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Recommendations of 1325 Civil Society Consultations on the U.S. National Action Plan

Between 23 September and 22 October 2011, the U.S. Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) held five civil society consultations with the Department of State's Office of Women's Global Issues on the formulation of the U.S. National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, due to be finalized in December 2011. The consultations resulted in 64 concrete recommendations, listed below, relevant to UN SCR 1325 implementation internationally, domestically, or both. In total, the recommendations provoke a rethinking of how, as a country, the U.S. defines peace and security, especially in terms of women's experience of conflict and violence.

The consultation validated the stated overall goal of the U.S. SCR 1325 NAP to make "women equal partners in peace" while also stressing the centrality of both external and domestic applications to achieve this aim. For ease of reference, the findings and recommendations from the consultations are organized into four categories, three of which directly relate to the pillars as identified in the U.S. SCR 1325 NAP and adopt the definition of the resolution as such: Participation; Protection (sub-divided into violence against women; women in the military and military families; the environment; and immigrant and refugee asylum); and Prevention, including human security and militarization, economic security, and education. A fourth category is Process, including monitoring implementation of the NAP. When relevant, recommendations have been broken down into "International," "International and National" and "National; in all contexts, participants felt the U.S. should lead by its founding principles of human rights for all, whether acting in domestic or international settings.

The U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (UN SCR 1325) should seek to:

Regarding the Process of the UN SCR 1325 NAP Development, Implementation, and Monitoring

1. Adopt a human rights-based, human-security framework, including international humanitarian law and human rights standards. To further integrate the NAP with other U.S. human rights commitments, monitoring progress on the U.S. 1325 NAP implementation should be included in reporting obligations for treaties to which the U.S. is a signatory and the Universal Period Review (UPR) process on human rights implementation across treaties.
2. Expand the current workgroup on NAP development and implementation to a wider circle of agencies, including those with globally-focused initiatives, for more coordinated and comprehensive domestic and international implementation. Department representation should include Justice, Homeland Security, Education, Health and Human Services, Commerce and Labor, Agriculture, Energy, and the

Environmental Protection Agency, among others. Also include the domestically-focused President's Council on Women and Girls.

3. Include an affirmative responsibility to report on progress annually across governmental agencies and departments.
4. Create a taskforce within the NAP process to formally monitor and evaluate implementation. Membership should be comprised of one-third government; one-third civil society (domestic and international representation); and one-third experts on women, peace and security.
5. Promote transparency by including a comprehensive communications plan, including a campaign to educate the public about 1325 and the effects of war on women and children. Organize annual/regular consultations as a follow-up to the present process in order to educate larger civil society and domestic audiences on the importance of SCR 1325 and implementation progress of the U.S. NAP.
6. Identify and replicate best practice models for implementation activities, and ensure the full spectrum of women (the poor, the disabled, and those marginalized by race, language, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or HIV/AIDS status, among others) participate and benefit from implementation.
7. Adequately fund the 1325 NAP, including its monitoring mechanisms, and include specific benchmarks, accountabilities and timelines. Adopt indicators, as based on the 26 global indicators, to track progress.
8. Mandate a gender impact analysis be completed for any project over a certain amount to be spent by the U.S. government, domestically or internationally. Institute gender-responsive budgeting for local, national and international expenditures.

Regarding Women's Participation at All Levels of Decision Making, Internationally

9. Ensure women's protection for participation in all peace processes, post-conflict negotiations, development, and political processes. Use best practices in this regard, including soliciting local NGOs to serve as liaisons for women's protection and security.
10. Systematize and benchmark women's participation in peace negotiations in critical mass numbers. Hold embassies accountable for the inclusion of women's priorities and representation, and mandate all U.S.-supported peace processes include a quota for participation of women civil society leaders.
11. Use best-practice models to support the inclusion of diverse and marginalized women, including the poor, rural women, women with disabilities, and the HIV/AIDS-positive, among others. Emphasize leadership, agency, and the fundamental rights of these women, rather than exclusively focusing on victim assistance and protection issues.

Internationally and Nationally

12. Support a Fifth UN World Conference on Women and create transnational global networks and clearinghouses on women's participation for shared resources and best practices.
13. Establish and enforce quotas for women's leadership in private and public sectors (including corporate boards, executive appointments and elected positions). Ensure women's adequate representation in the judiciary, the security sector, and in foreign relations.
14. Support women's grassroots organizing and leadership, providing networking and mentoring opportunities for women's transition from informal to formal engagement.
15. Support civic education, rights awareness, and empowerment, at all levels of education, using the media as necessary to combat negative stereotypes and inspire women to run for office with the support of men.
16. Support the strengthening—and as necessary (re)constitution—of safety nets and social supports necessary for women to participate, including funding for child/ elder care, secure transportation, and capacity building which are vital for women participation in decision-making roles.

