

Rethink! - A Seminar for Sustainable Peace

Dear Ambassador,

In the spring of 2004 the Swedish Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation published *Rethink! – a handbook for sustainable peace*. This handbook is our answer to all the questions we receive on how the international community should work to give women access to peace negotiations and post-conflict rebuilding processes. This handbook was launched at the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in the UN in March 2004, and is available on our website:

http://www.iktk.se/english/publications/thematic_reports/thematic_reports.html.

In order to generate concrete recommendations for implementing the women, peace and security agenda, on 14 October 2004 the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation held a seminar on women's role in peace building and rebuilding of conflict struck countries. Speakers at the seminar were experts from five different conflict areas: Georgia, Liberia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Israel/Palestine as well as from the UN system and the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation. Participants were practitioners and scholars from NGOs, universities, government institutions and authorities.

Implementing resolution 1325 will require further leadership and concrete directives from the Security Council, and the recommendations generated at our conference are submitted as a contribution towards your thinking and action.

In his 2004 report, the Secretary-General recommended that the Council consider Women, Peace and Security on an annual basis, which in your usual practice will require another resolution containing a date for reports to be submitted by the Secretary-General. To advance the agenda sparked by the Council on Children and Armed Conflict, no less than five resolutions have been passed, with each of these serving to demonstrate the Council's commitment in deepening and broadening the Council's range of activities, prompting action from other parts of the UN system, including the International Financial Institutions. The NGO community, along with governments and academic institutions that have enthusiastically amplified and praised the first step the Council took 4 years ago expect no less commitment and action on moving resolution 1325 to the next stage.

Sincerely

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President, Kvinna till Kvinna

Recommendations on the Implementation of resolution 1325:

1. Mechanisms with sufficient seniority and authority are needed to monitor and coordinate implementation of resolution 1325. As has been the case with other thematic issues, the Security Council should establish an expert level working group on Women, Peace and Security,

comprised of all Council members and led by a Member State designated as coordinator and focal point on Women, Peace and Security, with a mandate to explore ways and means of routinely operationalizing resolution 1325, and subsequent resolutions, in the work of the Security Council. This expert level working group should ensure gender issues are contained in the mandates and reports of all peace operations, and receive regular reports from the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, the senior management group on peace and security issues within the UN, which should be designated as the appropriate authority within the UN system to oversee a coordinated system-wide implementation plan, which should be requested by the Council. Rather than a decision-making body, the working level Task Force on Women, Peace and Security is a coordination and communications mechanism, which should be mandated by the ECPS to undertake specific tasks, in particular to coordinate reporting to the ECPS from the UN's Funds, Agencies and Departments on progress made on ways and means, obstacles and achievements in implementation.

2. It is necessary to repeat the request in resolution 1325 that Member States nominate women candidates for senior international positions. The Security Council should express dissatisfaction in the lack of progress made on the request for more women to be nominated and appointed as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) by the Secretary-General. The Security Council should again call strongly on Member States to nominate women so that the UN not only sets standards for gender equality but is also a role model for their realization.

3. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General require explicit guidance and training in order to play their role in implementing resolution 1325. All SRSGs require explicit instructions from the Security Council and training modules and standards from the UN to better incorporate 1325 and gender equality into their work of brokering and implementing peace negotiations and processes, including those processes related to writing of constitutions and legislation which are often part of the peace process. SRSGs should be mandated by the Security Council to demand that all peace and reconciliation process and provisions include women and gender issues. SRSGs should be required to meet regularly with representatives of civil society, including women's organisations to become better informed of local conditions, and to provide an ongoing mechanism for civil society support in distributing and multiplying information about the Peace Operations goals, mandate and achievements.

4. Regular quality information on Women, Peace and Security is needed for the Security Council to implement resolution 1325. The Security Council's "willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations" has been proven through inclusion of 1325 in some mandates and assessment missions since 2000, which should be applauded and become regular future practice. The Council should request more routine inclusion of information on women, peace and security in reports of the Secretary-General, which to date have been deficient in this regard. Such reporting should include: information on the impact of the conflict and peace operation on women, including women outside main centres; the number and ranking of women personnel in each peace mission; and the programmes undertaken by the mission to address gender issues. Such information gathering will require specialized expertise and the Security Council should include provisions for this in peace mission concept of operations, and request that the General Assembly Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) provide additional information officers for the Department for

Political Affairs to improve the quality and quantity of gender disaggregated information required by the Council for timely and targeted action.

5. Repeated emphasis is needed from the Security Council on strict adherence to the Code of Conduct, which will encourage efforts by Member States to adequately train their personnel. The Security Council should call for all personnel of Peace Operations – military and civilian - to be fully informed and trained on the Code of Conduct. While disciplinary and enforcement action is not in the purview of the UN, but rather of Member States, nonetheless a clear chain of reporting and follow-up of violations of the UN Code of Conduct should be established and maintained by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

6. Efforts to realize the Security Council's recommendation in 1325 on DDR will require that the traditional definition of a “combatant” be abandoned. Mandates for DDR, and the work of planners and implementers should recognize the essential roles played also by women and children in contemporary armed groups. Even those associated with armed forces -- in both voluntary and forced capacities -- such as cooks, porters, sexual slaves and spies, need to be taken into the programmes not only because they have a right and a need, but also because, like their traditional “combatant” counterparts, they have acquired military skills and practices that endanger ongoing peace. DDR planners should always consult local NGOs in the planning of DDR programmes from the outset to avoid mistakes such as miscalculation of the number of combatants, or training former fighters in skills that have no local application or market.

7. It has been proven through numerous failed DDR programmes that cash in exchange for weapons does not work. To avoid the misuse of funds or the creation of a new incentive to acquire and profit from arms, and to encourage long-term investment in the health and wellbeing of the former fighters and the communities into which they will reintegrate, the Security Council should encourage the exchange weapons for development, education or training extended over a longer period of time, and should instruct much closer collaboration between DDR efforts and ongoing development programmes which are too often disconnected, and threaten to undo the DD achievements at the R stage.

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