

Consultation on the Women, Peace and Security 2015 High-Level Review

April 28, 2015

2:00-3:45pm, The Hague, the Netherlands

On April 28th 2015, the PeaceWomen Programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) held a strategic consultation on the October 2015 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) 2015 High-Level Review and the independent Global Study during the WILPF Women's Power to Stop War Conference (27-29 April, 2015) in The Hague, the Netherlands. Panellists included Maria Butler, WILPF PeaceWomen Programme Director; Radhika Coomaraswamy, lead author of the 2015 WPS Global Study; and Nahla Valji, United Nations (UN) Women WPS Policy Adviser and Officer in Charge.

Over 80 members of civil society from around the world participated. Participants engaged in breakout sessions and provided recommendations and pledges on nine key gap areas:

1. Human Rights and Humanitarian Relief (facilitator: Howard Mollett, CARE International)
2. Prevention and Early Warning Systems (facilitator: Josefine Karlsson, Kvinna till Kvinna)
3. Political Economy and Economic Rights (facilitator: Carol Cohn, Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights)
4. Environmental Degradation and Climate Justice (facilitator: Akinyi Walender, Cordaid)
5. Human Rights Defenders and Journalists (facilitator: Leila Alikarami, Nobel Women's Initiative)
6. The Continuum of Violence: Gangs, Small Arms and Light Weapons (facilitator: Elisabeth Van Der Steenhoven, Wo=Men)
7. Leadership and Accountability (facilitator: Sarah Taylor, Human Rights Watch)
8. National Action Plans (NAPs): Minimum Standards and Maximising Revisions (facilitator: Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders)
9. Masculinity and Violence (facilitator: Abigail Ruane, WILPF PeaceWomen)

This session was participatory and organized to gather input, recommendations and voices for action. The breakout groups focused their discussions on crafting specific and actionable recommendations, while highlighting good practice examples to serve as inputs for the Global Study. Below, we have provided summary recommendations on issues and questions for each topic. In addition to the recommendations, a discussion was held on how civil society can work together, through local, national and global advocacy to push for change.

Recommendations

The Global Study and High-Level Review should:

1. **Call** for a human rights and women's rights perspective to analyse humanitarian relief in order to strengthen women's participation and promote gender equality, women's rights, and a WPS perspective to humanitarian aid and relief.
2. **Support and promote** the work carried out by women's human rights defenders in conflict and post-conflict settings, to ensure both their safety and their work.
3. **Urge** for the inclusion of women's pre- and post-conflict experiences of violence; the strengthening of women's human security and access to justice; and increased attention to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.
4. **Demand** that "prevention" efforts be defined holistically to address the prevention of conflict as a whole, not just sexual and gender- based violence, and that increased attention be focused on the linkages between conflict prevention and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, including through demilitarization.
5. **Promote** the WPS Agenda through a gender lens as it is not solely about women's issues or women's access to political power; it is about a gendered analysis of reconstruction and development policies to build sustainable and equal peace.
6. **Ensure** that women - particularly women in areas affected by climate change and conflict - play an active role in the designing and implementation of international and local responses to climate change and that women's human rights, including in conflict settings, are addressed in all environmental and climate change agreements and policies.
7. **Emphasize** the need to equip and support women to attain and maintain leadership positions in peace and security work, while recognizing the structural and systemic barriers women face.
8. **Urge** Member States to ensure that the development of NAPs is a bottom-up, inclusive process that involves multiple stakeholders and actors (including national/local governments, civil society, religious and community leaders, academics, practitioners and others), while empowering and raising the voices of conflict-affected women.
9. **Acknowledge** violent and dominating masculinities as drivers of conflict, as part of a holistic gendered approach to conflict prevention.

