



15 Years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – On Women Peace and Security – review and outlook

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Final Conference Messages

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) remains a milestone resolution as it changed perceptions and drove government action. The women, peace and security agenda is a transformative agenda promoting women as actors of peace and security and linking gender equality with the human security agenda.

International Geneva is an important platform to accelerate implementation of the women, peace and security framework as it hosts a large number of key organisations. The creation of the Gender and Diversity Hub at the Maison de la Paix in Geneva will contribute to strengthening gender mainstreaming in hard security issues. The Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat will provide a new opportunity for UN Member States, including Switzerland as its host, to show their commitment to UNSCR 1325.

Sustainable peace requires an integrated approach based on coherence between political and security measures, as well as the humanitarian, development, and human rights agendas. Gender equality and resolution 1325 must be at the centre of all. We also need to link resolution 1325 to the implementation of the new 2030 agenda for sustainable development with an emphasis on goal 5 on gender equality and goal 16 on inclusive and peaceful societies as an excellent opportunity to further enhance coherence of peace promotion and development policies.

Civil society organisations, in particular women's rights organisations and women's networks, can play a major role in conflict prevention, establishing and sustaining peace and security. We are committed to ensuring their meaningful participation and inclusion in all preventive initiatives and in ongoing peace and statebuilding processes. At the same time we recognise the importance of building a bridge between civil society movements and formal peace processes for real conflict transformation.

Policies and normative frameworks for realizing 1325 are in place and awareness on gender-specific dimensions of peace and security has been built. What is needed now is action and implementation.

Implementation of UNSCR 1325 requires political will, strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms, as well as adequate resourcing and financing. The UN promotes a target of 15% of all peacebuilding spending to be dedicated to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. We are committed to move towards this target.

Resolution 1325 concerns all members of society, men and women: in addressing gender relations, the resolution requires men's participation in all implementation efforts.

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UNSCR 1325 needs to be linked with existing women's rights frameworks using existing UN and treaty bodies and their reporting mechanisms, in particular CEDAW, the Universal Periodic Review and the Special Mandates. This will strengthen accountability for all actors, including governments, and prevent the fragmentation of the gender equality and women's rights agenda.

On Gender Equality and Women's Influence in Peace Processes (Panel 1)

Women's participation and inclusion is both a matter of equal rights and effectiveness as women's meaningful inclusion enhances the quality and sustainability of peace agreements. Women's inclusion contributes to the sustainability of peace agreements by broadening the range of issues on the negotiation agenda and by enhancing public support and acceptance of those agreements.

Too often, participation of women is resisted as a complicating factor that will slow the signing of the peace accord. This short-term approach should always be challenged. Peace talks need to be seen as a comprehensive process that does not end with the signing but includes the successful *implementation* of the agreement.

Participation and inclusion is not only about numbers and a seat at the negotiation table, but about creating conducive preconditions and opportunities for women to be able to take up influential roles at the negotiations as well as in consultative forums or other inclusion modalities. Further investment in research and analysis for the development of evidence-based strategies is crucial.

Women's inclusion at the table as part of negotiation delegations should become an unquestioned standard. The establishment of additional separate women delegations has proven effective but is context specific.

We need to build capacities and empower women from early on to compile a roster of women personalities with the capacity, the acceptance, and status to exercise effective influence as mediators, as negotiators or as civil society activists.

There are still many exclusionary barriers that prevent women – and other groups not directly represented – to participate meaningfully, and be able to bring ideas and concerns onto the political / negotiation agenda. There are a number of findings to overcome these exclusionary barriers:

- Women must be supported to gain access to negotiations by introducing gender balance and gender expertise as one of the selection criteria.
- The early involvement of women into any type of negotiation and the establishment of provisions for the inclusion of women in implementation mechanisms are essential to sustain meaningful involvement over time.
- Women need to be represented in substantial numbers: quotas have worked well in the past.
- Decision making procedures need to be established that allow women to exercise influence and take part in leadership forums.
- Women need to be supported before and throughout their participation in the peace process. This can take the form of training and workshops to build capacity among women and to allow women to create common advocacy platforms. Support can also take the form of funding for women's travel to negotiation venues and associated costs or of resource centres to allow women to meet the technical requirements of a process.
- International actors and mediators must advocate for the inclusion of women, but also support the advocacy of those local actors advocating for women's inclusion.

