

Civil Society Advisory Group to the UN on Women, Peace, and Security

WORKING PAPER ON CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN PEACEMAKING AND PEACEBUILDING

In 2000, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 called on all member states and the United Nations (UN) system to protect the rights of women in the context of armed conflict and to ensure women's full participation in all conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction processes. The Civil Society Advisory Group on Women, Peace, and Security (CSAG) advises the High-Level Steering Committee of the heads of UN agencies and entities on ensuring a coherent and coordinated approach to implementing UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security within the UN system. CSAG's co-chairs are Mary Robinson and Bineta Diop, and its members are Sanam Anderlini, Thelma Awori, Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Lakhdar Brahimi, Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, Swanee Hunt, Hina Jilani, Elisabeth Rehn, Zainab Salbi, Salim Ahmed Salim, Donald Steinberg, and Susana Villarán de la Puente.

In addition to recommending priorities for commemorating the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in October, 2010, CSAG advocates for the full participation of women's groups and civil society in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. In consultation with civil society, CSAG has prepared a series of working papers with concrete recommendations for action by the UN, member states, and civil society on the following topics:

- Civil Society Participation in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding;
- Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence against Women Displaced by Conflict; and
- Advancing National Action Plans, Regional Action Plans, and Twinning on Women, Peace and Security.

This *Working Paper on Civil Society Participation in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding* examines the critical role that civil society - particularly women's groups - play in ensuring the success and sustainability of peacebuilding processes. The paper is based on consultations with women peacebuilders globally, including a consultation in New York and a one-day consultation with 25 activists in Washington DC¹, as well as discussions

¹ On October 28, 2010, CSAG hosted an event in New York City featuring a discussion between Under-Secretary-General Bachelet and approximately 25 women peacemakers from across the world. On November 1, 2010, a Strategic Planning Session to identify priorities for advancing UNSCR 1325 in the next decade was hosted by the Institute for Inclusive Security and the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) on behalf of CSAG. Participants included civil society actors from Aceh, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda and those working in the Balkans, Colombia and the Middle East.

with CSAG members, and publications of affiliated organizations. The first part of this paper examines constraints to women's organizations' participation in peace making and peacebuilding and recommends ways to overcome them. The second part offers recommendations to the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) on how it can partner with civil society organizations to lead the women, peace, and security agenda in the next decade.

PART ONE:

Facilitating Civil Society's Participation in Peace Making and Peacekeeping.

I. Recommendations:

To the UN, Donors, and National Governments:

1) *Increase civil society participation in decision making at the UN Security Council and at UN Headquarters*

- Establish a permanent Civil Society Advisory Group on Women, Peace, and Security (CSAG) to advise the UN on implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. This would be an adaptation of the existing CSAG that worked so effectively in 2010.
- Support the development of qualifying criteria for civil society organizations to participate in UN-endorsed peace processes.
- Hold an Arria Formula meeting with civil society members, particularly those working on women, peace, and security issues, every time there is a country report by a Special Representative of the Secretary General, the Peace Building Commission, or the Security Council, amongst other UN institutions.
- Formally solicit civil society input when drafting Security Council Resolutions, including those establishing and renewing mission mandates. Seek input from persons in conflict-affected locations as well as from members of international networks.
- Implement the commitments the UN has made to advancing UNSCR 1325, such as those in the Department for Political Affairs (DPA's) Action Plan on 1325, which include requiring travelling Security Council officials to meet with representatives of women's groups working on peace and security.

2) *Increase civil society participation in decision making within UN missions in the field*

- Establish standard operating procedures requiring the UN to convene civil society organization forums in conflict zones. These forums should be organized by the UN Development Program (UNDP) due to its presence in states before, during, and after conflict.
- Integrate gender, peace, and security experts from civil society into all aspects of military and police peace operations, including in conducting technical surveys, the design of concepts of operation, training, staffing, and programs.
- Ensure regular, structured consultations between UN mediation teams and women's peace groups during all mission visits.
- Form in-country UNSCR 1325 working groups comprising government, UN, donors, and NGOs to facilitate information sharing and coordination between these sectors.

3) *Strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to advance the women, peace and security agenda.*

- Fund training of women-led NGOs on skills and knowledge pertaining to security, justice, and peace issues including mediation and conflict resolution training,

coalition building, media, and monitoring and evaluation related to peace and security.

- Support organizational strengthening through funding of core activities, not just short term projects.
- Deepen institutional capacities by ensuring that new generations of activists (especially younger women) have access to training and networking opportunities to develop a depth of knowledge in women, peace, and security issues.
- Support international and regional NGOs to assist their national counterparts in generating situation analyses, creating tools to promote UNSCR 1325, and strengthening strategic action by women's groups.
- Support documentation, analysis, and cross-sharing of women's peacemaking strategies to capture best practices and facilitate the replication of these practices in different conflict-affected contexts.

4) Reduce competition and improve collaboration between UN agencies and civil society organizations working on women, peace, and security issues.

