



**Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Summary Report
Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 56
Women, Peace and Security Perspective**

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1. Introduction

This document provides a summary of CSW56 events from a Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Perspective.

The 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from Monday, 27 February to Friday, 9 March 2012. This session focused on the theme of "the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges." Sadly, **no outcome document (on agreed conclusions) was adopted by Member States.** This was only the second time that the CSW had failed to agree on an outcome document. WILPF and other women’s groups expressed strong disappointment at the inability of parties to adopt an agreed conclusion able to promote and solidify the role of Rural Women in Development as agents for change and progress in their society.

Background to CSW56

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. CSW is held annually as a means to evaluating progress on gender equality, identifying challenges, setting global standards and formulating concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

Each year the CSW selects a priority theme for debate, with some previous themes including “Women’s and girl’s access to and participation in education, training, science and technology” (CSW55) and “Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women” (CSW53). In 2012 the priority theme was “The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.”

In addition to the official program of CSW and parallel events held by United Nations’ entities, civil society groups and grassroots organisations took the opportunity to participate and to draw attention

to issues regarding gender and development in rural areas by hosting many panels, workshops and roundtables.

Outcomes

Despite the CSW's disappointing failure to adopt an outcome document they were successful in negotiating **seven** draft resolutions with content and language relevant to the WPS agenda. These draft resolutions to be recommended by ECOSOC included, [Ending female genital mutilation, E/CN.6/2012/8.](#), [Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, E/CN.6/2012/](#), [Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts,](#) [Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters,](#) [Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women,](#) [Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication,](#) [Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS.](#)

Consistent with the past two years the resolution on the situation of Palestinian women made clear reference to SCR 1325 and stressed the need to involve women in the peacebuilding process: *“Emphasizing the importance of increasing the role of women in peacebuilding and decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of conflicts as part of efforts to ensure the safety and well being of all women in the region, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and involvement in all efforts for the achievement, maintenance and promotion of peace and security...”*

Women, Peace and Security at CSW56¹

The official theme of CSW56 (The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges) did not explicitly focus on the WPS agenda, however the link between the priority theme and SCR1325 is clear and there were a large number of events focused directly on issues related to women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Although the majority of WPS events were held by NGO's, several Member States, most notably Austria, the United States, Canada, Norway, South Africa and Sri Lanka also organized/hosted events.

Given the high prevalence of conflict in rural areas this year's priority theme provided the catalyst for many events focusing on the peace and security challenges faced by women in conflict and post-conflict societies.

PeaceWomen's focus during the two week commission was to monitor as many events as possible relevant to SCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions (SCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960) which make up the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) policy agenda. For further information regarding these resolutions and the Women, Peace and Security agenda please [click here](#).

Overall PeaceWomen reports on 27 events related to the WPS agenda, of these events close to half focused on women's participation in both politics and society and just under a third dealt with gender based violence and/ or sexual violence in conflict. Other consistent themes included women's access, or lack thereof to justice, human rights property and adequate health services. The need to involve women in prevention and protection mechanisms was another notable theme as was

Peacewomen recognizes that the events presented in this document represent only a fraction of the meetings, panels and discussions held during CSW56 and that other events not included here may have also dealt with issues relating to the WPS agenda. Longer summaries of all events reported on are available upon request at info@peacewomen.org

discussion on how member states and UN organs can work to better operationalize the WPS agenda particularly in rural areas.

Although the commission was unable to reach consensus on an agreed conclusion, progress was made in certain areas with the adoption of draft resolutions and programs of work pertaining to; Ending female genital mutilation; Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women; Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts; Gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters; Eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women; Indigenous women: key actors in poverty and hunger eradication; Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS. PeaceWomen urges all actors to implement these texts in order to see impact women's lives.

Other noteworthy highlights from a WPS perspective included the launch by UN Women of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative. This project seeks to support countries in the collection and usage of sex-disaggregated statistics, and to help strengthen national capacity and national systems on data collection as a means to advancing women's empowerment and gender equality. In addition UN Women announced its commitment to partnering with the UN Rome based agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the World Food Programme to provide support for successful local initiatives promoting rural women's and girl's empowerment.

WILPF at CSW56

WILPF members from several sections participated, including Pakistan, Japan, Nigeria, U.S., Sweden and Lebanon. During this year's CSW, WILPF was active at numerous events and actively voiced its ongoing recommendations for a holistic approach to conflict prevention, by way of statements and through advocacy efforts. WILPF's official CSW 56 statement is available online at Peacewomen.org (ref: E/CN.6/2012/NGO/27).

Our Nigerian Section held event on "Human Security for Rural Women in Nigeria - using SCR 1325. Joy Onyesoh, the WILPF-Nigeria president, highlighted the urgent need to advance the process of formulating and drafting a comprehensive Nigerian National Action Plan for implementation of SCR 1325. Sameena Nazir, WILPF Pakistan, spoke at our second panel, which was co-hosted by various CSO organisations and entitled "Food, Sovereignty, Conflict and Peace". On Friday March 2nd, US WILPF and PeaceWomen co-hosted an event recognizing the release of WILPF's report on the Civil Society Consultations on the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1325).

