

GENDER-RESPONSIVE PEACE BUILDING: MOVING FROM PLANNING TO PROGRESS

DRAFT Wilton Park Speech for 18 March 2013

Wilton Park

Sussex UK

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I deeply regret that I can not be with you in person. I send you all my very best wishes for a successful meeting and I thank you very much for having invited me. I thank our partners, Wilton Park, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Civil Military Centre (ACMC) for your efforts on such an important issue.

This meeting comes at the right moment. Two important conflict and development frameworks are under negotiation— the New Deal and post-2015. Advancing women’s participation in peacebuilding is crucial to both of these frameworks.

During my tenure as Executive Director of UN Women, I have been privileged to meet women

from many conflict-affected countries. I am awed by their strength, courage and sense of purpose and let me tell you a bit about it.

A typical experience for women leaders when conflict erupts is that their courage and actions are all too often followed by marginalization from formal power processes. Let me illustrate this with a story from Mali.

When rebels stormed into Timbuktu in April last year they immediately forced the Deputy Mayor, Maiga Haziza Mint Kadra out of her office. Maiga fortunately escaped to the south

—but not before seeing women raped and children abducted to serve as soldiers or sex slaves.

Once she escaped to the South she immediately became active as a mediator and community leader and began to engage in valuable work to make visible women's experience of the conflict. She organized a fact-finding mission of Municipal leaders in June 2012 to review the situation of refugee camps in Burkina Faso and elsewhere.

She delivered alarming news about the destitution of women and girl refugees who were turning to sex work for survival. Later, she worked behind the scenes in the North to encourage rebel leaders to join the negotiations in Ouagadougou.

She is a natural mediator. But was this peace leader invited to the talks in Ouagadougou or other efforts at conflict resolution by international or national actors?

No.

Women around the world every day make significant contributions to conflict resolution and community reconciliation, but they are not found at the peace table. The exclusion of women from these processes can have serious consequences.

Everywhere women are prevented from engaging in their usual economic activities, including food production, compounding the extreme food security crisis we see. It is women who manage water resources and family well-being.

In the recovery process women's practical roles must be supported if there is to be swift and effective resumption of normal life. Beyond that, crimes against women and children, including sexual violence, have severe implications for health, economic stability and justice. If there is no attempt to condemn these crimes and to provide redress to survivors, efforts to reassert the rule of law are undermined, and this fosters a culture of impunity.

We just successfully concluded the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The theme was preventing and ending violence against women and girls. All five Security Council resolutions on women peace and security were recognised, as were resolutions on children and armed conflict. Organised sexual violence in conflict was recognised as an issue for which there cannot be amnesty. This session of the CSW was very close to my heart and I knew we needed to do our utmost to come to a successful conclusion. As the Secretary-General stated at the conclusion of the CSW: “ Violence against women is a heinous human rights violation, global menace, a public health threat and a moral outrage. No matter where she

lives, no matter what her culture, no matter what her society, every woman and girl is entitled to live free of fear. She has the universal human right to be free from all forms of violence so as to fulfill her full potential and dreams for the future.”

This conclusion represents progress and there has certainly been progress on other fronts. In fact, the creation of UN Women marked a significant step forward in terms of UN system-wide coherence on women’s empowerment and gender equality. UN Women’s new mandate and increased presence at the country level will

enable us to fulfill our role to lead and coordinate the UN system on gender equality.

The Secretary-General's Seven Point Action Plan is a truly significant achievement for the UN. It is the culmination of a decade of pushing for increased UN accountability for the women, peace and security agenda. It binds all parts of the UN's peacebuilding architecture to concrete targets and actions that are expected to drive deeper institutional changes to make all aspects of peacebuilding gender-equal.

This is a robust policy framework. There is no need to develop new norms and policies in this area. We need to see accelerated and consistent implementation of existing agreements.

Now let me turn to specific areas and outline some issues that should be addressed in the next few days:

The first is women's participation in peace negotiations and donor conferences.

When the Seven Point Action plan was adopted by the UN in 2010, we assumed that appointing a woman as a UN chief mediator would be one of the easier targets to meet. More broadly, formal mediation processes remain almost completely closed to women's participation.

In 2011, only 4 out of 14 UN-supported mediation processes had any women members in the negotiating parties.

No non-governmental women leaders participated in any of the eight meetings held in 2011 and 2012 by 'Friends' or 'Contact

Groups' that support a particular crisis or peace process.¹

Women's continued absence from these forums reduces the chances that wealth sharing, power sharing, security arrangements and other key components of a peace agreement will respond to the specific needs and capacities of women and girls.

Women's participation in other high level forums, such as donor conferences for fragile states, has also been inadequate. In the first half

¹ UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security (S/2012/732)

of 2012, women's civil society representatives had participated in only one third of donor conferences.² There was no mention of women's perspectives in the communique of the recent Addis conference for Mali. As you are all aware, funding allocations are made at donor conferences. How can post-conflict financing respond to women's needs if women are not there to defend their priorities?

We need to ensure women's access to forums beyond peace processes. I call on you to do your utmost to ensure there is a seat at the table for women in high level meetings.

² UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on Peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict (S/2012/746)

And I hope you will come up with ideas for action to help women break through the barricaded doors to the peace table and related negotiations.

The second issue on which there has been slow progress is **financing**.

One of the specific targets of the SG's 7 Point Action Plan is that at least fifteen per cent of the UN's post-conflict recovery funding should be allocated for gender equality and women's empowerment. Inside the UN, we have been

challenged to devise a system to track expenditure across different entities, which all have different financial management systems. We are working with the Peacebuilding Support Office and UNDP to produce a baseline before the middle of the year so we can assess how close we are to meeting this target.

