Brief presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development for their study on Women, Peace and Security

Prepared by the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada

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When the Security Council finds it unthinkable to address a crisis without addressing women's rights; when humanitarian responders have full funding for their gender-specific services; when women grassroots leaders find their work fully funded and politically supported; when it is unimaginable that peace talks be held without women's full engagement: only then will the full potential of 1325 be realized.

- Dr. Alaa Murabit (Canadian/Libyan women's rights activist) addressing the United Nations Security Council, October 2015[1]

Last October, women's rights activists, government representatives and United Nations officials gathered in New York to review the progress made in implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR). Although participants in this global review could point to some successes, the predominant mood was one of impatience and frustration at the lack of progress.

Julienne Lusenge, Director of the Congolese Women's Fund, spoke for many. She told the Security Council that she had "thought for a long time whether I really wanted to come back here" and tell once again of the same atrocities that she had spoken of in the same venue seven years previously, and "tell you that almost nothing has changed in critical situations for women in DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo]."[2]

This is the context as we embark on the renewal of the Canadian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (C-NAP). On the one hand we face global challenges as conflicts continue to wreak devastation on women, girls, men, and boys as well as families and communities around the world.

Yet, there are also clear opportunities. There is strong evidence that including women in decision-making and supporting gender-equitable societies lead to greater peace.[3] We have the courage, experience, and dedication of women's rights and peace activists around the world. Canada has recently received global accolades for our commitments to gender balance and women's rights. Canada's emphasis on re-engagement with the multilateral system, peacekeeping, and peace building offers multiple entry points.

In their briefs and testimony, other organizations are addressing the global context and recommendations on how the WPS agenda can be advanced. Given the mandate of the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C), this brief provides five general recommendations for the Canadian government to move forward with the women, peace and security agenda and their implications for the next Canadian National Action Plan.

<u>**Recommendations**</u>

1) Affirm that women's rights and support for the WPS Agenda is a core goal of Canadian foreign policy.

The 2012-2013 C-NAP Progress Report stated: "The empowerment of women, in decision-making processes, including for conflict resolutions, is central to Canada's foreign policy."[4] In reality, however, it appears to be an aspirational goal, rather than current practice.[5]

The C-NAP Mid-Term Review conducted by Inclusive Security found that the C-NAP was not widely considered to be a policy directive. The C-NAP was "perceived as not significantly influencing Canada's overall policy direction with respect to conflict-affected and fragile states."[6]

It is crucial to elevate the status of the C-NAP and ensure that Canada's stated commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment is clearly and explicitly reflected across the full range of international policies (including, but not limited to, peace operations, failed and fragile states, counter-terrorism, organized crime, humanitarian assistance, and corporate social responsibility).[7]

Canada's approach to these issues should be grounded in a rights-based approach that includes the full range of rights (including sexual and reproductive rights).[8]

Implications for the C-NAP:

- Ground the C-NAP (and Canada's approach) in both a rights-based approach and the emerging literature on the core links between security, conflict prevention, gender equality and women's participation.[9]

- Affirm and ensure that the C-NAP is recognized and understood by all staff in participating government departments as a mandatory policy directive.

- Make Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) a requirement in participating departments when developing and evaluating policies, programs and projects.[10]

- Develop a high-level policy for Global Affairs Canada that outlines how Canada's commitment to gender equality and women's rights will be reflected across the work of the entire department.

- Make the provision of sex- and age-disaggregated data mandatory in programme planning and reporting.

- Provide quality training and briefing for all staff in participating departments on Canada's commitments in these areas and how it is relevant to their specific area of work.

- Ensure the participation of all appropriate government departments in the C-NAP, expanding the current participants to include Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Public Safety Canada; and Status of Women Canada.

2) Address the full range of WPS issues or pillars: *participation* (supporting the full participation of women in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peace building and recovery); *protection* (dealing with conflict-related sexual violence); *prevention* (investing in conflict prevention); and *relief and recovery* (ensuring attention to women's rights and gender equality results in humanitarian assistance and post-conflict recovery initiatives).

In 2000, when UNSCR 1325 was passed, there were several reasons why this first Security Council resolution on women, peace and security was greeted with such enthusiasm. It linked the security of

states to the security of women. It highlighted the importance of women's participation, not just as an abstract goal, but as crucial for building peace. It paved the way for the legitimacy of including non-state actors in resolving conflicts. It held the promise of new routes to reduce the devastation of armed conflict.

The WPS Agenda does not just aim to add more women here and there. Although increasing the percentage of women in traditional structures is one element, efforts cannot stop there. The WPS agenda challenges us to rethink these structures, asking whether they deliver peace for women, girls, men, and boys. The WPS Agenda is not focused on "making war safe for women" and only responding to sexual violence in conflict. Advocates are pushing for greater attention to conflict prevention, to stopping wars before they start, as well as preventing conflict-related sexual violence.