- Provide institutional funding for UN agencies so they are not competing with NGOs for funding on women, peace, and security issues.
- Support the establishment of an independent UNSCR 1325 civil society fund to disperse grants rapidly, and with limited paper-work, to enable organizations to respond quickly and flexibly to crisis situations.
- Encourage collaborative programming based on the comparative strengths of each sector at the national and international levels – for example, where expertise lies in civil society organizations (CSOs), ensure that UN agencies are not duplicating their efforts.

5) Create an environment that better facilitates the participation of women's groups in peace and security decision making.

- Adopt a human security approach to violence by addressing its root social and economic causes instead of focusing primarily on military responses; and ensure that all strategies for addressing security concerns comply with international human rights standards.
- Integrate disarmament strategies, particularly relating to small arms and light weapons, into women, peace, and security policies and programming.
- Based on consultations with local women's groups, determine the most effective means of overcoming traditional practices that marginalize women, including by launching advocacy campaigns that challenge these norms; developing partnerships with religious leaders; and utilizing traditional and popular cultural tools such as song and dance to challenge discriminatory practices.
- Increase resources devoted to conflict prevention and transformation processes; for example, donors should require the incorporation of gender sensitive strategies for preventing conflict or making peace into all funding proposals.

II. Situation Analysis

1) Overview

UNSCR 1325 was the direct result of a strategic global advocacy campaign involving civil society-based women peacebuilders in conflict zones worldwide. At the UN, NGOs worked directly with Security Council members at the time (notably Bangladesh, Canada, Jamaica, and Namibia) to ensure that women, peace, and security issues were on the Council's agenda.

The issue of women and armed conflict was first raised in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, where the dual issues of women's protection needs and their demand for participation in peace and security related decision making was noted. But the push for recognition of the issues at the Security Council began in 1999 when the *Women Building Peace; From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table* was launched at the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference. The idea gained momentum following the Namibian-sponsored Windhoek conference and declaration on gender issues in peacekeeping operations in May 2000.

The driving force behind the campaign was recognition that with the end of the Cold War, the nature of warfare was also changing. The rise in intra-state conflicts and bitter manipulation of ethnicity and religion was becoming evident. States and armed groups were perpetrating systemic acts of terror against civilian populations. The impact of this changing warfare was similar for women across conflict zones. Their bodies were becoming the literal frontlines of warfare. Sexual violence, abductions and forced displacement were more prominent tactics of these wars than previous wars.

Simultaneously, women were emerging as the first responders to humanitarian crises. In communities and displacement camps, regardless of their own traumas, they were (and are) providing care for their children, the elderly and the sick. In many instances, women-led CSOs formed, and they sought to convey the real experiences and lives of their grassroots constituencies to decision makers.

Across conflict zones from Cambodia to Guatemala, Northern Ireland, the Middle East and South Africa, women who emerged as community leaders also recognized that given the changing nature of warfare, approaches to conflict prevention, peace making and peacebuilding needed to change as well. They understood that the social fabric and trust within communities was destroyed, and that building peace and promoting reconciliation was a more complex endeavor that political and military leaders alone could not tackle. Women-led CSOs often emerge in crisis settings in response to their communities' needs. They also often have specialized knowledge, insight and resources, including profound commitments to preventing violence, that are critical to the success of peace processes.

Women caught in the vortex of warfare also have first-hand experience of the UN's inability to intervene early to prevent conflict and their government's perpetration of violence or inability/lack of interest in protecting the citizenry. In many instances, particularly at the community level, they are active in mediation and prevention of

conflict, negotiating with state and non-state armed actors. Their organizations are also critical to state-building and good governance in the immediate aftermath of conflict. On the one hand, they provide services that the state is still unable to undertake; on the other hand, they demand accountability.

While governments sometimes consider CSOs as adversaries or competitors, in reality CSOs represent a key pillar in state-building – providing citizens with alternatives to religious or identity-based institutions. Their interest and commitment to sustainable peace and effective justice is an important but often unacknowledged and unsupported resource.

UNSCR 1325 was meant to alleviate this gap between women’s activism in peace at the community level and the more formal processes. Despite its adoption a decade ago and subsequent resolutions (notably UNSCR 1889) that call for civil society inclusion, the sector remains excluded and peripheral to peace processes. The barrier to entry remains high and arbitrary. As the MIT/ICAN “What the Women Say: Participation and UNSCR 1325” study states: International mediators have systematically ignored civil society actors and excluded them from negotiations regardless of their experience and contributions; while for belligerents, the use of violence appears to be the only criteria for entry into peace talks.²

This double standard sends the message that violence pays and peace does not. It also squanders the actual and potential contributions of women’s civil society groups to the promotion and sustenance of peace.

2) Trends Negatively Impacting Civil Society’s Participation in Peacebuilding

In the past decade UNSCR 1325 has inspired many women’s CSOs to engage in peacebuilding and assert their demands for inclusion in formal processes. But they are facing new challenges and constraints. Women peacebuilders identified key concerns affecting their work. They are grouped as “external” issues, notably relating to the environments and contexts in which they work, and “internal” issues relating to institutional constraints.

