

UN Reform and the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325

A Letter to the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence

15 July 2006

Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is a major international instrument for achieving Gender Equality. More than five years after its unanimous adoption the resolution has not been fully and effectively implemented.

SCR 1325 requires, inter alia, the United Nations (UN) to ensure the full and effective participation of women in peace negotiations and agreements, as well as increased representation of women at all decision-making levels. This responsibility also includes ensuring gender perspectives are mainstreamed into all peacekeeping operations, including specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and girls in conflict situations and the establishment of effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection, especially against gender-based violence.

Although the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has, to date, done the most to implement the provisions of SCR 1325, DPKO is not alone in this obligation. The responsibility to implement SCR 1325 is shared throughout the UN System, in both its norm-setting and operational roles and activities. Regrettably, the UN gender architecture and women's machineries—which should provide international best practices and models—have been set up to fail, due in large part to the systematic under-resourcing and low priority given to gender equality policies, programs and activities. This system-wide failure has profoundly impacted the effective implementation of SCR 1325, with grave consequences for the lives of women and girls everywhere, especially those in situations of violent conflict.

WE RESPECTFULLY SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The creation of a well-resourced independent entity with normative, operational and oversight capacity, a universal country presence and led by an Under-Secretary General, as articulated by Stephen Lewis and in submissions to the Panel by CWGL and WEDO. As Stephen Lewis argues, this entity must be powerful enough to do for women what UNICEF does for children.
- Structural arrangements and activities to ensure the implementation of SCR 1325 within the UN system must be significantly strengthened and improved, under the leadership of a new high-level position charged with oversight of SCR 1325 implementation.
- The United Nations must increase and guarantee sustained regular budgetary funds for the achievement of system-wide gender equality.
- The concept and use of gender mainstreaming must be reexamined. Gender mainstreaming must be understood as an adjunct to, not a substitute for, women specific entities and targeted programmes and activities to promote women's empowerment and human rights. To be effective, gender mainstreaming requires more robust units, program work and policy frameworks, with significant attention to women's rights in the context of advancing gender more broadly.
- The United Nations must recruit, employ, retain and promote women and men who are gender experts and champions of women's rights and peace—not only for dedicated gender posts, but also for assessments and for program planning and implementation throughout the system.
- Gender Training, that includes SCR 1325, must be systematically conducted with all UN headquarters and field staff.
- The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) needs to ensure women's participation in the formulation and implementation of peacebuilding strategies in Burundi and Sierra Leone, the first two countries on the PBC agenda. Additionally, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund must have the capacity and adequate resources to support women-specific projects that lead to the full implementation of SCR 1325.