



Letter to Ambassador of the Security Council: Women's Participation in the Security Council Visit to Signatory Countries of the Lusaka Accords

17 April 2002

Dear Security Council Ambassador,

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security would like to offer assistance for the forthcoming visit of the Security Council to the signatory countries of the Lusaka Accords.

We appreciate the engagement of the Security Council in working to ensure peace within Central and Southern Africa and commend the Security Council in its efforts and achievements in addressing the needs and equal participation of women in peace and security matters—in particular the appointment of Amy Smythe as Head of the Gender Unit of MONUC.

Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security calls for Security Council missions to take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups. This mission provides a potential opportunity for assuring the practical implementation of Resolution 1325, in recognizing and promoting the role of women in peace negotiations, conflict prevention, reconstruction and decision-making processes.

We would like to facilitate this process by offering to co-ordinate meetings with relevant local women's organizations in the countries included in this visit. Such meetings would provide members of the Security Council with pertinent briefings and information on the situation of women and their role in peace and security within each particular context. For example, the role of women in disarmament and demobilization.

These meetings would also help to examine the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, the inclusion of gender components in field operations, enable a deeper understanding of the special needs of women and girls in post-conflict situations and communicate the importance of supporting local women's peace initiatives—all established goals of Resolution 1325.

Enclosed with this letter are several publications from African women's groups and member organizations of the NGO Working Group, which we hope will provide useful background information for the mission. Please do not hesitate to contact our Coordinator, Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya at sara@peacewomen.org or 212-682-1265 if we can offer any further information or assistance in coordinating meetings and facilitating dialogue with women's organizations in this region.

We look forward to learning from the successes of this mission and hope that the inclusion of lessons learned from women's organizations can contribute to this success.

Respectfully yours,

Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya
Coordinator, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security