External Constraints:

- a) *Increased militarization of public discourse and diminishing space for civil society actors:*** Since the 9/11 attacks in the US and the advent of the “war on terror,” governments around the world have increasingly used the rubric of national security and threats of terrorism as an excuse to quell dissent. The paradigm of “making war to bring peace” is evident across the globe from Colombia to Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. The impact on civilians is devastating. Heightened militarization of national policies combined with the flow of weaponry (including small arms and light

² Anderlini, Sanam et al (2010), *What the Women Say: UNSCR 1325 and Participation*, International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)/ Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT): Cambridge MA. [www.icanpeacework.org](http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/WomenReport_10_2010.pdf), http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/WomenReport_10_2010.pdf

weapons) has shrunk the spaces in which civil society and dissenters can operate, and where their voices can be heard.

A related phenomenon is increased censorship of the media. Increasing global connectivity has been an essential tool for sharing information, increasing awareness, and mobilization by civil society organizations. Women have used the media and increased access to information as a vital tool of empowerment and mobilization. Yet state censorship, threats and violence directed at journalists, and severe restrictions placed upon the dissemination of information is on the rise. In the Pacific islands of Fiji and Tonga, for example, the promulgation of emergency laws has increased censorship and control of news and media content, limiting opportunities to conduct public advocacy. Websites are routinely blocked in many countries and government surveillance of email, cell phone and internet-based communications has profoundly negative impacts on legitimate human rights and civil society-based actors.

- b) *Prevention is about conflict, not just sexual violence:*** A key concern among women peacebuilders is the lack of attention and resources directed towards early conflict prevention. The term “prevention” in the UNSCR 1325 agenda was originally meant to denote conflict and war prevention. Yet, it has become confused with a more limited focus on sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). For CSO activists, the most important step towards limiting SGBV is the prevention of violence and the promotion of conflict transformation. Yet their experience suggests limited resources have been dedicated to conflict prevention.

The UN’s conflict prevention capacities have developed in the past decade including through improved mediation processes, and in-country peace and development programming (e.g. support for Kenya’s peace councils). But where states are strong (or not reliant on western donor funding) civilian social movements – women, students, human rights and democracy activists – are at the frontlines pressing for peaceful change but facing repression and violence. The international community is still ill-equipped to support such movements. Too often governments implicated in violence continue with impunity. In some instances, where the international community fails to condemn or criticize state actions but does step in to support displaced populations, it becomes an unwitting enabler of repressive state policies.

Renewed attention to conflict prevention and peaceful transformation of crises and a focus on attaining peace – rather than making wars safer for women - is a critical concern of women peacebuilders.

- c) *Tensions between governments and civil society:*** There is also growing tension between CSOs and governments. On the one hand, CSOs are keen to engage and work collaboratively with their states. They recognize the need for partnership and mutual support. On the other hand, many activists engaged in peacebuilding are under political and security pressures that effect their work and well-being. The lack of recognition for their work compounds the situation as many feel vulnerable to attacks by state and non-state actors whose actions they challenge. The situation is especially

difficult for women's groups due to women's social standing and the discrimination and violence directed against them because of their gender.

Women's CSOs are concerned about and resistant to being co-opted or exploited for political purposes and believe that independence is essential. After a decade of government rhetoric but limited action, many believe that assertive tactics such as "naming and shaming" may be needed. But many face dire consequences. In some instances, governments have accused women peace activists of treason, added them to "terrorism" lists or directly threatened them. The UN has often stood by silently, *de facto* supporting states' policies. By asking states for approval before supporting NGOs, the UN is often further compounding the problems. In many instances, only NGOs with government backing are able to access resources.

d) *The false dichotomy of culture, religion and women's dignity:* Religious and cultural ideology (Shia, Sunni, Sinhala Buddhist, Christian, Jewish etc.) that is fueling conflict has a direct impact on and for women. In every instance the ideology limits the role of women and places the burden of community honor on them. This has multiple negative implications. It causes women to become the targets of warfare as their humiliation and brutalization symbolizes that of their community, especially their men. At the same time, it places constraints on women's independence (however limited it may be). They embody the community honor and as such are pressed into either supporting the war effort and/or sacrificing themselves and their rights in the name of the community. Their own individuality and attempts at "self-determination" are viewed as betrayals to the cause. Those pursuing equal rights or demanding to be heard are accused of being culturally insensitive, too westernized, or elitist. Their assertions and demands are negated and undermined, regardless of their knowledge, experience, or grassroots authenticity (something that many of the male leaders often lack completely).

