

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR **PEACE & FREEDOM**



Written Statement by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for the Open Arria Formula Meeting on 5 December 2016

Theme: the Synergies between Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Dear Ambassadors:

As global violence and militarism increases, upholding women's rights and fulfill relevant state obligations are crucial steps toward building sustainable peace based on gender justice and demilitarised security.

WILPF welcomes the CEDAW Committee's recognition of States' extraterritorial human rights obligations, including in its Concluding Observations on Sweden and Canada. States' human rights obligations do not stop at their borders. Living in a globalised world, we cannot isolate human rights violations without linking them to global decisions and action steps. If states are serious about preventing conflict and human rights violations in other countries, those obligations must be fulfilled.

Realising the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda requires an integrated approach to upholding women's human rights. This approach addresses the root causes of conflict and violence, and acknowledges the many factors related to security, arms trade, militarization, and economic inequality, which impact women's rights.

Contrary to the principles of CEDAW and WPS Resolutions, current militarised approaches to conflict resolution perpetuate cycles of violence and conflict. As a result, militarism normalises and legitimises gender inequality, military action and continuation of violence. In particular, the consequences of militarisation not only violate the CEDAW Convention, among other international treaties, but also directly impede the implementation of the WPS Agenda. The perpetuation of violence is a violation of international human rights, and depending on the circumstances, can constitute an act of terrorism, transnational organised crime, a war crime, a crime against humanity, or genocide.

A year after the launch of the Global Study, the international community is well aware that gender equity is the number one predictor of peace, and feminist movement building is the number one predictor of policies on reducing violence against women. Yet we still have not

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moved beyond commitments to accomplishments in preventing conflict, promoting gender equality, and building de-militarised security mechanisms.

Allowing militarised responses to crisis only perpetuates cycles of violence and conflict. If the Security Council is serious about Women, Peace and Security, stronger action to address the root causes of violence and the militarisation of societies, including proliferation of small arms and light weapons, is required.

Therefore, the Security Council must

- a) take action to strengthen conflict prevention efforts including through concrete disarmament efforts
- b) Integrate women's human rights in all aspects of its work, promote gender equality and women's rights; and
- c) Establish formal consultative forums with women's civil society to ensure gender lens in the prioritisation, coordination, development, and implementation of policies and programmes.

All Member States should also

- d) Commit to halt war crimes;
- e) Cease arms transfers to countries that facilitate gender based violence, carry out surveillance against women human rights defenders, and oppress human rights;
- f) Develop plans to implement the SDGs, including 16.4 on illicit arms as an alternative to militarised policies.

Until and unless women's participation and rights, including economic and social rights, are supported and realised, the international community will not achieve sustainable security and peace.

We look forward to your rapid action on the points above.