

# Consultation Reviews Implementation of 1325 in Africa

(Kampala, Uganda, 25 -26 March 2002)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The regional consultation on UN Resolution 1325 was held in Kampala Uganda on Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th March 2002. The meeting was organised by the Africa office of Urgent Action Fund in collaboration with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and was hosted by Kituo Cha Katiba, the Ugandan based East African Centre for Constitutional Development. The meeting was facilitated by WILPF and International Alert. The Ford Foundation provided financial support for the meeting.

The objectives of the consultations were:

1. To take stock of the implementation of Resolution 1325 in the Africa Region
2. To take stock of how the Resolution has been utilized (if at all) in Africa in facilitating national, regional and International instruments in the region
3. To raise awareness on the importance of Resolution 1325 in addressing issues of post conflict reconstruction including peace building, peace making and peace education.
4. To examine the role of the media in implementing and monitoring implementation of the Resolution.
5. To make recommendations to civil society, the United Nations Agencies and Governments on possibilities of enhanced utilization of the resolution in assuring and ensuring the benefits to women that this resolution promises. In other words, to make it a living instrument.

Twenty-one participants attended the meeting. They included peace, refugee and human rights activists from Zanzibar, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, New South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Also represented were NGO leaders, the media and representatives of legal and health institutions from the region. Three international organisations working within Africa were also represented. The participants were chosen carefully to reflect the wide range of experiences and interventions by Civil Society Organisations in the arena of conflict in Africa. Among them, a member of the transitional Parliamentary Assembly of Somalia, and a Congolese Women's human rights activist and winner of the Martin Ennals Human Rights Prize in 2000.

Isha Dyfan of WILPF and Ancil Adrian Paul of International Alert undertook the Facilitation.

Nyaradzai Gumbonzvanda, UNIFEM's Regional Programme Director (East and Horn of Africa) set the tone for the meeting in a powerful key note speech emphasizing that African women should be proud of themselves as they had already been working on the issues addressed by Resolution 1325 before it was adopted. The resolution thus validated women's concerns and should be utilised primarily as a political tool and also as a tool for:

- Negotiation
- Accountability
- Leverage

The speaker suggested that a way of strengthening women's participation in politics, peace building and in post-conflict reconstruction might be to build and nurture alliances and support networks. These

stronger networks would be better placed to garner human and financial resources for effective participation.

The speaker identified some of the challenges that faced women in realising the promise of Resolution 1325. These challenges included being at the margins of access to critical and `confidential` information, lack of capacity, minimum representation in facilitating peace processes by being absent in key committees, and in party political structures. She highlighted the continuing challenge of patriarchal systems and absence of effective networks. She spoke to the private and public responsibilities that women undertake and how the private responsibilities affect women's abilities to participate in the public sphere.

The issue of peace at the household level was crucial if women are to participate fully in these processes. Finally the keynote speaker suggested that participants should interrogate the resolution as part of a wider discussion on promoting a culture of human rights and democratic governance. After two days of discussions, the meeting was brought to a close by the Ugandan Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, the Honourable Christine Aporu. She told participants that her Government was aware of its obligations under the UN Resolution and that her ministry stands ready to promote the implementation of 1325 and to work on strengthening it as well. Following lively discussions and working group sessions, participants identified the following focus issues affecting women's peace and security in their different country contexts:

- Discriminatory laws: these deny women their human rights and lack mechanisms to address gender imbalances. These laws deny women mobility both physically and professionally.
- A culture of exclusion and marginalisation in the management of socio-economic political affairs and the resource base. The continuation of the colonial legacy of divide and rule prevails and needs to be addressed.
- Simmering and prevalent ethnic conflicts across the board precipitated by ethnic, religious, generational, geographical factors among others and resulting insecurity. This affects the everyday environment and results in vulnerability, forced migration and displacement of people, the proliferation of refugees, slavery and extreme poverty.
- Absence of women from strategic roles and positions in security and peace organs such as the Military and Police Forces as well as from critical committees in peace processes. There is a clear resistance to gender equity and inadequate capacity building and a lack of genuine political will to remedy these ills.
- Institutionalisation of patriarchy and the male mould in the definition of peace and security results in exclusion of women's perspectives and the exclusion of various components of society.
- State Collapse resulting in anarchy and the lack of protection for vulnerable groups including women, the aged, the physically and mentally challenged, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.
- Traditional Customs and practices promoted by a culture of patriarchy that has distorted customs and religious practices against women's interests and participation, resulting in domestic violence and the use of women's bodies as battlegrounds in wartime and in times of internal conflict. This violence includes female genital mutilation, sexual slavery and forced prostitution. All of these practices result in a collusion of silence, ignorance, and illiteracy, denial of access to resources and lack of ownership of processes, even those that women were traditionally integral to.
- HIV/AIDS and its consequences particularly on women.
- Violence against women including rape and systematic rape, sexual abuse, defilement and battering.

