



7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
Baku, Azerbaijan, 25-27 April, 2016

Breakout Session “Women and Peace-building in Conflict Zones in Africa”

Background

Sustainable peace and security can only be achieved through an integrated approach, including human rights and gender equality. In this regard, it is essential that women are empowered to play a role in peace-building and post-conflict recovery.

In its resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), the Security Council recognizes the serious and specific impact that armed conflict has on women and girls, and calls for equal participation by women in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and for the mainstreaming of gender perspective into conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction.

The 2015 United Nations Report on “Women and Peace and Security” specifically articulates the rising opportunities and challenges faced by women and girls in conflict zones. Persistent deficits remain for the implementation of the WPS agenda, including in protection from human rights abuses and violations; opportunities for women to exercise leadership; resources provided to address their needs and which will help them exercise their rights; and the capacities and commitment of all actors involved in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions to advance women’s participation and protection.

Member States are encouraging to continue to pursue such implementation, including at regional and sub-regional levels, through strengthened monitoring, evaluation and coordination, as well as the development of action plans and implementation frameworks.

At the regional level, the 2063 Agenda of the African Union highlight the necessity to unleash the full potential of women as drivers of changes towards a regional integration process for shared prosperity and peace. In many cases, African women’s participation in conflict resolution efforts has helped to integrate their empowerment and lasting peace in the peace-building framework. African leadership has therefore capitalized on women’s ability to act as trainers, facilitators and mediators before, during and in post-conflict environments.

In this context, the breakout session on “Women and peace-building in conflict zones in Africa” during the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in Baku, Azerbaijan, will analyze the needs and challenges of women and girls in post-conflict situations. It will also explore their role and influence in peace-building efforts, recovery processes and building inclusive societies.

1. Women’s post-conflict needs and challenges in peace-building

Women face unprecedented waves of violence and destabilization in conflict settings, violent extremism, terrorism, refugee and migration crises. They also face gender-specific challenges, such as their difficult access to funding, to primary education, and to key senior positions in mediation and peace-buildings negotiations. Providing security for women requires an acknowledgement of the particular threats they face in the aftermath of conflict.

In order to implement the international strategies for peace, security and sustainable development, as well as regional and national frameworks towards inclusive societies, women and girls must be empowered. Equal participation of women must be ensured in all aspects of life, through inclusive approaches focusing on increasing women’s leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women’s economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.

2. The role of women in building inclusive and peaceful societies in the aftermath of conflict

The 2030 Agenda embraces the fact that gender equality is an absolute precondition for building peaceful and inclusive societies. Therefore, the priority theme of the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development.

Women and girls are rarely included in the decision making-process on post-conflict recovery and governance related issues. In 2014, half of all signed peace agreements included references to women, peace and security¹. Nevertheless, research and practice over the past fifteen years have established that women’s effective and meaningful participation builds a more durable peace.

In addition to ensuring women’s contribution, peace-building initiatives must support women’s rights and economic, political and social empowerment in order to maximize women’s role in stabilization and recovery, including through the development of long - term strategies that benefit women and girls.

Furthermore, peace-building must address the root causes of conflict and the human rights violations that women and girls continue to experience during conflict and after a peace

¹ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security* (S/2015/716) 16 September 2015.

agreement has been reached. Women's participation in peace-building processes contributes to strengthening linkages to root causes of conflict and promoting more sustainable peace.

Areas of Discussion

Persistent implementation deficits in the women, peace and security agenda, including in: protection from human rights abuses and violations; opportunities for women to exercise leadership; resources provided to address their needs and which will help them exercise their rights; and the capacities and commitment of all actors involved in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions to advance women's participation and protection,

- What are the persistent deficits in implementing the WPS agenda in Africa?
- What is the role of the African Union in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions to advance women's participation and protection?
- Which capacities are available to African actors involved in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000)? And what are their strategies and commitment to the WPS Agenda?
- What is the impact of women's participation in peacemaking, constitution-making and national dialogues in Africa?
- What innovations and good practices are available to promote the role and participation of women in mediation and peace-building processes?
- How can we strengthen the commitment of the international community to the agenda of women and peace and security at a time of increased challenges and violence?
- How can governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, promote and secure women's participation in capacity-building and peace-building efforts?
- What is the role of women in preventing and countering conflict and violent extremism? What are the new contexts surrounding the women, peace and security agenda?
- How to increase women's voices in the agenda of building inclusive and peaceful societies? How to increasing the gender-responsiveness of peace agreements?
- Showcase examples of good practices of including women in the social, political and economic spheres of African communities to promote national, regional and international reconciliation/peace strategies.
- What innovative avenues could enhance the financing of the WPS security agenda?