



Platform News

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UN Security Council Resolution 1325—10 Years On

This year marks the 10th anniversary of a landmark piece of international law codifying the link between women, peace and security known as U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). As a Security Council Resolution, it is by definition binding on member states, and in theory at least obligates them to:

take special steps to protect women from violence;

promote their increased participation in peacekeeping efforts; and

to ensure women's valuable contributions to peace-building are acknowledged and elevated to formal roles in peace negotiation

Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon who opened a high-level ministerial meeting reviewing UNSCR 1325 honestly assessed *"The international community can point to some successes... but this... is a sombre occasion. Our achievements over the past decade have not met our own expectations. Women are still excluded from peace processes. The security sector in most countries is still dominated by men. When conflicts end, and international aid begins to come in, it is still not geared to the needs of girls and women. And -- most tragically and strikingly -- women and girls still suffer gender-based violence, including systematic sexual attacks, in and around armed conflict. The international community is still failing to protect."*

Observers have also recognised something of a rift between what has emerged as two distinct thematic areas under the 1325 umbrella - protection and peace. No one disputes the impact of sexual violence. Protection efforts are necessary and, to date, insufficient. But protection also appears that States a far more willing to dedicate policy and resources to combat sexual violence than they are to promote women's substantive participation in peace negotiations.

Lytic Thompson a Senior Policy Analyst at Women for Women International (WfWI), argues *"protection is politically an easier lift than promoting women's participation in substantive, decision-making roles in peace negotiations and emerging governments and economies. The statistics paint a clear picture on this: ten years after the penning of 1325, there has still never been a lead female mediator in a UN-moderated peace talk, and women's participation as representatives in those talks has only been roughly 8%. Warring parties have explained this small sum by citing fears that women will either be so firm as to hold sex crimes to account, or will be too weak and likely to compromise."*

As we head into the remaining month ahead of the 10th anniversary, it is with dual and conflicting senses of deep frustration with the past and tentative optimism for the future. Ours is an opportune moment for real progress ahead, yet it is preceded by a decade of real failure. Future reports from me over the next six weeks will record developments from the Secretary General's reports; open debates by member states; reflections of civil society ac-

tivists; and the final day of events on 29 October, when the Security Council will take up the issue and present an outcome document outlining concrete steps the UN will take to advance implementation. Perhaps this time our commitment will extend beyond the day and into the coming years-years that can and should be, in the words of peace activist Mary Robinson co-chair of the UN Civil Society Advisory Group on Women, Peace and Security, *"a decade of action and account."*

In a time when women in Northern Ireland are losing ground as members of the Assembly, the lack of commitment to gender balance in the RPA transition committees, the reduction of public appointments which is already underrepresented by women, where Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (CSI) consultation document has no reference to women although many have provided stability throughout a 40 year conflict, no actions identified for women in Northern Ireland in both the National Action Plans on 1325 by the UK and Ireland—considering CEDAW observations in 2008 called for full implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Northern Ireland - these are indicators that UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for women in Northern Ireland is still an aspiration instead of reality.

The 10th Anniversary of 1325 October 2010 should mark the start of a reinvigorated agenda for the implementation of 1325 in Northern Ireland requiring concrete, responsive, time-bound programmes, resources and evaluation

European Commission 5 Year Equality

The European Commission adopted a five-year strategy for promoting equality between women and men in Europe. The strategy aims in particular to make better use of women's potential, thereby contributing to the EU's overall economic and social goals.

It translates the principles set out in the European Commission's Women's Charter into specific measures, ranging from getting more women into company boardrooms to tackling gender-based violence.

Meanwhile, a new Eurobarometer survey shows 87% of Europeans support EU action to tackle domestic violence. One out of four knows someone who has been a victim of such violence.

The gender equality strategy spells out a series of actions based around five priori-

ties: the economy and labour market ; equal pay; equality in senior positions; tackling gender violence; and promoting equality beyond the EU.

They include:

- Getting more women into the labour market and helping to reach the Europe 2020 target employment rate of 75% overall for women and men;
- Putting forward targeted initiatives to get more women into top jobs in economic decision-making;
- Promoting female entrepreneurship and self employment;
- Instituting an annual European Equal Pay Day to raise awareness of the fact that women continue to earn an average of nearly 18% less than men across the EU;

- Working together with all Member States in combating violence against women, especially eradicating
- female genital mutilation in Europe and beyond.

For full access to the strategy

www.ec.europa.eu

UN Review of UPR

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years.

The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations. As one of the main features of the Council, the UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their human rights situations are assessed.

The 9th Universal Periodic Review will take place in will be 1-12 November 2011 in Geneva

Search by Country and by Session for UPR Documentation:

www.ohchr.org

EWL Response to the 5 year Strategy

The European Women's Lobby (EWL), the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union, today welcomed the launch of the EU's much anticipated new five year strategy for equality between women and men. 'A number of crucial issues are dealt with in this new document and some concrete actions are outlined', said Myria Vassiliadou, Secretary General of the EWL; 'what is less clear at this stage are the ways in which the Strategy translates the Women's Charter into binding measures.

The EWL warmly welcomed the Commissioner Reding's announcement that she will consider introducing quotas to get more women into boardrooms.

The Strategy for Equality between Women and men 2010-2015 follows up on the European Commission's Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010 which was accompanied by a Gender Pact endorsed by the 27 member states.