Recommendations by Key Issue Area

1. Humanitarian Relief and Human Rights

Overview:

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees who are women and girls experience unique vulnerabilities, including uncertain citizenship status and challenges accessing education and health resources, and they often face sexual and gender-based violence. Many IDPs and refugees may not return home for years, or even generations, and live in what were intended to be “temporary” camps. The right to education—particularly for girls—comes under threat in conflict settings. Women and girls in conflict settings also face difficulties accessing adequate health care, including reproductive services and psychosocial support. It is critical that key stakeholders including the UN, Member States, civil society, and others take action to improve the situation of women IDPs and refugees, including addressing their long-term needs, ensuring that the right to education and access to healthcare is realized in situations of fragility and conflict.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and the High-Level Review should call for a human rights and women’s rights perspective to analyse humanitarian relief in order to strengthen women’s participation and promote gender equality, women’s rights, and a WPS perspective to humanitarian aid and relief.

In particular, the Global Study and the High-Level Review should:

- Call for action to overcome the **disconnect between WPS commitments and humanitarian action**. Demand a systematic approach to **consult, partner with, and empower women from conflict-affected communities, and CSOs that genuinely connect with them, on the design, implementation, monitoring and accountability** of humanitarian action.
- Call for **increased and long-term investment in women's economic empowerment and livelihoods** in protracted conflicts and the development of long-term gender equality strategies in humanitarian preparedness/planning and emergency responses from the outset for displaced and host communities.
- Call for increased accountability of humanitarian agencies on women’s participation and rights. Demand **more effective and systematic tracking of gender-related funding, through obligatory rather than preferential gender assessments, gender budgets, and other mainstreaming of gender equality in humanitarian action**. Call for donors to **strengthen coordination on accountability for gender through the tracking of funding** and influence on funded agencies. Call for the IASC Gender Marker tool and related tools to be comprehensively, consistently, and effectively utilized.

- Call for both humanitarian agencies and peacekeepers to be held accountable for **sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)**. Demand **increased resources for coordination and accountability mechanisms** and increased **investment in women and women-led civil society**. Demand that zero-tolerance policies be implemented. Demand that **systems be designed in collaboration with and responsive to women and girls in order to ensure their safety and confidence and to ensure strengthened SEA prevention and accountability systems**.
- Demand **strengthened accountability of national governments on gender equality** in humanitarian action as well as strengthened investment in inclusive infrastructure and honest governance to reduce disasters such as in Haiti.
- Demand that **sex-disaggregated data and women empowerment strategies be integrated into all national strategies** including Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programmes and emergency response. The High-Level Review should explicitly reference the UN Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and World Humanitarian Summit processes and call on them to factor in women's participation, gender analysis and accountability for these into their outcomes.
- Propose a 5-year plan to invest in building capacity (both in understanding gender and systems to measure data) that enables crisis-prone areas to better integrate gender into their humanitarian work at all levels.
- **Challenge government policies, linked to counter-terrorism agendas, which contravene international humanitarian law and deny women and girls access to humanitarian assistance and protection.** In particular, it should be recognised that commitment to UNSCR 1325 is inconsistent with counter-terror-related **proscription measures including:** constraining the ability of humanitarian agencies to deliver assistance to women and girls in areas under the control of proscribed armed groups, and **drone-bombing, renditions and other military operations** that violate the human rights of women from conflict-affected communities.

2. Human Rights Defenders

Overview:

In conflict-affected settings, women human rights defenders and journalists face extraordinary risk of violence—both from the state and from their communities. Restrictions on freedom of expression are one warning sign of potential triggers to conflict. It is often easier for men to work as human rights defenders than women. Often times, it is difficult for women to work in this field due to familial obligations and/or security issues such as threats made towards families and loved ones.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and High-Level Review must seek to promote the work carried out by women's human rights defenders in conflict and post-conflict settings, in order to ensure that women human rights defenders are able to do their critical work in a safe environment.

