

## **WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT**

### **Agreed conclusions<sup>1</sup>**

The Commission on the Status of Women:

Reaffirms the Beijing Platform for Action, notably chapter IV.E on women and armed conflict;

Proposes the following, taking into account the Commission's conclusions on human rights of women, violence against women and the girl child, in order to accelerate the implementation of the strategic objectives of chapter IV.E:

#### ***A. Ensuring gender-sensitive justice***

##### Actions to be taken by Governments:

- Ensure that national legal systems provide accessible and gender-sensitive avenues of redress for victims of armed conflict;
- Ensure that a gender-sensitive perspective is integrated in the drafting and interpretation of international law and domestic legislation, including for the protection of women and girls in armed conflict;
- Support efforts to create an international criminal court that integrates a gender perspective in its statute and functioning, enabling a gender-sensitive interpretation and application of the statute;
- Provide and disseminate to the public in local languages, including to women's groups and non-governmental organizations, information on the jurisdiction and procedures for accessing the ad hoc war crimes tribunals, human rights treaty bodies and all other relevant mechanisms; this information should be widely and actively disseminated in cooperation with the United Nations system and on-governmental organizations;
- Protect children in situations of armed conflict, especially the girl child, against participation, recruitment, rape and sexual exploitation through adherence to the applicable principles of international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and national legislation;
- Promote a gender balance and gender expertise in all relevant international bodies, at all times, including the International Law Commission, the ad hoc war crimes tribunals and

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<sup>1</sup> E/1998/27 - E/CN.6/1998/12

the human rights treaty bodies, having due regard for the principle of equitable geographical distribution;

- Examine and consider modifying existing legal definitions and standards to ensure that they encompass concerns of all women and girls affected by armed conflict, and, in particular, reaffirm that rape, systematic rape and sexual slavery in armed conflict constitute war crimes;
- Ensure that where crimes of sexual violence are committed in situations of conflict, all perpetrators, including those among United Nations and international peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel, are prosecuted.

### ***B. Specific needs of women affected by armed conflict***

#### Actions to be taken by Governments and international organizations:

- Collect and provide information on violations of the human rights of women under foreign occupation and take steps to ensure the full enjoyment of the human rights of these women;
- Take account of the impact of armed conflict on the health of all women and introduce measures to address the full range of women's health needs, including those of women with disabilities, and the psychological needs arising from trauma stemming from sexual abuses and the effects of violations of their rights;
- Address the specific needs and concerns of women refugees and displaced persons and ensure appropriate training for relevant bodies to address the specific needs and concerns of women refugees, who should receive special protection, including the proper design and location of camps and the adequate staffing of camps;
- Recognize the importance of fully involving women in designing rehabilitation policies in post-conflict situations and take steps to assist household economies, including the social and economic conditions of women-headed households and widows;
- Ensure the physical safety and security of all refugee women and girls and those internally displaced by, inter alia, adequately providing for and increasing their access to the right of return to their country or place of origin, and the participation of women in the committees responsible for the management of the camp(s), and ensure that camps are designed in accordance with the 1995 Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and arrange for gender-sensitive legal, social and medical services in camps, and for the talents and capabilities of refugee and displaced women and girls to be fully integrated in the development and implementation of these programmes while they are in these camps;
- Provide refugee victims of sexual violence and their families with adequate medical and psychosocial care, including culturally sensitive counselling, and ensure confidentiality;
- Take measures in accordance with international law with a view to alleviating any negative impact of economic sanctions on women and children;

- Mainstream a gender perspective, as appropriate, into national immigration and asylum policies, regulations and practices, in order to extend protection to those women whose claim for protection is based on gender-related persecution;
- Provide and strengthen assistance to all women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, including through non-governmental organizations, as appropriate. Refugee women and men must have equal rights in the administration and distribution of goods and services in the camps;
- Condemn and bring to an immediate end massive violations of human rights, especially in the form of genocide, and ethnic cleansing as a strategy of war, and its consequences, such as rape, including systematic rape of women in war situations;
- Encourage rehabilitation centres to ensure that the knowledge and professions of displaced and refugee people are utilized;
- Mainstream a gender perspective into humanitarian responses to crises and armed conflicts and into post-conflict reconstruction activities.

