



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

*United Nations Consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO and UNCTAD
Special relations with the ILO, FAO, UNICEF, and other organisations and
agencies*

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Submission on the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the New Zealand Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including 1325, on Women, Peace and Security (the Action Plan).

Introduction and general remarks

WILPF Aotearoa is part of an international organisation which works for peace, justice and human rights, locally, regionally and internationally. Our aims include working for an end to war, violence and coercion; peaceful negotiated solutions to conflicts; universal disarmament, and the diversion of resources away from armed forces and weapons and towards meeting human needs; the elimination of all forms of inequality, oppression, discrimination and exploitation; the establishment of an international economic order based on meeting the needs of people, not on privilege and profit; environmentally and socially sustainable development; and reform and strengthening of the United Nations (UN) to assist with achieving these goals.

WILPF expects the New Zealand government to support UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and other related resolutions, 1820, 1882, 1888 and 1889, at all times, regardless of whether or not New Zealand has a seat on the Security Council.

We note that the Action Plan does not refer to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's General Recommendation No. 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-conflict Situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30) and recommend that the Action Plan be assessed in the conjunction with those recommendations, as well as relevant recommendations from other human rights treaty monitoring bodies.

The Action Plan speaks of increasing the number of women in peace and security decision making. WILPF believes there needs to be equal participation in peace and security decision-making by women, both nationally and internationally within the UN and other multilateral forums.

Meaningful implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) throughout all government policy and practice would resolve the issues around equal opportunity and equality in decision-making here, and would by extension have a positive effect on New Zealand's international relations. It would also contribute to

a much-needed attitudinal change throughout society to ensure gender equality in decision-making, employment and remuneration.

With regard to the five key areas of New Zealand's approach to implementing UNSC resolutions on women, peace and security, we have the following comments.

1. Prevention of conflict and of violation of women's rights

WILPF supports the need for protection of women in conflict-related situations through: strengthening efforts to ensure respect for women's human rights, and their physical and economic well-being; strengthening efforts to combat sexual violence, intimate partner violence and violence against women; raising the issue of sexual violence, intimate partner violence and violence against women in dialogue with parties to any armed conflict; and rigorous investigation and prosecution of sexual violence, intimate partner violence and other forms of violence against women perpetrated by international, national or non-state actors.

We support political pressure in international forums to ensure women's involvement in decision making in all situations and at all levels.

WILPF supports promoting New Zealand women as mediators and negotiators in international forums, in peace building initiatives, and as part of UN non-military peacekeeping missions. New Zealand's peace building, development assistance and other support initiatives to countries affected by conflict must be fully informed by a thorough gender analysis.

With regard to issues of security in the Pacific region, WILPF would like to stress the importance of alleviating poverty, violence against women and the effects of climate change.

WILPF supports the UN thematic areas of conflict prevention by incorporating women's perspectives into early warning systems, public education and training guidelines, and prosecution of violators of women's rights; of participation by increasing the quantity and seniority of women's representations in national and UN led peace processes and empowering local women at all decision-making levels to be involved in peace processes; and of protection of the human rights of women and girls to ensure their physical and economic wellbeing. In the context of the Pacific, this includes institutional strengthening of judicial systems, and peace-building relief and recovery - including equality of access to resources, justice and basic services, and investment in economic and social security for women and girls - in accordance with the priorities determined by the affected communities, and particularly, by the women in those communities.

2. Deployment of New Zealand women overseas

WILPF supports the deployment of women in peace building, conflict resolution and mediation teams.

We do not support the use of violence as a means of resolving conflict, and thus we do not support the participation of women in the armed forces or the deployment of women overseas in combat roles.

New Zealand is not threatened by military attack, and the resources used by the armed forces should be diverted to meet human needs, both here and overseas. Our efforts and resources should particularly be directed towards economic and humanitarian assistance in the Pacific, helping with poverty and the effects of climate change, including assisting so-called 'climate refugees', in

accordance with the priorities determined by Pacific communities, and particularly, by Pacific women.

3. Political appointments

WILPF considers the appointment of women to senior levels in the United Nations and other international agencies, and for more New Zealand women to be appointed to senior diplomatic positions, to be an urgent priority.

4. International Development

The New Zealand government needs to provide more aid to our Pacific neighbours, especially the economic development of women and support for gender equality, the alleviation of poverty and action to alleviate the effects of climate change, in accordance with the priorities of Pacific communities, and particularly, by the women in those communities.

WILPF supports the government focusing on civilian development and humanitarian assistance, peace building and conflict prevention initiatives rather than military deployments.

5. Support for UNSC Resolutions

WILPF supports UNSCR 1882 dealing with children and armed conflict which calls for the protection of children in peacekeeping missions and funding for effective welfare programmes for all children affected by armed conflict. We recommend that the government develop time-bound action plans for protection and relief of children affected by armed conflict.

We also recommend that the government lead by example and remove its reservation to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000) as well as ensuring that it is fully compliant with its provisions.

WILPF supports UNSCR 1888 which deals with specific commitments to the prevention of sexual violence in conflict through the maintenance of peace and security for women and girls.

WILPF supports UNSCR 1889 which calls for: women's involvement and perspectives in the development and implementation of post conflict strategies; gender mainstreaming in all peace building and recovery processes; the participation of women in post-conflict economic and political decision making; funding and programmes for women's empowerment in post conflict situations; and the input of civil society, including women's organisations in the planning, oversight and tracking of funding and programmes for women in the post-conflict phase.

WILPF calls for the provision of an annual report on the progress made on implementation of UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1325.

Recommendations

1. The Action Plan be assessed in conjunction with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's General Recommendation No. 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-conflict Situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30), as well as other relevant recommendations from the human rights treaty monitoring bodies.

2. New Zealand removes its reservation to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000), and ensures full compliance with its provisions.

Specific actions that New Zealand could promote at the UNSC:

3. The appointment of a Special Representative to provide leadership, strengthen existing UN coordination mechanisms, and advocate on ending sexual violence against women working with governments, military , judicial representatives and parties to armed conflict.

4. The creation of a team of experts comprising specialists on the rule of law, civilian and judicial systems, mediation, criminal investigation, security sector reform, witness protection and fair standards.

5. The appointment of women's protection advisers in all peacekeeping and peace building missions.