Too often, international actors and their national counterparts (overwhelmingly male) use culture or religion as an excuse to exclude women from decision making and avoid addressing issues that affect women differently (and more detrimentally) than men. Women peacebuilders fully acknowledge the importance of cultural sensitivity but they question the approaches and assumptions of international actors. Many argue that their demand to be included in decision making is precisely because of their ability to navigate their own cultures and traditions, asserting their views and demands in ways that are acceptable. International actors also have responsibilities to uphold universal norms and basic human rights and dignity. Cultural relativism should not be the dominant mode of operation.

e) *Gaps between international policies and action and local level realities are not being addressed:* The UN-level processes on indicators and strategic frameworks, etc. bear little reality to the issues facing women on the ground. In most cases, as the MIT/ICAN study notes, basic awareness and understanding of UNSCR 1325 is either non-existent or limited. This applies to field-based UN employees (who are responsible for implementing the resolution), government personnel, and CSOs. In a

number of settings where CSOs have advocated for UNSCR 1325, women are more aware of the resolution than their erstwhile leaders and UN counterparts. The same challenges apply to the national action plans on UNSCR 1325 (NAPs). Women peacebuilders are wary of the NAPs being purely cosmetic, neither addressing peace and security issues effectively, nor promoting women's full participation in related decision making processes.

Women peacebuilders are also concerned about the absence of effective outreach by the UN, and being forced to jump through hoops to engage the international community. Events such as the Global Open Days on Women and Peace³, held in twenty-five countries, or workshops and conferences commemorating UNSCR 1325, are useful but not sufficient. The interactions need to shift from the symbolic and ad hoc to being more systematic, substantial, and strategic: the UN agencies must act on the recommendations of women they meet and establish mechanisms for engaging with and including women civil society groups on a regular and ongoing basis. Their communications with women should not be in parallel to those undertaken with governments. Rather, the UN agencies should facilitate more direct interaction between state and CSO stakeholders in country settings.

f) Absence of resources for women's peace work: Despite the rhetorical support for the women, peace and security agenda and development of NAPs, women's peace efforts have limited resources. Funds that do exist for this agenda are overwhelmingly directed at SGBV related issues, leaving women's participation and organizational development marginalized. Women's NGOs also face competition from the UN system, particularly UNIFEM. In Pakistan, Liberia and elsewhere, UN field offices are competing directly with national NGOs. Government entities, notably ministries of women's affairs, are also siphoning funds, leaving NGOs struggling, yet burdened with the task of implementation. For many NGOs, the notion of partnership with the multilateral or state agencies is inherently unfair as they receive only a percentage of the funds available, are required to do the work, yet are rarely given due credit. This system undermines women's leadership and participation. It weakens their organizations and capacities to strengthen local structures.

The funding that does exist is not tailored to the reality of working in crisis settings. It is typically for time-limited projects with specific goals and outcomes. This forces women's groups to try and fit their work into the parameters of a specific project rather than allowing them the flexibility to be agile, proactive, and responsive to the fast-paced changes that are inherent to crisis contexts and peace processes.

Conflict prevention efforts, in particular, are a key casualty of this limited and constrained funding environment.

³ UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), DPA, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and UNDP organized Global Open Days in May and June 2010, where civil society members had the opportunity to discuss their women, peace, and security-related experiences and concerns with the top UN leaders in their countries.

Internal Constraints:

The women's peace movement that has emerged and evolved in the past decade also faces internal constraints that affect organizations and networks' abilities to pursue and realize the promise of the UNSCR 1325 agenda.

a) *Limited institutional capacities:* Women's NGOs focus on local level issues and dealing with the impact of conflict. It is often difficult for them to make the linkages to the international processes or policies related to the women, peace, and security agenda. Without timely information about forthcoming events or familiarity with the formal terminology and processes associated with the agenda, women peacebuilders and organizations can be overwhelmed. This is compounded by international entities that do not recognize women's actual experiences and are unable to tailor their processes to the constituencies most affected. As stated in MIT/ICAN study:

“Activism on the UNSCR 1325 places a heavy burden on women's groups, particularly because much of their work is at the sub-national level and they have little access to information generated by the state or international community. Often they are adept at addressing aspects of a problem—e.g., women's groups are typically articulate and knowledgeable about the lack of security and a community's needs, but engaging in a national policy debate can be overwhelming. They cannot sustain their work or build their capacities without significant technical, political, and financial support. In post-conflict situations they are even more stretched as their services are still needed but donor funds are directed to building state capacities.”

The report further notes that “the skills and substance taught in the majority of trainings framed as UNSCR 1325 are not directly linked to peace and security issues...most do not offer gender analysis, scenario assessment, conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation skills training for women that would bolster their knowledge and capacity to engage effectively.”⁴

b) *The need to systematize and deepen knowledge:* Many women's peace groups, similar to their UN and international counterparts, suffer from lack of systemization and depth of expertise. Individual women leaders are effective but their work cannot gain traction until and unless a wider cross-section of organizations and individuals have familiarity with and knowledge of the issues and approaches related to women, peace, and security. The movement is growing but attention to a new generation of actors is important if the work is to continue and progress.

