



Draft guidelines on the effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs

*Input for consideration submitted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
(WILPF)*

Contents

Women's Political Participation in Peace Work	1
Gender Analysis and Women's Political Participation	2
Women's Organisations as a Political Actor	3
The Impact of Arms Proliferation on Women's Political Participation	4
The role of Funding and Austerity Measures for Women's Political Participation	5

Women's Political Participation in Peace Work

The Global Study on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) finds that women's participation in formal peace processes leads to a 35% increase in the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years¹. Relevant Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Resolutions, as well as a joint General Assembly/Security Council Resolution on Sustainable Peace, "note the substantial link between women's full and meaningful involvement in efforts to prevent, resolve and rebuild from conflict and those efforts' effectiveness and long-term sustainability of peace" (S/RES/2282, PP.22). Therefore, it is important for Member States to take concrete actions to ensure women play the fulsome role in political processes.

- Good Practice: Following significant pressure from women's organisations, on September 2014 the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC-EP) agreed to create a Gender Subcommission, which highlighted the gender dimension of the conflict and the need to address this dimension in the peace agreement².

Recommendations for Member States:

- Ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict (S/RES/1325, OP.1);

¹ Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-study>

² (2017). Summary Report: Women for Disarmament. WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/resource/women-disarmament-summary-report>

- Ensure that women are not only at the table in peace negotiations, but also in political governance, disarmament, in international processes and negotiations with International Financial Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF)³;
- Ensure that all actors, mediators, Friends Groups, and parties to the conflict guarantee that women's participation in talks is equal and meaningful, and barriers to their participation, whether these exist in law or in practice, are completely eliminated⁴
- Develop and implement temporary special measures to increase women's participation, including in peace work⁵;
- Ensure that women in politics have a right to participate and be decision-makers on the full range of political, economic and social issues⁶;
- Acknowledge the diversity of women's backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, and make sure to represent those in decision-making fora⁷;
- Develop and implement National Action Plans (NAPs) on UNSCR1325 with sustainable and allocated funding for its monitoring and implementation⁸;
- Submit national reports to human rights mechanisms on time and ensure that national legislation is harmonised with ratified instruments and international commitments⁹.

Gender Analysis and Women's Political Participation

Gender norms are part of the fabric of all societies, which play an important role in determining how men, women, boys and girls access services and rights, how much power they have over resources and how they can influence decision-making¹⁰. Stereotypes of women as victims and uncritical advocates for peace, combined with a strict division of labour in the public and private spheres, prevent women from entering official peace and post-conflict reconstruction political processes and normalise the use of force for dispute resolution. A gender analysis of national and sub-national governance and peace and security efforts is therefore essential for a comprehensive understanding of the needs and priorities of communities¹¹.

³ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

⁴ Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-study>

⁵ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

⁶ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

⁷ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

⁸ (2017). Security Council Scorecard on Women, Peace and Security: Lessons Learned from 2010-2016. WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/scorecards>

⁹ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

¹⁰ (2017). Building Inclusive Peace: Gender at the Heart of Conflict Analysis. Saferworld, WILPF, Oxfam. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/BuildingInclusivePeace-GenderHeartConflictAnalysis.pdf>

¹¹ Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-study>

- **Case-study:** When the harms suffered during conflict are not analysed because of the lack of women's political participation and a gender analysis, these processes are flawed and can cause renewed conflict. For example, in Bosnia¹², a peace agreement which contained the constitution drawn up by the perpetrators of the conflict and the absence of a comprehensive transitional justice strategy has led to the institutionalisation of nationalism and economic divisions.

Recommendations for Member States:

- Creating formal mechanisms to transfer women's demands into the decision-making and peace processes¹³;
- Strengthen gender analysis of peacebuilding work, including through the delivery of gender-sensitive and targeted programming, aimed at ensuring women's political participation across the conflict cycle¹⁴;
- Conduct a detailed mapping and understanding of local conditions with the participation of women themselves before national and international peace programmes are designed, formulated or implemented¹⁵;
- Strengthen gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated data collection, analysis and dissemination¹⁶;
- Ensure that government staff are trained on gender and on traditional and harmful concepts of masculinity and key principles of gender equality¹⁷.