Event Summaries

Event: Opening session of the 56th Commission on the Status of Women

Date: 27 February 2012

Panelists: Member State Delegations; Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro (Deputy Secretary-General of UN); Michelle Bachelet (First Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women); Mr. Miloš Koterec, (President of the Economic and Social Council); Silvia Pimentel (Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW)

Member state delegations and other actors participated in the opening ceremony of the 56th CSW. Distinguished speakers took the floor and spoke on the 56th CSW theme "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges".

Ms. Bachelet expressed that “Listening to and supporting rural women is fundamental to ending poverty and hunger and achieving peace and development that is sustainable” and both Mr Koterec and Ms. Kamara made references to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Here, Mr Koterec stated that “it is critical that their contributions are recognized and their voices heard in decision-making processes at all levels of governments and within rural organizations” and Ms Kamara in her statement emphasized the need to address the remaining gaps in implementation.

Find the full statements [here](#)

Event: Arab Spring: Voices for Women

Date: 27 February 2012

Organized by: US Federation for Middle East Peace

Panelists: Fatima Akushi; Sally Kader; Nerim Abdukader

Theme: Participation

Focusing on the revolutions occurring in the Middle East and North Africa, this panel discussed these events from a women’s perspective. Underlined was the significance of empowering women at a local level to establish relationships and build community around the globe. With new constitutions and cultural shifts under way, the question has turned to the role of women in these new societies; how do they fit within the reconstructed political structures and participate as equals? Examples from Bahrain and Egypt were presented and suggestions from the panelists included discussing the women vs. religion issue, the role of media, reconstruction of social and cultural ideas and education.

Further info: [US Federation for Middle East Peace](#)

Event: Role of Women in Poverty Eradication

Date: 27 February 2012

Organized by: United Religions International Public Policy Institute

Panelists: Ven. Chung Ohun Lee; Dr. Azza Karana; Robin Andrews; Allison Van Dyk

Theme: Participation

This panel served to bring attention to the success of women instead of focusing on the negative aspects. The panel discussed the “unsung” heroes of the women’s movement as well as how big of an effect the small contributions can have. They advised the women all over the world to ask one another for support, help and become self-reliant in the process. They also encouraged all women to run for political office and encouraged our sisters to do the same. Through this women will gain a larger voice in the policies and programs that shape our lived realities.

Event: Stop Violence against Women by Implementing International Standards

Date: 27 February 2012

Organized by: Permanent Mission of Turkey

Panelists: Jean-Claude Mignon (Council of Europe, President of Parliamentary Assembly); Askin Asan (Turkish Deputy Minister of Family and Social Policies); John Hendra (Executive Director of UN Women); Maud de Boer-Buquicchio (Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe)

Theme: VAW

This Panel, comprised of several high-profile men, commented on the positive example of Turkey in regards to violence against Women and especially The Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women, which Turkey was the first country to ratify. All panel members commended the progress that the international community has made in recognizing violence against

women as a human rights issue, and commended Turkey on its ratification of the Convention. The panel ultimately agreed that the Convention complements CEDAW effectively, but persuasively commented that European states and the international community must continue to join efforts to ensure that the Convention enters speedily into force, so that the text of the convention does not remain a “dead letter”.

For more information [click here](#) to access the Turkey UN Permanent Mission website

Event: Engaging Young Women and Men, Girls and Boys, to Advance Gender Equality

Date: 28 February 2012

Organized by: European Union

Panelists: Mr Manu Sareen (Minister for Gender Equality, Denmark); Ms Kathleen Lynch, (Minister of State for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People, Ireland); Ms Teresa Morais (State Secretary for Parliamentary Affairs and Equality, Portugal); Ms Viviane Teitelbaum (Belgian Representative of the European Women’s Lobby Board and President of the National Council of French Speaking Women’s Organizations in Belgium)

Theme: Participation

This panel described policies and innovative measures in the European Union aimed at making sure that girls and boys, young women and young men, can fully contribute to the promotion of gender equality, overcoming gender stereotypes and traditional roles, which hinder their full contribution to the construction of an equal, democratic and efficient society. The panelists described different measures they were taking on in their respective countries. The panel was followed by an informative question-and-answer session that tackled a range of issues including the relations between domestic violence, government policy, and gender equality.