c) *Tension between networks and organizations involved in women, peace, and security issues:* Assumptions that all women's groups or all peace groups are inclined to get involved in the women, peace, and security agenda is incorrect. Those involved in the peace movement often lack an interest in the gendered aspect of peacebuilding and are not always convinced of the value of women's participation. At the same

⁴ Ibid.

time, divisions within the women's movement are exacerbated by ethnic and religious identities which often reflect opposing sides in conflicts. There is also a lack of understanding between women, peace, and security activists and traditional women and development or women's rights groups. When identities are based on conflict, women are as affected as anyone else. Events create fissures and it takes time and negotiation for activists to get beyond their traditional identities in responding to these situations. Women's ability to work together ebbs and flows based on what is happening within the conflict itself. For example, Israeli and Palestinian women have been working together for two decades. As the conflict has progressed and varied in form they have had to re-establish ways of collaborating because they have been affected by the crisis on a personal level. When the war in the Gaza erupted in 2008, many Israeli women supported Israel's actions, whilst many Palestinians found the war untenable. Cooperation between the two groups of women ground to a standstill.

Given the ever-changing nature of conflict, and women's identification with opposing parties, a process of negotiation must be supported continuously. The moment conflict occurs women need support and information on peacebuilding or conflict resolution approaches have worked in similar circumstances.

Where mainstream peace movements exist, even in organizations involved in *track-two* diplomacy/mediation efforts, women's peace activism or the specific approaches and strengths that women bring to peacebuilding, is only minimally acknowledged. Even among renowned international NGOs, women's programs are ghettoized rather than being integral to all programming areas. The narrow slice of organizations and cohort of women who are seeking to expand the women, peace, and security sector are caught in this divide between women's programming and peace and security programming. To sustain their approaches, they need a strategic, methodology for deepening and broadening their work within both the women's rights or development field and the peace and security field.

- d) *Fostering collaboration, not competition, between organizations in the global north and south:*** The limited resources and shifts toward in-country funding can create tension and competition between international NGOs and their counterparts working in conflict-affected settings. Both groups recognize that each offers comparative advantages and that partnership brings immense added value. There is, nonetheless, a critical challenge in ensuring an equitable division of resources, between organizations in the north and south, which will effectively prioritize activities and attain the goals of the movement as a whole.

Currently, national NGOs require assistance in developing sector-specific knowledge, applying the provisions of UNSCR 1325 to local contexts, reaching policy-makers, and engaging in peace and recovery efforts in a more timely and strategic manner. International NGOs must also focus on deepening local capacities and institutions. Key roles for international organizations include ensuring a consistent flow of information and documentation (from the international to the local and vice versa); providing national organizations with access to bilateral and multilateral entities;

facilitating contacts and networking; sharing experiences across regions; and speaking out on behalf of national partners when and if they are constrained by security concerns or other difficulties.

3) Proposed Responses to Internal and External Constraints to Implementing UNSCR 1325:

a) Address militarization:

- Governments and the UN must shift from the existing state/militarized paradigm to a human security based approach to internal and international conflict and violence. Such an approach would allow for attention to underlying socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that foment violence and are manipulated by leaders (national and non-state) to recruit people into violent activities.
- The international community/donors should facilitate and support efforts to increase interactions and dialogue between women's groups and the police/military at national levels.
 - ***Program examples:*** In Nepal, the Women's Security Watch Network is currently initiating such efforts. Internationally, ICAN and MIT are launching a "women's security campaign" to bridge the divisions at the national and community level between women's voices and state policies and actors.
- The international community must also increase support for non-violent transformative actions and approaches, such as mediation and dialogue initiatives for reaching out to conflicting parties, or economic empowerment and social cohesion efforts, such as youth, peace, and cultural initiatives.
- Disarmament issues, particularly related to small arms and light weapons must be integrated into the women, peace, and security policies and programs.

b) Improve government and civil society relations

- Regular open dialogue and consultations between NGOs and governments would resolve existing tensions and mistrust. It would also contribute to greater coordination of efforts based on comparative advantages. Governments must, however, recognize and value CSO independence. Approaches include:
 - The formation of national UNSCR 1325 civil society advisory groups (CSAGs) to liaise with states (ministries etc.); and
 - The formation of national UNSCR 1325 working groups comprising NGOs, government, and international actors.