Women's Organisations as a Political Actor

There is often a lack of interest by Member States to include gender and grassroots perspectives into their work, or a lack of knowledge about how to do so. There is also a lack of trust in the skills and expertise of grassroots organisations¹⁸. However, these groups play an important role in bringing about positive change in conflict settings, including by forging a new solidarity and strengthening reconstruction efforts, often at considerable personal risk to themselves and their families. Women's groups and organisations best understand the concerns and opportunities on

¹² (2016). Feminist (Re)Interpretation of the Dayton Peace Accords. WILPF. Available at:

<http://peacewomen.org/node/95559/>

¹³ Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-study>

¹⁴ Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-study>

¹⁵ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

¹⁶ (2017). Security Council Scorecard on Women, Peace and Security: Lessons Learned from 2010-2016. WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/scorecards>

¹⁷ (2017). Leveraging UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans for Local Change: Civil Society Opportunities in the MENA Region. WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Leveraging-UNSCR-1325-National-Action-Plans-for-Local-Change.pdf>

¹⁸ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

the ground and can identify, design and implement practical strategies to overcome the challenges¹⁹.

- Good practice: Over time, WILPF Cameroon trained its members and other community leaders to ensure UNSCR1325 awareness and effective advocacy. It also engaged with relevant stakeholders and demonstrated the urgent need for a NAP on UNSCR1325 in Cameroon by participating at various international forums. This led to the development of Cameroon's NAP on UNSCR1325²⁰, with a renewed commitment to increase women's political participation.

Recommendations for Member States²¹:

- Include women-led civil society in formal leadership positions within working groups, consultations, and steering committees;
- Ensure strong partnerships and meaningful dialogue with women-led civil society, including when Member States are undergoing the review under international human rights mechanisms.

The Impact of Arms Proliferation on Women's Political Participation

Throughout the history of armed conflicts, arms proliferation has had a different impact on women due to structural discrimination and inequality, paired with gender-specific violence, such as torture, sexual and gender-based violence, among others²². Conflict and the ongoing presence of arms in a country therefore significantly influences whether or not women participate in politics. In this context, women often have less access to public spaces and therefore fewer opportunities to participate in public political activities and decision-making, including peace processes²³.

- Good practice: In Nigeria, women are mobilising to prevent and address violence both around and outside of elections, as well as build networks that support women's political participation. The 2015 Women's Situation Room (WSR)²⁴ aimed to create an early warning and early response mechanism for electoral violence surrounding the March 2015 general elections. The WSR successfully responded to a number of incidents of election-related violence, making it a strong example of the feminist movement's power to strengthen women's political participation.

¹⁹ (2017). Open letter to a group of Women Civil Society Organisations in Libya. WILPF. Available at: https://wilpf.org/wilpf_statements/open-letter-from-a-group-of-women-civil-society-organisations-in-libya/

²⁰ (2016). Good Practice Case Study: Engaging the Media on the Women, peace and Security Agenda in Cameroon. WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/node/96853>

²¹ (2017). Leveraging UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans for Local Change: Civil Society Opportunities in the MENA Region. WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Leveraging-UNSCR-1325-National-Action-Plans-for-Local-Change.pdf>

²² (2017). Summary Report: Women for Disarmament. WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/resource/women-disarmament-summary-report>

²³ (2017). Building Inclusive Peace: Gender at the Heart of Conflict Analysis. Saferworld, WILPF, Oxfam. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/BuildingInclusivePeace-GenderHeartConflictAnalysis.pdf>

²⁴ (2016). Does Feminist Movement Building Reduce Violence against women?: Case-Study of Nigeria. WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/resource/does-feminist-movement-building-reduce-violence-against-women-case-study-nigeria>

Recommendations for Member States:

- Design alternative opportunities for livelihoods and jobs that do not incentivise proliferation and use of arms for economic security²⁵;
- Adopt and implement laws and comprehensive national strategies to put an end to violence against women and girls²⁶;
- Curb the flows of small arms by ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty and implementing it through enforced national laws and regulations as a way to improve the lives of women and guarantee their effective participation in all aspects of society²⁷.

