Women’s Leadership for Peace and Security

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN CONTEXT

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1325, which calls for women’s equal participation in decisions regarding peace and security. This is the first resolution that addresses the disproportional impact of armed conflicts on women’s lives, and the positive impact they have in both preventing and resolving conflicts. Furthermore, UNSCR 1325 stresses the importance of women’s full participation as active agents of peace and security.

This project uses UNSCR 1325 as a foundation to strengthen women’s role in decision-making processes that ignite and end wars. By working directly with women leaders and groups in the Greater Horn of Africa and the Andean Region, the project promotes interaction and dialogue between regional and national institutions on the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

THE PROJECT

The Women’s Leadership for Peace and Security project focuses on reinforcing political commitment to UNSCR 1325 in the eastern region of Africa - Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Central, Somaliland and Puntland (Somalia), Sudan and South Sudan, Uganda - and the Andean Region (Bolivia and Colombia). Drawing on UNSCR 1325, it promotes the equal participation of women from grassroots to the level of political representation.

The project utilizes the basic Club de Madrid methodology of leaders working with leaders – both male and female, including those recently elected or aspiring to political office – to build strategies for the increased and effective participation of women in political decision-making processes, particularly with regards to peace and security at regional and national levels.

in order to be fully effective, the project relies on the participation of political experts. The Club de Madrid is composed of more than 88 democratic former Heads of State and Government, from over 60 over countries, who have access to local and national governments, as well as connections to regional and international security organizations. Knowledge based on experience helps to formulate effective strategies to forge internationally assisted security blueprints, as such the project endorses and is guided by the premise that decisions on local security problems should be made, as much as possible, by people close to the problem.

SECURITY FLUENCY & A SEAT AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

To maximize the participation and contribution of women in political dialogue and in national, regional and international security decision-making in the target countries, Club de Madrid members and project partners focus on the following two components:

- Learning security fluency: building women’s knowledge of and capacity to address peace and security issues.
- Securing a seat for women at the decision-making table: advancing women’s participation in security policy and practice, at all levels.

“Women experience the full impact of violent conflict as civilians and combatants – all too often as targets of extreme forms of violence. That they are excluded from the decision-making processes that ignite wars and put an end to them is unacceptable and must stop.”

Mary Robinson
President of Ireland (1990-1997) & Member of the Club de Madrid

Member HE Benjamin Mkapa, President of Tanzania (1995-2000, 2000-2005) & former Chair of the UN Panel for the Referendum of South Sudan with Mohamed Abdoul Abdourahman, Head of IGAD Liaison Office, Sudan and GAD women representatives in Juba (Oct 2011)
PROJECT ACTIVITIES
In the Horn of Africa:
Ten high-level missions have been held to date in Addis Ababa (October 2009, October 2010 & June 2012), Kampala (November 2009 & September 2010), Djibouti (December 2009), Nairobi (February 2010 & May 2010), Juba (October 2011) and Hargeisa (Feb 2012) under the leadership of Club de Madrid Members Birkavs (Latvia), Bondevik (Norway), Campbell (Canada) Robinson (Ireland) & Mkapa (Tanzania). Among their objectives were discussing urgent issues of peace and security, developing women’s capacity and advancing their participation in decision-making processes, and issuing recommendations aimed at regional and national authorities.

In the Andean Region:
Two high-level missions, conducted in Bolivia and Colombia, focused on promoting multi-sectoral, inclusive and participatory processes for the development and institutionalization of the countries’ respective UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans. A delegation led by Member Vikte-Freiberga (Latvia) to Bogotá (November 2009) represented a significant step towards leveraging UNSCR 1325 as a means to call attention to gender issues in Colombian politics.

In Europe:
Important steps are being taken to lobby EU and NATO officials and other bodies in coordination with civil society organizations. This has served to strengthen the relationships between the G40 and international decision-makers. The G40 is now positioning itself to play a role in international forums working on UNSCR 1325, giving this project a sustainable impact.

THE G40 GROUP OF 40 WOMEN LEADERS
The G40 is a community of humanitarian workers, lawyers, grassroots peace activists, political scientists, business professionals, historians, social workers, human rights defenders and journalists. Founded in 2009 under the framework of the Women’s Leadership for Peace and Security in the Greater Horn of Africa project, the group aims to bring fresh thinking to crisis prevention in the Greater Horn of Africa. Ultimately, the group transforms ideas into action through the communal forces of women’s networks and constituencies in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Central, Somaliland, Puntland (Somalia) North and South Sudan, and Uganda.

“If you do not understand the role of certain women in their communities, you do not understand how they can be supporters in the process of creating order, and the mission will be a failure.”
Hon. Kim Campbell
Prime Minister of Canada (1993)

G40 STRENGTHS
• Expertise from multiple sectors that provide know-how and insight to practical solutions of peace and security.
• Unique regional network with gender responsive outlook on peace and security.
• Ability to identify common ground.
• Capacity to generate options for resolving deadlocks from the bottom up.

G40 ACHIEVEMENTS
• Engaging in public awareness activities in the run up to the Sudanese 2010 elections.
• Consulting with the Somali Constitution Committee during the Drafting Process.
• Helping to organize awareness-raising programs for the 2010 Somaliland elections.
• Engaging with high-level officials in Djibouti.
• Running as parliamentary candidates in local elections.

“Women’s organizations are really powerful, and you (G40) as a network of women in the Greater Horn of Africa can harness that strength to the benefit of the Greater Horn of Africa, to include the issues on the national agenda (…) it takes time, courage, effort, assistance and cooperation.”
Valdis Birkavs
Prime Minister of Latvia (1993-1994)