Nationally

17. Support the immediate U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.
18. Support the full funding of Commissions on the Status of Women at the federal and state levels with a mandate to promote women's political activity, raise awareness of rights, and rectify negative societal gender stereotypes. Use these mechanisms to monitor implementation of the U.S. SCR 1325 NAP.
19. Support electoral and campaign finance reform to encourage women and minorities to run for office, including subsidized training to run for office and a centralized database for networking and mentorship opportunities.

Regarding the Protection of Women and Women's Rights

20. Support the immediate U.S. ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and serve as a model for ending impunity and strengthening transparent, impartial justice mechanisms.
21. Support the immediate U.S. ratification of CEDAW to ensure international human rights standards for women are implemented from the global to the national to the local and address family violence and violence against women as a human rights violation.

Internationally

22. Include explicit provisions in all status of forces agreements (SOFAs) for securing the rights of women and those affected by the presence of U.S. troops, military trainings, maneuvers, and off-duty activities. Women who are knowledgeable and concerned about women's issues—from the United States and nations that “host” U.S. bases—should be active participants in negotiating future agreements like SOFA/VFA, in line with the provisions of UN SCR 1325.
23. Eliminate diplomatic immunity in sex cases for private contractors and others, and enforce a zero tolerance policy for sex trafficking by private contractors and military personnel, including accountability for perpetrators. Secure additional funding for independent prosecutors.
24. Mandate the training of military personnel on gender and gender security issues before deployment. Tie gender responsiveness to performance reviews and include accountability measures and consequences for non-compliance. Use men to educate other men on these issues.
25. Ensure the full and equal participation of women in the formulation of the terms of social order that provide for the assurance of criminal responsibility for all gender crimes and crimes against civil populations.
26. Ensure transitional justice addresses crimes against women, especially but not exclusively sexual violence as acts of war/crimes against humanity, and ensure reparation programs are gender-sensitive.

Internationally and Nationally

27. Increase women in military and police, and improve gender ratios in peacekeeping forces.
28. In line with the City of Joy program in the Democratic Republic of Congo, provide holistic services, protection, and safe havens for survivors of sexual violence, including sex trafficking and prostitution, internationally and domestically, ensuring comprehensive services that address the trauma of violence and mitigate the financial impact of violence.
29. Engage men in ending violence against women, and create public awareness campaigns through media and information and communications technologies aimed at reducing the stigma of victims of sexual violence and redefining violent masculinities.
30. Include those most directly affected by violence at all decision-making tables, especially in regards to prevention and protection measures.
31. Recognize and address the link between small arms and light weapons proliferation, internationally and in domestic urban centers, and violence against women.

Nationally

32. Align the Uniform Code of Military Justice with the Palermo Protocol and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to protect children forced into sex trafficking and situations of abuse.
33. Hold responsible parties accountable for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in regards to legislative and institutional reform to address the protection of victims of domestic violence and their children, and ratify the American Convention on Human Rights.
34. Raise awareness through school curriculums of multiple oppressions, including discrimination based on gender, race, class, sex, gender, sexual preference, HIV/AIDS status and disability status. Include attention to the status and treatment of refugees and immigrants.
35. Mandate training for police and law enforcement on racism, sexism, and on cultural sensitivity, as well as human rights generally and non-violent intervention techniques.
36. Support the reform of social systems to focus on rehabilitation in lieu of incarceration; provide rehabilitation for incarcerated women reuniting with children; expunge female offenders' criminal records for nonviolent victimless offenses. Support the reform of criminal penalties to focus on consumers of prostitution, rather than sex workers themselves, and better identify and protect victims of forced prostitution and sex trafficking.

In Regards to Women in the Military and Military Families

37. Include more women in leadership positions in the military forces.
38. Protect all women in service from sexual assault and harassment. Reform the current internal lack of justice, and have resources to deal with immediate and long-term impacts on survivors, including the provision of civilian life skills to assist with reintegration.
39. Replicate successful programs, such as that in Portland, Oregon, for returning women veterans, especially survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Protect these programs from federal and state budget cuts.
40. Ensure survivors of sexual assault in the military are provided leadership positions in critical mass numbers in prevention efforts.
41. Recognize and provide the social protection of women caregivers and the soldiers for whom they care.

