



## **Oral Statement to the 63<sup>rd</sup> Commission on the Status of Women**

The undersigned members of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women Vienna – a substantive committee of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations – maintain that war and armed conflict are the greatest threats to women's empowerment and sustainable development. The ambitious goals of Agenda 2030, including social protection, public services and infrastructure for gender equality, can only be achieved when military spending is re-allocated to investments in public health, universal education and infrastructure.

We are deeply concerned about the rising tide of xenophobia, militarization, violent extremism and fundamentalism, and the increase in nationalist rhetoric and decline in multilateralism. Armed conflicts destroy communities and infrastructure; displace hundreds of thousands of people; pollute air, water and soil; and consume vast resources. Military spending diverts public funds from health care, education, disaster relief and other vital services. Reallocating just 10% of world military spending to meet human needs would be enough to achieve major progress on key Sustainable Development Goals.

Women and girls suffer the most in war and armed conflict, and rape of women and girls is used as a weapon to humiliate the enemy. As long as there is armed conflict, we will not be able to achieve the SDG#5 target to eliminate violence against women and girls. Nor can we achieve SDG#16 promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, or SDG#17 encouraging partnerships to achieve the 2030 agenda, while conflicts persist.

Patriarchy, militarized masculinities and discriminatory power structures are significant obstacles to effective conflict resolution. Increased involvement of women in negotiations of

peace settlements, disarmament, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and policy-making would make peace agreements more sustainable.

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a powerful tool for moving toward democratic decision-making, gender justice, and sustainable peace. The Beijing Platform for Action highlighted women and armed conflict as a critical concern. It is time to finally implement and fulfill these commitments.

At least 1,500 people are killed and 44,400 are forced to flee their homes every day because of conflict or persecution. There can be no peace until people become aware that there is only one planet, and only one humanity.

We call upon Members States and the United Nations to:

- Analyze and eliminate the root causes of conflict, fundamentalism and violent extremism;
- Promote the engagement of women in conflict prevention and peacemaking, as well as in decision-making and development of post-conflict programs and initiatives;
- Mobilize the international community to increase investments in peace and security and peacekeeping operations;
- Re-allocate funding from war to peace and achieve the goals of Agenda 2030 by increasing social spending and reducing military spending;
- Understand the crucial role of human rights and peace education in sustainable peace building; promote a culture of peace, non-violent communication, mutual respect and peaceful dispute resolution in schools, families and communities;
- Assist countries in building their capacities for peace and security; and encourage innovative, inclusive approaches to conflict prevention; and

- Support strong local and global women's movements and civil society organizations, and protect women human rights defenders.

Signed:

African Action on Aids

African Women's Organisation

European Union of Women

FAWCO

Graduate Women International

International Alliance of Applied Psychology

International Alliance of Women

International Association of Democratic Lawyers

International Council of Jewish Women

International Council of Women

International Federation on Ageing

International Inner Wheel

Le Projet Imagine

Pax Romana

Servas International

Socialist International Women

Soroptimist International

Verein zur Förderung der Völkerverständigung

Women's Federation for World Peace

Women's International Zionist Organization

World Union for Progressive Judaism

Zonta International