



**Arria Formula Meeting - Synergies between SC Resolutions on Women Peace and Security and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

**UN Headquarters, New York; December 5, 2016**

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Good morning! Thank you to H.E. Ambassador Elbio Roselli and the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the UN for hosting this Arria Formula Meeting and to my fellow briefers UN Women Deputy Executive Director Mr. Yannick Glemarec, Ms Pramila Patten, Chair of the CEDAW Task Force on General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (GR 30). Special thanks to Switzerland for supporting our advocacy to use CEDAW GR 30 as a complementary accountability mechanism to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) resolutions.

I am going to present the views of our organization the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders on why CEDAW is important in our work as civil society in implementing the Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. We are a network of women's organizations and civil society groups from more than 30 countries- mostly conflict-affected countries - dedicated to implementing the WPS resolutions. Our members and partners are at the forefront of national action planning on the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and other aspects of the WPS agenda.

The CEDAW, particularly GR 30 is important to our work in civil society in implementing the WPS resolutions because:

1. CEDAW has a very established reporting and review process, which requires all the 189 States parties to report on measures they have adopted to implement the Convention in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. Civil society also present shadow reports to the CEDAW Committee, which are given as much value as the States parties' reports. The shadow reports inform the constructive dialogues that the CEDAW Committee holds with States parties.
2. There is a very strong ownership of CEDAW among women civil society organizations. In many countries, there are civil society-led CEDAW Watch Groups and CEDAW Monitoring Committees. Therefore, civil society structures that conduct systematic monitoring of women's rights, gender equality, peace and security policies exist.

Following are some of the specific provisions in GR 30 that strengthen and support civil society,

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[Member States and UN] efforts to implement the WPS resolutions:

1. GR 30 includes non-State actors --although they cannot place obligations on them – GR 30 urges non-State actors to respect women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situations and to prohibit all forms of gender-based violence (Swaine, A. & O’Rourke, C., 2015). This is important for us in civil society because we hold everyone accountable – the Member States, the UN, private sector, including ourselves and most certainly the non-State armed actors. GR 30 is a strong instrument that highlights the necessity to gather and share information on abuses or violations of peace agreements committed by non-state armed groups. This is also in line with operational paragraph 11 of UNSCR 2106 that “Emphasizes the important role that can be played by women, civil society and women’s organizations and community leaders in exerting influence over parties to armed conflict with respect to addressing sexual violence.”

GR 30 and UNSCR 2106 acknowledge the work that GNWP members in Rutshuru Territory, North Kivu, DRC who are facilitating community peacebuilding dialogues with former Mai Mai and M 23.

2. GR 30 highlights the correlation between increased incidence of gender-based violence and discrimination and outbreak of conflict (Swaine, A. & O’Rourke, C., 2015). As we all know, gender inequality is one of the drivers of conflict. For example, high 'bride price' fuels cattle raiding and conflict between tribes. It also encourages corruption, as politicians and public officials use public money to buy cattle they need for marriage. In certain places, women may be given to other families, tribes or communities to settle disputes or to compensate for a crime against the family.
7. GR 30 draws attention to the role of conflict in exacerbating existing gender inequalities, which heightens the risk of gender-based violence for women and girls. It captures how women and girls experience sexual violence as a war tactic; and how such violence impacts on women’s participation in public life (Swaine, A. & O’Rourke, C., 2015). It recognizes the continuities between gender-based violence occurring before, during and after the conflict. This is critical for us in civil society as oftentimes, violence against women and girls continue even after the signing of peace agreements, even after the guns are silenced.
4. GR 30 is also in line with UNSCR 2122 (2013) as they both highlight the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty and both noted the gendered impacts of the proliferation of arms (Swaine, A. & O’Rourke, C., 2015) as well as the contribution that the implementation of the Treaty can make in reducing violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations.
5. The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse which is addressed by the WPS resolutions particularly 1820, 1888, 1960, 2106, 2242 which provide accountability and zero tolerance for SEA by UN personnel. GR 30 extends the range of actors accountable on this issue to include not only peacekeeping forces but also national security forces, border police, immigration officials and humanitarian actors. This reinforces the accountability to the issue of SEA and makes the response more comprehensive.

6. On the issue of participation in peace negotiations, peace operations, mediation and in political decision-making, GR 30 reaffirms the need to have a critical mass of women and offers practical advice such as the use of quotas; and organizing leadership training for women to ensure their effective participation in political and peace processes.
7. GR 30 also reinforces the provision for the full range of sexual and reproductive services elaborated in UNSCR 2122. This is important since it is during conflicts that infrastructures breakdown and health care services become unavailable.

Since the adoption of CEDAW GR 30 in October 2013, at least 25 States parties (have reported to CEDAW regarding their implementation of the WPS resolutions. A number of these countries are on the Security Council agenda.

The CEDAW Committee has raised questions and made recommendations to States parties regarding the:

1. Need to develop and implement National Action Plans including by providing adequate resources for the implementation; and establishing monitoring and evaluation systems;
2. Civil society's participation in national action planning processes is crucial;
3. Participation of women at all stages of the peace process in national reconciliation and all reconstruction initiatives, as well as in transitional justice processes, in particular at the decision-making level;
4. Inclusion of women from local communities, internally displaced and refugee populations;
5. Adoption strategies to prevent any setback for women's rights in the peace negotiations.

When used together, the WPS resolutions and CEDAW provide a more comprehensive understanding and response to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence wherein the States take the necessary measures and the CEDAW Committee takes on the monitoring task.

We have produced case studies on how civil society have used GR 30 in their advocacy for the effective implementation of the WPS resolutions. We brought some copies and they are also available on the GNWP website.

As already mentioned by my fellow briefers, there is a great need to enhance system-wide accountability, coordination and coherence in order to effectively accelerate implementation of the WPS agenda. To contribute to this, Member States should "ratify, remove reservations to, and fully implement CEDAW, and report on the implementation of obligations relating to women, peace and security as part of their regular reporting to the CEDAW Committee (Coomaraswamy, 2015).

This Arria Formula meeting and the subsequent efforts in implementing the WPS resolutions and CEDAW together is a response to the recommendation from the 2015 Global Study to pursue avenues to strengthen interaction and information flows across the entire [UN] system, and take efforts to limit the fragmentation and silos that can hamper effective response.

GR 30 and the WPS resolutions support and reinforce each other in various ways and are most effective when used together.

We sincerely hope that the Security Council will consider adopting a presidential statement or a resolution to encourage the use of CEDAW GR 30 by Member States to report on their implementation of UNSCR 1325, 1820 and the supporting resolutions.

Thank you.

## References

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