

Civil society presents findings from the 2013 civil society monitoring of UNSCR 1325

New York, USA – On Thursday October 31st 2013, the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP), a program partner of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN); and the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations, co-hosted the much anticipated launch of GNWP’s “Women Count 2013- Security Council Resolution 1325: Civil Society Monitoring Report”. The 2013 civil society monitoring of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) provides systematic analyses and recommendations from 15 countries, including Armenia, Canada, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Fiji, Liberia, Nepal, Netherlands, Philippines, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and Uganda.

Ms. Chantale Walker, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN moderated the panel, while H.E. Michael Grant, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Canadian Mission, delivered the opening remarks. Ambassador Grant noted that the annual Women Count report serves as the “first real evidence based accounting tool prepared by people who should directly benefit from UNSCR 1325.” GNWP’s International Coordinator, Ms. Mavic Cabrera-Balleza, stressed that the report was not meant to “name and shame” countries, but to present the depth of independent civil society voices with regards to the level of implementation of UNSCR 1325.

GNWP members from Colombia, the Philippines, Serbia and Sierra Leone presented country specific findings and recommendations that had emerged from this year’s monitoring exercise. Ms. Gloria Tobon Olarte of Coalición1325 and Red Nacional de Mujeres focused on the participation of women in peace and security decision making, underlining that “only 9.4 percent of elected officials in the [governor’s office in Colombia] are women.” She also reported that women’s representation in the Colombian peace talks remains discouragingly low. There are no women among the 10 principal negotiators from both the government and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army). Out of the 10 alternate negotiators, there are only two women on the government side; and none from the FARC. Ms. Gordana Subotic of Women in Black, Serbia spoke about the protection of women’s rights and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence; and prevention of armed conflict. Ms. Subotic stressed the importance of truth and reconciliation commissions, while stating that Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs tended to be ad hoc and unsustainable. Due to the largely negative perception of CSOs within Serbia, Ms. Subotic called for public support in order to counteract the persistent blacklisting of CSOs by fascist groups. As the Serbian National Action Plan (NAP) process did not involve women’s organizations, Ms. Subotic also urged international donors “to focus on State accountability” rather than offering continuous support to governments.

Dr. Nana Pratt of the National Organization of Women, Sierra Leone, also focused on protection of women and girls and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. Dr. Pratt stated that

while the reporting of sexual violence has increased in Sierra Leone, the prosecution of cases has remained dismally low. GNWP's initiative *Localization of UNSCR 1325 and 1820* was underlined as a best practice model, whereby communities most impacted by conflict are taking ownership of the women, peace and security agenda. A recommendation that emerged from the Sierra Leone report was the need for the international community to earmark funds for institutional development.

Ms. Jasmin Nario Galace of WE Act 1325, Philippines discussed the promotion of a gender perspective, indicating the need to engage the security sector and identify spaces to transform ideas of masculinity. The need for increased transparency and accountability were also highlighted as key recommendations emerging from the Philippines.

Some of the common themes that emerged include the need for sustainable funding of WPS issues; protection of human rights defenders; and the need for a bottom-up approach to UNSCR 1325 implementation. Given the broad range of issues and challenges in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 made evident by the findings of the 2013 civil society monitoring, the development of a comprehensive strategy was stressed. Quoting Anne Marie Goetz, Chief Advisor on Women, Peace and Security at UN Women, Ms. Walker underscored the need for "wholesale, rather than piecemeal" approaches to the WPS agenda, and for greater support of CSOs, globally.

"The hope is that the abundance of data gathered in the GNWP Monitoring reports since 2010 could feed into the high-level review of UNSCR 1325, which will take place in 2015" said Helena Gronberg, GNWP's Program Manager in her closing remarks.

The full Women Count 2013 - Security Council Resolution 1325: Civil Society Monitoring Report will be made available in December.