Implications for the C-NAP

- Address all four WPS pillars in a holistic fashion. Progress is required on all of these agendas. The inter-linkages should be acknowledged and built on. For example, violence against women is often a major constraint that restricts participation in political processes.

- Support women's participation in peace processes and decision-making at all levels. This includes a range of initiatives from supporting women's participation in peace negotiations, to increasing the percentage of women peacekeepers (military and civilian – both Canadian and globally), to increasing the number and capacities of female mediators and negotiators, to holding the United Nations accountable for its commitments to gender balance in high-level staff appointments.

- Combine Canada's diplomatic efforts on conflict-related sexual violence with support to grassroots women's organizations working on these issues and on women's rights and gender equality before, during and after conflicts.

- Continue Canada's strong stance on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (abuse committed by civilian staff, police and military peacekeepers). Continue to take leadership on this issue at the United Nations.

- Continue to set and report on targets for the participation of women at all levels in international deployments in peacekeeping operations.

- Address the concerns raised in the Deschamps Report on sexual abuse and harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).[11]

- Support an ambitious program of arms control and demilitarization that includes rapid accession to the Arms Trade Treaty among other measures, acknowledging the gendered impact of uncontrolled flow and widespread use of arms and armaments.

- Require all humanitarian funding to effectively address women's needs, rights and roles and include the results of this requirement in public reporting.

- Consistent with UNSCR 2122 "…ensure humanitarian aid and funding includes provision for the full range of medical, legal, psychosocial and livelihood services to women affected by armed conflict and post-conflict situations, and *noting* the need for access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services, including regarding pregnancies resulting from rape, without discrimination…"[12]

3) Strengthen and support women's organizations working in fragile contexts.

One of the most significant steps the Government of Canada can take is to increase its support for grassroots women's organizations. These are the organizations doing leading-edge work, yet they are consistently under-funded, under-resourced and excluded from key discussions. In a global survey of civil society organizations conducted for last year's Global Review of progress on implementing UNSCR 1325, respondents noted the lack of resources as a primary barrier affecting the effectiveness of their work.[13]

These organizations need consistent, significant, and reliable core funding in order to carry out their crucial work.

Implications for the C-NAP

- Allocate significant new resources to support grassroots women's organizations building peace. (Expansion of the Canadian Funds for Local Initiatives is not sufficient.)

- Devise funding mechanisms to ensure resources reach grassroots women's organizations. Options include, but are not limited to, establishment of a specific Canadian fund to support grassroots women's organizations working on WPS issues, issuing a call for proposals from Canadian NGOs to partner with grassroots women's organizations, and working through the global network of women's funds (of which the MATCH International Women's Fund is a member).

- Organize and fund regular consultations with women's organizations in conflict-affected countries.

- Mobilize political and diplomatic resources to support the inclusion of women's organizations and women's rights defenders in national, regional and international forums (including peace processes and donor meetings) dedicated to preventing conflict and building peace.

4) Dedicate increased financial and human resources: a commitment without resources is not a commitment.

One of the common themes throughout last fall's discussions of the progress on implementing the WPS agenda was the consistent lack of resources and actual low levels of investments. According to the Global Study: "although there is a great deal of rhetoric supporting women, peace and security, funding for programmes and processes remains abysmally low across all areas of the agenda."

The expired C-NAP had no budget attached. Furthermore, C-NAP reporting did not provide clear information on women, peace and security investments from across government departments and programming envelopes. Government officials have argued that Canada uses a 'mainstreaming approach', negating the necessity for defined budgets. However, the evidence is clear that progress on women's rights and gender equality generally, and on National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security in particular, requires the dual strategy of mainstreaming (or cross-cutting attention) and specific, targeted initiatives and budgets. By itself and without sufficient accountability mechanisms, a mainstreaming approach produces few results.

Implications for the C-NAP

- Set a target of 15% of all development assistance in fragile contexts and all "peace and security" funding to initiatives that have gender equality/women's empowerment as the **principal** objective.[14]

- Provide a dedicated budget for the C-NAP, including funds for staff, consultations, outreach, Canadian capacity building and knowledge management.

- Commit to track and report on financing for women, peace and security initiatives and the inclusion/achievement of gender equality results through improved use of gender markers across all development assistance in fragile states, humanitarian assistance and conflict-related funds.

5) Ensure accountability for WPS policy directives and commitments.