In particular, the Global Study and High-Level Review should:

- **Advocate for the collaboration between civil society and religious leaders** on the subject of human rights in order to help promote and disseminate the work done by human rights defenders.
- Increase awareness and promotion of women's human rights defenders and their work, highlighting the difficulty facing smaller, local organizations to work and collaborate with UN Women, which can hinder the possibility of creating strong early-warning systems. Additionally, there needs to be greater **strengthening and promotion of UN Women within the UN system/network and its processes**.
- Call for **an increase in budgeting support given towards security measures to ensure the safety of women's human rights defenders** and their work, particularly during **“unstable” situations** such as elections.
- **Urge for the mandatory presence and participation of women's human rights defenders within all negotiations processes and peacekeeping mandates.**

3. The Continuum of Violence

Overview:

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a major factor contributing to conflict and violence in women's daily lives. Women experience a continuum of violence and insecurity, before, during and after conflict—in range of forms, including domestic violence, structural violence, and criminal violence. Strong rule of law and security sector institutions can play an important role in increasing women's security and willingness to report crime, particularly when such institutions prioritize women's access to justice.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and High-Level Review should recommend that greater attention is given to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; to the disarmament of combatants (such as done in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan); and to warring parties who very rarely reduce their weapons stockpiles after conflict. The WIPS Agenda must be inclusive of women's pre- and post-conflict experiences of violence and that women's human security and access to justice are strengthened.

In particular, the Global Study and High-Level Review should:

- **Call for greater inclusivity of women in security, sector reform (SSR) processes.** SSR processes must promote gender equitable economic opportunities to reintegrate former combatants back into society. Local security forces, such as the police, must pursue **non-violent methods for combating domestic violence**. This should include strict laws enforcing gun control and communal policing as well.
- **Call for further research on the correlation and relationship between domestic violence, structural violence, and insecurity.** The Global Study and the October Review should call for **recognition of domestic violence as an important potential indicator for growing violence and conflict**.
- **Call for further research and investigation into the correlation between militarized societies and sexual and gender-based violence.** Currently, there is a lack of analysis and data on the relationship between the two.
- **Ensure the creation of “safe spaces” in the transitional period** of conflict for security and military forces and local women’s human rights leaders, where **security is defined based on the needs of the community, including local women**.

4. Prevention of Conflict and Early-Warning Systems

Overview:

Demilitarization is essential to prevent conflict and to stop the flow of arms in order to reallocate resources toward peacebuilding and development. New technologies can be extremely useful tools for early warning and conflict prevention; for example, mobile and satellite phones can be used to quickly report incidents of violence and call for assistance. Community-based dialogue that includes women and their perspectives can play an essential role in de-escalating conflict and can ensure that women’s perspectives in conflict-prevention and mediation are both considered and prioritized. There is a direct link between increased gender equality in society and decreased likelihood that the society will experience conflict. Thus, gender equality measures must be a part of long-term conflict prevention strategies.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and High-Level Review should demand that “prevention” efforts be defined holistically to address the prevention of conflict as a whole, not just sexual and gender-based violence, and that increased attention be focused on the linkages between conflict prevention and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, including through demilitarization.

In particular, the Global Study and the High-Level Review should:

- Call for **gender budgeting**, in consultation with women. Gender budgeting should be used as a tool to address, highlight and mitigate militarized state budgets and their destabilizing impact on international peace and security and women's rights.
- **Demand accountability not only for the militarization of conflict-affected countries and regions, but also for the countries and arms sellers contributing to this militarization and violence.**
- **Call for action to implement tools such as the Arms Trade Treaty, including its criterion on gender based violence**, to strengthen monitoring and accountability for external actors contributing to conflict. **Bring attention to the role and responsibility of external actors in upholding and implementing the WPS Agenda.**
- **Seek prioritization of investing in gender equality as part of a long-term conflict prevention strategy urging Member States to uphold their human rights and international humanitarian law obligations including under CEDAW and to build systems and institutions that facilitate women's political and economic participation from political participation to maternal leave.**

5. Political Economy and Economic Rights

Overview:

During post-conflict recovery, it is essential that the infrastructure that is built is gender-sensitive, taking into consideration women's needs for roads, lighting and other public utilities. Women are an essential part of post-conflict economic recovery. Yet the contributions of women, particularly in the informal economic sectors, receive inadequate investment and support. In many contexts—and particularly after conflict and displacement—women face challenges accessing land and land-related rights (e.g. the right to transfer or inherit land).

