



# The 2012 Open Days on *Women, Peace and Security*



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# Summary

## 1. Background

At the heart of the landmark United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security passed in 2000 are commitments to enable women's equal engagement in, and contributions to all stages of peacebuilding, peacekeeping and conflict prevention. Globally, women have participated in all aspects of peacebuilding and peace negotiations, but are often not adequately recognized for their contributions, or not given opportunities to participate to the fullest extent possible. Progress on commitments relating to women's participation and representation has remained slow and uneven. To address this, in 2010, on the tenth anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the UN organized the first series of Open Day events on women, peace and security.<sup>1</sup>

These Open Days, held in conflict-affected areas, enable direct dialogue between women civil society leaders, activists and senior UN representatives. The objective was to provide a space for women to highlight their concerns, priorities and recommendations on key context-specific issues relating to peace and security, and present proposals for improving implementation of UNSCR 1325, subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security,<sup>2</sup> as well as relevant regional and national commitments. Such open and inclusive forums for women peacebuilders also provide the opportunity to deepen local ownership of the resolution, share good practices in implementation and form strategic partnerships.

*"Sustainable peace is possible only with women's full participation - their perspectives, their leadership and their daily, equal presence wherever we seek to make and keep the peace."*

Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General

The Open Days initiative is jointly organized by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

## 2. 2012 Open Days

In total, 25 Open Day events were organized between July and October 2012, including twenty-two country events and three regional events, held in West Africa, Central Asia and by the African Union. First-time Open Days were held in Central African Republic, Rwanda and the African Union. In fifteen cases, Open Day events were organized for the third time in a row, having also been held in 2010 and 2011. While designed to meet the same central aim of allowing women to present their concerns, priorities and recommendations on key peace and security issues, as in the previous two years, the format and scale of the 2012 events varied between countries. The number of participants ranged from around 20 to over 500, with representatives of civil society, national and local government and UN officials taking part in all the cases. More specifically, participants to the Open Days included representatives from a broad range of sectors engaged on the issues of peace and security, gender equality and women's empowerment, including civil society (peace activists, leaders and advocates, community networks and human rights defenders), national and local governments, legislative assemblies, representatives of the judiciary, prison wardens, national police and armed forces, traditional and religious leaders, DPKO or DPA mission components, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General or the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG), UNDP, UN Women and other UN agencies, funds and programmes, including UN Resident Coordinators.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations (2010). *Women Count for Peace: The 2010 Open Days on Women, Peace and Security*. New York.

<sup>2</sup> As of 31 December 2012, this includes: S/RES/1820 (2008), S/RES/1888(2009) S/RES/1889 (2009), and S/RES/1960 (2010).

The 2012 Open Days were unique in terms of participation due to their expansion from the capital cities to the states or regions, which helped to ensure a truly national dialogue among women from a broad spectrum of society. In most of the larger UN missions the events included a workshop lasting one to three days, involving presentations, debates and group work. For instance, in Timor-Leste the participants of preparatory workshops worked in thematic groups focusing on justice, security, socio-economic concerns, and women’s participation to ensure that all relevant issues and concerns were integrated into the Open Day dialogues. Where available, the presence of expert resource persons at preparatory workshops provided for a

*“Nobody is going to engage you, it is up to you to claim your space.”*  
*Participant in the 2012 Open Day in Rwanda*



*Developing Key message during the two-day preparatory meeting in Sierra-Leone, 18-19 September 2012*

valuable exchange and enabled participants to enhance their knowledge of technical issues and to be informed about the range of existing resources. These workshops were followed by a closing ceremony, during which, a compact or a similar document was signed by a government official. For the first time in 2012, many of the Open Day events featured a specific national theme to focus the discussions and recommendations. The concept was that choosing a single priority issue to anchor the discussion would lead to more in-depth engagement with UN representatives and also facilitate subsequent monitoring and implementation of follow-up actions. Most of the Open Days in 2012 received wide media coverage. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the event was attended by over 30 journalists and covered by national television, radio and newspapers. Wide dissemination of information and images from these events is important for raising awareness beyond the participants in the Open Day events.

### **3. Shared Priorities and Concerns**

While a broad range of concerns and context-specific priorities were raised during the individual Open Day events, a set of common priorities across regions can be identified:

#### ***Women’s Participation, Representation and Engagement in Decision-Making***

UNSCR 1325 calls for women’s increased representation and participation at all levels of decision-making in relation to the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict. This appeal was reinforced by subsequent Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010). The need for women’s increased participation and representation in governance was the primary theme raised by the participants in the 2012 Open Days. The event in Haiti was specifically focused on the theme ‘Women in leadership positions’. It is notable that women’s participation also formed a key theme of the 2010 and 2011 Open Day dialogues indicating that that sustained attention and implementation of concrete initiatives in this area is needed. Women called for measures to enable their increased participation in national governance at all levels, peace processes, donor conferences, international peacekeeping and political missions, international organizations and justice and security sector institutions.

#### ***Dissemination, Implementation and Monitoring UNSCR 1325***

The Open Days initiative was conceived as part of significant efforts within the UN to accelerate achievement of the goals of UNSCR 1325 (2000) and related resolutions. While notable progress has been made in the dissemination, implementation and monitoring of the women, peace and security resolutions across different regions, gaps remain and these formed another overarching concern expressed by the participants of the 2012 Open Day events. The Democratic Republic of the Congo chose ‘Contributing to the effective implementation and coordination of a National Action Plan on SCR 1325’ as the focus theme for its event.

## ***Security and access to justice***

Security and access to justice was the theme of the Open Day in Liberia and also emerged as an overarching concern of the 2012 dialogues. The challenges in regard to security, justice and accountability created in war tend to persist long after fighting has come to an end, and addressing them is key to creating and sustaining lasting peace. In Liberia, under the glare of the media coverage of the Open Day, some of the women representatives bravely shared personal testimonies of the challenges they encounter in their daily quest to access justice, serving to underline the rationale and urgency of the recommendations they presented.

## ***Prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence***

Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), and 1960 (2010), called on parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, particularly targeted sexual violence, in conflict situations. Resolution 1820 (2008) recognised for the first time that sexual violence has been used as a tactic of warfare, and as such requires a security and justice response to improve protection and prevent impunity. Addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) was a key concern expressed during the Open Day dialogues and common recommendations focused on improving support service provision, awareness-raising, providing SGBV training to justice and security stakeholders, and improving and implementing legislation.



*Open Day in Central African Republic, 23 July 2012*

## ***Women's economic empowerment and access to resources***

Economic insecurity characterised by high unemployment among women and a lack of productive assets and livelihood skills is a serious constraint to recovery in post-conflict societies. Open Day participants called for a gender-sensitive economic recovery framework in which income generation and training opportunities for women are expanded.

A number of broad **crosscutting concerns** relevant to all five of these thematic priorities also emerged from the 25 Open Day dialogues:

Firstly, the **gap between existing norms, standards, laws and their implementation** hinders progress across thematic priorities, particularly in addressing SGBV and in ensuring women's access to justice. The need for monitoring implementation of obligations was strongly emphasized.

Secondly, a demand for **skills training and capacity development** permeated the Open Day dialogues. Women called on Governments and the UN system to provide training opportunities for women to develop their skills in the political and economic spheres as well as to train security and justice sector stakeholders to enhance their sensitivity to gender equality and women's rights issues.

Thirdly, the **need for a strong civil society** in achieving progress in the area of women, peace and security was another concern relevant across thematic priority areas. The key messages included the importance of making funding available to civil society organisations, building their capacity and ensuring a robust relationship between civil society and Government authorities.

Lastly, **engaging men and boys** was expressed as key to lasting change. This includes awareness-raising among men about women's rights and gender equality concerns in conflict and post-conflict settings and training male stakeholders on how to conduct gender sensitive work.

## 4 . Recommendations

While many country-specific recommendations related to the shared concerns and priorities are outlined in the country and regional reports, this section presents a selection of common recommendations identified from across these 25 reports.



Open Day in Baghdad, Iraq

### ***Women’s Participation, Representation and Engagement in Decision-Making:***

- Increase the presence of women in decision-making positions and peacebuilding initiatives to a minimum of 30 per cent;
- Enhance capacity-development for women in political, negotiation, communication and leadership skills;
- Build and support the development of robust women’s organizations and networks.

### ***Dissemination, Implementation and Monitoring SCR 1325:***

- Governments and the UN system to enhance dissemination of and awareness-raising about UNSCR 1325 and related commitments on women, peace and security at country level;
- Governments to develop a National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325 and related commitments with UN system support;
- UN system to provide logistical and financial support for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related commitments, and to support countries to mobilise their own resources for this purpose.

### ***Security and access to justice:***

- Invest in training more women to serve in both the security and justice sectors, including police officers, troops, lawyers, judges;
- Raise awareness of women protection’s needs and human rights among government officials, security organs, and the community, including specific training on gender equality targeted at men;
- Protect human rights defenders.

### ***Prevention of and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):***

- Improve quality of, and access to support services to survivors of SGBV and disseminate information about these services;
- Improve existing legal frameworks on SGBV and enhance their implementation;
- Provide SGBV training and awareness to security personnel and other stakeholders;
- Raise public awareness about SGBV.

### ***Women’s Economic Empowerment and Access to Resources:***

- Develop and support income generation initiatives targeting women;
- Provide training to women in economic participation and entrepreneurship;

## Afghanistan

### 10 September 2012

#### Background

Issues of women's participation in peace and security are very current in Afghanistan. The country is going through a period of transition, where the security responsibilities are being transferred from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF). This process is not only a military exercise, but involves some socio-economic aspects, such as the ability of the Afghan Government to provide services to its people, to ensure good governance and rule of law and to secure the rights of its citizens.

While women in Afghanistan are war-weary and support initiatives towards peace, there are still many concerns around development, governance and human rights issues, which Afghan women would like to see addressed. Current concerns mainly revolve around the fear that the gains that women have made in the areas of human rights, dignity and freedoms in the last ten years may be eroded as the Government negotiates a peace agreement with the Taliban. Although women have been repeatedly assured that their human rights are not negotiable, practices in the Government-led peace initiatives have not reassured women that they will always be consulted and heard in the peace processes.



In addition, women peace activists have repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with their limited participation in the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP). They are therefore lobbying for the involvement of a critical mass of women in the implementation of the program. There are only nine women in the 70-member High Peace Council and very few women in the provincial peace councils. Women peace activists are advocating for the creation of a civil society-led monitoring body, with provincial outreach to evaluate the activities of the APRP - a body that has female leadership, has an explicit mandate to monitor and evaluate women's inclusion in the activities of the APRP, and builds on existing monitoring efforts, to include committees at district and provincial levels, with channels to interact with the Provincial Peace Councils on a regular basis. They are, however, disappointed that there has been little response to their concerns which they have voiced in many forums.

#### Event details

The 2012 Open Day on women, peace and security in Afghanistan was held on the 10 September. It was chaired by Ingibjorg Gisladottir, Country Director of UN Women, and was hosted by Jan Kubis, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Afghanistan in Kabul. The theme chosen for the 2012 event was 'A Platform for Women Peace Activists.' Twenty three participants from civil society, Government departments and UN agencies attended the Open Day. More than ten media personnel from various media houses and UNAMA were present, having been invited through the UNAMA Strategic Communication and Spokesperson Unit in order to give publicity to the messages from women civil society peace activists.

#### Women's Peace and Security Priorities

Some participants raised concerns that the same issues that had been raised last year were still current, but little action had been taken. Other participants, however, noted that the recommended actions were long processes, which would require resilient follow-up and cannot be achieved in a short space of time.

The messages agreed on were wide ranging but clear. There was a keenness to engage with the Government of Afghanistan and the UN, as well as the international community more generally in addressing the women's concerns. The following key issues and messages that were discussed among the civil society and peace activists at the preparatory meeting on 3 September 2012 were presented to the SRS. Ms. Palwasha Hassan was nominated by the civil society participants to present the key messages and issues on behalf of activists and groups representing women's voices.

The key issue raised under the rubric of women's physical and political security was the need to review parallel security structures and the rearming of illegal groups such as Afghan Local Police (ALP). Participants also expressed concern over the increased trend of targeting women leaders and public figures and a continuous pattern of violence against women, which is widely observed in the country. They noted that the recent beheading of women and children is a new pattern of terrorizing women and girls. The targets are not limited to individuals, rather the violence has expanded to institutions; girls' schools are burnt, students are poisoned, and by implication more than five hundred schools are closed annually across the country. A further key concern was over reports that indicate that children are being recruited for military and intelligence services on both sides, including for international forces. Participants noted that the judicial system and police protection response remains weak. On the subject of women's leadership and participation, the protection of women's rights defenders and women leaders was expressed as a key concern. Additionally, participants of the Open Day emphasized that women's participation in the peace process should be elevated at all levels, including international talks and in all upcoming political negotiations.

- Ensure women's inclusion and participation in the screening and vetting process of the ALP to prevent the recruitment of criminals and children.
- Review the people's uprising to identify the source of arms for these communities and the future security implications for women, men and children in the communities.
- Provide security training for women leaders.
- The Government and the UN to support preparations for the upcoming elections, especially where women's participation is concerned.
- Scale up funding and resources for women's organizations.
- Utilize women's conflict resolution capacities at local and provincial levels.
- UNAMA and UN-WOMEN to work with local women's groups in the careful review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325, 1888, 1889, 1890 and 1960 in Afghanistan.
- The SRS and NATO/ISAF to work with the transition commission to ensure women's access to GOIRA facilities (health, education, courts, and jobs) as an indicator of successful transition in a practical sense.
- Among other issues, Afghan women activists were concerned about the protection of women's rights defenders and women leaders.

### ***UN Response***

The SRS acknowledged the significance and clarity of the messages. He indicated his interest and concern about women's issues, indicating what UNAMA had done in response to various incidents of violence against women. He talked about his interest in holding such consultations, not once a year during Open Days, but regularly, with some monitoring of what is being done, as well as raising any new issues. He made a commitment to meeting the women peace activists regularly and making this a part of the 'mutual accountability' process on women, peace and security issues. He said that he was willing to meet the women again after his visit to the UN General Assembly where he would convey the message from the Afghan women at all the meetings he would attend.

# ***Bosnia and Herzegovina***

## ***12 September 2012***

### ***Background***

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has developed and adopted an Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325.<sup>3</sup> This instrument sets out eight women, peace and security objectives to be achieved by the end of 2013. In 2011, Open Days generated a set of recommendations in support of the implementation of the Action Plan. These recommendations relate: (i) the provision of adequate support and care to women victims of wartime trauma; and (ii) localizing the 1325 Action Plan.