c) *Bridge the international/local gaps in rhetoric, policy, and practice:*

- At the country level, UNSCR 1325 working groups (mentioned above) could be a conduit for sharing information (from the international level to the local and vice versa) in a timely manner. The groups could also act as watchdogs at the national level, using the global indicators on women, peace, and security to monitor state progress. They could also generate tools and information reflecting the applicability of UNSCR 1325 to their situation and ensuring they would be culturally and contextually relevant. NGO initiatives to independently monitor UNSCR 1325 implementation (such as that of the Global Network of Peacebuilders and ICAN) must be supported.
- Donors should support regional and international NGOs in assisting national counterparts to generate regular analysis of situations, develop and deliver relevant tools (training modules, media support, simplified explanations of the UNSCR 1325 agenda etc.), support strategic action by women's groups, and learn from cross-regional experiences.
- Donors should support rigorous documentation and analysis of women's peacemaking strategies and actions. The experiences must not get lost; rather, they should be drawn upon to improve future efforts.
- The UN and governments should support the formulation of criteria for civil society participation in peace processes to reduce the arbitrary approaches currently underway and to benefit fully from women's (and other CSO-based) peace efforts.
 - Where male leaders refuse to speak to women, a parallel high-level, women-only process could be hosted to demonstrate international commitment to the women, peace, and security agenda.
 - The UN, governments, and CSOs could develop criteria for the qualification of CSO peace groups. For example, CSOs that demonstrate a commitment to constructive engagement for peaceful and gender-equitable resolution of conflict and recovery processes could be included and recognized as formal partners in UN-endorsed and sponsored peace processes. This would:
 - Put pressure on belligerents (states and non-state actors who often claim to represent the population) to be more transparent about their views and priorities for recovery;
 - Demonstrate that violence is not rewarded;
 - Ensure that belligerents are responsive to the concerns and solutions raised by war-affected communities; and
 - Guarantee that the spirit of democracy and pluralism is integral to the decision making (and power sharing) processes.

d) Do not re-invent the wheel. The UN should use what it already has:

- UN agencies already have good policies mandating engagement with civil society. The 2006 DPA Plan of Action for implementing UNSCR 1325, for example, calls for:
 - Systematic inclusion of meetings with women’s groups in all Security Council missions;
 - Participation of women’s groups in Arria meetings at the Security Council on a regular basis (beyond the annual 1325 meetings) when country situations are being addressed; and
 - Systematic interactions between mediators and local women’s groups and peacebuilders and inclusion of women from the earliest stages of planning in peace negotiations and processes.
- In addition, OP 10 of UNSCR 1820 calls for the inclusion of women civil society representatives in all nationally formed structures related to the UN Peacebuilding Commission; and OP 12 of UNSCR 1820 urges the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys to invite women to participate in discussions pertinent to the prevention and resolution of conflict, peacebuilding, and reconstruction.
- UNSCR 1889 reaffirms and expands on the inclusion of civil society in peacebuilding processes. The UN and the international community must realize these commitments and transform them from platitudes on paper to realities on the ground.

e) Improve conflict prevention/transformation efforts

- Development aid log-frames must be based on rigorous conflict and peace situation analysis and focused on conflict prevention/transformation and social cohesion strategies.
- Donors should set funding criteria requiring gender-sensitive conflict prevention/peacemaking strategies in all development interventions (particularly in crisis-affected countries).
- Donors should call for a high-level summit of major international development and humanitarian agencies (UN and NGOs) demanding comprehensive strategies for the prevention/mitigation of sexual violence in crisis settings (including in camps and among displaced communities).

f) Develop positive cultural and religious norms regarding women

- International actors should seek guidance from national and locally based women’s groups to determine the most effective means of overcoming traditional practices that marginalize women. Providing women the space to engage each other and build confidence and tactics to address policy makers and community leaders is critical.

- **Models:** In Rwanda and Uganda women mobilized locally with support from national NGOs. They developed their confidence, knowledge of the issues, and leadership skills. Having developed their own agenda they invited policy makers to present their views and engage in a dialogue. In Fiji, with support from international experts and UNIFEM, over a five-day workshop, women leaders familiarized themselves with the national security policy review process, identified their priorities and gaps, and met with the policy makers to challenge the process and assert their demands.
- Advocacy campaigns that challenge cultural norms and perceptions of women and promote women’s leadership are also important and should be developed. Campaigns that articulate positive male role models are also urgently needed.
- Partnership with religious leaders (mullahs, priests, elders, etc.) is an important strategy and should be fostered. Often such leaders are amenable to women’s concerns and realities (e.g., the plight of widows) and recognize the burdens that women carry (generating incomes, vulnerability to violence etc.). Engaging them to define solutions that benefit women and adhere to religious or cultural values is essential, and can be powerful. International donors/actors should encourage, engage in, and support more interventions with such leaders. The use of popular and traditional cultural tools (radio, dance, etc.) to convey women’s experiences and promote gender equality, social cohesion, and non-violence is also essential, yet remains under-utilized.

g) Sustain civil society and avoid competition over resources with the UN

- Donors should provide institutional funding for UN agencies (especially UN Women) regarding the women, peace, and security agenda. UN Women (like its predecessor, UNIFEM) should not compete with national NGOs for the same pool of funds. It should encourage and enable national and regional NGOs to access resources.

h) Fund women’s peacebuilding effectively:

- Countries supportive of the UNSCR 1325 agenda should provide long term institutional and programmatic funding for NGOs working internationally and nationally. Project based funds and short term grants perpetuate personality driven approaches and discourage sustainability and development of human resources and capacities.
- Funding for NGOs in crisis settings to do peace and security-related work should be inherently flexible to allow for rapid reaction and proactive approaches to fast changing contexts. Donor demands should not hinder women’s activism.
- “Donors should support the establishment of an independent 1325 CSO fund to bridge the divide between major donors and civil society groups working in fast-changing crisis settings. The fund could support women’s activism within the spirit

and range of issues framed by UNSCR 1325, focusing on the prevention of conflict and war; mitigation of violence and militarism; and promotion of human security, and gender-sensitive, sustainable peace and civil activism. It could provide grants of 10,000-50,000 USD to support organizational and programmatic development and ensure that the resources are deployed within 4-6 weeks of application. Grantees could contribute by *paying forward* – i.e., sharing the knowledge and experience they gained with future grantees.”⁵

i) Strengthen institutional foundations and knowledge through targeted and relevant technical support:

- As the MIT/ICAN study recommends, women’s groups and other civil society organizations require significant technical, political, and financial support to sustain their activities in the women, peace, and security field. In particular, the substance of workshops and trainings must be tied to peace and security-related issues (not generic politics or social issues only).
- Specific attention is needed to develop institutional staff capacities. All stakeholders have a role:
 - NGOs should ensure that staff has equal opportunities to participate in trainings or exposure programs (e.g. international conferences).
 - Donors and international partners should set criteria for the inclusion of mid-level and junior staff in workshops and other interventions that provide experience and exposure; and
 - The new generation of activists should demonstrate commitment to and understanding of the field at least through familiarity with existing resources (texts, toolkits, etc.).

j) Promote synergy between international and national NGOs:

- The donor community should support and encourage partnerships between international and national (and local) NGOs, particularly along thematic areas of work or cross-country programming. Resources should be accessible at both levels. Particularly where local/national NGOs face constraints, bilateral donors can support them through international NGO partners.

III. Conclusion

The promise of UNSCR 1325 cannot be realized without the full participation of civil society activists. While interactions between civil society and state and UN entities are strong in the women, peace, and security field, CSOs are facing new pressures and restrictions – both financial and political. As the next decade approaches, the UN system (all relevant agencies), bilateral donors, and governments must recognize the expertise

⁵ From the MIT/ICAN “What the Women Say: Participation and SCR 1325” report (2010).

and commitment that CSOs bring to this agenda, engage them as equal partners, and respect their independence.

CSOs must also take a more activist and creative approach to the issues, demonstrating their comparative advantages and capacities to engage in peace making in ways that states and the UN cannot.

UN member states must adhere to the basic principles of human rights and recognize that a strong independent civil society is not a threat to the state, rather it is an asset.

The international community must recognize and uphold the work of individual women peacebuilders and organizations as models of innovation, courage, and good practice. This acknowledgement will provide security to groups doing sensitive work. It also ensures that women who are empowered and committed enough to take on peace and security are given the respect they deserve.

Finally, the next decade must be a time to refocus UNSCR 1325-related activities on core conflict prevention, peace making, and security issues. The 2010 Report of the UN Secretary-General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding provides a practical seven-pillar framework for initiating this work.⁶ UN Women is the natural choice to lead and coordinate these efforts. The remaining section of this paper contains recommendations on how this agency can fulfill such a role and ensure that the next decade is one of action on and implementation of UNSCR 1325.

⁶ 2010 Report of the Secretary-General on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (A/65/354 – S/2010/466).

PART TWO:

Women Peacebuilders' Consultations on UN Women

I. Introduction

On the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, CSAG hosted two meetings with women peacebuilders in New York and Washington D.C.⁷ to capture their views, concerns, and recommendations for UN Women vis-à-vis the women, peace, and security agenda. This brief provides a summary of key points and issues raised.

General Comments:

- Women peacebuilders are supportive of the new agency and look forward to having Under-Secretary-General Bachelet at its helm. Many were active in the Gender Architecture Reform (GEAR) campaign⁸ that was pivotal in UN Women's formation, and look forward to a collaborative and mutually respectful partnership with the agency.
- There is profound expectation that UN Women will take a strong and active role in leading UN efforts on UNSCR 1325. The demand for full implementation of the agenda is strong and CSO leaders are keen to build on the momentum developed during the 10th anniversary commemorations.

II. Concerns and Recommendations:

1) Overarching principles for UN partnership with CSOs and leadership on the women, peace and security agenda

- Some advocates and activists working on UNSCR 1325 issues, particularly on women's participation in peace and security, are concerned about the disconnect between those working on the sexual violence agenda and those working on the UNSCR 1325 agenda more broadly. They look to UN Women to ensure cohesion and clarity on women, peace and security, and to prioritize women's participation.
- UN Women must develop a conceptual framework and methodology (or draw upon an existing one) for its work on gender, conflict prevention, and resolution issues. This framework should guide its international and country-level work and its interactions with state and non-state actors.
- UN Women must draw attention, acknowledge, and support documentation of women's peace work and ensure that women peacebuilders are given the appreciation and legitimacy they deserve. Partnership should be based on respect:

⁷ The meetings are described in footnote 1 above.