For more information [click here](#) to access the EU at the UN website

Event: Facilitating Human Rights from a Gender Perspective

Date: 28 February 2012

Organized by: Center for Women’s Global Leadership – Rutgers University

Panelists: Margot Baruch (Center for Global Women’s Leadership, Rutgers University); Radhika Balakrishnan (Center for Global Women’s Leadership, Rutgers University); Rebecca Brown (ESCR-net); Ejim Dike (US Human Rights Network); Carly Nyst (Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty Mandate)

Themes: HR, Protection

This panel shared ways in which Center for Global Women’s Leadership advocated for the inclusion of specific gender considerations in reports conducted and presented by the Special Rapporteurs to the UN Security Council regarding social protection. The panel also shared feminist approaches to human rights policy, particularly in terms of social protections, as well as suggestions for preventative measures to social protection using a feminist lens. This event shared the specific interactions between the CGWL and the Rapporteurs, the outcomes of their communications and the impact of other members of civil society. Each panelist shared their particular human rights and feminist analyses of economic and social policies, especially social protection policies. At the end of the panel discussion, an important point was made about human rights and social protection, specifically in regards to women; when governments care, they act. The panel urged us as members of civil society to lean on this as a key element in our quest for gender equality in social protection measures from policy to practice. For further information, [click here](#) to access the CWGL homepage.

Event: Gender Budgeting – An Effective Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality

Date: 28 February 2012

Organized by: Permanent Mission of Austria

Panelists: Lakshmi Puri (Deputy Executive Director, UN Women); Ms. Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek (Federal Minister for Women and Civil Service, Austria); Mr. Gerhard Steger (Director General for Budget and Public Finances, Austria); Ms. Vera Jauk (Head of Dept, Federal Chancellery, Austria); Ms. Elisabeth Schindler (Federal Chancellery, Austria)

Themes: Participation, MS

Outlining Austria's experience with Gender Budgeting this panel explained how it is being used in the domestic and foreign aid budget as a strategy to achieve gender equality. The four presentations examined Austria's integrated approach to gender budgeting wherein all ministries (without exception) are obliged to adopt achieving gender equality as one of their 5 top priorities. The panel also demonstrated how outcomes, performance indicators, quality assurance and ongoing monitoring/evaluation have been used to ensure compliance and effectiveness in implementation/achievement of outcome. Finally, the panelists emphasized that effective gender budgeting can only be achieved through an integrated approach, viewing gender as a regular component of the budget analysis and not as a separate entity.

Click [here](#) for further information on Austria's gender budgeting strategy

Event: Social, Economic and Rights-based Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls in Russia's North Caucasus

Date: 28 February 2012

Organized by: Coalition of North Caucasus Women's Organizations

Panelists: Malika Chetakarova (female lawyer working with violence against women); Zarema Magazieva (NGO); Raisa Borchshigova (NGO); Marika Safeova (NGO); Taita Yunusova (NGO) Almut Rochowansky (Chechnya Advocacy Network)

Theme: VAW, Militarization

This panel described the type of work and challenges they face in their specific regions of the North Caucasus of Russia working with women issues. With the collapse of the Soviet Union came high unemployment and with two wars in Chechnya (which also has affected the regions close to Chechnya) the men have become more militarized and the younger generation of boys are growing up more conservative. This together with a radicalization of Muslim groups has led to a greater control over women and consequences thereafter. The panel discussed how their NGOs try to work together in terms of resources and knowledge.

Event: Women, Media, Revolution: Amplifying Voices of Women Living on and Reporting from the Frontlines

Date: 28 February 2012

Organized by: Women Peacemakers Program, Joan B Kroc Institute

Panelists: Jina Moore (Freelance Journalist); Prue Clarke (Executive Director of New Narratives, Women Reporting Africa); Jennifer Pozner (WIMN Women in Media and News); Kristen Fitzpatrick

(Exhibition Manager, WMM Women Make Movies); Jeckee Batanda (Ugandan Journalist IWWMF Fellow)

Theme: Participation

This event presented updates, insights and key concerns from the 2011 Women, Media, Revolution forum. Journalists, filmmakers, and social media citizen activists engaged in the critical examination of women in conflict and how they are using their voices in media. The panel gave examples from their own work and issues such as participation, foreign affairs and human rights and social justice issues.

Event: “Human Security for Rural Women in Nigeria – Using SCR 1325”

Date: 29 February 2012

Organized by: Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Panelists: Joy Onyesoh (President of WILPF-Nigeria); Adanna Baldwin (WILPF-Nigeria National Co-ordinator); Joy Ezeigbo (International Federation of Women Lawyers Nigeria); Dr. Frances Ajose (Medical Women’s Association of Nigeria); Kachollom C.S. Best (YWCA); Mavic Cabrera-Balleza (Global Network of Women Peacebuilders)

On the third day of the CSW56, WILPF organized a panel discussion at the UN headquarters on “Human Security for Rural Women in Nigeria - using SCR 1325”. The panel discussed the current situation in Nigeria and focused on prevention of increased conflict and the promotion of human security and women’s rights and participation. Special attention was given to the situation of rural women and the challenges they face, given the theme of CSW 56. Nigeria may not be classified as a situation of armed conflict but the reality presented at the panel showed otherwise. Adanna and Joy from WILPF-Nigeria underlined that there must be emphasis on real human security, including addressing corruption at every level in the country rather than the narrow focus on national security. WILPF-Nigeria presented their current and upcoming projects including: Partners of 1325 (national action plan coalition), Team 2015 (women’s participation in elections), and a national conference on women’s rights. In addition to discussing the current realities, panelist also outlined recommendations and actions relating to the political situation in Nigeria and SCR 1325. “We urgently need action and to move forward the process of formulating and drafting a comprehensive National Action Plan on implementation of SCR 1325 in Nigeria”, stated Joy Onyesoh, WILPF-Nigeria President.