BiH was the first country in the Western Balkans to adopt a 1325 Action Plan although its implementation to date has been incremental. The Coordination Board<sup>4</sup> tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan is functional; its members are also mandated by the BiH Council of Ministers<sup>5</sup> to ensure the implementation of UNSCR 1325 within their respective institutions. UN Women, in particular, and other UN agencies in BiH that work on women, peace and security issues, work closely and continuously with several members of the Coordination Board in order to ensure that adequate support is provided and that the women, peace and security agenda moves forward. In their 2011 progress report,<sup>6</sup> the members of the Coordination Board rightfully pointed out the challenges facing the implementation of the 1325 Action Plan:

- Economic instability and a high level of social exclusion which makes BiH more vulnerable to issues such as human trafficking.
- General lack of understanding and capacity to provide survivors of wartime sexual violence with necessary care services.
- Lack of human and financial resources in relevant public institutions.
- Inadequate presence of women in decision-making positions.

### ***Event details***

The 2012 Open Days meeting in BiH was held on 12 September 2012 at the office of the United Nations Country Team in Sarajevo. The event was formally hosted by Zahira Virani, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP, Amna Muharemovic, Head of Office UN Women, Faris Hadrovic, Assistant Representative, UNFPA, and Amna Berbic, Cluster Coordinator, Justice and Human Security Sector, UNDP. Participants included twelve representatives of the NGO Sector and nine members of the Coordination Board designated to monitor the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 Action Plan, as well as representatives of UNFPA and UNDP.

### ***Women's Peace and Security Priorities***

The Open Days meeting in BiH generated three sets of recommendations that were formulated by NGOs engaged in the promotion of women's rights. These recommendations were also supported by the members of the Coordination Board.

### ***Support for women survivors of wartime trauma***

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<sup>3</sup> Please see [http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/bosniaherzegovina\\_nationalactionplan\\_2010.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/bosniaherzegovina_nationalactionplan_2010.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Members of the Coordination Board are the representatives of the following institutions and organizations: BiH Agency for Gender Equality, BiH Ministry of Defence, BiH Ministry of Security, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation of BiH, BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs, BiH Ministry of Finance and Treasury, BiH Border Police, BiH Mine Action Centre, State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), Gender Center of Republika Srpska, Gender Center of the Federation of BiH and NGO Zene zenama.

<sup>5</sup>The executive branch of government in BiH.

<sup>6</sup>The 2012 progress report has not been drafted yet due to the political instability in BiH which threatens changes in ministerial positions which in turn constantly shifts political and policy priorities in institutions in charge of implementing UNSCR 1325.

The first set of recommendations arose in the light of the continuous neglect and lack of sufficient support for women survivors of wartime trauma. For over 17 years the rights and the needs of these survivors have not been adequately addressed. NGO representatives highlighted that the following is imperative:

- To provide the necessary, long-awaited, comprehensive and continuous support to women victims of wartime rape through the use of best practice such as the establishment of institutional networks.
- To enable the use and further development of existing human, financial and technical resources available among judicial authorities, relevant ministries, public institutions and non-governmental organizations for providing adequate support to women victims of wartime rape. It is also necessary to provide support by informing victims about available resources within institutions and organizations that have an obligation, developed capacities and established partnerships to provide survivors with adequate support and assistance.
- To provide support in raising public awareness and educating the media in order to reduce the stigmatization of women who are victims of wartime rape and in order for society as a whole to participate in their long-term recovery and re-socialization.
- To provide obligatory and appropriate specialized gender equality training for judges and prosecutors, and other relevant justice sector stakeholders.
- To empower and strengthen the capacity of less visible non-governmental organizations that have basic capacity and the trust of the community to provide support and assistance to women survivors of wartime rape.

### ***Gender-Based Violence***

Participants of the 2012 Open Days highlighted that gender-based violence is also an area concerning women, peace and security where much work needs to be done. In this regard, participants called for work towards preventing and eventually eradicating gender-based violence and domestic violence (along with the provision of adequate support and assistance to survivors). It is necessary to ensure that the existing legal framework in BiH is fully implemented and that it constantly improves in line with the needs of society.

### ***Enhancing the Implementation of the 1325 Action Plan***

Unconditionally enable women to be members and heads of negotiating teams, and to incorporate gender equality principles in negotiating agendas. This recommendation is fully in line with the BiH Gender Equality Law and UNSCR 1325.

This recommendation emerged considering the fact that BiH is engaged in the so-called Structured Dialogue on the Justice Sector<sup>7</sup> and that women are not present at the negotiating table nor are gender equality principles integrated in the recommendations of the Structured Dialogue. Eventually, BiH will engage in further negotiations with the European Union. Women activists are asking for support to ensure that they are equally represented during the aforementioned processes.

### ***UN Response***

UN leadership in BiH demonstrated commitment towards sharing the 2012 Open Days recommendations with the attendance of all UN agencies in BiH and a commitment that the UN in BiH will make every effort towards the incorporation of these recommendations into future policy and programme development. It was also noted that the UN values its partnerships with both the NGO and Government sectors and welcomes a 'reality check' from the NGOs in terms of where UNSCR 1325 implementation stands in BiH, including the strengths, needs, gaps, and resources. It was further emphasized that working together, the women, peace and security agenda can be moved forward in BiH and globally.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information please see <http://europa.ba/Default.aspx?id=87&lang=EN>

## **Burundi**

### **27 September 2012**

#### **Background**

Burundi celebrated the Open Day on SCR 1325 event in Bubanza province under the theme “Women: Pillars of Peace and Sustainable Development.” The President of the Senate, Mr. Gabriel Ntisezerana, and the Minister of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender, Madam Clotilde Niragira, accompanied Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) Parfait Onanga-Anyanga during the event.

#### **Event details**

Prior to the official exchange on priorities, the SRSG was invited to witness advances made under 1325 through direct interactions with women in the province who presented achievements and current challenges in the areas of prevention and protection against gender based violence (GBV), economic revitalization and women’s participation.



Positive developments in support of women’s economic revitalization include the farming of rice and the rearing of goats and chicken. Through these activities, the women explained, they have been able to significantly improve their livelihoods, not only directly through their produce, but also by being able to access micro-credit loans to further support their initiatives. The challenges raised include the Burundian inheritance law, which does not favor women’s access to land.

When reviewing advances made in the field of prevention and protection against violence against women, the group of women addressing the SRSG highlighted successful peaceful resolutions of

conflicts, awareness-raising among youth on the fight against violence and, the formation of women’s groups organizing themselves to discourage polygamy. Challenges include cultural perceptions among both women and men on domestic violence. Sexual abuse and rape in school environments also continue to have a negative impact on girls who give up school due to unwanted pregnancies.

At the last stop, the SRSG met with local female leaders who shared encouraging experiences in promoting women’s participation through different decision-making mechanisms on topics such as communal development. Women have become more forth-coming in sharing their views through meetings and in actively taking part in discussions that concern them, including politics. A general view, however, was that women are not sufficiently represented among decision-makers at all levels of society. In this regard, calls for the institutionalization of a 30% quota of women, including at local levels were made. (Burundi has more than 30% women in government at national level but significantly below the quota at local levels with only 4.68% as *Chef de collines*).

#### **Women’s Peace and Security Priorities**

Based on the participatory display of achievements and on-going challenges, the following priorities were presented during the formal session of the Open Day on SCR 1325:

#### **Participation**

- Advocate for affirmative actions to increase women’s access to commanding posts within defense and security forces.

- Support the revision of the constitution and electoral code to ensure gender balance at all levels.
- Support the adoption and implementation of the guide on integrating gender within public administration.

### **Prevention**

- Support public sensitization on laws in support of women's rights.
- Support collection of data on GBV cases in Burundi.

### **Protection**

- Support the establishment of a transitional justice mechanism that takes into account the gender dimension.
- Strengthen the access to material, financial and medical support to victims of GBV.

### **Economic Revitalization**

- Support the establishment of rural microcredit loan cooperatives across the country.
- Provide financial support to enterprise initiatives among rural women and girls. Train women on their effective implementation.
- Put in place special funds for agro-pastoral activities among rural women and girls.
- There was also a request to strengthen women and girl's empowerment further by advancing from awareness-raising activities to actual actions and to assist in mobilizing funds in support of gender under the PRSP-II.

### **UN Response**

The SRSB highlighted that, while a lot indeed remains to be done, Burundi has achieved a lot in the 12 years following the Arusha Accord when it comes to promoting women's rights. Among the noted achievements are the inclusion of a 30 per cent quota for women in parliament into the constitution, the actual representation of female elected representatives in parliament on a national level, and the recently appointed FIFA chairmanship to Burundi's Ms. Lydia Nsekera on an international level.

The Minister of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender took note of the concerns raised during the course of the day and encouraged women to be more actively involved in decision-making mechanisms at all levels as well as in the fight against GBV. Among the achievements, she added the establishment of a joint steering committee and national action plan on 1325 and announced that the National Women's Forums would soon be established. The President of the Senate in turn encouraged women to already start preparing themselves to actively participate as candidates in the 2015 elections.

An interactive session followed, where the SRSB and Minister were given the opportunity to respond to issues raised by the women who had come to represent all seventeen provinces in Burundi.

The SRSB reassured participants of UN's support towards an increased participation of women in decision-making bodies at all levels. He also reiterated UN's zero tolerance against SGBV with the yearly 16 days of activism in support of this position, and congratulated Burundi for the establishment of the '*Centre Humura*' in Gitega province which has been established through UN support to attend to victims of GBV. In this regard, the UN will also ensure that particular attention be given to victims of GBV through the transitional justice mechanism which is under development. With regard to women's economic revitalization, the SRSB mentioned UN's support through its different projects and programmes. Acknowledging the overall negative impact that poverty has on peace and reconciliation, "*il n'ya pas de paix sans pain.*"

## **Central African Republic**

**23 July 2012**

### **Event details**

In commemoration of the 2012 Global Open Day, United Nations Integrated Peace Building Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) in partnership with UN Women and the UN Country Team, organized a round table discussion with women Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Women Parliamentarians on 23 July 2012. The event which took place in Agoumar, 5 kilometers from Rafai, a region that is at the centre of LRA attacks, was attended by the Central African Republic's (CAR) Minister for Women Affairs, local authorities, community leaders and International Non-Governmental Organizations. A number of recommendations were addressed to partners and other UN entities in the country. The event ended with a visit to the bridge, a vital link with the rest of the country for the people of Agoumar and Rafai, to see the condition of the ferry used for transportation between Rafai and Agoumar.

In her opening remarks, SRSB Margaret Vogt emphasized that the event was aimed at highlighting the challenges that women in CAR face, but also their contributions to the peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts. She further reminded the IDPs that their presence in the camp testifies to the brutality imposed on them by the LRA and that, she was confident that the presence of the International/Tripartite force would contribute to the restoration of peace and security in the region.

The SRSB's speech was followed by intervention of women leaders from both communities (Rafai and Agoumar) with a number of recommendations. Survivors gave testimonies on how they were kidnapped, molested and raped by LRA elements and as a result, they and their children, have been abandoned by their husbands. The absence of UN presence and limited presence of humanitarian actors in the area created not only a big gap in humanitarian assistance to the population, but also a serious security vacuum.

As a message to the GoCAR and BINUCA, the displaced women of Rafai and Agoumar strongly recommended that strong measures be taken to ensure the return of their families abducted by the LRA and appealed to the Government of Central African Republic (GoCAR) to increase the number of security forces (Gendarmes and FACA) and equip them to effectively protect the population.

### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

At the UN level, the women pleaded for the establishment of centres for functional literacy, skills training and income generation activities to support the development of the capacity of women in the region. They also called on health agencies to promote family planning and intensify sensitization on HIV/AIDs to prevent the spread of the disease as well as unwanted pregnancies.

They highlighted the need to equip health centres, including with basic child delivery equipment such as delivery tables. They added that accessibility to these health centres is virtually impossible due to insecurity and lack of means of transportation in emergency situations. They also highlighted that basic drugs are difficult to come by and further appealed for food rations, tents, blankets and utensils. At the donor level, they appealed for support and access to microfinancing for income generation and agricultural activities. From the Government, the IDP community requested that trained, qualified health personnel be deployed to the regions to serve in the health centres established by the NGOs.



***Actions undertaken:***

As a follow-up to these recommendations, BINUCA and the UNCT mobilized the necessary resources to alleviate the suffering of the population in Agoumar and Rafai, including women and children and advocated for the deployment of 300 additional security forces to patrol the area. These included the donation of two big trucks of building materials, utensils, blankets and one hundred thousand US dollars of humanitarian funding for the reparation of the ferry.

Within this framework, the UN provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in support of the development of a national plan of action for the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

## Cyprus

### 21 September 2012

#### **Background**

There is still a noticeable deficit in Cyprus in the incorporation of gender into the current (and past) peace process and therefore into a possible future settlement. Recent reports of the Secretary-General cite the need to more actively include women in the process. In 2009, the United Nations Development Programme Action for Cooperation and Trust in Cyprus (UNDP-ACT) and the Office of the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General for Cyprus (OSASG) decided to review gender components of past and on-going UN peacebuilding activities to increase their understanding of potential entry points with regard to gender. A consultant conducted an assessment with the following objectives:

- To review current initiatives and those in the past six years with respect to gender considerations.
- To identify the types of expertise required to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming in projects and create a roster of local experts/organizations to be utilized.
- To provide background information and suggestions on how best to include gender considerations in the peace process.
- To offer strategic recommendations on how the gender perspective could be further strengthened given the current context in Cyprus and ways to implement gender-centred peacebuilding projects within the framework of UNSCR 1325.

The mission led to the formation of the Gender Advisory Team (GAT), comprised of women from both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities who attempted to fill the gap with regard to gender in the peace process. To date, the GAT has met regularly both amongst themselves as well as under the auspices of the UN. The GAT has provided specific recommendations to the leaderships on various chapters of the current negotiations and has advocated strongly for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. A number of civil society organizations, including the NGO Support Center, the Management Center, and Cyprus 2015 have also been working to increase the understanding of the two communities for the need to mainstream gender into the peace process. Despite high hopes, political support from the United Nations, and the appointment of 'Gender focal points' from the respective negotiation teams, there has been little marked progress in the inclusion of gender into the peace process or in the adoption of a 1325 National Action Plan in Cyprus.

The Open Day 2012 event built on previous years' Open Days in Cyprus. In 2010, the SASG for Cyprus, and SRSG of United National Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) met with an expert group of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women to listen to ways in which gender issues can be better integrated into the ongoing peace process on the island. Their main message was that successive leaders have failed to address issues of power imbalances between men and women on the island: "It is time that women's voices are heard. The peace process is an excellent opportunity to integrate fundamental principles of gender equality within the settlement." In 2011, the United Nations hosted a dinner with the participation of the representatives of the two leaders in the negotiations and a group of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women. As a result, the women's group recommended a series of steps to enable gender considerations to be more systematically connected with the talks.