⁸ Refer to <http://www.gearcampaign.org/> for more information on the GEAR Campaign

complementarity (recognition of comparative strengths) should be the cornerstone of UN Women's relations with women's peace groups.

- Women, peace, and security issues and expertise must be integrated into all UN Women programs. This includes an understanding of peacebuilding and conflict resolution methodologies.
- UN Women should strive to be proactive on the women, peace and security agenda not reactive (a criticism that has been leveled against UNIFEM). It should have mechanisms to work across social divisions, and support women's capacity development for peace and security in a systematic and timely manner: interventions should not be based on serendipity and short-term opportunities but should be planned in advance.
- Women, peace, and security issues are newer to the UN system in general and often more sensitive for governments than other women's rights or development issues. Some governments have already signaled their reluctance to accept UNSCR 1325-related programming at the national level. UN Women will need a clear strategy and alternatives to government channels to overcome these obstacles and ensure adequate support to local women's groups. This will require partnership with international and regional NGOs.

2) UN Women's activities at the country-level

- CSOs are concerned that UN Women (like UNIFEM) could be at risk of being politicized or constrained by host-country policies particularly with regard to the women, peace, and security agenda. They believe UN Women must uphold UN norms and values and its role must be to promote implementation of the UNSCR 1325 agenda by government and by UN actors.
 - Peace and conflict analyses should be conducted when UN Women enters a new country and at regular intervals to inform strategic planning.
 - Country offices must develop comprehensive strategies for the implementation of all four UNSCRs on the women, peace, and security agenda⁹. They should not focus on one (e.g. UNSCR 1820) to the detriment of the broader issues, particularly the issue of participation.
 - UN Women must develop more nuanced understandings of the ground realities in which it seeks to operate and/or where women are active.
 - If empowerment of women is a priority, UN Women should seek guidance and advice from a cross section of CSOs to ensure that it does not inadvertently do harm to those most active on sensitive peace and security issues.
 - Consultations should be inclusive and the outcomes should be transparent.
 - Consultations should be regular and not only held in capital cities.

⁹ UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889.

3) Technical expertise within UN Women

- CSOs are concerned about the lack of technical expertise among UN Women’s field staff (and at headquarters) on women, peace, and security issues. Country and regional offices must have demonstrable capacities in this field and professionalize their staff. In addition, women, peace, and security issues should provide an overarching framework for country programming, instead of being siloed into discrete projects or stand-alone programs.
 - UN Women should strive to be a “learning” institution – improving staff knowledge and capacities should be integral to the organization (and knowledge of women, peace, and security issues and capacities included in measures of staff competencies and performance). One approach is to ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of programming and exchange of experience and information based on rigorous analysis.
 - UN Women should support the analysis and documentation of women’s activism and resilience in conflict settings – not just focus on the impact of conflict on women - and draw on its analysis to:
 - Make the case for women’s inclusion among governments and UN actors; and
 - Inform women across conflict zones about past experiences in other contexts.
 - UN Women must work with external experts and international CSOs specializing in women, peace, and security to provide a strong and substantive focus on peace and security related issues and to build the skills of its partners. Generic training on political leadership or development issues is not sufficient: trainings must be peace and security specific.

4) Funding mechanisms for UN Women

- UN Women should not seek to compete with national CSOs for funding for women, peace, and security work. Currently, national NGOs are struggling because UNIFEM is competing with them directly for funding in a number of settings. CSO funding should be prioritized because CSOs represent local social capital and capacity, and are more cost effective and sustainable in the long term.
 - The UN’s grant making systems should be simplified to enable wider access by NGOs and community-based groups.
 - UN Women should encourage governments to support an independent CSO 1325 Fund to ensure adequate, timely resources are channeled to women’s peace initiatives in crisis settings, particularly for conflict prevention and resolution.

5) The specialized role of UN Women

- There is concern about UN Women acting as a program implementer. It should act as a facilitator bringing together key stakeholders (international agencies, donors, CSOs, and governments) to ensure coordination and collaboration on the women, peace and

security agenda. It should also facilitate access between CSOs and government actors, drawing on the good offices of the UN to provide space for dialogue, interactions, and collaboration between states and CSOs.

- Before embarking on a UNSCR 1325 strategy UN Women should undertake a thorough independent evaluation of past efforts by the institutions that have been combined to form UN Women, namely, UNIFEM, the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI), the Division on the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), to identify good practices, successes, weaknesses, failures, and strengths.
- To avoid duplication, UN Women should build on recommendations emerging from CSO reports published in 2010, notably the Care International study¹⁰, the MIT/ICAN study and reports by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.
- UN Women should develop an international advisory group of women peacebuilders/experts for regular consultation and strategic guidance.

¹⁰ Care International UK, *From Resolution to Reality: Lessons Learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding and Post-conflict Governance*, October 2010. <http://www.careinternational.org.uk/research-centre/conflict-and-peacebuilding/91-from-resolution-to-reality>