See [here](#) for a full summary of this event.

Event: Building a Stronger United Nations for Women: One Year After the Creation of UN Women

Date: 29 February 2012

Organized by: Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign Working Group

Panelists: Charlotte Bunch; representative from the Pacific Islands; representative from Africa; representative from Latin America

Theme: Participation

This event started off by describing the GEAR Campaign which started 4 years ago to work on changes in the UN architecture for change for women and to increase civil society engagement. There are over 300 organizations involved with GEAR. Political Participation and Economic Empowerment are the two biggest focuses for UN Women and the different representatives pointed out the key issues: - need to address limitations and flexibility of UN because some organizations feel

like that have to work with government in order to work with the UN but if governments does not communicate with the grassroots, what can be done? - human rights approach, - systematic engagements with civic societies and women's rights organizations. The panel stressed the need for more communication between grassroots movements and UN Women.

Click [here](#) for further information

Event: Joining the Dots: Economic Empowerment of Women in Conflict Areas

Date: 29 February 2012

Organized by: Asia Pacific Women's Watch

Panelists: representatives from Sri Lanka; Nepal; Pakistan; Fiji, Kyrgyzstan and Kurdistan

Themes: Political Participation, PP

The panel on this event focused on the research of JERA International, an NGO designed to quantify the (lack of) results of aid programs in the lives of women in Asia, specifically in countries which have been affected by conflict. The panelists were involved in a long running project in which they conducted interviews with women from their respective countries or regions to determine their feelings regarding their economic empowerment. Many of the representatives discussed how CEDAW had been signed and ratified in their respective countries, but had not truly been implemented, meaning that women on the ground were not reaping the benefits of CEDAW. One particularly interesting case was that while Sri Lankan women felt that they experienced less empowerment since the end of the Tamil Tiger insurgency, the study found that Nepali women had become more "aware of themselves as participants of social action." The Nepali representative explained that a manifestation of this increased power was that rural women were more involved in the decision-making processes in their respective homes.

Click [here](#) to access APWW and further information

Event: Launch of Global Report on Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders

Date: 29 February 2012

Organized by: Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

Panelists: representatives from Amnesty; Asia Forum for Human Rights; Frontline Defenders; ISIS; Information Monitor Sri Lanka; International Federation of Human Rights; World Organization Against Torture; Muslim Women for Human Rights

Themes: HR, VAW, SGBV

This event presented the Global Report on Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders. The report includes 43 case studies from all regions of the world and it describes different contexts and adopts a feminist analysis on the findings. Systematic violence and discrimination against women human rights defenders is present in every field and is increasing. The panel presented examples from Nicaragua and Philippines, areas where abortion is criminalized and women work with reproductive rights and also Burma, where the military uses rape as a weapon of war against ethnic minority women and children. The report also presents suggestions for addressing these issues.

For more information on this event please [click here](#)

Event: Implementing Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan

Date: 29 February 2012

Organized by: Permanent mission of Liechtenstein

Panelist: Humaira Ameer Rasuli (Medical Afghanistan, also represented Afghan Women Network)
Themes: SCR 1325, PP, PK, Political Participation

The panelist shared the outcome of a workshop that was held in Liechtenstein dedicated to the issue of WPS and SCR 1325. The goal of the workshop was to make recommendations for the Security Council in relation to the Afghanistan mission since the mandate renewal is scheduled to due in March. The workshop concluded that the international community has reached a critical stage of its engagement with Afghanistan with impending withdrawal of troops. There is a strong need to have greater women's participation in political life and the peace process as a whole. Since the Taliban women have seen their rights been taken away in all areas of their lives; cultural, social, private but times are changing and 328 women ran for provincial council seats last election.

For further information click [here](#)

Event: Rural Women Speak : land, rights and health in Africa

Date: 29 February 2012

Organized by: FEMNET

Panelists: Saquina Mocavele (Mozambique); Assa Ngatansou (Cameroon); Jane Cutan (Kenya); Besse Madzuiva (Zimbabwe)

Themes: Political Participation, SGBV

This panel discussed how rural women need to participate at decision making level on issues that relates to them. They are a large part of the rural population (larger than men statistically) but are rarely asked to participate or contribute to the solutions. Several recommendations were made during the panel discussions to address the issues that face rural women and women in general in Africa; rural women have the solutions to their own problems and support must be given to these initiatives taken by the women, microfinance, illiteracy campaigns, gendered laws at national and regional level/legal mechanisms to involve women in decision making, address gender based violence.