On Creating Security for All – security as a gendered concept (Panel2)

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) continues to be one of the greatest threats for the security of women and girls and for many men and boys in today's conflicts. Sexual violence is regularly used as a tool of war by state and non-state actors. SGBV is a constant, not an exception in armed conflict. Impunity for these crimes threatens post-conflict recovery.

All responses to crisis and conflict, including humanitarian action, need to include adequate strategies and services as a matter of course. Sufficient resources for immediate response, services to survivors and violence prevention measures remain cornerstones of any 1325 policy development and programming. Appropriate transitional and criminal justice mechanisms need to be put in place to combat impunity for gender-specific crimes and provide for reparations.

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence as well as other gender-related issues has to be at the core of any security strategy. Investing in gender-responsive security sector reforms and gender capacity building for security institutions enhances the capability and the credibility of the security sector. The recruitment of more women in security institutions and the deployment of mixed teams in military and police have been positive steps in enhancing security for all.

Women and men, girls and boys perceive their own security and insecurity in different ways. Security institutions need to broaden their perception and understanding of the specific security needs of women, men, girls and boys and should adapt their structures, policies and procedures accordingly. With a more comprehensive security concept, security agencies can be agents of change.

Decisive action is required of UN Member States and the UN against all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) committed by members of peace operation missions as well as political missions. There must be a zero tolerance policy and punitive action must be taken against all personnel committing such crimes.

There is a connection between gender equality and the readiness of society to take up arms. Addressing patterns of violent masculinities that are fostered during war and conflict and engaging men and boys, victims and potential perpetrators in all transformative action is crucial for any conflict and violence prevention strategy and will benefit both women and men.

DDR processes have to ensure that the needs of women and girls with their varying functions and roles within the armed groups are adequately addressed in order to promote their reintegration into society.

The women, peace and security agenda is linked to our efforts against violent extremism and terrorism. Prevention is key to success: education is a form of prevention of conflict and violent extremism. And finally, there is a correlation between gender equality in a society and the readiness to take up arms: More gender equality – less readiness to take up arms.

On Gender Equality from the Peace Table to Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (Panel 3)

Building lasting peace requires that our peace and security policies are complemented by a long term statebuilding agenda promoting democratic institutions that are accountable to all citizens – men and women – and that protect and respect human *and* women's rights alike. Women's rights and gender equality must be at the centre of this agenda and must be a priority from the very beginning of any political settlement.

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Statebuilding processes not only gain from stronger women's participation, but actually can provide a momentum for women's empowerment and are an opportunity to tackle gender inequalities. We have to become more strategic and make use of the potential momentum that exists in post-conflict transition and statebuilding contexts.

However, the window of opportunity is usually very short. Even if women played a crucial role during conflicts, they are marginalized and excluded in formal statebuilding processes. Women's rights and empowerment often faces resistance by traditional elites and religious leaders and can become bargaining chips between different political factions.

We need to better analyse and understand the patterns of power and exclusion and the drivers of resistance to gender equality in each local context. In particular, we have to pay more attention to informal power politics and institutions since they are predominant in weak and fragile states and play a crucial role in the exclusion of women.

We need to be cautious when engaging with traditional and customary institutions as agents for conflict resolution. Often war destroys social structures and customary institutions are captured by new elites such as war lords. Better strategies how to engage with those powers and institutions and overcome barriers and resistance against women's empowerment and gender equality are needed.

The provision of and access to basic services and women's economic empowerment must receive greater attention in post-conflict recovery and statebuilding. Women's access to resources, income and economic independence is vital and a precondition for women to gain more influence in matters of peace and security.

We don't need new tools and framework, but integrate gender systematically in existing ones. The five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals of the New Deal for International Engagement in Fragile States link peace, security and development and are all highly relevant for realizing the Women, Peace and Security agenda.