#### **Event Details**

The 2012 Open Day in Cyprus was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September. The Ledra Palace Hotel, UNFICYP, the Buffer Zone, Nicosia was chosen for its neutrality. The event was hosted by Alexander Downer the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General (SASG) on Cyprus and Lisa Buttenheim the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

The participants included representatives from AKOVA (Turkish Cypriot women's association focusing on rural development), KAYAD (Turkish Cypriot societal development focusing on women), YKP FEMA (Turkish Cypriot women's branch of the political party, YKP), Prologue Consulting (Turkish Cypriot organization), FEMA (Turkish Cypriot independent feminist activist group), the Cyprus Community Media Centre (bi-communal), the Gender Advisory Team (bi-communal), the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender organizations, ENGAGE (bi-communal), NGO Support Centre (bi-communal), University of Cyprus (Greek Cypriot), HAD (Greek Cypriot organization), the Nicosia local municipality (Greek Cypriot) and the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies.

### ***Women's Peace and Security Priorities***

The participants of the Open Day event in Cyprus expressed their major concerns as follows:

- ***Women are trapped in the national problem:*** There was a keen awareness amongst the Open Day participants that there is a lack of a robust civil society that could act independently.
- ***Women are not working as collective agents:*** There is a growing women's movement in Cyprus, which is gradually becoming more inclusive. The Open Day participants had a good understanding of what women's role can and should be vis-à-vis decision-making and participation. They do not, however, appear to have the ability or the tools necessary to gain access to decision-making or political bodies. They also acknowledged that divisions between feminist approaches and women's rights have not been fully reconciled.
- ***A lack of understanding of UNSCR 1325:*** The Open Day participants acknowledged that most Cypriot women and men do not know what UNSCR 1325 is or how it is relevant to their lives. There was also lack of clarity about international gender equality and women's rights tools. It was said that "1325 Empowers [women], but political parties are not aware [of 1325]".

## ***The Democratic Republic of Congo***

### ***11-13 September 2012***

#### **Background**

Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have experienced high levels of sexual violence as a tactic of war and as a consequence of conflict. Low levels of participation of women in peace negotiations has been observed, even in the last decade, and Congolese women were practically excluded from negotiations leading up to the 1999 Lusaka Peace Agreement. Only one woman was designated to participate in the preparatory meeting of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Sun City, South Africa. Less than twelve per cent of the delegates at the March-April 2002 diplomatic negotiations in Sun City were women. The number of women present in the formal negotiations would have been even lower if the warring parties had not come under pressure from the international community.

#### **Event details**

In line with the celebration of the anniversary of the UN Security Council resolution 1325, UN Women in the DRC in Collaboration with the provincial Ministry in charge of Gender in the South Kivu organized activities marking the celebration of Open Days from 11 to 13 September 2012. The main objective of the Open Days was to accelerate the implementation of SCR1325 within the province and the Zero Tolerance Campaign adopted by the Heads of States of the Great Lakes Region. In Kinshasa too, the MONUSCO gender office organized the same event from 29 to 31 October 2012 in collaboration with the Ministry of Family, Gender and Child and others UN agencies with the main objective of reinforcing strategic partnerships between UN institutions, the government, civil society, women's associations and bilateral and multilateral stakeholders for effective implementation of the SCR 1325 in peace-building and development programs.

#### ***Event development***

##### ***In Bukavu, South Kivu province***

Participants worked in two groups to come up with an action plan for the Zero Tolerance Campaign adopted by the Heads of States of the Great Lakes Region and also formulated recommendations to be submitted to the South Kivu Government for validation and commitment. The group that worked on the action plan came up with a plan that will be evaluated twice a year and modified according to lessons learned. A proposal for new institutions/organizations to join the existing committee that coordinates all stakeholders engaged in the fight against sexual violence was adopted to coordinate and supervise the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Campaign.

The other group worked on formulating recommendations taking account of the recommendations of the Head of States of the Great Lakes region in the Kampala Declaration, the situation of women in South Kivu and the proposals made by participants during the Open Days. Before the formulation of new recommendations, group members evaluated the actions taken by the South Kivu Government to address the recommendations of the last year's Open Days. The quick evaluation showed that both the provincial parliament and Government had worked on 50 per cent of the recommendations (promotion of female leadership and allocation of a budget for gender and women's political empowerment by the provincial assembly). The unaddressed concerns were carried forward for this year's recommendations:

#### ***1. Female leadership:***

- Reinforce strategies to promote the acceptance of female leadership by the South Kivu population and advocate for the application of the parity principle as stipulated in the DRC Constitution.
- Commitment of the provincial governor to appoint women in decisions making positions. This commitment led in June 2013 to the appointment of 4 women out of 10 ministers composing the actual provincial government of the

South Kivu province (40 per cent of women provincial ministers) and 2 women secretaries of the provincial governor cabinet out of the 3 secretaries appointed in June 2013.

## **2. The implementation of Resolution 1325:**

- UN agencies to allocate at least 4 per cent of their budgets to the implementation of SCR1325.
- The South Kivu Government and other stakeholders to advocate so that the National Government operationalizes SCR1325 both at the national and provincial level;
- Promote women's participation in decision making processes in the South Kivu province, especially in peace processes.
- South Kivu government and UN Ewomen to lobby at the national level for the creation of the National, provincial and local committees 1325 as stipulated in the DRC national plan to implement the SCR 1325: these 3 committees have been created under the ministerial order N° 008/CAB/MIN.GEFAE/GIBI/13 of 5th June, 2013

## **3. Domestication of texts:**

- Popularize resolutions 7 and 8 of the Kampala declaration in the South Kivu province.

## **4. Special measures, courts and sessions:**

- The Government to accelerate the establishment of special courts following up the effectiveness of special measures and procedures to fast track judgments and punishment of perpetrators of sexual violence;

## **5. Zero Tolerance Campaign:**

- The South Kivu Government and Parliament to engage fully in the launching and implementation of the campaign;
- Everyone to contribute \$1 to the Zero Tolerance Campaign.

## **UN and Government response**

During the closing ceremony, the UN Women representative thanked all the participants and called for the appointment of more women to decision-making positions. The Governor of the province then validated all the recommendations presented, but emphasized that these recommendations can become realities only if all stakeholders play their roles. He promised he would appoint more women following agreed upon procedures and criteria.

## **In Kinshasa**

During 3 days, the workshop included presentations, debates, working groups on several thematic such as Peace and security, SGBV, women rights, women Political participation, etc. At the end an **"Act of engagement"** towards the funding and execution of the DRC 1325 plan was signed by the Vice Prime minister in charge of defense, the Ministers of gender, Justice and Human rights, the Resident Coordinator, the Representative of the Embassy of France in Kinshasa( on behalf of donor committee) and several NGOs and local organizations.

## **Key decisions adopted for the Kinshasa open days on implementation of the SCR 1325**

- The creation of the Executive Committee to coordinate implementation of the DRC 1325 national plan:
- Creation of a trust fund for resources for the implementation of the DRC 1325 national Plan with UNWOMEN as depository

NB. The above 2 actions have been formalized under the ministerial order N° 009/CAB/MIN.GEFAE/GIBI/13 of 5th June 2013

- Adoption of terms of reference for rendering the 1325 National Steering Committee operational at the national, provincial and local level

## **Ghana**

**15 July 2012**

### ***Event Details***

The African Women's Active Non-violence Initiatives (AWANICH), the Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the UNDP office in Ghana and the Women Peace and Security Institute of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) collaborated to hold a one-day meeting on women, peace and security under the theme 'Partnerships for Peace: Perspectives on Women's Effective Participation in the Electoral Process.' The event brought together about forty participants including civil society representatives, the Electoral Commission, the security sector, the traditional sector, media and women aspiring to political positions. Held at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre on 5 July 2012, the meeting aimed at sensitizing participants to the provisions of SCR1325 with regards to women's participation in peace processes and collectively exploring strategies to harness women's effective participation in the electoral process in Ghana to ensure peace and security beyond the 2012 elections.

### ***Women's Peace and Security Recommendations***

- Establish a women's network that will put to the fore women's interests in politics.
- Establish solidarity groups for unanimity in candidates who will represent women and avoid duplication of efforts in competing for the same posts.
- Engage the youth, especially young women by including gender sensitive programmes in the school curriculum.
- Review political parties' manifestos to promote gender priorities and hold political parties accountable on gender policies.
- Work with Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to encourage women with leadership qualities.
- Use FBOs as channels for fund raising to financially aid women who seek political offices.
- Provide capacity development programmes for women in public speaking, public relations, how to vote, etc.
- Document the experiences and activities of women in Parliament and women in politics. For instance, involve and encourage film producers to make documentaries and movies about women in decision-making and leadership roles.
- Simplify the electoral process as this will increase women's participation.
- Engage more with female traditional leaders.

## **Haiti**

**19 October 2012**

### **Background**

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established on 1 June 2004 by resolution 1542, to restore a secure and stable environment, to promote the political process, to strengthen government institutions and rule of law structures, as well as to promote and protect human rights. Haiti was making significant progress towards stabilization and sustained economic development when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the country on 12 January 2010, leaving more than 230,000 dead, 300,000 injured, and more than 1,297,000 internally displaced. The Haitian population was profoundly affected by this disaster. Lacking shelter and income, many struggle to meet immediate basic needs. There is an increased risk of violence within the population, which translates into increased violence against women. Poverty and desperation are acting as magnifiers of gender inequality in Haiti.

### **Event Details**

The Open Day event in Port-au-Prince on 19 October 2012 provided a framework for twenty women leaders of ten regions of Haiti to interact with UN officials about their priorities and recommendations on issues related to peace and security in Haiti. The UN system was represented by the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Nigel Fisher, the Head of the Political Affairs Section of MINUSTAH, Ms. Lisbeth Cullity, the Head of the Office of Gender Issues in MINUSTAH, Madame Baudouine Kamatari and the Head of the UN Women office in Haiti, Ms. Sheelagh Kathy Mangones.

### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

Participants of the Open Day events expressed their major concerns as including equality issues in projects and programmes, the promotion of women's participation in decision-making spheres, and women's security, including gender-based violence.

### **UN Response**

Thanking women leaders for the confidence they place in UN agencies, the UN authorities present renewed their commitment to support the national effort to create a climate of security and establish conditions conducive to a better representation of women in decision-making spaces. At the end of the meeting, a monitoring committee consisting of five women leaders was established to monitor action in relation to addressing the priorities identified with the support of the highest levels of the United Nations system.

## Iraq

### October-December 2012

#### Event Details

In recognition of the 12<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UN SCR 1325 on the 31 October and in response to the call in UN SCR 1325 urging 'consultation with local and international women's groups', UNAMI in collaboration with the UNCT organized three Open Days in Nassriyah, Baghdad and Erbil between October and December 2012. The overall objectives of the Open Days were firstly to provide a space for women's voices to be heard, to advocate increased women's participation and the improved representation of women's concerns in local/regional processes of conflict resolution/reconciliation and peacebuilding. The event also aimed to provide an opportunity for grassroots women's groups and leaders to hold discussions on what progress and impact had been made in implementing UN SCR 1325 in Iraq.

The fact that these events were organized by UNAMI and UNCT ensured a neutral arena where women from various



political and ethnic groups could meet on an equal footing and deliberate on issues without fear, particularly within the context of Iraq where sectarianism and ethnicity are sensitive issues. In Nassriyah, it was the first-time that an Open Day on SCR 1325 was held, and also the first-time ever that the UN had organized an event jointly where women leaders, the Governor, members of the Provincial Council and members of security and law institutions participated. The event in Nassriyah generated interest in the media and created an entry point for further UN visibility and work in the Thi-Qar Governorate. In Baghdad, women leaders mostly from civil society organizations met with the SRS

SG and head of the National Alliance Political Coalition, Mr Ibrahim Ja'fary, to discuss women's participation in peace building. In Erbil, the approach was different where the Open Day event involved the youth from Salahadin University who interacted with members of the Women's Affairs High Council, which falls under the Council of the Presidency, Kurdistan Regional Government.

#### Women's Peace and Security Priorities

Participants in Baghdad and Nassriyah provided a set of recommendations outlining what needed to be done and address issues relating to women's protection, basic needs, political participation and security:

- Ensure the participation of women and women's groups in political dialogue and negotiations, taking into account their role in strengthening good governance and development by improving transparency and accountability in all areas.
- Include a quota of at least one third for women's participation in political parties.
- Adopt of a comprehensive national strategy for the advancement of women.
- Ensure gender-responsive budgeting in state budgets.
- Approve a national strategy to combat Violence Against Women that includes monitoring of violations of women's rights as guaranteed in the Constitution and in accordance with Iraq's international obligations.
- Submit the thematic report for CSOs to the CEDAW Committee.

- Create of a High Commission on the Advancement of Women.
- Enact a Social Security Law to cater for unemployed youth and vulnerable social groups.
- Enact laws related to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and freedom of information and media.
- Secure the rights of minorities.
- Support the activities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Protect women and human rights defenders.
- Enact a law to ensure the right of CSOs to access financial support within the annual State budget for the implementation of their programmes.

### ***UN Response***

The SRSB promised to continue to support gender equality and women's empowerment efforts and said he would like to engage with the women CSOs on a regular basis. UNAMI, UN Women and the wider UN family will continue to provide strategic advice, policy guidance and capacity-building at the request of the CSOs within the contexts of their mandates and in line with UN SCR 1325.

## Kenya

13 September 2012

### Background

Kenya has a history of sporadic violence that culminated in the 2007/2008 post-poll violence. This was followed by a mediation process that led to the cessation of violence, followed by a peace agreement that saw the formation of a coalition Government in an unprecedented power sharing deal. The mediation process was led by Kofi Annan and the Panel of Eminent Personalities who had worked to resolve the stalemate through the Kenya Dialogue and instituted transitional measures, including the Reconciliation Act that outlined long, mid and short-term reforms. Key among the immediate measures was the promise of a new constitution, which was finally promulgated in 2010 and contained significant gains for women in Kenya.

In tandem with international best practice, Kenya has developed a National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820. The plan has been developed through an inclusive process that incorporated lessons learnt from other states that have implemented National Action Plans and with the advantage of ‘twinning’ with the Republic of Finland.

