's World Summit Foundation	108. World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy
109. WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform	110. Youth Advocacy Network (YAN) Pakistan	111. YWCA Zambia