

Where We Stand Statement

Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).

Where Things Stand...

Global peace is integral with a sustainable environment, the just sharing of natural resources, fair social and economic development, and the promotion of human rights. On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). This resolution, with its four pillars of prevention, participation, protection and peacebuilding and recovery, has become the focal point for efforts to deal with the many challenges that women face in situations of conflict including pre and post conflict.

There are a further eight supporting UN Security Council resolutions—1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467 (Oct 2019). Other key reference points are the Beijing Platform for Action (12 Action Points Point E), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

There is a strong evidence base that women's participation in peace and security processes is core to the operational effectiveness of peace and security efforts worldwide. This ensures strengthening the protection efforts of peacekeepers, improving prevention of radicalisation and accelerating economic recovery. Women's meaningful participation helps the conclusion and implementation of more sustainable peace agreements.

Yet, fifteen years after the adoption of resolution 1325, more than half of peace agreements continue to make no mention of women, UN military peacekeepers remain 97 per cent male, and data gathered by OECD-DAC shows that only 2 per cent of aid to peace and security in 2014 targeted gender equality as a principal objective.

Despite widespread acknowledgement of how the WPS Agenda contributes to conflict prevention and sustained peace, and its role as a "prerequisite" for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) there has been little progress on Member State commitments to ensure the meaningful participation of women in these processes. Women are not consistently included and engaged in negotiating peace—they are consistently excluded.

Global politics is marked by failures to protect and promote the most fundamental human rights in conflict and conflict-affected settings. Without addressing fundamental issues of inequality and exclusion for women and lack of respect for international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, significant advancement in meaningful participation or even increases in 'women at the table' will not be made. Across the four pillars of the WPS Agenda there is a sidelining of women, a shrinking of political space, and lack of consistent financing for women's civil society organisations. Women's engagement in peace and security is essential to building sustainable peace, but progress toward gender equality remains slow, leaving untapped an incredible tool for transformative change and sustainable peace.

The world and the United Nations is now facing unprecedented challenges to global peace and security: the number of people in need of international assistance is increasing, and traditional conflicts are aggravated by new threats including climate shocks, global health pandemics and a rising wave of violent extremist groups directly targeting women's rights. The women, peace, and security agenda, now more than ever, is a critical tool for building sustainable peace and economically strong communities.

...And Where Things Need to Go

Fundamental Action

Enhancing women's engagement for sustainable peace requires an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses conflict prevention, resolution and recovery, while strengthening national accountability and ensuring women's protection from all forms of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence. This should include:

- the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security and subsequent related resolutions.
- The development of National Action Plans (Resolution 1325) by all Member States.
- the promotion of non-violent forms of conflict resolution and the involvement of women and girls in the development of a culture of peace and non-violence.
- the promotion of human rights for women and girls in situations of armed conflict.
- interventions which support the specific needs of women and girls during and after conflict situations.

Additional Action

- Extension of monitoring and reporting of involvement of women in post conflict negotiations.
- Enforcement of accountability of perpetrators of violence against women before, during and after conflict.
- gender mainstreaming in all activities relating to peace-building and peacekeeping.
- early education promoting the concept of peace, leading to a genuine awareness of justice, freedom, dignity, and equality for all people.
- partnerships with other organisations which encourage the exchange of ideas between communities and individuals from differing countries and cultures;
- training programmes which sensitise officials to the particular needs of women and girls during and after armed conflict

Where Soroptimist International Stands

Soroptimist International advocates for the equal inclusion of women in all peacemaking activities and the maintenance of sustainable peace. Soroptimist International will:

- support the Sustainable Development Goals and all United Nations initiatives for peace, particularly in initiatives which promote the involvement of women and girls in peace-building and maintaining peace.

- continue to draw to the attention of governments and civil society the impact of conflict on women and children and to demonstrate to all the economic and social benefits of a culture of peace and non-violence.
- seek to implement in practical ways its commitment to peace, security, and justice for all people with special attention paid to the particular needs of women and girls.

Soroptimist International supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its Federations, Unions, Regions, Clubs, by working on the ground with partner organisations and UN agencies to Educate, Empower and Enable women and girls everywhere.