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Open Letter on Women, Peace and Security and Sustainable Development calls on UN Member states to “raise the bar” on sustainable development, gender equality, and peace

August 12th, 2019, New York, NY - The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) announces the release of an Open Letter to the Group of Friends of 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On 24-25 September, the United Nations General Assembly will meet for a Sustainable Development Summit to follow up and review progress made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In advance of this meeting, governments have been encouraged to make commitments to accelerate their progress.

The Open Letter urges governments to make commitments on sustainable development that also advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

“We need a power shift that re-centres work on equality, development and peace around the voices, human security and rights of women and those most marginalized,” stated WILPF Women, Peace and Security Programme Director Abigail Ruane. “The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a critical tool for creating the world we want and need.”

The letter specifically recommends that governments:

1. Commit to accelerating action on Women, Peace and Security as part of Sustainable Development Summit commitments on gender equality and peaceful and inclusive societies
2. Strengthen interlinkages between policies that deal with sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, and peace and security;
3. Support reforms to the High-Level Political Forum to strengthen effectiveness, accountability, and meaningful participation of civil society.

The letter was released on 12 August 2019 with over 83 signatories from NGOs and NGO coalitions across the world.

In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by the year 2030, including stand-alone goals on gender equality (SDG5) and peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG16). Every year, progress towards the goals are reviewed at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which in 2019 had its first component take place July 9-18, 2019 in New York. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which acknowledged the disproportionate and different impacts of armed conflict on women and girls and stressed the importance of women’s participation as active agents in peace and security.