



Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security

CHARTER

March 20, 2019

The full leadership, empowerment, and participation of women is essential to preventing and resolving deadly conflict; building stable, prosperous, and just societies; and creating a peaceful global security order. As women and men who have long worked on issues of international security, we have come together as partners to identify, encourage, and mobilize our collective voices in support of women's engagement in the pursuit of peace, reconciliation, security, and post-conflict reconstruction.

Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security brings global citizens – including prominent men from the defense, diplomacy, development, civil society, faith-based, and business sectors – more fully into this campaign, along with the leading women from these sectors who have long driven this advocacy. While men still monopolize leadership roles within national and international security structures, they have largely remained on the sidelines of the women, peace, and security movement.

As signatories of this Charter, we pledge to use our connections with global leaders to reinforce, amplify, and open doors for advocates, especially grassroots activists from conflict-affected countries who speak with authority and credibility on this agenda. In determining our actions and advocacy, we will ally with, listen to, and learn from each other under the watchwords: “Nothing about us without us.”

Clear empirical evidence from research by UN Women and other institutions, including the 2015 Global Study on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, shows what we have long known from our personal experiences: peace agreements that involve a critical mass of empowered women and women's groups are far more likely to build stable, just, and prosperous post-conflict societies than those that do not.

The advantages of women's engagement are many. Women's organizations are often the first to speak out in the struggle for peace. In addition to expanding the talent pool contributing to these processes, women often bring to the table unique and essential ground truth, longer-term perspectives, innovative approaches, and a focus on the socio-economic causes of conflicts. Research also shows that women typically represent fewer than one in ten participants in peace processes. One result is that most peace agreements pay insufficient attention to such issues as girls' education, reproductive health care, and psycho-social support for survivors of sexual violence. Women's leadership and engagement on so-called “hard” security issues is equally essential.

Our efforts are equally rooted in the need to promote the human rights that all women possess, to change malign gender power dynamics, and to secure gender equity and equality in political, social, economic, and security terms. Unequal power relationships and harmful versions of masculinity fuel conflict drive men's violence against women and impede women's full access to rights and opportunities. We speak out against such views of manhood and in favor of equitable and non-violent attitudes and behaviors.

Many outstanding civil society groups, national governments, and international organizations are advancing women’s engagement in the peace and security sector. They have helped change norms, regulations, and attitudes of senior leaders throughout the United Nations, other international institutions, NGOs, and national governments that support peace processes and peacekeeping missions.

Civil society has also identified best practices -- incorporated in “tool kits” -- and provided technical support and training modules for governments designing National Action Plans under UNSCR 1325.

It is understandable and appropriate that the leading voices in this effort have largely belonged to women advocates, activists, and academics. However, the absence of male participation reinforces the impression that these issues affect only part of our society and are somehow of lesser importance than “hard” security issues, when in fact they are vitally important and impactful for all of us.

This Charter results from intensive consultations with global stakeholders. We will use the principles and guidelines that have emerged to serve as a watchdog for international agencies and national governments, support and connect grassroots activists to the larger global agenda, provide implementers with the tools they need, and develop concrete, time-bound, measurable goals to achieve these objectives. Steps emerging from this dialogue vis-a-vis the U.N., for example, are the following:

- Require at least 30 percent women’s meaningful participation in peace negotiations, peacekeeping missions, and post-conflict reconstruction processes as a key for international support, with women’s engagement rising each year to even gender balance.
- Insist that post-conflict recovery packages adopt a gender lens and include at least 30 percent funding for issues related to basic human security, such as reproductive health care, girls’ education, women’s economic empowerment, and support for survivors of violence.
- Engage UN Women more prominently in the peacemaking and peace-building agenda and increase voluntary contributions from Member States to \$500 million per year, as was originally envisioned. Member States should also support the Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which provides direct support to grassroots women’s organizations.
- Designate, mainstream and empower high-level gender advisers on all peacekeeping missions.
- Enhance training, performance expectations and accountability measures in sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and gender equitable work environments for all participants in peace operations, especially those in leadership roles.

We also support meaningful roles for persons facing exclusion due to other factors, including disability, displacement, indigenous identity, racial and religious affiliation, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity, reflecting the magnification of marginalization based on intersectionality.

Given the wide range of security challenges facing the global community, some ask, “Can we afford to place women’s leadership at the top of our to-do list?”

Our experience has taught us the tragic cost in human lives and resources that result from the repeating cycle of violence from failed peace processes. Countries faced with instability due in part to marginalizing women are more likely to traffic in drugs, people and weapons; send-off large numbers of refugees across borders and oceans; incubate and transmit pandemic diseases; harbor criminal networks, pirates, and terrorists; and require foreign military engagement and humanitarian assistance.

Thus, we ask instead: “Given these challenges, can we afford not to put women’s leadership at the top of our list?”

Mobilizing Men as Partners for Women, Peace and Security

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The rationale and motivation for our work comes both from a rights-based and gender equality approach -- including changing gender power dynamics through political, socio-economic and security empowerment -- and from a pragmatic/utilitarian goal of providing additional capacity to create stable, equitable, and just peace processes and post-conflict societies.
2. Advocacy goals will be time-bound, measurable, outcome-oriented, and tied to implementation of UNSC Resolutions and National Action Plans; U.N. and regional peacekeeping missions; and national laws, regulations and practices, such as U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017.
3. Our actions are rooted in the ground-truth brought to the table by activists and advocates from conflict-affected countries, especially young people, with Advocacy Coalition members frequently exposed to a bottom-up education process based on the concept, "Nothing about us without us."
4. We will strengthen grass-roots organizations by facilitating their contact with donors, promoting training, and attending to their security concerns, especially in the context of shrinking civil society space.
5. There is scope within our work for many advocacy efforts, including organizing men to align with women in their advocacy in the corridors of power, men facilitating access for previously marginalized women advocates, and men engaging in direct advocacy with their counterparts. In all cases, male partners will convey agreed-upon messages, acknowledge the leadership of women and women's institutions, acknowledge their "ally" status, support women's leadership, and avoid "mansplaining."
6. We will promote healthier and more just gender identities -- e.g., addressing concepts of "toxic masculinity" and "hypermasculinity" -- as they relate to the peace and security agenda.
7. We will connect to actions and advocacy to address sexual harassment and abuse reflected in the global #MeToo movement, especially as they relate to male/female power dynamics. While we seek to cast a broad net, individuals with past records of abuses will not participate.
8. Our participants will come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including defense, diplomacy, development, civil society, foundations, international organizations, corporate sector, academia, faith-based organizations, and others. We will be international, intergenerational, non-elitist, gender-balanced, inter-denominational, and non-partisan.
9. We recognize that the same principles that apply to marginalized women also apply to other marginalized communities. Thus, we support prominent meaningful roles for individuals/groups marginalized because of disability, displacement, indigenous identity, racial and religious affiliation, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, and other factors. We will recognize and address the magnification of marginalization based on the intersectionality among these identities.
10. This initiative is a two-year effort running through the end of 2020, at which point the participants will determine what is the best course of action moving ahead. While we will consider additional actions and targets of opportunity as they arise, we will avoid creating bureaucratic or costly structures. Instead, we will partner with existing institutions and remain a loose coalition of like-minded individuals and institutions focused on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.