

Preparing for the 20th anniversary of 1325: Pledge of commitments on Women, Peace and Security

Concept Note

Security Council resolution 1325 will turn 20 years old on 31st October 2020. Two decades after the Security Council first observed that a lack of gender equality adversely affects the maintenance of international peace and security, more attention is paid to assuring women's participation in peace processes. Regrettably the absence of women from peace negotiations and decision-making is still far too common place. Violence committed against women and girls in conflict situations may be more thoroughly documented and condemned but has not abated. A new generation of programmes and jurisprudence aims to help survivors and deter perpetrators but neglect and impunity are still rampant. Seventy-nine countries have adopted National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security and the global footprint of this agenda has grown significantly, but implementation has not matched the rhetoric heard at summits or the targets set on paper. Financial support to gender equality in conflict and post-conflict countries has increased, but funds often fail to reach the most vulnerable or support the women's organisations who work to prevent violence and build peace in their communities.

To close the implementation gap, Member States were asked to issue new commitments on Women, Peace and Security during both the 10th and the 15th anniversaries of resolution 1325. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom documented the commitments made in 2010, and their analysis revealed that the majority of commitments were neither concrete nor time-bound, and many were never fulfilled. In 2015, Member States were once again asked to make strong, concrete, time-bound and measurable commitments during that year's High-Level Review. This call, which was accompanied by instructions, a commitment form, and a menu of options, yielded stronger results. Many countries came to that year's Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security with concrete commitments and took action on those promises. The 20th anniversary will presents another high-visibility opportunity to re-commit to Women, Peace and Security and to commit to new goals and ideas.

To strengthen the potential impact of this anniversary and encourage governments and UN entities to prepare with enough lead time, we are proposing another step to this exercise. During Germany's presidency of the Security Council in April, and at the margins of the Open Debate on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence on April 23, 2019, Germany and the United Kingdom will co-host a **high-level side event to invite Member States and UN entities to each commit to a specific action or achievement to be implemented between April 2019 and October 2020, during the lead-up to the 20th anniversary**. Each Member State or UN entity that submits a specific commitment prior to the event on April 23 will have the chance to announce it publicly in very brief remarks. This commitment would not have to represent the full breadth of their actions or plans on Women, Peace and Security, nor would it have to be a new commitment - it could be a concrete example of how a Member State is building upon or implementing the commitment(s) they made in 2015. No commitment is too small, but all should **be specific and achievable in the following 18 months in time for the 2020 Open Debate**. UN Women as mandated by the Security Council to support Member States on the realization of UNSCR 1325 will provide support on monitoring and assessing progress on the commitments made by stakeholders during the event. The annexed menu of examples provides a non-exhaustive list of suggestions.

Date and time: 23 April 2019 from 2.30 PM

Place: ECOSOC Chamber

Format: After keynote remarks, the co-hosts will kick off the commitments segment of the event, with very brief remarks from each country or entity. The order of speakers will be determined taking into consideration the level of representation and date of submission of the commitment.

Member States, regional organisations, and UN entities should send their commitments to Idil.Absiye@unwomen.org before 5 April 2019. After the event, UN Women will document the commitments and make them public.

ANNEX: Examples of commitments to achieve between April 2019 and October 2020

New policies or programmes:

- Adoption of a National Action Plan (for countries that do not have one yet) with specific targets, indicators, budgets and meaningful involvement of civil society.
- Development of legislation that advances the Women, Peace and Security agenda, including on specific issues like reparations, sexual and reproductive health and rights, or gender-based persecution and refugee and asylum rights, reforms of criminal code or elimination of remaining discriminatory legislation, including with regards to citizenship and nationality).
- Ratification of international treaties that enhance women's rights (e.g. Arms Trade Treaty, Rome Statute, CEDAW without reservations) or reporting on implementation with special attention to WPS (e.g. CEDAW periodic reports, ATT compliance monitoring).
- A pledge to support of peace talks, national dialogues and reconciliation talks dependent on the full inclusion of women.
- Adoption of special measures for women's representation or reaching a gender parity milestone before October 2020.
- Adoption of new strategies that prioritise gender equality issues as part of preventing/countering violent extremism and security sector reform, or the protection of human rights defenders and women's civil society activists.
- Launch innovative programming with special emphasis on resources for local and national NGOs (e.g. women's participation in local conflict resolution -local ceasefires, humanitarian access, community security, natural resource management, women's access to land and identity documents in post-conflict settings, women-led early warning and prevention, temporary employment programmes in conflict-affected settings that target women), new education or advocacy campaigns in universities and professional schools (including the translation of WPS tools and knowledge into local languages), or new research and data on Women, Peace and Security.

Joining or supporting existing initiatives:

- Joining and devoting specific resources to supporting existing global initiatives (e.g. some of the most frequently referenced in Open Debates on WPS such as the WPS Focal Points Network,

Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, Elsie Initiative, G7 WPS Partnerships, networks of women mediators).

- Joining the SG's Voluntary Compact and Circle of Leadership on SEA and issue ministerial directives with instructions to adopt the measures recommended by the UN to prevent and respond adequately to sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers.
- Hosting of special events or trainings to support existing initiatives.

Financing:

- Reaching the SG's target of allocating a minimum of fifteen percent of all peacebuilding funds towards gender equality or replicating it in official development assistance devoted to conflict-affected contexts before October 2020. Earmark or reach a certain target of support to women's empowerment and specific attention to women's needs in humanitarian aid.
- Development and adoption of guidance on post-conflict macroeconomic policies that takes into account gender equality and prioritises public expenditure to reconstruct vital services for women.
- Disburse funding to support women's civil society organisations and initiatives for strengthened gender and conflict analysis in missions and country teams.

Enhancing accountability:

- Invite human rights special procedures and special envoys/representatives of the Secretary-General to visit a conflict-affected area of special concern for advocates on women's issues.
- Provide political, financial, and logistical support to the prosecution of gender-based crimes in national or international courts to advance gender justice *ahead* of the 20th anniversary.