



Conference Brief

The EU & UNSCR 1325 point 8

Brussels, 6-7 November 2007

Women: from target group to stakeholders in peace and security

BACKGROUND

Involvement of women in peacebuilding is essential for sustainable peace. This is acknowledged by both governments and civil society organisations. In 2000 the United Nations expressed a strong commitment to recognise and improve the position of women in conflict and peace processes with the adoption of *Security Council Resolution 1325* (UNSCR 1325). Several UN Member States have integrated the resolution in their policy development and the EU has made commitments to integrate UNSCR 1325 in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

ICCO & Kerk in Actie in cooperation with its APRODEV sister agencies EED, HEKS, Norwegian Church Aid and Church of Sweden, show a broad and global support of civil society. At regional partner consultations in Africa and Asia, partner organisations expressed their concern for women, peace and security and asked to be assisted in their plea for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Their concern is that local knowledge and experience, while essential to successful conflict resolution and peace building practices, is neglected in international actors' policy-making process.

The implementation of *UNSCR 1325* faces many challenges and obstacles. The widespread violence against women in East Congo and the lack of female participation in the peace process of Aceh are just some of the numerous examples. It is of the utmost importance that international actors support citizen and women's organisations in their work on civilian conflict transformation and peacebuilding efforts. Civil society needs to be included as more than an implementing partner and service provider. The implementation of *UNSCR 1325* will simply not succeed without local gender knowledge included in the policymaking process.

FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

Partner organisations indicate that the EU, through its political, diplomatic and development activities, has great resonance in their countries. The EU now has the opportunity to play a leading role in the implementation of *UNSCR 1325*, and encourage other international actors to do the same. It can also motivate and coordinate its Member States to further the inclusion of women at all levels of the peacebuilding process.

8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:
- (a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;
 - (b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;
 - (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

This conference therefore aims to facilitate the sharing of knowledge between local civil society organisations and EU policymakers. Through these exchanges common ground can be found to bridge the gap between policy and implementation. We will also further our knowledge of the complex security-development nexus in which all peace builders operate. We hope to create, through this conference, a platform from which concrete recommendations can be made. This platform can then be a step in the direction of creating a methodological structure for the inclusion of local knowledge and knowledge holders in the EU policy making process. This would be following the recent example of United Nations Peacebuilding Commission in setting out guidelines for the participation of civil society in their meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We regard our civil society counterparts as a rich base of knowledge and expertise, which can contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of peace building. If this is not recognised, peace building efforts may fail to meet the basic needs of the most affected and exposed civilians.

We recognise the commitment made by the EU to implement *UNSCR 1325*. Facing the complexity of the security-development nexus however, policy does not always translate into practice. As a contribution, ICCO & Kerk in Actie, in cooperation with its APRODEV sister agencies, would like to facilitate the sharing of expertise between its civil society counterparts and EU institutions. Jointly we will build a bridge between the different actors to generate concrete ideas for the future implementation of *UNSCR 1325*.

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