- Forced prostitution, trafficking and abductions by rebel forces, peace keepers and security personnel

### **Gaps identified in the Resolution**

- No differentiation between the protection of women in recognised states and those living in unrecognised territories e.g. New/South Sudan. This needs to be addressed for true accountability.
- No mechanism apparent in the resolution for the civil society groups to monitor the implementation of the tool and no bench marks apparent for impact assessment.
- Lack of early warning and early response mechanisms.
- No mention of peace education, both formal and informal
- No mention of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP'S) or any mechanism to protect them.
- Danger of encouraging impunity by amnesty provisions.

### **Local Recommendations**

- Engender and mainstream peace education and conflict resolution skills at all levels (schools, etc).
- Translate the resolution into local languages.
- Systematise outreach and strengthen media involvement in disseminating the resolution.
- Women must use the power of their traditional role in nurturing to actively work against armed conflict.
- Create safe zones in refugee and IDP camps.
- National governments must comply with resolution 1325 and should be held accountable.
- Presidents of national governments must ensure that women are part of their governments at cabinet level in order to advise them on gender issues. These Ministers and others in high level national positions must be trained in gender sensitivity.
- Local women and their organisations must make themselves available to consult and brief the Security Council and other missions to their areas. It was noted that currently a Security Council Mission was underway in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **International Recommendations**

The international community must ensure that the Resolution can apply equally to both recognised states and non-recognised entities. There should be:

- Adequate and sustainable funding for capacity building and technical training of women peace and human rights civil society organisations.
- A fund co-coordinating body or bodies should be established for training of civil society organisations and UNIFEM should be involved.
- Structures of international agencies that are currently unfavourable to women should be revised to prevent exclusion of local women, prevent limits on the freedom of movement of women and their access to reproductive health care, the separation of families and rationing of food.
- There should be the creation of a strategic and separate agency for the protection of IDPs which will ensure that there are enforcement mechanisms within refugee and IDP camps.

- Member states must develop gender sensitive policies for the protection of IDPs and these should be monitored objectively.
- African women must be represented in adequate numbers at all levels in the monitoring of the Resolution.
- Reports and recommendations resulting from the Kampala consultation to be sent to the independent experts preparing the UNIFEM operational report on women, peace and security and to the office of the Special Adviser on Gender to the UN Secretary-General.
- Feedback on the process and progress of the implementation of the resolution to be sent to the Africa 1325 network created at the consultation.
- Security Council missions to conflict zones should be briefed by both local and international NGOs.
- The United Nations must treat 'low intensity conflicts' with the same seriousness as they treat 'high intensity conflict' in order to save lives.
- UNHCR should revise and strengthen their guidelines for protection of refugee women and girls and ensure that they are informed of the existence of these guidelines.

**Action to be taken by the participants to further promote the Resolution Local**

- Sensitise the populations and especially women living in non-recognised entities to the existence and relevance of 1325 as a rights-based advocacy tool.
- Build the capacity of local women and their organisations to promote peace and for monitoring Resolution 1325.
- Engage in advocacy and mobilization.
- Launch awareness campaigns on the resolution.
- Publicise the resolution among national populations using all forms of media i.e. newsletters, publications, drama, music, television, radio, the internet and e-groups.
- Engage in strategic planning to ensure that training and material on the Resolution is harmonised nationally as well as regionally.
- Inform local leaders, including religious groups, diplomats, parliamentarians, politicians and other policy makers of the resolution and the issues it addresses.
- Engage in advocacy and mobilization.
- Form a network.
- During the meeting the participants created the Africa 1325 Network to engage in the sharing of information and experiences, the monitoring of implementation and to act as a pressure group nationally, regionally and internationally.

The group will comprise the 21 members but will be enlarged after a period of one year and further discussion. ISIS-WICCE, the Ugandan regional documentation and resource centre was designated the focal point for one year. ISIS will host and supervise an intern to conduct the business of the network. WILPF, Urgent Action Fund-Africa and ISIS volunteered to fundraise for the initiative. Kampala March 28th 2002.