### Event Details

UN Women in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Finland in Nairobi and the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) held a practitioners’ conference, themed ‘Best practices: Women, Peace & Security Interventions’ on 12 September 2012 and a ‘High Level Conference on Women, Peace and Security’ on Thursday 13 September 2012 in Nairobi. Participants were drawn from Afghanistan, Kenya, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Uganda, The Director General of the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Sahle-Work Zewde, who also attended the event remarked that the representation of women in formal peace processes and negotiations remain unacceptably low. She noted that this is despite the fact that women are the hardest hit in times of crisis and estimated that 1,500 women were raped and infected with HIV during the post-election violence of 2007. She revealed that a study conducted by UN Women in 2009 of 21 major peace processes since 1992 showed that women participation is strikingly low.

Zewde said that women’s contribution to peacebuilding is vital, as they add immense value to peace processes. “We can learn from countries that have made remarkable strides in including women in peace processes and have made a difference. Within the African continent, we saw the role women played in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone and even in Somalia where women created the “sixth clan” to influence the male dominated peace process in Djibouti in 2000, ” observed Zewde. She added, “Women will not only speak about the ‘so-called’ women’s issues, but will speak on behalf of the voiceless, bringing the needs of the silent majority and critical mass to the table which until now has been dominated by men.” In a keynote address, Zewde said that the inclusion of women helps to develop sustainable peace which has an impact politically, socially and economically.

### Women’s Peace and Security Recommendations

Participants at the practitioner’s conferences made the following recommendations for Kenya:

- Kenyan women to adopt the Situation Room Model, as presented at the conference by women from Liberia and Senegal and replicate the same in the March 2013 elections as a way of ensuring a peaceful process.



*Sahle-Work Zewde, Director-General of United Nations Offices in Nairobi at the Kenya Open Day 2012*

- Kenyan women to examine in-country national security strategies and priorities to ensure that the Kenyan National Action Plan (KNAP) is aligned to these for its successful implementation.
- Women in Kenya to seek to participate in the March 2013 electoral process in various capacities including in the management of the electoral system as voters, aspirants and election observers.
- To ensure that the KNAP works in tandem with existing frameworks such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol, 2003) to ensure coherence with other processes and policies, maximise use of resources and avoid duplication of efforts.
- To ensure that the implementation process of the KNAP includes engagement strategies targeting various actors such as the media, traditional leaders, religious institutions, the Government and CSOs. These should include a flagship campaign with a slogan and strategy as seen in the Senegal case.
- To ensure that the KNAP includes a Resourcing Plan at the initial stage to ensure clear budget lines and secure financial commitments.
- To make sure that the KNAP includes provisions that ensure the active participation of women in political parties at high levels and the appointment of women as ambassadors and in key positions in the security sectors such as the police, Kenyan defence forces, prisons and intelligence.
- To ensure that the KNAP seeks to include a gender perspective in peacekeeping and peace building measures in line with regional and international standards.
- Ensure that troops are trained on gender issues prior to deployment and are respectful of the rights of women and conscious of their specific vulnerability.

### ***UN response***

In conclusion, Zebib Kavuma, the Country Director of UN Women in Kenya expressed satisfaction that the high level meeting on women, peace and security had involved a rich sharing of experiences and resulted in new and innovative ideas. Appreciating the depth and complexity of the issues discussed at the meeting, she highlighted the need to build on existing efforts. She noted the similarity of the challenges and struggles women face with regard to peace and security in the varying contexts as had been highlighted by the panelists and participants and encouraged regional and global solidarity in working towards peace and security. She hoped that the KNAP would provide a platform for women to implement strategies that would enhance the main goals of protecting women from SGBV, create accountability mechanisms and meet the needs of women in peace building. She welcomed the replication of best practices such as the use of the Situation Room model and enhanced networking among women from the various countries.

## ***Kosovo (under SCR 1244)***

### ***12 September 2012***

#### ***Background***

After the conflict in Kosovo (under SCR 1244) and the 1999 NATO intervention, the territory came under the interim administration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (under SCR 1244). In December of 2008, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (under SCR 1244) deployed and took over many of UNMIK's functions in rule of law and security.

The situation of survivors of wartime sexual violence was one of the major concerns expressed by women in Kosovo (under SCR 1244) in 2012. The development towards redressing their situation since the conflict ended has been very slow. Prior to the Open Day, women's civil society organizations devoted the International Women's Day on 8 March 2012 to survivors. The Women's Caucus had presented a Parliamentary resolution calling for particular support to women raped during the conflict and calling upon local and international judicial structures to punish the perpetrators of these crimes, some of which contain elements of genocide. The fact that only one war crime case containing elements of sexual violence has been prosecuted by Kosovo (under SCR 1244) courts is a reflection of the challenges related to the investigation and prosecution of such crimes. The establishment of a working group to draft the Action Plan on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 demonstrates a political will to enhance the representation and participation of women in ensuring lasting peace and meaningful security in Kosovo (under SCR 1244). One of the three pillars of the Action Plan will focus on sexual violence.

#### ***Event Details***

The 2012 Open Day in Kosovo (under SCR 1244) was led by UN Women and UNDP, and supported by the EU. The theme of the Open Day was the status of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and torture. The meeting was attended by women activists and civil society leaders in Kosovo (under SCR 1244) along with members of the Women's Caucus of the Kosovo Assembly and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. The purpose of the meeting was for women civil society representatives to have a dialogue with the UN Development Coordinator and UN heads of agencies to address women's peace and security concerns and to present their recommendations and suggestions for the future. Prior to this event, a preparatory meeting was organized with the participation of civil society leaders and activists on 5 September 2012. To widen the opportunities for dialogue with women, an Open Days reception was also held with the presence of the UNMIK Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, international organizations including UN agencies, the EU Special Representative, Government Ministers, Members of Parliament and other stakeholders.

#### ***Women's Peace and Security Priorities***

##### ***Women in politics/ leadership/decision-making***

- Include more women in dialogue and consultations with civil society.
- Enhance inclusion of women in decision-making positions, especially at the municipal level.
- Provide greater support to women within political parties, which will, in turn, result in a larger number of women in decision-making structures within political parties and as heads of parliamentary groups and committees.
- Increase the percentage of donor funds dedicated to the promotion of women's rights to 25 per cent.
- Provide institutional support to the Kosovo Women Caucus secretariat at the Assembly of Kosovo (under SCR 1244).
- Introduce a special gender equality budgetary code in the Kosovo (under SCR 1244) budget.

#### ***Legislation***

- Request the Cadastral Office of Kosovo (under SCR 1244) to implement legislation related to co-ownership of property.

- Increase women's access to information on their rights, better acquaintance with the law and property-related rights, and financial and institutional support in this regard.
- Fully implement gender equality laws.
- Increase financial support for the implementation of gender equality legislation and programmes.

### ***Poverty and Economic Security***

- Economically empower women through trainings, grants for start-up businesses and easier access to loans.
- Research the possible impact of the Labor Law, and the Maternity Leave section in particular, on women's employment.
- Include women in relevant economic decisions and plans.
- Create a national trainings framework on women's employment and self-employment.
- Review current fiscal laws from a gender perspective.

### ***Gender Perspective in the Security Sector***

- Respect gender equality in the National Security Council, by including a gender equality observer/expert.
- Provide continuous support to further strengthen such mechanisms and build capacities of women in the security sector.
- Increase the number of women involved in the security sector, and in particular in decision-making positions.

### ***Gender-Based Violence/ Transitional Justice***

- Increase public awareness of and compensation for victims of gender-based violence.
- Ensure more programmes and funds to assist gender-based violence victims.
- Give victims of gender-based violence priority in reviewing their cases in courts.

### ***Women Minorities and Reintegration***

- Increase financial support for women of minority communities and increase their employment rates.
- Improve the health situation among minority women.
- Create programmes and funds for repatriation of women returnees from the region and Europe.

### ***Women's Civil Society***

- Increase funds for the implementation of gender equality policies.
- Enhance consultations between the government, donors and women's civil society.
- Improve coordination of donors supporting initiatives and projects in gender equality and women's rights, including through the organization of a donor conference.
- Increase cooperation with the media.

### ***Status of Survivors of Wartime Sexual Violence and Torture***

- Legally recognise women survivors of sexual violence and torture during the war as civilian victims of war and include them under the Law on the Status and the Rights of the Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of the Kosova Liberation Army, Civilian Victims of War and their Families, No.04/L -054.
- Provide support for survivors and witnesses before, during and after war crime procedures, including through the establishment of a fund for the delivery of restorative justice to women survivors.
- Establish a governmental platform to address matters pertaining to sexual violence and torture related to the war.
- Establish a central database on survivors of war-related sexual violence and torture to facilitate a structured coordinated effort to ensure access to justice and the rights of survivors to reparations.

- Increase women's representation to 30% in the Institute for Research of War Crimes in Kosovo (under UN SCR 1244)
- Improve visibility through the media and the treatment of such matters by media in a sensitive and constructive manner.
- Support community-based awareness raising campaigns, in order to raise awareness about the fact that sexual violence in war represents a great violation of human dignity and human rights, a violation of international humanitarian law, a war crime and a crime against humanity.
- Establish a supervision mechanism to monitor the future transfer of war crime cases from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to local courts.
- Improve the survivors' access to healthcare, in particular to psychosocial care;
- Fully implement the survivors' right to inheritance and property.
- Provide gender-sensitive training to judges that deal with cases of survivors of war-related sexual violence and torture.

### ***UN Response***

Ms. Osnat Lubrani, UN Development Coordinator, thanked all participants for their engagement and the information that they provided. Ms. Lubrani commented that a lot of information had been received, and that the heads of UN agencies should take time to reflect on these issues and then respond. The challenges faced by civil society and parliamentarians were noted, with the strong need to focus on implementation of laws and accountability. The importance of the civil society's role was noted, along with the fact that limited resources were affecting all levels of organizations in Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244). Ms. Lubrani stated that the UN must do more to track gender equality-focused funding and improve coordination, and accepted that a mechanism to ensure this coordination should be established. Ms. Lubrani noted that the topic of conflict-related sexual violence was complex and sensitive, but that it was a good time to move forward. Women must be shapers of this process and communicate what they need that the UN can provide. Ms. Lubrani committed to studying the recommendations that had been raised, reflecting on the discussion and determining concrete steps that the UN can take, with the hope that on the next occasion of the Global Open Day, UN Agencies can also report on their progress.

The heads of United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme all addressed the women gathered to thank them for the recommendations issued, and provided feedback on some gender projects that are already ongoing or that are planned, and how these are connected to the recommendations issued.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

### **17 September 2012**

#### **Background**

The practice of conducting an Open Day in Kyrgyzstan started in 2010, after the June violence when, reacting to that event, UN Women Kyrgyzstan commissioned a rapid assessment of women's needs in southern Kyrgyzstan with a view to the post-conflict situation, and implemented two component projects addressing these needs which rendered immediate support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Pursuant to consultations and joint advocacy efforts of UN Women, United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) during 2010, 2011 and in 2012, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic established an inter-ministerial working group to elaborate a National Action Plan (NAP) in order to implement UNSCR 1325. As no civil society representatives were part of the working group, the UN Women Country Office Kyrgyzstan strongly advocated for the establishment of mechanisms to ensure an inclusive consultative process for the drafting of the NAP. It was suggested that the working group should engage with all relevant Government structures that are not members of the working group, the Parliament, the Ombudsman's Institute, and - most importantly - with civil society representatives and experts who focus their work on gender and human rights, in order to ensure that the needs and concerns of all stakeholders are addressed in the Kyrgyzstan 1325 National Action Plan. The NAP was signed in February 2013.

#### **Event Details**

The 2012 Open Day brought together representatives of the Women's Peace Network and civil society representatives as well as representatives from local authorities, ministries, the Office of the President, and journalists. It provided space for discussion of topical issues in the context of building trust and sustainable peace in the country.

The consultation was held in Check-Abad, located in the south of the country. It offered a forum for women to highlight concerns and inform senior UN officials as well as high-ranking Government officials about their work supporting reconciliation and peace. Participants included Miroslav Jenca, the special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, as well as Alexander Avanesov, the UN Resident Coordinator in the Kyrgyz Republic. Also UN agencies as well as representatives of the government and civil society attended the event. The Head of the Department of Ethnic and Religious Policy and Public Relations under the Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ms Mira Karybayeva, assured participants that the Office of the President will consider their concerns and do its best to resolve the mentioned issues in cooperation with local authorities and the State Registration Service.

#### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

The following concerns and recommendations were elaborated based on the analysis of the discussions that took place at the Open Day:

- Women's participation in political processes is one of the priorities in the period of recovery, and the need for supporting special programmes for empowering and supporting women to run for local and national level posts was voiced at all meetings devoted to the Open Day. Women's meaningful and equal participation should become a priority for UN programming.
- Progress in terms of building peace and reconciling different communities in Kyrgyzstan is visible. However there is an urgent need to follow up with immediate efforts to sustain the fragile peace. UN Women will focus its activities on supporting women's activities aimed at peacebuilding and recovery.

- Religious extremism is a widely discussed topic, but difficult to address effectively. The participants recommended that the UN undertake more analysis on the matter and elaborate a unified strategy for addressing emerging problems, making use of UN agencies' comparative advantages.
- The real or perceived freedom of speech and expression are still a challenge for many communities, especially in the south of Kyrgyzstan.
- The capacity of state structures in charge of the UNSCR 1325 NAP is critically low and UN Women will take urgent training measures not only on NAP elaboration, but also on the basics of UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

### ***UN Response***

UN Women in Kyrgyzstan agreed to work together with the Bishkek office of UNRCCA and the UN Gender Theme Group to facilitate dialogue between women peace activists on their specific concerns, *inter alia* access to justice, implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and their participation in joint peace-building activities with the Government.

## **Lebanon**

### **30 October 2012**

#### **Event Details**

The 2012 Open Day on Women, Peace and Security in Lebanon was led by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in collaboration with a local NGO, the Union of Municipalities of Tyre, and the Gender Thematic Working Group of South Lebanon co-chaired by the Gender Unit of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The event provided an opportunity for women in South of Lebanon to discuss women, peace and security issues through the lens of 'safety through my eyes.'

Over 150 women took part in three preparatory meetings in Tyre, Marjayoun and Bint Jbeil. These meetings were coordinated with the Unions of Municipalities. During the meetings the women from the community highlighted their understanding of 'safety' and how it applies in the context of their community. From these discussions, the participants drafted recommendations to be presented at the Open Day event on 30 October 2012.

#### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

The recommendations formulated during the three preparatory meetings and presented at the Open Day event highlighted the need for women to be consulted in all aspects of their community. Women participants outlined an understanding that they had a role to play in peace building and peacemaking especially at the community level. They expressed disappointment that the international community did not recognize women as independent from men in the community and were therefore not consulted on any areas of importance regarding their communities.