For access to FEMNET please [click here](#)

Event: Food, Sovereignty, Conflict and Peace

Date: 1 March 2012

Organized by: WILPF, PODA, WURUN

Panelists: Sameena Nazir (WILPF, PODA)

Themes: PB, Participation

This event, co-hosted by WILPF, focused on the linkages between food security and conflict in several contexts. Emphasising the link between food security, war, violence and empowerment of rural women, the Panel called on those attending to explore the ways in which they as government and civil society can advance holistic peace and development. The disconnect between the rural woman's need for and ability to access resources forms the crux of the ongoing food security crisis faced by rural women and their families, in times of both war and peace. Stressing the link between food insecurity and the under-representation of women at the policy- and decision-making level, panelists highlighted the gap between legal policy and practice regarding gender equality. It was stipulated that food insecurity will continue to paralyse growth in developing nations as long as gender equality and better access to land, education and training, health services and productive resources are lacking. For societies emerging from or experiencing ongoing conflict, food security remains a key issue. Women must be present at all stages of mediation and peace negotiation to

ensure their full and equal access to resources and opportunities in the reconstruction phase, because if ignored, women--especially those widowed by the war--will continue to struggle to provide for their families, leading to stagnant growth.

Accordingly, the implementation of gender responsive budgeting is essential, as is the need for governments to employ strategies aimed at understanding the particular affects of conflict on rural women, something which can be promoted through the accumulation of sex disaggregated data. One key challenge to achieving food security in Pakistan is the focus on border security as the only security challenge. This militarized definition of security cannot take into account the daily human security challenges facing the population, which is reflected, for example, by the alarming rate of malnutrition in rural Pakistan. According to Sameena Nazir, one way her organization is promoting food security in Pakistan is by organizing education and training days for women on legal and human rights. In addition, WILPF-Pakistan continues to lobby the Government to prioritise issues of gender and human security as a means to achieving national security. Finally, the panel emphasized that food and peace security are not mutually exclusive and that rural women can be catalysts for peace and food security in their communities if government and civil society institutions commit to adequately supporting their needs.

For a full summary of this event please click [here](#)

Event: Disaster/Reconstruction and Gender Equality: The Great Earthquake and Tsunami in Eastern Japan

Date: 1 March 2012

Organized by: National Women's Committee of the UN NGOs in Japan, International Women's Year Liaison Group Japan, Japan Women's Watch

Panelists: Mihoko Ejiri (National Women's Committee of the UN NGOs in Japan); Atsuko Okajima, Director General, Gender Equality Bureau); Reiko Aoki (The National Council of Women's Centers); Hiroko Hara (JAWW); Nobuko Kurosaki (National Women's Committee of the UN NGOs in Japan); Masako Hiramatsu (BPW Japan, Coordinator, IWYLG in Japan); Makiko Kubota (Gender Advisor, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Themes: Participation

According to the panel at this event, Japan can provide the international community with information regarding the lessons they learned from disaster response and recovery. This panel stressed the fact that women need to be apart of the decision making process when disaster hit in order to protect women's human rights.

Event: Girls Grow: A vital force in Rural Economies

Date: 1 March 2012

Organized by: United Nations Foundation

Panelists: Judith Deares; Laura Lasky; Don Kumbukani

Theme: Participation

This event was dedicated to address problematic issues for rural girls and presented a report stating recommendations based on information from UNICEF and 6 other UN entities that has been working together on these issues. The recommendations included expanding education opportunities, empowering girls to be leaders in agriculture and natural resource management, health information and services, improve safety and security for girls and educate men and boys of the value

of girls and women. The panelists agreed that the UN should have a comprehensive approach and specifically look at marginalized girls between 10 – 14 years of age and support innovative programs.

[Click here](#) to access the UN Foundation homepage

Event: UNSCR 1325 and Rural Women

Date: 1 March 2012

Organized by: World YWCA

Panelists: Sara Arumugam (YWCA); Sharon Bhagwan Rolls (Femlink Pacific); Maria Butler (WILPF)

Themes: PB, SGBV, Participation, SCR 1325

World YWCA hosted a panel event on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 together with young women leaders from the YWCAs of Sri Lanka, Palestine, and Fiji and the Project Director of PeaceWomen, Maria Butler. Maria presented overview of work globally on SCR 1325, noting that one way of pushing for more efficient implementation of SCR 1325 is through the legally binding treaties such as CEDAW. Maria underlined that advocacy remains key to implementation and all CSOs should be continuously pushing both Member States and UN organs to meet the requirements of the Resolution. Finally, Maria referred to the importance of the holistic approach to 1325 and the focus on prevention. In this regard, she recalled the recent debate on sexual violence and emphasized the importance of not narrowing the existing mandate of the Special Representative on sexual violence. This event was dedicated to highlighting, with a particular focus on rural women, the challenges of 1325 implementation at the National and International levels. Sara Arumugam, from YWCA Sri Lanka, spoke of the challenges rural women face in post-conflict Sri Lanka. Referring to both the consequences of the occupation and those produced by a lack of rights for women locally, the second panelist Arda Aghazarian highlighted the complex nature of discrimination faced by women in Palestine and how this double oppression has resulted in high levels of domestic violence and institutionalized inequality. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Director of Femlink Pacific, discussed the challenges and opportunities relevant to 1325 implementation in the South Pacific.

