

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security

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<http://www.peacewomen.org/un/ngo/wg.html>

Arria Statement, October 21, 2004

I would like to start by thanking Ambassador Adechi and the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations for organizing this important meeting. I particularly note the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security's (NGOWG) pleasure that Benin has included the voices of women from conflict zones in today's panel.



I would also like to thank the many member states supportive of this pressing issue of women, peace and security.

Thanks also to the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom for its efforts to highlight SCR 1325 this month under its presidency and particularly in focusing on gender based violence which has reached epidemic proportions globally. The NGOWG feels fortunate to be included in this Arria Formula meeting.



We will present **three** core recommendations focusing on the UN system, which I will set forth now and elaborate on later.

- **First**, the NGOWG recommends that the Security Council encourage action on its earlier calls for mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout all UN operations for women, peace and security. (S/PRST/2001/31 and S/PRST/2002/32.)
- **Second**, the NGOWG recommends that the Security Council request the Secretary General to create a well-funded Action Plan for a system-wide strategy for the coordinated implementation of Resolution 1325.
- **Third**, the NGOWG recommends that the Security Council call on Member States and UN entities to partner with civil society and women's networks, like the ones on today's panel, to support their work on women, peace and security.



We urge you to incorporate these recommendations into the Presidential Statement.

As we all know, in ten days, we will celebrate the fourth anniversary of your first resolution on women, peace and security. For adopting the resolution, the NGOWG congratulates you. The NGOWG formed four years ago to advocate for the adoption of 1325, and we are still pushing for full implementation of the Resolution.



As both the Secretary-General and NGOWG's reports on 1325 indicate, much has been achieved in the last four years. For example, we note with satisfaction that the gender advisor position at DPKO has been established and filled. However, both reports also indicate, and I am sure we will all agree, much work remains to be done.

Regarding the **first** recommendation on gender mainstreaming in women, peace and security, it should be noted that the Secretary-General's Report states that only 15.6% of Security Council resolutions adopted from January 2000-June 2004 paid any attention at all to women or to gender concerns. (Women and peace and security, Report of the Secretary-General, 13 October 2004, Para. 6.) In addition, only 25 member states took time to respond to OSAGI's *note verbale*, and of the 25, just seven are Security Council members. The NGOWG understands that there are numerous pressures and time constraints facing the Security Council and that gender concerns may not be

foremost in the minds of Security Council members when considering time-sensitive issues and drafting resolutions. However, history has demonstrated-- that *until* and *unless* women's voices are heard and their contributions recognized and supported, we will not achieve sustainable peace. Resolution 1325 compels the UN and Member States to implement gender-sensitive programs across the board for all women in conflict affected areas. For most women in conflict affected areas, gender has determined and in many cases, limited, their opportunities to participate in decisions that their lives. Gender is not an optional concern for them. The UN and Security Council have an obligation to consistently promote gender-sensitive strategies to support such women.

For this reason, we urge you to act on this recommendation in two concrete ways:

- *First*, to call for a high level gender advisor position in the Department of Political Affairs, and
- *Second*, to establish a Security Council working group on women, peace and security in order to integrate 1325 into the work of the Council.

Gender mainstreaming on women, peace and security will be made even more feasible if the Security Council adopts our **second recommendation**, that a system-wide Action Plan should be drafted by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General's Report calls for an Action Plan repeatedly. We urge the Security Council to ensure that that such a time bound Action Plan is backed by sufficient funding, however. To locate the funding, we propose an audit of existing resources in the UN system and re-allocations of funding as necessary. After all, we all know that an action plan without the requisite funding is essentially an inaction plan.

Third, we urge the Security Council to call for increased collaboration with civil society. We acknowledge that the Security Council has met with women's organizations when on mission. We encourage you to ensure that such meetings are systematically implemented. For example, the upcoming mission to Central Africa provides an opportunity to draw on women's expertise and knowledge, we are hopeful that plans are already underway. Additionally, we urge the Security Council to invite women peacebuilders to New York to speak frequently to Council members. We commend the United Kingdom Mission for featuring a female lawyer from DRC who works with civil society in the open debate to be held next week. We also call on the Security Council to urge Member States and UN entities to collaborate with civil society to support their work.

In closing, the NGOWG urges you to:

- **First**,
 - i. to establish a working group in the Security Council and
 - ii. to renew your call for gender mainstreaming in women, peace and security, and
 - iii. to call for establishment of a high level gender advisor position in the DPA,
- **Second**, to call for a time bound and adequately funded Action Plan; and
- **Finally**, to urge member states and the UN to collaborate with civil society to form partnerships working for women, peace and security.

We also draw your attention to the additional recommendations we set forth in our Alternative Report as well as our Open Letter, copies of which are available here and on <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/ngo/wg.html>.

Thank you for your attention today. I expect that you must have many questions for this panel. The NGOWG looks forward to continuing these discussions in order to lead to full implementation of Resolution 1325.