***C. Increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping, peace-building, pre- and post-conflict decision-making, conflict prevention, post-conflict resolution and reconstruction***

Actions to be taken by Governments and international and regional intergovernmental institutions:

- Increase, including through measures of affirmative action, women's participation and leadership in decision-making and in preventing conflict;
- Mainstream a gender perspective into peace-promoting activities at all levels as well as humanitarian and peace-building policies, including through gender analysis and the encouragement of the participation of more female personnel at all levels, in particular at senior or high levels in field missions, and monitor and review such policies as appropriate, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution where applicable;
- Recognize and support women's non-governmental organizations, particularly at the grass-roots level, in respect of their preventing conflict, including early warning and peace-building;
- Take note of the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace, as well as the post-Beijing follow-up Kigali Declaration on Peace, Gender and Development, and A Plan of Action for Conflict-affected Areas, and if appropriate, convene conferences to assess progress and promote implementation;
- Regional research and training institutes should carry out research on the role of women in conflict resolution and identify and analyse policies and action programmes;
- Create mechanisms to encourage more women candidates with the appropriate qualifications to apply for judicial, prosecutorial and other positions in all relevant

international bodies, in order to achieve gender balance on the basis of equitable geographical distribution;

- Nominate and appoint more women as special representatives in conflict resolution, taking due consideration of the principle of equitable geographical distribution;
- Enhance the role of women in bilateral preventive diplomacy efforts as well as those undertaken by the United Nations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;
- Ensure that the participants in humanitarian missions and in peacekeeping operations, both military and civilian, are given specific gender-sensitive training;
- Develop and implement innovative strategies to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping operations and invite the Secretary-General to analyse their effectiveness in his reports on peacekeeping operations, if appropriate, based on an expert group meeting;
- Mainstream a gender perspective into bilateral and multilateral peace-building discussions and promotion of social development.

#### ***D. Preventing conflict and promoting a culture of peace***

Actions to be taken by Governments, the international community and civil society, as appropriate:

- Integrate a gender perspective into foreign policies and adjust policies accordingly;
- Support the establishment of women-for-peace networks;
- Discourage the adoption of and refrain from any unilateral measure that is not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, in particular women and children, that hinders their well-being and that creates obstacles to the full enjoyment of their human rights;
- Ensure that education, including teacher training, promotes peace, respect for human rights and gender-sensitivity, tolerance for diversity, including cultural and religious diversity, and pluralism;
- Encourage the incorporation of relevant international humanitarian law principles and their interpretation from a gender perspective into national legal systems;
- Encourage and support the participation of young people in programmes, seminars and workshops on conflict resolution and human rights, negotiations for the peaceful settlement of disputes and the importance of a gender perspective in the promotion of a culture of peace, development and human rights of women;

- Strengthen ongoing efforts to train international peacekeeping forces on human rights and gender-sensitivity, provide training on codes of conduct and prevention of violence against women, ensuring that trainers include civilians, women and experts in gender issues, and monitor the impact of this training;
- Enhance the culture of peace and the peaceful settlement of armed conflicts, including through mass media, audio and video as appropriate;
- Draw upon and utilize the expertise of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Children's Fund for the preparation of materials for the training of United Nations peacekeepers;
- Continue to make resources available nationally and internationally for prevention of conflict and ensure women's participation in the elaboration and implementation of strategies for preventing conflict;
- Recognize and support the work done by national machineries for the advancement of women and by non-governmental organizations and work towards mobilizing the action necessary to encourage the achievement by women of a critical mass at the national cabinet level in key ministries and departments and in international organizations that make or influence policy with regard to matters related to collective peace and security.

Actions to be taken by the United Nations:

- Acknowledge and support the vital work of non-governmental organizations in the field of peace in efforts towards preventing conflict and for peace-building;
- Organize programmes and seminars to sensitize community leaders and women on the important role that women should play in developing a culture of peace in society.

***E. Disarmament measures, illicit arms trafficking, landmines and small arms***

Actions to be taken by Governments:

- In order to alleviate the suffering of women and children caused by landmines, work towards the objective of eliminating anti-personnel landmines; and in this regard take due note of the conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and its implementation by those States that become parties to it;
- Join international efforts to elaborate international policies to prohibit illicit traffic, trade and transfer of small arms, and to control their excessive production, with a view to alleviating the suffering of women and children in the situation of armed conflict;
- Provide landmine awareness campaigns or classes in close cooperation with communities and community leaders formally and informally, making them accessible to women in

afflicted areas, and provide resources and assistance for landmine clearance and share technology and information so that local populations can engage effectively in the safe clearance of landmines;

- Support programmes for the rehabilitation and social integration of women victims of anti-personnel landmines, and demining and mine awareness activities;
- Encourage as appropriate the role of women in the peace movement, working towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control including disarmament of all types of weapons of mass destruction;
- Work to prevent and put an end to aggression and all forms of armed conflict, thereby promoting a culture of peace.