The role of Funding and Austerity Measures for Women's Political Participation

Despite the benefits of investing in women, the failure to allocate sufficient resources and funds has been perhaps the most serious and persistent obstacle to women's participation over the past 15 years²⁸. Only two percent of aid to peace and security for fragile states in 2012-2013 targeted gender equality; and Member States only limitedly have begun to integrate gender equality into national budgets, with significant cuts in public health and social services-related expenditures²⁹. Conditionalities linked to funding provided international financial institutions (IFIs) also contribute to the feminisation of poverty and the deepening of gender inequalities.

Undertaking a gendered and human rights-based analysis of the impacts of macro-economic reforms imposed by IFIs, as well as developing gender-sensitive budgeting, are therefore essential to address barriers to women's participation, including by building in gender analysis of how legislation, policies, programmes and schemes meet the socio-economic, political, and other rights of women; by identifying the adequacy of budget allocations to gender sensitive policies; by evaluating the impact of these actions on women and men in all of their diversity.

- Case-study: Conditionalities imposed by IFIs, contingent on structural reforms and austerity measures have differentiated and disproportionate impacts on women's economic and social rights. These impacts pose obstacles to women's meaningful participation in decision-making processes, as documented by WILPF in Bosnia and Ukraine.³⁰

²⁵ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>

²⁶ (2017). Against Violent Masculinities and For Feminist Peace: Engaging Men and Boys. WILPF. Available at: <http://www.peacewomen.org/e-news/women-peace-and-security-e-news-june-2017>

²⁷ (2017). Summary Report: Women for Disarmament. WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/resource/women-disarmament-summary-report>

²⁸ Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-study>

²⁹ (2016). Why does Women, Peace and Security Financing matters? WILPF. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/WPS-Financing-Lessons-Learned>

³⁰ (2017). Obstacles to Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Efforts in Ukraine. WILPF. Available at: https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/UKRAINE.UPR_JointSubmission-30-Mar-2017.pdf
A Feminist Perspective on Post-Conflict Restructuring and Recovery: The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Feminist-political-economy-ENG-FINAL.pdf>

Recommendations for Member States:

- Fund capacity-building programmes for women to enable women to participate fully in the political and economic life of their societies³¹;
- Prioritise investments in accessible, affordable and quality social infrastructure and essential services that reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care and domestic work, and that enable their full participation in politics³²;
- Ensure adequate budgetary allocation to ensure social safety nets and innovative social protection floors³³;
- Analyse the current dominant strategies and policy frameworks for economic reform and their role in perpetuating structural inequalities³⁴;
- Develop a mechanism for human rights and gender impact assessments of macroeconomic reforms before approval of any strategy or reform program and ensure specific gender analysis on all conditionalities linked to lending agreements with IFIs or other lending institutions before approval³⁵;
- Ensure meaningful consultations with civil and wider society, including women and women civil society in the negotiation process and implementation of macro-economic reform programs³⁶;
- Provide effective gender budgeting on all aspects of national and international foreign policy by including gender impact assessments and by including women in project design, implementation and follow-up³⁷.

³¹ (2016). Women, Peace and Security Financing Workshop. WILPF. Available at:

<http://peacewomen.org/resource/women-peace-and-security-financing-workshop-report>

³² (2015). Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. UN Women. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Action%20Plan%20on%20Financing%20Gender%20Equality.pdf>

³³ Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325. UN Women. Available at: <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-study>

³⁴ <http://peacewomen.org/security-council/2015-high-level-review-global-stud>

³⁵ A Feminist Perspective on Post-Conflict Restructuring and Recovery: The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Feminist-political-economy-ENG-FINAL.pdf>

³⁶ A Feminist Perspective on Post-Conflict Restructuring and Recovery: The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Feminist-political-economy-ENG-FINAL.pdf>

³⁷ (2017). What Member States can do to ensure Women's Meaningful Participation in the UN System? WILPF. Available at: <https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BOOKLET-3-Member-States-online.pdf>