The EWL has stressed the importance of co ordinated action on gender equality t the European and national levels, calling for strong, visible and well-resourced co ordination mechanisms within the European Commission as well as renewed commitment at the national level.

You can read the EWL press release at:

www.womenslobby.org

Northern Ireland Women's European Platform Strategic Plan

Northern Ireland Women's European Platform has been working to complete its strategic plan for the next 3 years. It has agreed the following of the organisation:

Aims

- to capture the position of women in Northern Ireland and to ensure it is represented in international standards and mechanisms
- to hold government accountable for working towards equality through meeting international standards

It also agreed its Strategic Objectives which are:

-to **inform** and **share** with women international instruments and mechanisms that could assist their work for equality

-to **monitor** and **capture** Northern Ireland women's experience and reflect their need

-to **voice** the needs of women in Northern Ireland to international bodies

-to **monitor, shape** and **influence** the Northern Ireland and UK administrations

Once the plan has been completed it will be available on NIWEP's website.

The Vision

Northern Ireland Women's European Platform strives to maximise the effectiveness of international mechanisms in achieving equality between women and men: in safety and physical integrity, participation in public life, access to services, economic security, social protection and quality of life.

WNC and the vital role of the UK Joint Committee of Women

NIWEP regrets the recent government decision to stand down the Women's National Commission (WNC). It is with regret in light of their recent work in raising awareness of the difference in policies, legislation and issues across the devolved nations . WNC had begun to engage and network closely with its members in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, and this could be clearly seen at the Beijing +10 event at the UN when it provided a platform to reflect on the different inequalities across the UK.

New legislation such as the Equality and Human Rights laws for England and Wales does not extend to NI **therefore it is vital that the partnership the UK Joint Committee of Women (UKJCW) be recognised as the forum to continue to share and monitor strategically.**

Many thanks to the staff at WNC for their dedication and work and in particular making women from NI feel they could contribute fully at the UK meetings at the United Nations and a final thanks to those from NI who have acted as Commissioners over the years including those women from the Women's Forum NI, Women for Peace, and Ann Hope and Bronagh Hinds.

NIWEP CEDAW Pre Consultation

NIWEP held a pre-consultation meeting in October to seek advice and from groups, organisations and individuals on a method to gather information in order to prepare a Northern Ireland shadow report the CEDAW Committee. * The Committee has the responsibility to monitor State implementation of the CEDAW Convention and to measure changes in the delivery of the Convention every 4 years with the UK government reporting in 2011.

At the pre-consultation it was agreed that in order to develop a shadow report a process was needed to gather evidence

and this would be circulated to different groups, organisations and individuals for comments on the 16 CEDAW Articles over the next coming months.

***The CEDAW Committee carries out the duty through consideration of reports submitted by State parties and also shadow reports provided by NGOs.**

UNiTE Trust Fund

"We must unite. Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government."

**SECRETARY-GENERAL
BAN KI-MOON**

The United Nations Secretary-General's campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* includes a specific target of raising US\$100 million annually for the UN Trust Fund by 2015, in recognition of the urgent need to address violence against women and the Fund being a pioneering inter-agency initiative to advance progress on the ground to respond to this pervasive human rights violation.

The new UN Trust Fund grantees will spearhead pioneering approaches worldwide, including:

- In **Turkey**, the Mother Child Education Foundation will model a highly innovative programme engaging fathers in the prevention of gender-based violence within the family;

- The **Jordanian Women's Union** will establish the first regional NGO network in **Egypt, Jordan and Morocco** to tackle trafficking and protect women migrant workers' rights;

- In **Cambodia, Nepal and Uganda**, Acid Survivors Trust International will pilot and up-scale groundbreaking strategies for ending acid burning against women;

- In **China**, Beijing Cultural Development Centre for Rural Women will develop protection mechanisms for girls "left behind" and at risk of sexual abuse in the countryside, while their parents pursue work in urban centres;

- In **Peru**, Asociación de Comunicadores Sociales Calandria will empower rural adolescent girls

to become leaders in the anti-violence movement ;

- In the **Marshall Islands**, Women United Together Marshall Islands will strengthen domestic violence legislation and protocols, ensure enactment of culturally sensitive laws, and establish a gender responsive national policy;

- In **Burundi**, the Ministry of Human Rights and Gender will focus on sexual and domestic violence, with an emphasis on prevention of violence in schools; and

UN Country Teams in **Belarus, Sri Lanka and Indonesia** will support multi-sectoral interventions to enforce national laws addressing violence against women and girls.

Michelle Bachelet—First Press Conference

The Head of the UN Women believes that UN Women cannot have only one formula for improving the situation of women, and it will therefore be necessary to see what is needed most in each country without leaving out others.

Michelle Bachelet, recently assigned by the Secretary General of the United Nations to head UN Women, held her first press conference in the auditorium of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in September.

Bachelet will not take office until January, starting now she will be incorporated into the United Nations and begin working with the transition group, which is made up of the four already existing women's entities in the

UN that will be integrated into the new entity.

The representatives of the 41 countries that will make up the UN Women's Board of Directors will be elected in October and the Committee will be constituted in November and begin their functions in January 2011.

One question asked was how she planned to work with civil society and she reported she already respects and knows and has experience working

with women's organisations and she believes that this is a key for UN Women. She mentioned, for example, that she has promoted the formation of advisory committees, commissions and other mechanisms for civil society participation, and that she will also promote this in UN Women.