

Dear World Leaders:

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 of preventing and resolving conflict, UN Member States and agencies 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 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 (UNHQ); 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 Protection Advisors (WPA), 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; **calling** 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 **institutionalizing** 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