

United Nations Development Fund for Women



**Towards Coherent and Effective Implementation of
Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)**

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to the
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, members of the Security Council:

On behalf of UNIFEM, I am honoured to address the Security Council on the important issue of implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security.

We have been promoting and supporting implementation of this ground-breaking resolution now for seven years, and it is clear that our collective commitment to moving this resolution forward requires significant strengthening.

There is progress upon which to build. Gender advisors have been placed in most integrated missions; mission mandates are designed to secure women's participation and address violations against women and girls; gender-sensitive action plans have been formulated in security and humanitarian areas of UN work. Security Council members now regularly meet with women's groups and networks on their trips to conflict-affected countries. Member States are making efforts to increase numbers of women amongst peacekeepers and police – most notably the all-woman police unit contributed by India to Liberia this year. The verdicts announced by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in July showed that war crimes against women and girls could be successfully and fully prosecuted.

But the real measure of effective implementation is not the setting up of systems, plans and processes. The measure is women's participation in and contribution to more sustainable peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction strategies. The measure is better protection of women and girls in today's conflict zones. The measure is women and men being secure enough to bring cases of wartime atrocities against women and girls to transitional justice mechanisms.

We have a long way to go. UNIFEM supports implementation of SCR 1325 in over 30 countries, building on a vast range of partnerships with Member States, UN organizations, NGOs and women's networks. Let me present some insights from our experience.

Peace agreements:

Women's access to peace processes has been highly uneven. In the past year UNIFEM – in partnership with many UN and non-governmental organizations – has supported women's networks in Uganda, Kosovo, Nepal and in the Middle East conflict to build capacities and intensify their lobbying for inclusion in peace negotiations. In many cases, women are building dialogue across lines of conflict and have much to contribute about aspects of sustainable peace that would otherwise be neglected. But there remain few examples of structured access for women to peace talks. Despite the promises of 1325, peace tables remain the province of those who made the conflict rather than those who have the greatest motivation for ending it.

Post-conflict reconstruction:

In countries emerging from conflict, numbers of women *participating* in elections are high – a remarkable testament to women's eagerness to participate in post-conflict decision-making, in spite of the gender-based violence that so many women encounter in daring to run for office. Numbers of women *winning* these contests vary according to whether electoral systems embrace special temporary measures, as mandated by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The strongest examples of the positive impact of these measures come from Rwanda, where women won 49 per cent of Assembly seats in the 2003 election, and Burundi, where they won 30.5 per cent in the 2005 elections. Where such measures have not been adopted or have been inconsistently applied, proportions of national assembly seats won by women have been disappointing: for instance, after the recent elections in Sierra Leone this share reached only 14.3 per cent, a slight decrease from the previous election.

Better protection for women and girls:

Perhaps our greatest collective challenge, however, is our ability to use Resolution 1325 to meaningfully address sexual violence as a method of warfare. Current media reports highlight the horrific extent of sexual violence in conflicts around the world. Even so, what gets reported is only the tip of the iceberg, Mr. President, as you and your colleagues recently heard directly from the Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr. John Holmes.

Resolution 1325 calls on us to take action against sexual violence in conflict. UNIFEM has joined with 11 other UN entities in setting up UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations. UN Action is providing strategic and technical support to UN Integrated Missions and UN Country Teams to step up their response. It is seeking to build global awareness of the extent and impact of sexual violence in present day conflicts and advocating for more effective responses from international and regional security institutions in conflict situations.

Few other methods of warfare are so socially destructive as systematic sexual violence. Vigilance and action are needed to send an irrevocable message that sexual violence must be prevented, that impunity for perpetrators is unacceptable, and that providing services to survivors of such violence is the highest priority.

Moving from commemoration to implementation

Mr. President, the days in October that the Security Council turns its full attention to the issue of women, peace and security and the Presidential Statements that the Security Council issues, all add up to a message of hope for women whose unique experience of war and armed conflict had for too long been ignored.

Given the enormity of the 1325 agenda and the need to step up implementation visibly to contribute to greater security and protection for those who are most in need of it, I would end with two points that we hope the Council will give due consideration:

- Firstly, that the Security Council consider calling for more concerted action by Member States, with UN system support, to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. This means stepping up the global response in three key areas: 1) expansion of services for survivors, including provision of health services to treat fistula, HIV infection, and the many forms of physical and psychological trauma that women and girls endure; 2) focusing on transitional justice systems to build capacity to prosecute perpetrators; and above all, 3) finding means to prevent sexual violence from being perpetrated by ensuring that peacekeeping operations make life safe for women and girls.
- Secondly, that the Council consider calling for more detailed reporting on implementation of 1325 and that it enhance its own capacity to monitor gaps and achievements in implementation. We reiterate the Secretary-General's call for Member States to establish a Security Council mechanism to monitor national implementation.

Before ending, I would like to express sincere appreciation for the designation by the Secretary-General of Ms. Ellen Margrethe Loj as his Special Representative for Liberia and Ms. Bintou Keita as Deputy Special Representative for Burundi.

Mr. President and members of the Council, the issue of women, peace and security is one for which there is a huge constituency. We at UNIFEM are at your disposal to assist you to turn the tide of history to meet the implementation challenge. Security and peace for women remains a necessary pre-requisite to security and peace for all.