Please click [here](#) for a full summary of this event

Event: Rural Women Are Vital to Post Conflict Reconstruction

Date: 1 March

Organized by: Women's Alliance for a Democratic Iraq

Panelists: representative from Iraq; Janet Benshoof (Global Justice Center); Anne-Marie Goetz (UN Women)

Themes: SCR 1325, Legislation, Participation, Implementation, DDR

This event incorporated panelist speakers and engaged the audience in discussion on how to move forward. The audience was encouraged to give practical examples on how to make rural women participate more in decision making, since policies that are being made affect them the most but they don't have a voice at governmental level. Panelists highlighted the need for fresh thinking when it comes to CEDAW and SCR 1325 as to see them as hard law - adopted treaties must be treated as relevant legal tools. Some of the innovative recommendations included having women as prosecutors and judges, having women at the frontline of public service to make women and girls feel more empowered and raise their voice. Anne-Marie Goetz stressed the importance of seeing women as combatants of war and make DDR programs gendered.

Event: Rural Women, Challenges and Development

Date: 1 March 2012

Organized by: The permanent mission of Mongolia to the United Nations

Themes:

Discussion of the initiative being undertaken by various actors such as BPW International and the Mongolian Government in addressing the restrictions placed on rural women, particularly poor herders. Women herders do not have specified working hours or structured pay, meaning they cannot regularly pay social security payments and are ineligible for a pension. They have to deal with mining companies ruining natural resources and restricting available water, as well as very harsh climate. Much of women's time is taken up with unrecognized care work. Much work done by women is not included in production statistics.

Click [here](#) for further info

Event: Women Building Peace at the Local Level: Research in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sierra Leone & Liberia

Date: 1 March 2012

Organized by: Womenkind Worldwide

Themes: PB, SGBV, Participation

Focused on research on women's role in local peacebuilding, this event presented examples and recommendations of the findings. Women assume a variety of roles, especially in terms of inter and intra-household stability, but are excluded from reconstruction planning and peacebuilding conversations. There were three research goals in this project; to examine how women are involved in peacebuilding at the local level; to create development recommendations for the international community; and to create development case studies. The findings of this research reinforced that peace, to women, is more than the absence of conflict; it encompasses their daily lives, freedom of movement and security, education for their children, and violence against women. What peace means at the community level is much different than what donors think, but women at the local level are not consulted about their needs and suggestions. What women are doing, according to the research, is creating safe spaces where women can come together to support one another, discuss their needs, receive counseling, and promote a normalization of culture; they are organizing themselves and creating groups at the local level. There is a disconnect between the local and national levels of dialogue and how to build peace, for there are few formal processes that link the two. Several obstacles to peacebuilding at the local level were identified, including the challenge of economic empowerment and independence; lack of education and cultural barriers; perceptions of women's roles by men; gender stereotypes; and domestic violence. The emerging recommendations based on this research emphasize the need for long term, sustainable resources and support at the community level and understanding peace and conflict by listening to what people have to say and what it means to them.

To access the Womenkind website please [click here](#)

Event: The Empowerment of Women During and After Conflict Situations: Rwanda

Date: 2 March 2012

Organized by: Rwanda Association of University Women

Themes: PP, Participation, Political Participation, SCR 1325

This program discussed the nature and experiences of women in Rwanda in the situation of post-conflict development where women took on the role of rebuilding the country. One of the panelists made the comment that Rwanda should be seen as a model for post-conflict development in terms of its national policies on gender and the advancement of women since the new constitutions implementation and the implementation of a National Action Plan following SCR 1325. The quota system (30%) in the country has allowed women to gain access to political positions. It has grown since to reach about 50%.

Event: Development and Women's Human Rights: The Way Forward

Date: 5 March 2012

Organized by: International Women's Rights Action Watch: Asia Pacific (IWRAP)

Panelists: Kate Lappin (Regional Coordinator for Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development)

Themes:

The panelist at this event stated that the dominant neo-liberal model of development promotes inequality between states and does not effectively address many of the disadvantages experienced by rural women, including poverty, illiteracy, lack of healthcare and land rights disenfranchisement. A more sustainable framework for women's rights and development would incorporate an intentionally gendered agenda, would confront and eradicate pink washing, would address some of the economic inequalities between the global North and South, and would measure success more by rights enjoyment than by economic growth.

Here's a [link](#) to the IWRAP homepage

Event: Rural, Urban and Across Borders: Women's Human Right to Freedom from Torture by Non-State Actors

Date: 5 March 2012

Organized by: Canadian Federation of University Women

Panelists: Jeanne Sarson; Linda MacDonald (Persons Against Non-State Torture (Canada))

Non-state torture is torture committed by actors not acting on behalf of a state—e.g. parents, spouses, relatives, other trusted adults, or strangers—in the so-called private sphere. Persons Against Non-State Torture works from a relational feminist perspective to bring NST into the public eye and to expose it as an egregious violation of human rights that is not adequately addressed by current legislation in Canada, the US and beyond according to the panel.