Recommendations:

The Global Study and the High-Level Review should regard the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through a gender lens as it is not solely about women's issues or women's access to political power; it is about a gendered analysis of reconstruction and development policies in order to build sustainable and equal peace.

In particular, the Global Study and High-Level Review should:

- **Recommend that all reconstruction or economic projects include mandatory gender analyses.** This ‘gendered impact assessment’ should interrogate how the project will affect gendered power relations, taking into consideration issues such as health, education, livelihoods and human security. Crucially, **it should also build in monitoring and accountability measures so that projects that exacerbate inequalities face penalties and build in action for change.**
- **Request for universal gender auditing of budgets with monitoring, enforcement and accountability measures.**
- **Call for the strengthening of the political economic component of Action Plans,** both for NAPs but also including Regional Action Plans (RAPs), as RAPS can leverage regional pressure to promote national action.
- **Urge for strengthened regulatory mechanisms to regulate private actors** including multinational and transnational corporations, private banks, and private military corporations, preventing them from exploiting the conditions of post-conflict reconstruction. Demand mechanisms to ensure that private sector engagement strengthens rather than reduces the human rights for all people especially women and girls.
- **Call for action to ensure that women’s leadership training, empowerment programmes, education for peace, civil society capacity-building, and other WPS programming include education in political economics, especially macroeconomic policy.** Prioritize training for women civil society leaders and parliamentarians with a holistic approach that goes beyond low-level financial literacy and women’s entrepreneurship to women’s human rights oriented macroeconomic policy.

6. Environmental Degradation and Climate Justice

Overview:

Climate change has specific impacts on women’s livelihoods and access to resources, and women often are aware of community practices and social norms that can be instrumental in designing strategies and programmes to help communities address changing environmental conditions. Resilience in the face of climate change and natural disasters is essential to preventing escalating crises, which may result into large-scale conflict.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and High-Level Review must ensure that women-particularly women in areas affected by climate change and conflict play an active role in the designing and implementation of international and local responses to climate change and that women’s human rights, including in conflict settings, are addressed in all environmental and climate change agreements and policies.

In particular, the Global Study and High-Level Review should:

- **Call for the equal representation of women in local and national disaster committees. The inclusion of women’s leadership, participation, and rights in environmental management and programmes must be acknowledged and women’s traditional knowledge must be incorporated in programme development and implementation.**
- **Call for organizations, Member States and missions organizing strategies to aid and support displaced communities to consult with women and at risk groups** to promote positive synergies that strengthen women’s human rights as well as environmental resilience, and reduce negative impacts on livelihoods including through gender equitable financing and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, including the goals on gender equality (Goal 5) and peaceful societies (Goal 16). **These strategies must ensure that women’s practical needs and livelihoods are considered at all times.** Furthermore, the Global Study and High-Level Review must call for **strengthening of data collection and analysis in order to monitor the effect of climate change on women and communities.**
- **Call for condition-based aid that includes women’s leadership and participation as a criterion.** Clear financial commitments to resources for local women are critical in order to build resilience against climate change and disasters.
- **Seek training and capacity enhancement for women farmers in order to prepare them to prevent and respond to changing climates** through innovative, gender equitable, and climate-resilient sustainable agriculture (e.g. water harvest; land-terracing). Agreements made by Member States on climate change must be inclusive of gender analysis and targets that include a gender perspective.

7. Leadership and Accountability

Overview:

Inclusive women’s leadership is key to ensuring the effectiveness of peace and security-related activities—from peace negotiations, to peacekeeping, to post-conflict recovery. Local, national and international leaders must be held accountable for their commitments to implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. In general, monitoring and accountability of WPS continues to be a challenge -at the national, regional and global levels. It is important to look at commitments made by governments at the international level and analyse how they can be monitored externally.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and the High-Level Review should emphasize the need to equip and support women to attain and maintain leadership positions in peace and security work, while recognizing the structural and systemic barriers women face.