The participants also highlighted the need to recognize the needs of women in different geographical areas and therefore the Gender Theme Working Group should be revised with area specific working groups.

#### **Bint Jbeil Group recommendations**

- Organize capacity-building workshops to equip women with skills to contribute to safety and security in their communities, including emergency evacuation plans and procedures for conflict and natural disasters, and First Aid training.
- Facilitate women's participation and contribution to decision making through training on communication skills, negotiation skills, and leadership.
- Build robust women's networks that will allow for women's groups to build on experiences and learn from good practices and lessons learned (an initial mapping of women's groups and needs in the south would support this activity).
- Recognize that women need to be engaged in identifying the needs of their communities, and in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any action that takes place in their communities.
- Support women's initiatives in economic empowerment by providing links to donor agencies and promoting donor interests in women's economic activities in the south.

#### **Tyre Group recommendations**

- Provide capacity-building opportunities on problem-solving and strategic thinking, including the following: building women's capacities for preventative conflict intervention for youth, training on economic participation, computer literacy, foreign languages, leadership and political participation, skills development and mentoring of women to assume leadership roles in their communities, training workshops on income generating activities, safety training sessions to respond to natural disasters.
- Empower women economically through support to small and medium enterprises by linking them to funding agencies or the development of a central hub of information where women can access information on economic

opportunities and lessons learned. Encourage agricultural activities as well as handcrafts through supporting women's cooperatives through the identification of markets.

- Support the establishment of a gender working group that represents women of the area and their specific needs.

### ***Marjayoun Group recommendations***

- Support a 'twinning project' between southern villages and the international community. This will help to create marketing niches for local products. It will also ensure cultural exposure and the exchange of experiences and expertise.
- Ensure direct links and initiate communication channels with women staff working at the UNIFIL.
- Support awareness-raising sessions on women's rights and UNSCR 1325.
- Support women who are addressing environmental problems in their communities especially related to a solid waste management initiative that has been initiated in the area.
- Support increased awareness-raising for men on gender equality and women's rights issues.

## **Liberia**

**26 September 2012**

### ***Background and event details***

Liberia organized its third annual Open Day on women, peace and security on 26 September 2012 in Gbarnga, Bong County, under the theme ‘women demand access to justice.’ The occasion provided an opportunity for over 70 Liberian women, representing 14 of the 15 counties in the country to dialogue with SRSK Karin Landgren, representatives of the Government, community leaders and international partners on challenges as well as opportunities for enhancing women’s access to justice. The Open Day was preceded by a two-day workshop organized by women’s representatives to collectively reflect on their experience of accessing justice, and to outline a set of recommendations to the Government of Liberia and UN partners, intended to address persisting gaps that impede women’s access to justice.

The 2012 Open Day in Liberia was unique in a number of important respects. First, a broad-based planning committee chaired by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and comprising representatives of the UN Country Team Gender Thematic Group, the Ministry of Gender and Development, the Women’s NGO Secretariat and the Civil Society Council was established to oversee preparations for the event. Second, the cross-section of women’s organizations consulted by the planning committee decided to focus the Open Day discussions on a single priority issue (women’s access to justice), so as to have a more in-depth engagement with the SRSK and also to facilitate subsequent monitoring and implementation of follow-up actions. Third, the decision to convene the Open Day outside of the capital city of Monrovia, and to extend invitations to women from all 15 counties of Liberia, helped to ensure a truly national dialogue among women from the broad spectrum of Liberian society. Finally, the presence of expert resource persons on issues of access to justice at the two-day workshop which preceded the actual Open Day, provided for a very useful exchange and enabled participants to enhance their knowledge of their rights and also to be informed about the range of existing resources in place to promote women’s access to justice.

### ***Women’s Peace and Security Priorities***

As an outcome of the two-day workshop, the women elaborated a set of recommendations under five priority areas, which are intended to respond to the challenges they cited from their review of both the formal and traditional justice systems.

### ***Security and Justice Sector Reform***

The recommendations developed under this priority area emphasize the need for investments in training more women to serve in both sectors, and for greater incentives to be provided to personnel in the justice and security sectors who are deployed to the counties. The uneven distribution of police and justice personnel across different counties was cited as a challenge as it resulted in many communities having no access to police posts and court houses through which to pursue justice. The need to curb bribery and corruption in the justice and security sectors was also underlined, in order to make the system more accountable.

### ***Sexual and Gender-Based Violence***

Under this priority area, the women recommended actions to enhance support for survivors of SGBV in order for them to access court services for the duration of the often lengthy trials. Enhancing the dissemination of information, on services available to survivors such as ‘Safe Homes’, was also necessary. Participants further cited the need for greater protection of survivors as well as witnesses during trials. Protection for police officers and court officials working to ensure justice for victims was also deemed necessary, as they sometimes endure threats and social ostracism. The problem of short jail terms for perpetrators was understood as compounding this problem as once they are released back into the community, both the victims and witnesses live in fear of retaliation. The need to amend the existing rape law, to facilitate access to justice for minors, who comprise the majority of victims of reported rape cases was strongly recommended. In this regard, the women recommended that the age of criminality for SGBV cases should be reduced to

15, given the significant numbers of perpetrators who are minors. The need for a forensic laboratory to facilitate evidence gathering related to SGBV crimes was also emphasised.

### ***Economic Empowerment and Protection***

This priority area underscored the need to address the root causes of the difficulties that impede rural women's ability to access both the formal and informal justice systems, namely their poverty and lack of economic capital, as well as their lack of education. The limited economic empowerment of women often forces them to abandon the pursuit of justice due to the high costs involved. Women are therefore left with no choice but to compromise or opt for settlements that fall short of the justice they demand. Recommendations to support the economic empowerment of rural women and also to facilitate the growth of women's economic empowerment networks, such as the 'Women in Cross-Border Trade' that has been well-supported by UN Women were put forward. Calls were also made to expand entrepreneurship opportunities for women. At the national level, the adoption of a gender-responsive budgeting framework to facilitate women's empowerment was recommended.

### ***Women's Citizenship and Participation in Peacebuilding***

Under this priority area, women cited the limited awareness that persists of their rights under the law and the need to harmonize the customary and statutory laws in order to safeguard their rights to property, inheritance and divorce. They recommended that a national dialogue to discuss issues related to women's access to justice should be considered as an integral part of the peacebuilding agenda. The need to support and expand the operations of women-led community dispute resolution mechanisms such as the 'Peace Huts' was equally stressed. Participants also emphasized the need to ensure that gender equality principles underpin all reforms of existing laws in Liberia.

### ***Monitoring and documentation of progress***

The main recommendation proposed under this priority area is for the establishment of a mechanism under the auspices of the Ministry of Gender and Development, which will facilitate on-going monitoring of progress on the implementation of the Open Day recommendations. The monitoring mechanism will, in this case, include the United Nations and women's civil society organizations and should convene quarterly to assess progress.

### ***UN Response***

At the end of the meeting, the SRSB thanked the women for the frank and useful exchange and promised to continue to engage them throughout the coming year. For their part, the women thanked the SRSB for the interaction and appealed to the Government of Liberia to work with the UN in implementing the recommendations they had outlined.

## ***State of Palestine***

***11 October 2012***

### ***Background***

In the West Bank and Gaza, the fight for women's rights cannot be dissociated from the fight for Palestinian rights and statehood. Palestinian women live under pressure and restrictions due to the protracted conflict and Israeli occupation. While their contribution to advancing the Palestinian cause is widely acknowledged and the law gives women the right to vote and stand for political office, they continue to be under-represented in decision-making at various levels of public life, including in peace negotiations and initiatives. National efforts and the adoption of a quota system for women's political participation has increased the level of representation of women in the Palestinian Legislative Council and local councils but without contributing to a significant change in voicing women's concerns.

### ***Event Details***

The Open Day event in the State of Palestine was organized jointly by UN Women, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) and UNDP. The event took place on the 11 October 2012 and was hosted by the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) at their offices in Ramallah, West Bank. The GUPW was invited to host the event in its role as the current coordinator entity for the 1325 Coalition in the State of Palestine as this was considered an opportunity to enhance their leadership in representing the Coalition and the Palestinian women's movement in general. The meeting took place between 14 representatives of the Palestinian women's movement and the UN delegation headed by James Rawley, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, on behalf of Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and with the participation of UN Women Special Representative Alia El-Yassir and other representatives from UN Women and UNDP. The Palestinian women delegation was represented by women from a variety of political factions, professional backgrounds and age groups. However, only one representative (out of the five invited) from the Gaza Strip was able to attend the event due to the restrictive access system that separates the Gaza Strip from the West Bank.

### ***Women's Peace and Security Priorities***

In the context of the on-going occupation and conflict, the Palestinian women reminded the UN representatives of their obligations with regard to protection of the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination. They called upon the international community and the UN to insist that Israel complies with its obligation to respect international law and international resolutions, including on the status of Jerusalem. They also called on the UN to increase its efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Gaza people resulting from the blockade and to uphold the on-going efforts of the State of Palestine to obtain full membership at the UN since this is crucial for the achievement of Palestinian women's rights. Furthermore, the Palestinian women raised their concern that the situation in the State of Palestine is regarded by the UN and the international community as a post-conflict setting, contrary to the reality of the ongoing military occupation and conflict.

### ***Palestinian Women's Recommendations for the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325:***

- To institutionalize regular meetings between representatives of the 1325 Coalition and the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to follow up on the challenges and advances of the implementation of the UNSCR 1325.
- To conduct a study on the impact of the conflict on Palestinian women in accordance with the recommendation of para. 16 of the UNSCR 1325.
- To increase the support of UN agencies to foster women's capacities in political participation and representation by providing accompaniment for women elected to office.
- To appoint a special rapporteur to monitor the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in the State of Palestine.
- To activate mechanisms for the implementation of the resolution and increase accountability.

- To place the UNSCR 1325 in the context of other international resolutions related to the State of Palestine and international conventions for times of war and conflict, including the Geneva Conventions.

***Palestinian Women’s Recommendations for Improving the Situation of Palestinian Women in the context of the ongoing occupation and conflict:***

- To scale-up interventions to prevent the deterioration and collapse of basic services in the Gaza Strip;
- To ensure continuation of swift registration of all Palestine refugees as required and continue to improve quality of the services provided by UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) in particular the maternity and child health care assistance through the Agency's health centres;
- To provide basic rights and protection to Palestinian women prisoners;
- To protect the right of the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem to adopt a Palestinian school curriculum, as opposed to being obliged to follow an Israeli school curriculum.

***UN Response***

The Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, James Rawley, congratulated the Palestinian women’s movement on their efforts in the implementation of UN SCR 1325 in the State of Palestine, including the establishment of the National Coalition for the SCR 1325. Mr. Rawley also reiterated the commitment of the UN to provide protection to the Palestinian women and to support their efforts in achieving their rights, including the right to a viable independent Palestinian state. He expressed his willingness to work more closely with the 1325 Coalition. Mr. Rawley also took note of a major demand of the meeting - the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor the implementation of UN SCR 1325 in the State of Palestine for further consultations internally and with UNHQ.

The Deputy Special Coordinator insisted that women’s active participation in politics was of the utmost importance and it was encouraging to see that the Palestinian legal framework promoted participation of women as voters and candidates. In addition, the commitment of political parties in increasing the representation of women in the elections over the minimum quota of 30% was seen as another positive step. He highlighted the establishment of women-only lists as a great achievement of the Palestinian women’s movement. He called on the women not to be discouraged by the challenges ahead of them both in the electoral process and once elected to office and concurred that elected women would benefit from dedicated assistance empowering them to serve in public office.

Mr. Rawley agreed with the participants’ statement that UN SCR 1325 should not be isolated from other UN resolutions and that it is an integral part of UN action in the State of Palestine. He reiterated UN support to the Palestinian right to statehood in the context of a two-state solution and assured the participants of UN efforts in looking for solutions for overcoming the deadlock in negotiations. He noted that the United Nations institutions in the State of Palestine together with the Palestinian Authority are engaged in the development of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2014-2016, which should be signed in June/July 2013. The UNDAF would serve as a common framework for priorities and programmes that would reflect the international community’s consolidated development efforts in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

## **Rwanda**

### **24 October 2012**

#### ***Event details***

In 2012 the Global Open Day coincided with the UN Day in Rwanda and so the two events were jointly celebrated on 24 October 2012. The half day event was held at the Kigali Institute of Education (KIE). The Open Day event was organized around the following themes: violence against women, peacekeeping, economic empowerment, leadership and participation. The function was attended by representatives from the United Nations, development partners, CSOs, academics and the student community.

#### ***Women's Peace and Security Priorities***

A number of stakeholders addressed the audience during the event, including the UN Resident Coordinator and Donnah Kamashaz from UN Women. Professor Gertrude Fester delivered a speech on the implementation of the 1325 globally and in Rwanda. According to her, the key challenges for Rwanda in relation to UNSR 1325 are that while laws and policies exist, implementation is still weak and that cultural stereotypes and resistance to change is still a big problem even with good legal and policy frameworks.

Before the ceremony ended, the audience was given the opportunity to ask questions and most of them focused on what strategies are being promoted by the UN to reach out to women at the grassroots level and how the UN is supporting Rwanda to achieve its Millennium Development Goals. The issue of involving youths in conflict resolution and management was raised. Participants talked about more research being needed on conflict among families and schools.

## ***Serbia***

### ***7 September 2012***

#### ***Background***

In Serbia, the first Open Day was held on 7 June 2010 with the support of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice. In response to a call to follow-up and institutionalize women, peace and security recommendations, on 19 September 2011, UN Women in Serbia assisted the UN country team in organizing the second Open Day. One of the conclusions of this meeting was that there is a need for more regular communication and dialogue between women activists and UN senior representatives.

#### ***Event Details***

In 2012, the Open Days pre-meeting was organized for 14 May 2012 to allow for timely feedback about the situation regarding the general elections in Serbia. It also marked the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament (May 2<sup>h</sup>). On the occasion of the pre-meeting, women stated that poverty, a lack of transitional justice, war crimes, corruption, organized crime, and weak state institutions pose the greatest threat to security in Serbia.

The 2012 Open Days meeting in the Republic of Serbia was formally hosted by Stasa Zajovic, the Coordinator of CSO 'Women in Black'. The event provided a platform for local women leaders to speak directly with William Infante, UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in Serbia, to share their experiences, concerns and priorities as a contribution to national and regional efforts to resolve conflicts and build peace and security. The Open Day took place on 7 September in Vrnjacka Banja, as part of a 'Women in Black' hosted civil society network meeting. In situating Open Days within this context, an innovative approach was taken that facilitated: (i) the national ownership of Open Days; (ii) the regionalization of this initiative; (iii) the shared understanding that civil society is an indispensable partner for the United Nations. During the meeting, 45 representatives from 11 local women feminist anti-militaristic organizations working in the field of peace and human security (nine from Serbia, one from Bosnia and Herzegovina and two from Montenegro) met with the UNRC and representatives of UN Women to discuss current security challenges that women and men are facing in Serbia, also reflecting emerging concerns for regional stability and reconciliation.