Event: Women's Social and Economic Rights in Light of Political Changes in the Arab Region

Date: 5 March 2012

Organized by: Women's Learning Partnership

Themes: Political Participation, VAW,

This Panel discussed the concern that the Arab Spring has not advanced women's rights at all; in terms of CEDAW, things appear to be getting worse in many countries. Participants further noted that despite the media depiction of newer regimes as democratic, free elections are not the only

requirement of a democratic regime. Democracy should go beyond free elections and includes broader inclusion, protection of rights, etc. Despite equality of citizenship, most women are not treated as full citizens in terms of their political participation. Questions were raised over how to best engage these issues at both national and international levels and the role that international organizations can play in opposing a conservative movement. Primarily, panelists emphasized the need to speak out, engage women's rights issues, and pressure governments and media to consider the impact on women's rights. In response to a discussion on engaging different generations or engaging men, the panelists argued these discussions should strive to be as inclusive as possible and incorporate as broad a movement as possible.

Event: Youth Approaches to Funding Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights

Date: 5 March 2012

Organized by: FRIDA, The Young Feminist Fund

Panelists: Amina Doherty (FRIDA Fund); Shannon Farley (SPARK); Mia Herndon (Third Wave Foundation)

Themes: Political Participation

Discussions at this panel event focused on different methods to develop youth leadership and fund young feminists in women's rights work. FRIDA's goal is to put both resources and control over grant-making/allocation in the hands of young women. During the Q&A panelists described the benefits of working outside the traditional funding model for women's rights as it provides an opportunity to develop inter-generational partnerships, using this form to incorporate youth voices which cannot generally access the debate. All panelists emphasized the role of young feminist activists as they are agents of change.

Click [here](#) for further info

Event: Engendering Peace Processes in Africa

March: 6 March 2012

Organized by: Femmes Africa Solidarité

Panelists: Lilian Musau (FAS program officer); Mireille Aff'a Mindzie (International Peace Institute); Josephine Kabeya (FORFEM)

Themes: VAW, SGBV

Dedicated to the peace processes in Africa, this event highlighted examples from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The status of women's security in DRC remains precarious, although local activists judge the situation as being better now than in previous years. Direct violence concerns specific to women, especially rural women, include the presence of foreign armies in agricultural areas and high occurrences of sexual violence. Women remain politically underrepresented and the legislation aimed at protecting women's rights are chronically under-enforced. To address these concerns, Femmes Solidarité Africa (FAS) has launched a 45-month long program to create more women's associations in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, to hold human rights trainings with activists, and to partner with male feminists and local journalists, using a bottom-up model of information flow.

For more info on FAS please [click here](#)

Event: Increasing Rural Women's Access to Productive Resources

Date: 6 March 2012

Organized by: UNDP, UNCDF

Panelists: Lulu Xingwana (Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, South Africa); Ellen Morris (Director International Energy Policy and Management, Colombia University); Lucy Wanjiru (Programme Specialist Gender Environment and Climate Change); Mary Okumu (Chief Tech Advisor GELF, UNCDF); Kadia Koumare (MFP, Mali); Marie Izagiriza (Rural Women Representative, Rwanda); Catherine Nyiransengimana (President Iterambere Mu Cyaro Cooperative – Beneficiary of Barefoot College Project – Rwanda)

This event focused on strategies implemented by the UNDP and partners to give rural women in Sub Saharan Africa access to sustainable sources of energy for production of electricity and even products for sale. Speaking first Dr. Ellen Morris from Colombia University described the functioning and implementation of the Multi Functional Platform in rural communities in Sub Saharan Africa. This project, implemented by the UNDP in several countries since 1994, enables women to efficiently carry out multiple tasks including agricultural processing and electricity production. Women are trained in how to use the platform and the transfer from manual to mechanized production reduces the labour output time from around 4-5 hours to 20 minutes leaving these women with more time to carry out their other tasks. Another positive outcome had been that girl children were able to attend school far more consistently with their mothers now able to complete their chores single handedly. Benefits have included literacy and professional education and training for women, a real change in community attitude to women's ability to work.

Click [here](#) for access to further info

Event: Empowering Rural Women Through Modern Consensus-Building Strategies

Date: 6 March 2012

Organized by: Lawyers Without Borders

Themes: CSO, Justice, Participation

This event was presented as a training session, offered by Lawyers Without Borders, and aimed at outlining and teaching some interest-based negotiation strategies potentially of use to social activists in rural situations.