In particular, the Global Study and the High-Level Review should:

- **Seek institutional efforts** (quota systems, rosters and others) **and capacity-building efforts** (training for young/rural women) in order **to increase women's participation in leadership positions**.
- **Call for a 60% quota requirement of women's participation in leadership positions**, rather than the current 30%.
- Call for **required reporting within the existing structures** (such as the UN and within peace processes) and the **sanctioning of actors**, such as the Secretary-General, **who do not meet the quota requirements when it comes to the inclusion of women** in peace processes and negotiations.

8. NAPs: Minimum Standards

Overview:

The process of developing a legitimate and inclusive NAP must be transparent and consultative, and ensure that implementation mechanisms are put in place for future coordination, monitoring and oversight. Implementation of NAPs must combine the promotion women's participation in all aspects of post-conflict governance, while addressing the specific needs of the different groups of survivors (e.g. single women heads of household, widows, and people with disabilities). Countries with existing NAPs should conduct regular review processes, aimed at strengthening reporting and accountability.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and the High-Level Review must urge Member States to ensure that the development of NAPs is a bottom-up, inclusive process that involves multiple stakeholders and actors (e.g. national/local governments, civil society, academics, practitioners, etc.), while empowering and raising the voices of conflict-affected women.

In particular, the Global Study and the High-Level Review should:

- Require that the drafting of NAPs be **inclusive, bottom-up and incorporates a feminist perspective**. Furthermore, conflict-affected women should be included in the drafting and development of NAPs.
- Urge that **NAP development crosscuts existing policies, practices, and procedures** in order to avoid a silo-effect and reinvention of the wheel as well as incorporate the involvement and work of various governmental ministries.

- Call for **monitoring mechanisms** that ensure NAP implementation is directly leading to empowerment of women affected by conflict. Additionally, the **inclusion of women's CSOs (and feminist organizations) in the monitoring of NAP implementation is critical and must be genuine.**
- Call for **the inclusion of targets within NAPs** and/or the generation of targets for NAPs **in order to gauge and measure the effectiveness of the NAPs.**

9. Masculinities and Violence

Overview:

Addressing the connection between masculinities and patriarchy is essential to the prevention of conflict and the promotion of peace. Through measurable action, there must be engagement with both men and women from a gender perspective in order to address violent masculinities and their influence on conflict.

Recommendations:

The Global Study and the High-Level Review should acknowledge and address violent and dominating masculinities as drivers of conflict as part of a holistic gendered approach to conflict prevention.

In particular, the Global Study and the High-Level Review should:

- **Work with women and men together in a two-track approach building women's capacity for leadership and working with both women and men to change attitudes toward masculinities and femininities.** Donors and the UN should avoid seeing men solely as the problem, while only working with women as the solution.
- Advocate for **more work with religious leaders and other opinion-formers within communities in order to influence attitudes toward masculinity.** This includes both male and female religious leaders.
- Urge that **gender equitable peace education for children is included in the promotion of gender equality efforts and of and media engagement to strengthen norms that promote peace.**

Pledges

In addition to the recommendations, breakout groups crafted a series of pledges as commitments based on their groups' individual themes, during the consultation. Below is a sample of the collective pledges made:

1. To challenge notions of masculinity and militarised ideas within our own organizations, including through training and speaking to colleagues.
2. To include a gender perspective in our conflict analyses, which must analyse how both masculinities and femininities may fuel conflict.
3. To make stronger links between Women, Peace and Security advocates and those working on transforming masculinities (who often are not focused on peacebuilding).
4. To create model programmes on climate change, gender, and resilience that can be replicated, such as Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR).
5. To support CSOs in the independent monitoring of government performance, including in the representation of women in government, on resource allocation, and in understanding local government budgets and allocation systems.
6. To advocate our country governments to recognize women as both vulnerable and resilient; as the first respondents during disasters; and as a necessary part of decision-making.
7. To call for continued involvement in monitoring peace processes and in implementing disarmament, specifically through existing networks focused on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their disarmament.
8. To strengthen the feminist playbook for sustainable peace by focusing on political economy for sustainable development and long term gender equitable peace.