Donor countries have a particular role to play in helping us meet the target of fifteen per cent. I urge bilateral voluntary contributions from donor countries to include a target for spending on women's empowerment and gender equality.

There is nothing like a target to generate action and measure action!

The third challenge is **good governance**.

Post-conflict countries sometimes do relatively well to ensure women's participation in representative politics – particularly if there is a quota. However there is a great deal more to governance than increasing the numbers of women in representative office.

What is significant for peace and inclusive recovery is the strength of women's constituencies for peace and democracy. And

for constituencies to have an impact, women's organizations need to be strengthened in fragile state contexts.

Very few opportunities exist for women's grassroots organizations to access the type of support needed to make a difference in their communities and invest in peace and community welfare. These women's community organizations and networks all too often form the backbone of conflict-affected communities where men have fled to join armed forces or been killed.

These women provide basic services, support survivors of sexual violence and rebuild the social fabric that has been torn apart by war. In the middle of all this, do we really expect these women to have the time and skills required to draft funding proposals and donor reports? Are women community leaders able to access training opportunities on grant writing and budgeting? How does the UN even go about establishing what women's capacity building needs are before embarking on planning and programming?

Resources for programmatic and operational capacity building of civil society organizations are insufficient. More funding and capacity building must be directed to women's organizations at the local level.

Another feature of fragile state governance reform is the rebuilding of basic public services. Women are at the frontline of service delivery – I mean the police officers, registration officials, court clerks, teachers, medical attendants, agricultural extension agents -- deliver better quality services to both men and women. They are important role models for women's public

engagement, representing brighter futures for the women and children with whom they interact.

In Liberia, UN Women has supported the training and employment of women in rural areas as financial services extension agents. In Kenya and Timor Leste, bilateral donors promoted the training of women as water utility agents. Public service employment for women provides a stable and formal source of income for individual women, while for the community, this can provide a substantial boost to recovery.

Yet we know very little about the proportion of these positions held by women in fragile state contexts, and we do know that women's recruitment to these sectors is often not a top priority. We need special measures to fast-track recruitment of women to public service roles and ensure equal access to training opportunities.

The fourth challenge is the **rule of law**.

Without post-conflict justice for women, the perpetrators of conflict move back to homes and communities – and so does the violence.

And it is there that women pay the price. High

levels of post-conflict insecurity undermine development and block women's participation in economic, social and political recovery.

What can be done? Obviously there have to be more prosecutions and convictions, but there is another step prior to that: breaking the silence and ignorance about the abuses women experience. UN Women has for this reason sent a gender expert or a sexual violence investigator to every international Commission of Inquiry since the 2009 Commission of Inquiry for the stadium violence in Guinea Conakry.

You can see the impact of this effort in the growing awareness of the extent and severity of sexual violence in conflict – most recently in the reports of the Commission of Inquiry for Syria. But there are very few sexual violence investigators qualified to deal with this issue in conflict.

For this reason we have worked with our intergovernmental partner ‘Justice Rapid Response’ to train, roster and deploy skilled sexual and gender crimes investigators international and national accountability mechanisms. We commend the tremendously

increased attention brought recently by the UK's initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflict, and we stand in support of SRSG Bangura's efforts in this regard.

We also note that sexual violence is not the only abuse that women face during and after conflict, and rule of law reforms must address the entire range, from attacks on women human rights defenders and journalists, to refusal to allow returning women refugees and IDPs to access their spouse's property.

We need integrated responses that bring legal aid, services, and reparations for victims.

Reparations for war crimes against women can link redress for individuals with efforts to eliminate economic and social marginalization, including through increased access to health, education, property rights and broader development efforts.

Any discussion of transitional justice – including here tomorrow – should make proposals for how to build the funding base for reparations efforts, including for the ICC's

Trust Fund for Victims but equally and importantly within countries themselves.

The fifth challenge is **economic recovery**.

Economic recovery in post-conflict contexts is key to ensuing stability. Much more remains to be done.

Research commissioned by UN Women showed that increases in the labour force participation of women in conflict affected areas are associated with increases not only in overall household welfare, but in community welfare too. A review of 202 multi-partner trust funds

found that attention to gender specific needs in economic recovery programmes is very low - less than eight per cent!

The UN has set itself a 'range of parity' target in temporary employment programmes post conflict, which means attempting to ensure that neither sex receives more than 60 per cent of employment days in these food-for-work or cash-for-work programmes. There are some good cases -- for example, in the post earthquake recovery efforts in Haiti about 40 percent of the beneficiaries of paid rubble

removal programmes were women. We have to make this consistent elsewhere.

Investment in these types of programmes yields very high returns. I urge you to consider the integration of these principles into your own programming and policy as bilateral and multilateral donors and development agencies.

We need to work much more on the special measures to be taken urgently to help stimulate women's economic activities. We at UN Women look forward to the discussions on

economic recovery to hear your ideas and answers.

To recap and conclude, the UN has challenged itself to make meaningful changes in its approach to peacebuilding, so that it addresses structural obstacles to women's effective participation. We are eager to hear from Member States and other multilateral organizations what they have done.

If we need to take on tougher targets and stricter timelines, we will. We urge other actors to consider doing the same. We all have a

commitment to put an end to cycles of conflict and to support justice and human progress – and our parallel work on the New Deal for Fragile States and the post 2015 framework call for creative thinking in this regard.

All of us here are in positions to make some of these things happen. It is what women in conflict contexts expect of us. Do it!

UN Women looks forward to working together with all of you to this end. Thank you.