To get started, trainers outlined 2 bases for negotiation, Position-based and interest-based negotiation, explaining that; Position-based negotiation is characterized by parties with entrenched, competing agendas that cannot be mutually fulfilled, forcing a winner/ loser result. By contrast, Interest-based negotiation explores the underlying motivations for each party's position, and that by focusing on the social, historical and psychological factors that underpin each party's demands, a win-win situation can be produced. As a means of achieving mutual understanding each actor was given four questions to ask themselves and five similar questions to ask the negotiating party. A case study from women living in a rural community in Nigeria was highlighted as an example of how negotiation can be used to open up women's political space in communities. The training went on to stress the importance of attaining effective leverage in negotiation, something requiring; intelligence on the interests of other parties, including key agents, the source of conflict, the historical setting, and other social, economic and political factors. Here, questions relevant to developing leverage were presented including, "Do I have anything the other party wants or needs?", "What does the other party have that I want or need?" etc. Providing the Nigerian case study as an example, participants were then shown how to evaluate the strength of their leverage and the benefit of developing coalitions. Finally, the training explored the benefits of involving a third party mediator in negotiations and showed how this had been successful in one Nigerian case study.

For information relevant to this event please [click here](#)

Event: Women empowered by Learning, Knowing, and owning Human Rights as a Way of Life

Date: 6 March 2012

Organized by: NGO Committee on Human Rights

Panelists: Kishore Mandhyan (Deputy Director for Political Peace-Keeping and Humanitarian Affairs in the Executive Office of the Secretary General); Kathleen Modrowski (Dean Global College Long Island University); Shulamith Koenig (Founding President of People's Movement for Human Rights Learning (PDHRE)); Bertin Badou (Mission of Benin to the United Nations)

Theme: HR, CSO, OPWPS, MS, UN

This event discussed the transformative impact of human rights learning on communities and the process of human rights learning undertaken by individuals and communities. Panelists from diverse professional backgrounds, including non-governmental organizations, government missions, and the UN system drew from their personal experiences to explain the process of human rights learning. In each of their presentations, panelists focused on the aspects of equality, tolerance, and understanding as frameworks through which to harness human rights. By teaching human rights to communities, individuals are empowered to realize and defend their human rights. The presentation witnessed repetition of the questions, "When were your human rights first violated? When were they first realized?". By asking these questions individuals are forced to personalize and hence internalize human rights, allowing them to empathize better with the human rights needs of others and to defend their own human rights. A community representative from Mali was present at the event and explained the effect human rights learning has had on her community and how this learning is being utilized to pursue further human rights work.

For further info on the NGO Committee on Human Rights please follow this [link](#)

Event: Change Makers and Peacekeepers – Journey towards equal representation of women

Date: 7 March 2012

Organized by: UN Women

Panelists: Admiral Mark E Ferguson (US Navy Admiral, Vice Chief of Naval Ops); Lakshmi Puri (UN Women, Deputy Executive Director); Commissioner Anne-Marie Orlor, (DPKO/DFS Chief Police Adviser); Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye (DPKO/DFS Chief Military Adviser); Elizabeth Spehar (DPA Director of Europe Division)

Themes: OPWPS, PK, Part, SC, General

This panel focused narrowly on the operationalization of SCR1325 through the greater deployment of women in the military and the police. Discussion covered instruments and policy measures to increase the presence of women in the higher rankings. There was also discussion of gender specific needs of women military and police officers, with a discourse being opened on how limiting deployments to 6 months in order for female officers to return to the family, and on the example of the US Navy's "family life and work" employment principles. The panel concluded that there should be more flexibility in Peacekeeping deployments in order to facilitate greater participation of women. Comments have audience underlined that SCR 1325 is broader and must be applied holistically.

To access the UN Women website, please [click here](#)

Event: Situation of Rural Women Affected by the Great Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Power Accident

Date: 7 March 2012

Organized by: Human Rights Now

Themes: VAW, Part (pol), justice, MS, Hums

This event highlighted the poor disaster-preparedness of the Japanese Government at the time of the Great Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Power Accident, with a particular focus on the ways in which Rural Women were affected in the aftermath of the disaster. According to Kazuko Ito, Secretary General of Human Rights Now, the Japanese government failed to provide adequate care post disaster with concerns specific to women being largely ignored. Some examples of negligence highlighted included the lack of privacy/security in evacuation shelters, the occurrence of sexual violence during power blackouts, several instances of domestic violence post-evacuation reported in hotels and shelters, a lack of steady return to work and income for women in disaster affected areas and the absence of gender equitable decision-making processes after the disaster. Here, Kazuko reflected that this lack of respect shown to women in the days, weeks and months after the disaster is in fact representative of the gender inequality present in Japanese society of which continues to go unnoticed and unchallenged. The second part of the event demonstrated how gender analysis can be introduced into disaster preparedness, with the method outlined being the “upstream” (pre-disaster) inter-agency contingency planning technique. This technique includes dialogue and consensus on magnitude and type of potential disaster scenarios, undertaking of research into the existing needs and capacities of women and men, and on how women and men can best collaborate on post-disaster efforts. And in addition training including simulation exercises incorporating a gender perspective and a gendered analysis of supply planning, including who is responsible for supply distribution. Finally the panel highlighted the lack of transparency present concerning the Government’s immediate post disaster response actions and its ongoing program for reconstruction.

Please click [here](#) for further information

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Useful links

The [official website](#) of The Commission on the Status of Women

[PeaceWomen UN Monitoring: the Commission on the Status of Women](#)

The NGO Committee on the Status of Women [website](#)