#### ***Women's Peace and Security Priorities***

Women's peace and security priorities outlined during the Open Days meeting spread across several key areas including:

- The responsibility of UN officials (and the implications of UN assistance and diplomacy) towards influencing the national political climate, governmental commitments, and eventual deliverables.
- The partially fulfilled role of the Hague Tribunal and how it impacted democracy building and reconciliation in the Western Balkans.
- Ethnic tensions in the northern province of Vojvodina and signs of increasing intolerance and conflict.
- The frozen conflict with Kosovo (under UN SCR 1244) and the lack of mobility.
- The position of Roma women and discrimination towards other vulnerable and marginalized groups due to the non-implementation of protective legislation.
- The need for Serbia to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions as well as to work on the adoption of Law on Private Security Agencies in order to ensure better transparency and service delivery and also to demonstrate the commitment to demilitarization of Serbian society.

#### ***UN Response***

Mr. Infante expressed his gratitude for the results of the 2012 Open Days, and expressed support for more frequent open door meetings and more opportunities for discussion and exchange. He admitted that it is his job along with the entire UNCT in Belgrade to maintain communication with women's groups as well as to elevate some issues to New York. The quality of the UN assistance depends on the input received in-country and as such, this input is imperative to make a difference. For example, the Resident Coordinator welcomed the effort that women's groups dedicated to

developing a programmatic (shadow) report on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Serbia, a document that is also contributing to the CEDAW reporting process.

Mr. Infante also expressed his positive view of the progress that Serbia has made in the past five to six years in the area of human rights protection. However, he also said that not enough has been done to ensure that the citizens feel secure from the corruption. As the new Government is strongly against corruption, it is hoped they take a strong stand against this societal cancer. The RC undertook that he will do his utmost to hold stakeholders accountable for what they say. Meanwhile, the citizens should not pay bribes, and in this way, they can actively contribute to combating corruption on the local level. This is where women's groups can serve as models.

***Action points:***

- Mr. Infante is committed to further contribute to the development of the mechanism of dialogue with local women's organizations by engaging Serbian institutions and other international organizations and donors on this issue. Where possible, UN agencies (particularly UN Women and UNDP) will strive to provide direct assistance to meet the needs of women's groups.
- UN Women will work with the 'Women in Black' on programme proposals and innovative methodologies to continue involving more women in women, peace and security discussions.
- The next Open Days meeting will be held in September 2013. One suggestion is to organize Open Days outside of Belgrade (perhaps a regional event).
- The 'Women in Black' monitoring report on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Serbia will be shared with the RC.

## **Sierra Leone**

### **21 September 2012**

#### **Background**

The UN in Sierra Leone celebrated the first UN Open Day in June 2010 in which 500 women from all segments of civil society, international organizations and Government representatives participated. The meeting saw the launch of the Sierra Leone National Action Plan for the full implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820.

At the second UN Open Day in 2011, representatives of women's organizations and the UN Gender Technical Team (GTT) planned and coordinated activities in the lead-up to the celebrations. In their presentations to the ERSG on the day itself, the women's messages revolved around four key thematic areas: reparation for war victims, minimum 30 per cent quota for women at all levels of decision making, women living with HIV/AIDS and disabled women and women, peace and security.

#### **Event Details**

The objective of the 2012 Open Day in Sierra Leone was to engage the Executive Representative of the UN Secretary General (ERSG) and Senior Representatives of UN agencies with three key themes: sexual violence, gender equality and the minimum 30 per cent quota for women in decision making positions and women, peace and security.

A task force of the UN GTT led by UN-WOMEN planned and coordinated all project activities (meetings, workshops, venues, refreshments etc.) over a period of three months (July-September) in the lead-up to the celebration of the third Open Day on September 21 2012. Other participating UN agencies included UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF and FAO.

In attendance at the Open Day were Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen, the Executive Representative of the UN Secretary General, Mia Seppo, the UNDP Resident Representative and Chair of the UN GTT, Maxime Houinato, the Deputy Regional Director of UN Women West Africa, Hon. Steven Gaojia, Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, and women from various women's organizations, other civil society organizations, traditional societies (Soweis) and the media.

#### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

During the Open Day event, participants of the pre-meeting where the key messages were prepared gave presentations on the three focus thematic areas and the corresponding priorities identified.

#### **Sexual Violence**

Key challenges under this thematic area included:

- The Gender Equality, Matrimonial Causes, and Criminal Procedures Bills are yet to become law.
- It still takes a long time for pre-trial hearings on sexual offences to be heard in the High Courts.
- There are not enough magistrates and judges to hear sexual offence cases without delay.
- The poor conditions of judiciary staff which they say demotivates those prosecuting, sexual violence cases.

#### **Recommendations**

- The Government, the UN and civil society partners to facilitate the passage of the Gender Equality, Matrimonial Causes, and Criminal Procedures Bills into law.
- The UN to work with the Government for the ratification and domestication of international conventions/protocols like the Protocol on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.
- The UN to work with the Government to provide better service delivery for victims of sexual and domestic violence.
- Procure forensic equipment for the corroboration of evidence especially in rape cases.

- The UN to work with the Government for the separation of the post of Attorney General and that of the Ministry of Justice for the effective dispensation of justice and the provision of safe homes for battered women.

### ***Status of the Gender Equality Bill***

- The Gender Equality Bill has still not been enacted even though the bill has now been prepared.
- Intra-caucus squabbles among members of the Sierra Leone Female Parliamentary Caucus (SLEFPAC) delayed the tabling of the draft Gender Bill.
- Transformation of political will into concrete action on women's issues also remains a challenge despite the President's commitment to gender equality.

### ***Recommendations:***

Enact the Gender Equality Bill during the first session of Parliament in 2013.

### ***Women, Peace and Security***

Key concerns expressed for this thematic area:

- Intra-party intimidation of female aspirants.
- Delay in the enactment of the Gender Equality Bill.
- The limited representation of women's in the security architecture of the country particularly at the platinum level.
- The delay in the domestication of the African Union Protocol on women.
- Ensure adequate support for the prosecution of GBV cases.
- Establish a Women's Security Network to enhance the functioning of the Sierra Leone National Action Plan Steering Committee.
- Appoint women to the platinum security level.
- UN to support alternative justice structures to promote human rights at the community level.
- To ensure civil society participation in the security structure.
- To provide greater security for women aspirants.
- To provide greater support for the popularization of the Gender Laws of 2007.

### ***UN Response***

The ERSG in his response to the presentations by the women on the three thematic areas thanked them for the manner in which they were able to clearly highlight the particular challenges confronting their work towards greater protection, participation and representation in their country's decision making process and thanked them for all the progress they have made so far. He however reminded them that the UN by itself would not find solutions to all the challenges facing them. The UN, he said, works in a coalition with governments, civil society and other stakeholders to support the national ownership of the women's programmes. The women, he said, are better placed now to confront their challenges and the UN can only complement their efforts by "working with you on various policies and legislations and support the institutions that you yourselves have so courageously built." SGBV still remains a challenge for women, but he said the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act is a step in the right direction. He promised that it is in the area of technical support to the women's programmes that the UN can be of most help and pledged the UN's continued support for the implementation of 1325 and 1820 in Sierra Leone.

## ***Somalia***

### ***16 September 2012***

#### ***Background***

Somalia's eight-year transition ended on 10 September 2012. The adoption of a new Provisional Constitution, formation of a new Federal Parliament and selection of President Hassan Sheikh triggered a new interim period (2012-2016), which presents an opportunity for a new phase of stabilization and peacebuilding. By 2016, Somalia will need to finalize the Constitution, conduct a referendum and democratic elections and advance a range of stabilization, peacebuilding and state building efforts. Significant progress has been made over the past twelve months with the convening of the National Constituent Assembly and its subsequent adoption of the Provisional Somali Constitution. While there has been increased representation of women in the new Parliament, there is need to increase women's role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution and conflict related sexual violence.

#### ***Event Details***

The Somalia 2012 Open Day was attended by the SRSG, Ambassador Mahiga, RC/HC Mr. Mark Bowden and the Special Representative to the African Commission in Somalia. The consultations provided a platform for women's voices to be heard and offered an opportunity for women and peace activists to highlight their experiences, challenges, contributions and efforts to promote peace and security. The event was held at the Mogadishu International Airport. The event was jointly prepared and supported by gender focal points of the UNCT Gender Theme Group, i.e., UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA and UN OCHA. Participants included civil society representatives from Puntland, Somaliland and South-Central Somalia. The event was preceded by a preparatory meeting where women deliberated on issues relating to implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Somalia.

#### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

Somali women presented statements on a range of issues, grouped into four broad themes:

- Access to basic services,
- Protection from and prevention of SGBV,
- Women's political participation,
- Women's role in stabilization, recovery and peace building. Common to all the statements was concern about Somali culture and traditional leadership, which was seen as a hindrance to women's development, the commitment to thirty per cent women's representation, women's participation in peacebuilding and violation of women's human rights.

Participants proposed some recommendations and requested the newly established Somali government to take these issues into consideration in planning and implementation of the upcoming 'first 100 Days Action Plan', the 'National Development Plan for Somalia' and the new UN Strategy of Assistance to Somalia. The women developed action points that were to be prioritized and appointed focal points (women representatives) to follow up on the implementation of these priorities.



### ***Access to Basic Services***

- Increase the number and quality of existing shelters and improve living standards in IDP camps.
- Provide basic services to IDP women and children, for example electricity, toilets, sanitary kits, etc..
- The Government should provide and promote civic education and literacy programs for Somali women.
- Provide legal aid support and paralegal help to IDPs.
- Improve the standards of health facilities in hospitals/clinics: establish blood banks, improve antenatal/prenatal/postnatal care by increasing the number of health specialists in hospitals and providing them with capacity-building trainings; provide medical equipment to health centers such as MRI, CT-scans, monitoring equipment for intensive care, equipment for HIV/AIDS screening, blood transfusion and for operations.

### ***Prevention and Protection of Women from Violence, especially GBV and the Promotion of Women's Rights***

- Prohibit the use of weapons including small arms in areas inhabited by people, especially in IDP camps.
- Guarantee resettlement, security and safety of IDPs upon arrival.
- Support more community policing programs, methods and techniques.
- Adopt legislations that forbid and criminalize FGM in Islamic law in the Constitution.
- Ban FGM practice, raise awareness of FGM by including this in the school curriculum.
- Increase the number of female police officers in police stations.
- Educate Somali women about their rights in Islam and about international human rights conventions.
- Increase women's awareness of female genital mutilation, early marriages, family planning and the dangers of frequent pregnancies.

### ***Political Participation***

- Enable highly educated and qualified Somali women to take up managerial positions.
- Provide capacity building for women in political and leadership skills.
- Include Somali women in the planning and implementation of the upcoming 'first 100 Days Action Plan' and in the 'National Development Plan for Somalia' and the new UN Strategy of Assistance to for Somalia.

### ***Participation in Stabilization, Recovery and Peacebuilding***

- Adopt a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and involve women in the implementation process.
- Ensure gender mainstreaming in all sectors, ministries, administrations, not limited to the Government, but in the private sector as well.
- Government to initiate and implement equal opportunity policies for business development.

## ***UN Response***

Ambassador Mahiga noted that the Open Day was a special event in Somalia since it was commemorated on the same day that the Somalia President, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, was inaugurated. He acknowledged women's active participation and representation at the Open Day meeting, and commended them for their in-depth knowledge of issues affecting women and efforts to reclaim women's rights. He stated that the Global Open Days provided an opportunity to review the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other UN resolutions supporting women's political participation and empowerment. He noted the relevance of these to Somalia, a country which has gone through conflict and faces challenges of development, peace building and reconstruction. Ambassador Mahiga applauded the women for their efforts in mobilizing themselves to lobby for achievement of 30% representation of women in decision-making positions. He encouraged women to continue to advocate for 30% or 50% representation in the new Somali Government and institutions.

In his opening remarks, Mr Mark Bowden noted the different experiences of men and women in times of war and emphasized the importance of women in developing strategies for peacebuilding. He emphasized that people could no longer afford to ignore the political and social rights of women and hoped for a gender institution that promotes gender and women's rights in the new Government. He highlighted women's lack of access to maternal health services and noted that 600,000 women were displaced out of a total of 1.5 million, and now run single-headed households. He emphasised the lack of employment opportunities among displaced women and deemed such conditions to as unacceptable. Mr Bowden noted an increase in cases of violence against women, particularly displaced women. He strongly supported the need for the police force, judiciary and Somali Government to address issues of SGBV, while acknowledging women who provide support services to survivors.

## **South Sudan**

### **8 October 2012**

#### **Background**

South Sudanese women have a long history of participation in peacebuilding initiatives particularly during the two decades of war between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the National Congress Party (NCP)-led Government in the North, including their roles in peace negotiations between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan Government. The 2012 'Open Peace Forum' therefore came at an opportune moment, taking place immediately after the nation's first independence celebrations, to enable women to reflect on their involvement and achievements in peacebuilding, protection and security, and participation in leadership at the state and other decision-making levels. The 2012 'Open Peace Forum' in South Sudan is the second such event, the first was held in 2010. What makes it particularly significant is the fact that it is the first forum to be held in newly independent South Sudan.

#### **Event Details**

From the 20 September to the 1 October 2012, the Gender Unit in collaboration with UN Women and South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN) conducted Open Peace Forums in nine out of ten states of South Sudan (Central Equatoria, Western Bahr-El- Ghazal, Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal, Western Equatoria, Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity, Eastern Equatoria and Lakes), with a total of 558 participants of whom 450 were women and 108 were men. All the forums were officially opened by the Minister of Social Development or a representative in the state. A diverse range of participants attended the forums, with representation drawn from State legislative assemblies, female prison wardens, police officers and civil society organizations. Traditional and religious leaders, community network groups, human rights groups and gender focal points from line ministries were also present. The forums provided platforms for the women of South Sudan to discuss and hold consultations on issues pertaining to peace and security, protection, access to justice, leadership and participation in decision-making. All State forums concluded with recommendations on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, which were discussed and consolidated into one policy document presented to the SRSG Ms Hilde Johnson on the 9 October 2012.

#### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities and Recommendations**

The priorities and recommendations that emerged from the forums were similar in all the states, and included:

##### **Women's Participation in Decision-Making, Peace Negotiations, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation;**

- Increase the presence of women in decision-making positions to 50% especially in State legislative assemblies.
- Include women's activities and programmes in the annual budgets of State governments.
- Elect women to chieftaincy and other leadership positions at national and local levels.
- Employ more women peace keepers in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.
- Integrate gender into the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and security sector reform.
- Civil society organisations to inspect and verify the full implementation of the 25 per cent affirmative action at all levels.
- Implement the South Sudan Gender Policy framework.

##### **Protection of Women's Rights**

- Sensitization on women's protection needs and rights issues targeting Government officials, security organs, local and religious authorities and the community.
- Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) training and awareness for security personnel and other stakeholders.
- State Parliament to strengthen the role of the Government in implementing laws that prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence.

### ***Dissemination and Implementation of UNSCR 1325***

- Disseminate UNSCR 1325.
- Translate UNSCR 1325 into local languages and disseminate at grass root levels.
- Establish women's peace network at county and State levels.

### ***High Level of Illiteracy among Women***

- Enforce the universal education policy and encourage parents to support girl children's education to higher institutions of learning.
- Establish adult literacy and skills training programmes for women who did not go to school.

### ***Legal reforms on discriminatory laws against women***

- Establish a law reform commission to review laws that discriminate against women.
- Government to improve living conditions of female detainees.
- Increase the number of female lawyers and judges.
- Establish capacity-building programmes for female lawyers.

### ***Lack of access to resources: land, property, inheritance and credit facilities***

- Work towards equal rights of women to own land resources and inherit properties as provided for in the constitution of South Sudan.
- Increase access to credit facilities.
- Establish training programmes for women in entrepreneurship/financial management.
- Enhance women's access to justice.
- Enable women's, and particularly GBV victims' access to free legal aid services.
- Fast track women's court proceedings.
- Establish special protection units in the security sector. Cases of SGBV must be tried in special courts to ensure confidentiality.

### ***National Action Plan on SCR 1325***

Develop a National Action Plan to facilitate implementation of UNSCR 1325 in South Sudan.

### ***UN response***

The SRSR, Ms. Hilde Johnson, responded fully to the issues and proposed actions presented to her by representatives of women leaders in South Sudan. On the issue of SGBV perpetrators not being prosecuted she explained that the problem is lack of evidence and witnesses. She urged women to break their own silence, report SGBV cases and come forward to be witnesses. She also called on women to encourage survivors of rape to go through medical checks to gather the necessary evidence to support the prosecution of perpetrators. She encouraged women leaders to advocate with community leaders and elders to stop the issue of persecuting women victims of SGBV. The SRSR informed the women representatives that UNPOL was encouraging the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS) to recruit more women into the police force and providing support in training them. She added that several UN agencies, particularly UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women, in addition to the UNMISS Gender Unit and Human Rights Division work on SGBV issues and are committed to providing support.

On the issue of inadequate number of women in decision-making, Ms. Johnson noted that South Sudanese women must encourage their girls to go to school, and complete their education programmes. She added that "girls who complete education will be an incredible asset to their communities", hence the most "beneficial investment in South Sudan will

be educating girls". She highlighted that UNICEF has been assisting in the building of schools and will continue to do so if girls are encouraged to complete education. The Government has put in place the 25 per cent quota system, but has been implementing it selectively. Women were encouraged to advocate for more positions and to identify a pool of highly educated women who can compete with men. The SRSG noted that the UN will provide training courses for women politicians, and women need to advocate for the education of girls in their communities.

Regarding easy access and availability of small arms, the SRSG acknowledged that this is a real threat to peace and security in South Sudan. She noted that UNDP is working on the proliferation, flow and reduction of small arms and that she is working with the Government to provide safe storage of collected small arms.

On the issue of national reconciliation, she informed the women that the UN has been in discussion with government counterparts about the DDR process. A specific DDR programme is ongoing and gender issues have been mainstreamed and are being implemented.

On the subject of early marriage the SRSG noted that this was a negative cultural practice which South Sudanese women must end. The custom of early marriage, the SRSG explained, violates the rights of girls, and it kills them. She illustrated this point by noting that South Sudan is "the worst place any mother can give birth in the world". She explained that one woman in every seven die in childbirth. This is not because of lack of birth attendants, but because under-age girls get pregnant when their bodies are not ready to give birth. This is critical and needs to be addressed urgently because "no clinic or birth attendant can save a child mother of 11 years giving birth to a baby! Girls are not supposed to give birth at that age. She will die easily. Allowing early marriage is killing our own children". Ms. Johnson said she does not understand why there is no huge outcry from women saying "no to early marriages". She urged women to talk to male elders and men in their communities about it to work towards ending negative cultural practices.

## ***Sudan***

### ***9 October 2012***

#### ***Background***

The United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) Gender Advisory Unit (GAU) conducted a ten year impact study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in 2010, and organized a wide variety of dissemination activities whereby thousands of women and men were made aware of UNSCR 1325 and its provisions. For the past three years, GAU has organized a series of activities in supporting the implementation of 1325 including the conduct of workshops and sensitization forums in state capitals, localities and administrative units in all Darfur states.

GAU has also developed and strengthened its partnerships, collaboration and coordination with the state governments and other stakeholders including civil society groups such as women's organizations, legislators, judges, prosecutors, the police force, international NGOs and the UN country team. This enabled GAU to facilitate and support the creation of strategies and mechanisms aimed at ensuring gender equality and the implementation and local ownership of the UNSCR 1325.

The gains made by GAU in an environment where fragile peace and insecurity prevails are compromised due to GAU's limited human resources and insufficient budget. Nonetheless, major achievements have been registered, especially with the government-sponsored initiatives and the establishment of local implementation mechanisms. The Gender Advisory Unit has also been observing and investing in international events (e.g. International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism) on a regular basis to impart knowledge of gender equality to rights holders and duty bearers.

#### ***Event Details***

The UNAMID Gender Advisory Unit, in coordination with the states' governments in Darfur, conducted initial preparatory consultations at various levels from localities to state capitals, and jointly organized nine events in all Darfur states including the regional workshop in Elfasher on 9 October.

In the five states of Darfur, (North, South, West, East and Central) more than 500 stakeholders actively participated in the Open Day forums. The participants represented Government institutions including Government offices (prosecutors, judges, ministers, commissioners, the military, police and national security), women's organizations and activists, IDP communities, Darfur Regional Authority, Native Administration (Nazir, Sheiks, Umdas, Ajaweeds and Hakamats), political parties, youth groups, farmers and nomadic pastoralists.

Women participants and other stakeholders registered achievements, challenges and proffered recommendations on the promotion and implementation of the resolution, with special focus on the following thematic areas: protection of women's rights, in particular sexual violence prevention and response, women's active participation through effective women's engagement in peace building, conflict resolution, decision making, and post-conflict reconstruction processes. In addition, the events created an opportunity for wide dissemination of UNSCR 1325 amongst rural communities and IDPs.

#### ***Women's Peace and Security Priorities and Recommendations***

##### ***Promotion and Implementation of the UNSCR 1325***

Open Day participants emphasized the following challenges in relation to this thematic area: cultural resistance, inadequate knowledge on human rights particularly women's rights, lack of awareness of domestic legislation, inconsistent political will to implement 1325, and the under-representation of women in the political arena and Government institutions.

The Open Day participants recommended the following:

- Government to establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of 1325.
- Government and UN to create awareness on the provisions of UNSCR 1325 especially in the rural areas.
- States to develop annual work plans including monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of UNSCR 1325.
- Government and international NGOs to provide more financial and logistical support to facilitate the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

### ***Women's Participation in Political and Peace Processes***

The concerns highlighted in relation to women's active and meaningful participation in political and peace processes were as follows: lack of advocacy and lobbying skills to win political positions' under-representation of women in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, under-representation of women in Government institutions and structures, stereotypes depicting women as weak and emotional human beings, a significant decline in the participation of women in the constitutional, parliamentary, executive, judicial and police levels, and lack of coordination between locality and State bodies concerned with women's issues.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- The Government to fully implement the 25% quota for women's representation in decision-making and in all civil service institutions in all Darfur states.
- The Government to ensure full participation of women in constitution-making mechanisms.
- The Government and the UN to facilitate capacity-building initiatives for women, focusing on socioeconomic and political fields.
- The Government and other parties to the conflict to ensure 50% representation of women in peace building initiatives at all levels.
- Ensure women's participation and representation in traditional structures such as Native Administration systems, the Juddia and Ajaweed.
- Ensure increased women's participation in community policing systems.

### ***Protection and Women's Rights***

On the subject of ensuring protection and women's rights, the challenges outlined by the Open Day participants included the following: inadequate or absence of rule of law institutions in some localities and administrative units, unwillingness of law enforcement authorities to take actions against violators of rights, social ties and norms that restrain women survivors from seeking legal redress, inadequate functioning of the SGBV multi-sectorial preventive and responsive mechanisms, proliferation of unlicensed weapons among community members, harmful traditions and customs compromising women's rights, general insecurity perpetuated by armed groups as well as Government security personnel, and immunity and impunity .

#### ***Recommendations:***

- The Government to disarm the armed groups and dismiss undisciplined personnel from security sector institutions.
- The Government to increase the number of female police personnel.
- The Government with support from the UN to raise the capacity of police in the localities to enable them to prevent and respond to violations against women.
- The Government and the UN to raise awareness on the need to re-examine harmful cultural practices.
- The Government to enact laws prohibiting harmful traditional practices.
- The Government, with support from the UN to establish locality sub-committees on combating GBV.
- UNAMID to facilitate and support the establishment of women protection centers in localities in all Darfur states.

### ***Conflict resolution***

With regard to conflict resolution, Open Day participants noted the limited or absence of women in peace negotiations, inadequate security provided to women participating in conflict resolution and peace processes, lack of capacity-building in conflict resolution and negotiation skills, customs and traditional norms hindering women from participating in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

***Recommendations:***

- The Government, in collaboration with the UN, to offer training opportunities for women in conflict resolution.
- Come up with advocacy initiatives/ awareness on socio-economic benefits of involving women in the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Peace mediators, supporters and observers to avoid the previous experience of the Abuja Peace Agreement, where all women participating in the talks were representing the Government side;
- The Government, in collaboration with the UN to educate the Sheikhat and Hakamat about their roles in the dissemination of the culture of peace.

***Government and UN Response***

In the course of the Open Day events, Governments of Darfur states committed to fully implement all provisions of UNSCR 1325, which they reiterated are consistent with the Sudan domestic legislation, in particular the interim constitution of 2005. The UNAMID leadership and the GAU highlighted the gains made towards the implementation of the resolution in all Darfur states including increased women's participation in the peace negotiations and the strengthening of institutional capacities to address issues of gender disparities and women's protection. However, UNAMID representatives also stressed that a more systematic and speedy response by the UN to the major challenges confronting women is needed, especially in the areas of women's political participation and other decision-making arenas as well as in the justice and security sector.

## **Tajikistan**

### **10 October 2012**

#### **Background**

Tajikistan gained independence in 1991 after the breakup of the Soviet Union and a civil war broke out shortly thereafter. Since the UN helped broker a peace agreement in 1997 to end the civil war, the nation has struggled to strengthen its democracy and develop a market economy. Ferghana valley is a cross-border area for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and is identified as a region with a high risk of potential conflict. Risks are not only linked to the influence of radicalism and religious extremism, but also to high tensions between three neighbouring countries with regard to rational use and management of natural resources (land and water). More than 20% of the Tajik-Afghan border is mine-contaminated, as is the Tajik-Uzbek border. While mine clearance activities are on-going on the Tajik-Afghan border, they have not been yet initiated on the Tajik-Uzbek border due to pending respective political decisions between these Governments. More than 400,000 people live in Tajikistan in mine-affected areas, 70% of which are women and children. There are still high risks of internal instability. 2010 saw military operations by Governmental forces against warlords of some former opposition leaders in the Rasht valley. In summer 2012 military operations were initiated in the Gorno-Badakhshan region.

#### **Event Details**

The Open Day event in Tajikistan was hosted by Mr Alexander Zuev, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative in Tajikistan, and Ms Sumangul Tagoeva, the head of the National Committee for Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan. The main objective of the meeting was to provide a platform for UN officials to get acquainted and discuss priorities and needs of women in the context of conflict prevention and resolution. A preparatory meeting for the Open Day was organized on the 15 September in Khujand.

#### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

Statements of women leaders at the Open Day covered the following four topics: integration of international commitments on women's human rights and gender equality into the national legislation and policy, women's priorities for gender-responsive conflict prevention and resolution, statelessness in Tajikistan, lessons learnt from women's involvement in conflict resolution in Khorog, Gorno-Badakhshan region of Tajikistan, July-August 2012. The Open Day recommendations in relation to these four themes were as follows:

#### ***Recommendations to the UN for addressing the integration of international commitments on women's rights and gender equality into the national legislation and policy and women's priorities for gender-responsive conflict prevention and resolution:***

- Include specific commitments, targets and activities in the on-going UN programmes in the security and rule of law sector to ensure practical implementation of the UNSCRs.
- Provide assistance to develop a pool of mediators – women and men - at local and national levels with the aim of including them in rapid response teams for their further deployment in conflict areas to support, organize and conduct peace negotiations and ensure peaceful resolution of conflicts. Rapid response teams should also include qualified psychologists, medical staff, social workers and lawyers to provide necessary assistance to people in crisis situations.
- Support the provision of comprehensive training programmes on CEDAW/UNSCRs for civil servants, military personnel and civil society organizations.
- Support women's NGOs in their efforts to ensure inclusive/participatory consultations on the finalization of the draft law on the prevention of domestic violence in Tajikistan.
- Expand and support existing women's networks and strengthen their capacity to substantially contribute to policy formulation, implementation and political participation.

### ***Recommendations to the UN for addressing the needs of stateless persons:***

- Support the Government to resolve the problem of defining statelessness in the national legal framework, through ratification and further implementation of international agreements in this area, i.e. the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.
- Support Tajikistan in finalizing the drafting of a new law on citizenship of Tajikistan.
- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of statelessness in Tajikistan and Fergana valley to identify the scope of the problems and the impact on human security and stability.
- Replicate the practice of control over issuance of birth certificates by personnel of maternity hospitals that exists in the Sughd region, where a copy of the birth certificate is submitted to the maternity hospital before discharging the mother and child.
- Undertake a comprehensive information campaign to improve public awareness on the possibilities for legalization and naturalization in Tajikistan.
- Support civil society organizations to document cases of statelessness and contribute to policy-related processes addressing statelessness.
- Support better access of stateless persons to social services and opportunities for their social and economic integration.