Implementation of the WPS agenda has been a global challenge. One of the themes running through the United Nations Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is the vast 'implementation gap." Although progress has been made on the overall normative framework, progress on the ground has been lacking: "much of the progress toward the implementation of resolution 1325 continues to be measured in 'firsts' rather than standard practice."[15]

In the case of Canada, despite the publication of progress reports, it is difficult to understand what has actually been accomplished. Progress reports have been late (for example, the 2014-2015 progress report has yet to be released), reporting tends to focus on listing activities rather than understanding impacts, and the reports lack clear data on investments and investment trends.[16]

One positive development since January 2015 has been the introduction of regular meetings between C-NAP departments and Canadian civil society organizations (coordinated by START, GAC and the WPSN-C). We hope this constructive trend continues.

Implications for the C-NAP

- Use a results-based framework, outlining expected outcomes and appropriate indicators.

- Ensure regular, timely, and public reporting on progress that looks at challenges and lessons in addition to results achieved.

- Build in evaluation and monitoring initiatives.

- Consult regularly with Canadian civil society on progress, challenges and policy directions.

- Contribute to building Canadian capacity on WPS issues, providing funding for research and the development of expertise.

- Once there is a strong and well-resourced C-NAP, name a full-time, high-level champion/special envoy who will support implementation.

The Women, Peace and Security Network Canada is an informal network made up of over 65 Canadian organizations and individuals. We have 2 objectives: 1) promote and monitor the efforts of the Government of Canada to implement and support the United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security; and 2) provide a forum for exchange and action amongst Canadian civil society on this same theme.

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[1] Dr Alaa Murabit, *Address to the United Nations Security Council – Open Debate on UNSCR 1325*. 13 October 2015 http://www2.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/news/in%20focus/alaamurabitspeechfinal.pdf?v=1&d=20151013T172421

[2] Julienne Lusenge, *Address to the United Nations Security Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security* 13 October 2015. Translation. Original delivered in French. http://womenpeacesecurity.org/media/pdf-NGOWG_Statement_OpenDebate_Lusenge_Oct2015_EN.pdf

[3] See, for example, Graduate Institute Geneva (2015). *Results on Women and Gender from the 'Broader Participation' and 'Civil Society and Peacebuilding' Projects.* http://graduateinstitute.ch/files/live/sites/iheid/files/sites/ccdp/shared/Docs/Publications/briefingpaperwomen%20gender.pdf and Marie O'Reilly (2015). *Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies*. Inclusive Security. https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/why-women-inclusive-security-and-peaceful-societies/

[4] Government of Canada (nd) *2012-2013 Progress Report Canada's National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.* http://www.international.gc.ca/START-GTSR/women_report_2012-2013_rapport_femmes.aspx?lang=eng

[5] It is interesting to note that in the general briefing provided to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development by Global Affairs officials on February 16, 2016, there was no mention of the C-NAP. There were several references to women's rights generally and one mention of sexual violence as a key issue in the "Islamic State" strategy. http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=e&Mode=1&Parl=42&Ses=1&DocId=8098355

[6] Inclusive Security (2014). *Assessment of Canada's Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security 2010-2016*. http://www.international.gc.ca/start-gtsr/assets/pdfs/Canada_Action_Plan_Women_Peace_Security-2010-2016.pdf

[7] It is important to acknowledge the recent Chief of Defence Staff Directive for Integrating UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions into CAF Planning and Operations, announced 15 February 2016. http://www.forces.gc.ca/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/about-reports-pubs-cds/cds-directive-unscr-1325-directive-cemd-rcsnu-1325.pdf

[8] The WPSN-C is a diverse network of organizations and individuals thus not all members necessarily agree with all recommendations in this statement.

[9] The importance of rights-based approach and this nexus is clearly outlined in Radhika Coomaraswamy (2015). *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*. New York: UN Women.

[10] See Status of Women Canada: http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html Despite Government of Canada commitments to use GBA+ in the development of policy, legislative, or program initiatives, the Auditor General has found that the use of this analysis is not always complete and the quality is inconsistent. Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2015). *Reports of the Auditor General of Canada: Report 1 Implementing Gender-Based Analysis.* http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/parl_oag_201511_01_e.pdf

[11] National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (2015). *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces.* http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services/external-review-sexual-mh-2015/summary.page

[12] Consistent with End Note 8, not all Network members necessarily agree with the totality of this recommendation.

[13] GNWP, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, *et al.*, (2015) *Civil Society Organization (CSO) Survey for the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security.* http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Cordaid-CSO_Survey_Report_2015-DEF-LR.pdf

[14] The 'principal objective' requirement is crucial. These are not initiatives that have gender equality considerations integrated or mainstreamed. These are initiatives that are 100% targeted at gender equality/women's empowerment objectives/results.

[15] Coomaraswamy (2015). *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace.* Quote is from page 14.

[16] For reflections on the various progress reports see the two WPSN-C publications: *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Reflections on Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* (2015) https://wpsncanada.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/lblf-final.pdf and *Worth the Wait? Reflections on Canada's National Action Plan and Reports on Women, Peace and Security* (2014) https://wpsncanada.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/worth-the-wait-report.pdf .