In Regards to the Environment, Weapons Use and Manufacture

42. Recommend the U.S. immediately sign onto the UN framework on climate change, the Kyoto Protocol.
43. Support the enactment of government subsidies for U.S. energy independence through renewable energy and green sources domestically, and invest in alternative

energy sources in post–conflict reconstruction efforts.

44. Support a ban on the export of U.S. environmental toxins to countries with weaker environmental laws than our own.
45. Support the enforcement, through stronger regulations and penalties for non-compliance, responsibility for mitigating effects of weapons pollution and restoring—to the extent possible—the ecological balance of communities affected by armed conflict on parties responsible for the environmental degradation and damage.
46. Support the requirement that responsible parties track chemicals and toxins released into the environment and make this information widely available to the surrounding communities.
47. Support corporations, at home and abroad, with environmentally sustainable practices.
48. Explicitly link arms treaties—including land mines, cluster munitions, chemical and biological weapons, radiological weapons, and small arms and light weapons proliferation—with women’s safety and health.
49. Support a fully funded and empowered EPA as an independent agency that is not influenced by political vagaries or corporate influence. Include representatives from the EPA and Energy Department on the task force for the 1325 NAP development. Require the EPA to publish and disseminate a full list of chemicals, contaminants, and pollutants determined to be detrimental to women’s and girls’ health.
50. Include the needs of women and girls for safe access to sanitation in the design of relief and recovery programs, domestically and internationally.

In Regards to Immigration and Refugee Asylum

51. Provoke an immediate review of the current deportation and detention immigration policies and reform of the process and eligibility for filing U visas as asylum seekers.
52. Mandate that law enforcement, judges, health care providers and other personnel be adequately trained on immigration policy and sex/human trafficking, stressing cultural differences that can put women in further jeopardy for their well-being and safety.
53. Establish mechanisms for abused women to report their experience of crime without fear of retribution by abuser, state violence, or deportation.
54. Educate police departments on how to deal with sex–trafficked persons so that those who do approach police can do so without fear, and make the system easier to report abuse for immigrants and asylum seekers.
55. Support the establishment of a central repository for resources and legal advocacy for coordination and support on immigration issues; to serve as a centralized liaison to homeland security, state department, and local police; to educate victims of exploitation and abuse on resources that do exist; and to educate the public on how to identify and respond to sex trafficking.

56. Provide comprehensive support and services, including psycho-social support, for refugees, especially those who were victims of abuse in their home countries. Include awareness on human rights and the U.S. laws meant to protect those rights.

In Regards to Prevention, Internationally

57. Ban practices and tactics questionable or in contravention to international law, including the use of drones, methods of enhanced interrogation, preemptive strikes, and arbitrary detention without recourse to legal representation and a fair and impartial trial, as these practices make the country less, rather than more, secure.

58. Rigorously examine the impact on women and women's local NGOs of counterterrorism approaches that have increased the role of military engagement in non-military areas. For example, examine how women are impacted by the military undertaking development work (such as building schools as a means of trying to change "hearts and minds") and focusing the work of USAID on counterterrorism strategic objectives (such as focusing development projects on potential/rehabilitated insurgents, with Department of Defense funding, at the expense of women-focused, women-led initiatives).

Internationally and Nationally

59. Promote employment paths for women that provide a living wage, paid sick days, unionization, and health and safety standards. Strategies should be employed to support the balance of paid work and unpaid care giving, such as paid family medical leave. Strengthen and enforce laws against sexual harassment and gender discrimination at the workplace domestically, and support the codification of such laws in international settings.

60. Support activities for education as a prerequisite to women's empowerment, implementing in foreign and domestic policy the full Beijing Platform for Action.

61. Promote policy and practice to close the wage gap for women's paid work as compared to male counterparts.

Nationally

62. Support the provision of human rights, conflict-resolution and peace education in primary and secondary schools with funding and resource levels equal to those currently provided to support JROTC and the militarized Junior Cadets drug diversion program. Funding currently used to advertise military service to pre-teens and adolescents could be re-directed to teach real peace-building skills to our youth.

63. Support the rectification of the "opt out" policy to an "opt in" policy requiring parents' active consent to share children's information with military recruiters.

64. Support a shift in military spending to develop new approaches to nonviolent conflict resolution and the prevention of war, including by strengthening and fully funding the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) and creating a Department of Peace.