### ***Recommendations for increasing women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution:***

- Develop the capacity of local female activists to act as facilitators and mediators of peace consultations as well as to provide urgent assistance to affected civilians, especially psychological and legal assistance.
- Develop the capacity of local crisis centres' staff to serve as a core part of the rapid response teams.
- The Government and the international community to develop a cadre of female leaders at local levels.
- Promote partnerships between local authorities and civil society organizations to work jointly on conflict prevention.
- Open a local center of conflict resolution in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province.

### ***UN Response***

Both Mr Alexander Zuev, UN Resident Coordinator (RC), UNDP Resident Representative in Tajikistan and Ms Sanoat Jumaeva, UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) Representative in Tajikistan, responded to the statements by the women leaders. The UN RC assured the participants of his commitment to convey their recommendations to all UN agencies and follow up on them. He said he would be glad to continue the dialogue with women leaders and take practical steps together to ensure women enjoy their rights in all spheres. Ms Sanoat Jumaeva of the UNRCCA assured the participants that the UNRCCA is ready for a dialogue with women activists in Tajikistan and will continue its efforts to bring gender-related commitments into policy level consultations with States.

### ***UN Women also provided a useful evaluation of the messages/recommendations of the Open Day, as follows:***

- The dialogue in the format of Open Day event has to be continued further, and at least on an annual basis. To ensure that the recommendations deriving from these forums are practical and focused, there could be an assessment of on-going UN agencies' projects and programmes by women activists. The results of the assessment would then, be used by the activists, to come up with specific recommendations.
- There should be a mechanism for further regular feedback by UNCT on the Open Day recommendations. A follow-up bi-annual meeting could be arranged to discuss progress achieved.
- It is recommended that the findings and a possible action plan to respond to women's concerns raised at the Open Day meeting should be reflected in the UN RC/UNCT annual report.
- In countries where there is an operational Civil Society Advisory Board for UN Women, the Board could be involved in further consultations with UN Women and UNRC to follow up decisions taken at Open Day meeting.

## **Timor-Leste**

**12 and 14 September 2012**

### **Background**

The Open Day dialogues have been held in Timor-Leste since the 10-year anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security in 2010. UN Women, the Gender Affairs Unit of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and UNDP has supported Open Day dialogues since then. In 2010 two Open Days were held in Suai and Dili and in 2011 in Baucau. The Open Days in 2010 took place under the theme 'Partners for peace' and the Open Day in 2011 emphasized 'listening to the voice of every woman' to highlight women's role as voters and as candidates in the 2012 elections.

### **Event details**

Open Day events took place in Timor-Leste on 12 and 14 September 2012 in Maliana (Bobonaro district) and the capital Dili, respectively. The chosen global theme 'The role of civil society in the transition process' was adapted for the dialogue in Dili as 'the role of women in the transition process: from peacebuilding to development', while in Maliana the theme 'Strengthening local connections reinforces peace and security' was chosen. The Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General (ASRSG) of the UNMIT and the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality hosted this year's events. In addition to women's groups and civil society representatives, the Prosecutor General, the District Administrator (Bobonaro) and high-level officials of the Secretary of State for Security, armed forces and national police were also present.



### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities**

A recurring concern raised by women's groups and civil society representatives during the Open Day events in Maliana and Dili was the need for the UN to continue working towards women, peace and security initiatives after the UN peacekeeping mission departs at the end of 2012. Other recommendations to the UN included:

- Continue building the capacity of the police to better address crimes against women, including sexual abuse and exploitation, domestic violence and human trafficking.
- Advocate for more funding and logistics support for

the national police force's Vulnerable Persons Unit.

- Provide technical support and advocacy vis-à-vis the Government to allocate adequate funding for the Secretary of State for Promotion of Equality (SEPI) and civil society organizations for programmes and services (e.g. referral services for survivors of violence).
- Continue investigations of serious crimes committed in 1999; advocate with the Security Council to establish a mechanism to deal with past human rights violations, and urge the Government to enhance women's access to justice.

The community in Maliana highlighted that, despite much progress in women's participation in public life, (including as voters and elected officials in the recent elections and in the armed forces), decisions continue to be made by men. As part of a district that borders Indonesia, the Maliana community also stated concerns about human trafficking, increasing the number of women police to provide more appropriate searches of women at the border and better cooperation between the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) of the national police, border patrol and immigration authorities to work towards resolving these critical difficulties in maintaining a sense of community, peace and security. Additionally, they provided specific recommendations to respond to violence against women more effectively, including

the need to regulate interventions of customary leaders to be more in line with the Law Against Domestic Violence passed in 2010. Other recommendations made in Maliana to the Government included the following:

- Facilitate cash transfers as part of its programme to support vulnerable women (SEPI).
- Enhance the District Gender Working Groups' coordination with local women's groups (SEPI).
- Provide more educational scholarships for youth (Ministry of Social Solidarity).
- Provide training to national police and legal actors to support the processing of gender-based violence (GBV) cases.
- Prevent GBV survivors from travelling in the same vehicle as the alleged aggressor (Police).
- Create mechanisms to disseminate the Law Against Domestic Violence in rural areas.
- Facilitate licenses /registration for small businesses.
- Include more women in vocational training programmes, particularly in male-dominated areas (Secretariat of State of Professional Training and Employment).
- Increase the numbers of female police in border patrol and investigation units.
- Improve infrastructure (e.g. roads for transport to facilitate access to markets) so that women have better access to socio-economic opportunities (Ministry of Public Works).
- Provide better access to micro-credit for rural women.
- Work with the Ministry of Justice to implement the Law against Domestic Violence and expedite the process of cases submitted to the court.
- Disseminate cash transfer programme information (Ministry of Social Solidarity).
- Create a law to control the price of basic goods.
- Reduce the amount of imported items in order to promote local goods.
- Include women's groups in the distribution of materials and not only family, friends or members of particular political parties (Ministry of Agriculture).
- Provide training and conduct a study on the preservation of local products (Ministry of Agriculture).

Meanwhile in Dili, a civil society representative from an NGO that provides legal aid to survivors requested governmental follow-up on reparations to victims of the 1975-99 Indonesian occupation, including female victims of sexual crimes. Strengthening the VPU's capacity to respond to violence against women and the need to create a way to increase the numbers of female civil servants in ministries were also raised as important issues. Other recommendations made in Dili to the Government included:

- Create gender-sensitive policies in the security sector to provide equal opportunities for women to be trained and promoted (e.g. to prevent discrimination against pregnant police officers).
- Provide micro-credit to women at a low interest rate.
- Initiate training to ensure that women are represented in next year's municipal elections.
- Upgrade SEPI into a ministry.
- Provide more scholarships for women.
- Strengthen mechanisms of justice for GBV survivors.
- Draft a family law to harmonize marriages conducted through religious, traditional and civil ceremonies to improve legal protection for married women.

In Dili, recommendations were also made to the National Parliament:

- Approve the law on victim reparation.
- Create a Trust Fund for victims of violence and define the criteria for eligibility.
- Implement the recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation report.
- Amend legislation to increase women's recruitment and training opportunities in the national police and armed forces.
- Create laws against sexual harassment.
- Amend the electoral law to give women 50% representation in Parliament in the 2017 election.

## ***UN Response***

The Acting SRSG, Mr. Finn Reske-Nielsen, reassured participants that UN assistance would continue through UN agencies, at the Government's request and within its priorities after the UN peacekeeping mission departs at the end of 2012. He highlighted UN Women's important role in the coordination of gender equality work in the coming years. He urged the community and civil society organizations' representatives to work with existing state institutions to bring about change. Timor-Leste has put in place laws and is strengthening state institutions in the implementation of these laws, policies and programmes. In addition, he affirmed the crucial role of CSOs, stating that they do have the capacity for taking forward the gender agenda in Timor-Leste.

- There has to be a clear strategy for UN Women/UNCT in place on how to further work with women in political parties, especially with women in the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, the second largest in terms of the coverage of the electorate.
- Capacity-development for the most excluded groups of women (stateless, Afghan refugees, single women, disabled, etc.) to make their voice heard and improve their representation in decision-making and development policy dialogue at all levels has to be supported by UN Women programme interventions in Tajikistan in partnership with UN agencies.
- There is a need to examine how UN agencies could effectively advocate for reforms in the electoral and civil service systems of Tajikistan as a country with very centralized/monopolized governance – through application of the international human rights standards and commitments and meeting goals of further democratization and equity.

## ***African Union***

### ***21 September 2012***

#### ***Event Details***

African Union (AU) leadership, the UN family, civil society, members of the diplomatic corps, members of the academic community, and diverse media commemorated the International Day of Peace at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa on 21 September 2012. The theme for the event was ‘sustainable peace for a sustainable future.’

The UN Secretary-General’s statement was read by Special Representative Zackary Muburi-Muita, who called attention to the negative impact of armed conflicts on sustainable development, the need for conflict prevention and promotion of sustainable peace, underscored by a message of tolerance, dialogue, cooperation, and harmony. The Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, read the statement of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC). Lamamra highlighted progress made to keep and enforce peace on the continent, including in the prevention of conflict. He especially emphasized the need to focus on the challenges faced by women and children, who bear the disproportionate burden of conflict and wars. This message was echoed by the Director of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate, Litha Musyimi Ogana, who reiterated the need to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and highlighted the commendable progress made thus far.

The special focus on women and children was highlighted through a symposium organized by UN-Women with the support of the UN Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General (UNOAU) and the AUC Peace and Security Department. The theme of the symposium was ‘promoting UN and AU partnership in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000)’. The panel was moderated by Florence Butegwa, UN-Women Representative to the AU and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and she noted that the task at hand was to find ways of advancing the agenda as set out in the international legal framework promoting the role and participation of women in peace and security.

#### ***Women’s Peace and Security Priorities***

The civil society voice was raised through a presentation by Grace Maina of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). In her presentation Maina outlined the progressive developments globally and in the African context to address the role and participation of women in peace and security structures and processes. She highlighted the increased participation of women in track II diplomacy, wherein initiatives aimed at peace-making and peacebuilding are undertaken by non-State actors, but noted that this is still limited in scope and impact. Maina also outlined ‘women’s realities’ that presented challenges to women’s participation in peace and security matters, including ongoing violence, economic insecurities, and social and psychological challenges. She presented a number of recommendations, to the African Union and United Nations, as follows:

- Continue to engage with Governments to review and revise national policies and laws to ensure compliance with the principles established in international conventions and resolutions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and UNSCR 1325 as well as other instruments on women’s rights.
- Enhance early warning and response so as to protect women in difficult circumstances, particularly in on-going spaces of violent conflict.
- Integrate and consistently monitor international legislation, global resolutions, continental and regional agreements that address issues of women in peace and security. Consistently encourage the integration of the principles of human rights into the peacebuilding process.
- Measure the value of input by consistently interrogating work against specific benchmarks and a set of indicators. Recently the UN has adopted indicators for resolution 1325, which is a positive stride in helping actors concretise their contribution to ensuring holistic security for women. Increased sharing and engagement with the aim of promoting knowledge exchange must also be encouraged.
- Rebuild, revalue and engage with society more holistically in post-conflict environments in Africa, elevating the place of the woman as a meaningful agent of the society and as a contributor to sustainable peace. Increase the role that

women play in peace processes by appointing more women to high-level decision-making positions and peace processes. Engage in capacity-building and training by identifying competent women in the field of peace and security who will form a critical mass that can drive the agenda calling for the holistic security of women.

- Recognise the need for an interconnected solution – the definition of security goes beyond the concept of physical security and women on the continent are challenged by more than threats to physical security. Invest in interconnected solutions that speak to a more holistic response that is the product of coordinated actions by all relevant actors.

### ***AU Response***

The Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra and Director of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate, Litha Musyimi Ogana, acknowledged the importance of a special focus on women and children and reiterated the commitment of the AU to accelerate the response to the various challenges, whilst promoting good practices and initiatives.

## West Africa 13 September 2012

### Event details

Within the framework of Open Days on the UNSCR 1325 implementation in West Africa, United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) held in Dakar, on 13 September 2012, a videoconference with West African women leaders to exchange information and discuss trends, constraints and perspectives to better involve women in peace and security issues. The 2012 Open Day was organized in partnership with UN missions in West Africa, as well as UN-Women, United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Country Teams or UN Gender Theme Groups in the sub-region. The videoconference enabled women leaders of Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned to cope with the challenges of the sub-region. The theme of this third edition of the regional Open Day was the participation of women in electoral processes.



40 participants (in house) took part in the event, including 11 men and 29 women leaders from Mauritania and Senegal, members of civil society organizations, the working group on women, peace and security, public administration (including Senegalese Ministry of Armed Forces), academia, sub-regional and international organizations, and United Nations agencies in Senegal. 30 women and men from Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Togo participated through video-conference. Mr. Said Djinnit, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and Ms. Josephine Odera, Director of West Africa Regional Office for UN Women, were also present.

### **Women's Peace and Security Priorities and Recommendations**

Participants of the Open Day event expressed their priorities and recommendations to the United Nations System and especially to UNOWA and the West Africa Regional Office for UN Women as follows:

### **Women's Participation in Mediation, Peacebuilding and Stability Processes within the West African Sub-Region**

- Train and promote community mediators in areas at risk.
- Include women who have been trained on mediation issues in the UN, regional and sub-regional missions such as those involving peacebuilding, negotiation and mediation.

- Involve women in the ongoing negotiations for a solution to end the crises in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, at three levels: micro (community), meso (national) and macro (sub-regional, regional and international) levels.

#### ***Implementation of National Plans of Action for UNSCR 1325***

- Identify countries that have adopted or validated a National Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and mobilize resources to organize an activity - in each perspective country - for partners' participation.
- Support each country in resource mobilization for the effective implementation of National Action Plans.

#### ***Data/Information on Gender, Peace, Security and Stability***

- Support the collection of data disaggregated by sex.
- Make available sex disaggregated data.
- To elaborate and update periodically, a data directory on women, peace and security in West Africa.
- Make available a data directory on women, peace and security in West Africa.

#### ***UN Response***

At the end of the meeting, the SRSG commended the contribution of women to peace and security in West Africa and underlined the availability and commitment of the UN system and the Secretary-General to do more to support their actions in that regard.

He took this opportunity to congratulate, Mrs Rabiadou Diallo Serah, the President of Guinean Council of Transition who participated in the videoconference for her role in Guinea. He concluded the video-conference by encouraging the women to continue their important work, often in very difficult situations, specifically highlighting the current challenges to peace and security in Mali, Guinea Bissau and Guinea.

Furthermore, he reiterated the commitment of UN system to strengthen its partnerships with women's organizations in an effort to contribute to peace and stability in West African sub-region.