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Dear Ms Coomaraswamy,

I have the honour to address this letter to you as part of the contribution of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) which you are leading.

The Committee welcomes Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013) and the timely High-level Review in 2015 to assess progress at the global, regional and national levels in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). The Global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to highlight good practices examples, implementation gaps, challenges, and emerging trends and priorities for action, is also timely. The Committee appreciates your invitation to provide its input to this study which presents an opportunity for the United Nations system and all stakeholders/partners to build on good practice, generate new action, where needed, and address current and emerging concerns.

The Committee reaffirms that sustainable peace requires an integrated approach based on coherence between political and security measures, development and human rights agendas, including gender equality and the rule of law. The Committee further notes the convergence of the High-Level Review with other major global policy events, such as the post-2015 development framework and the 20-year review of the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Committee acknowledges the efforts of UN Member States, the UN system, international, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society groups in furthering the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. It particularly notes a number of recent achievements at the normative level, including the two resolutions adopted by the Security Council in 2013-2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013); two high-level political commitments to combating sexual violence in conflict; a declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding adopted by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC/7/OC/3), the inclusion of a criterion on gender-based violence in article 7 (4) of the Arms Trade Treaty, as well as General Recommendation No. 30 adopted in 2013 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on "Women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations".

Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy
Lead author on Global Study on the Implementation
of Resolution 1325 (2000)

The Committee, however, stresses that in spite of all these efforts numerous challenges remain at the implementation level and in sustaining progress. While acknowledging some progress towards the implementation of the Resolution over the last 15 years, it is also important to highlight the gaps between the aspiration of the Resolution and the reality on the ground. Women's continued marginalization from formal peace processes, as well as increasing levels of insecurity and violence against women and girls in conflict zones, constitute evidence of gaps in implementing the Resolution. Further, the Committee notes that despite the decisive role played by resolution 1325 (2000) in highlighting the issues of women in peace and security, the Resolution has fallen short in terms of addressing systemic violence against women as well as structural discrimination.

Grave abuses and violence against women, including sexual violence and rape, continue to be a common occurrence in conflict and post-conflict settings all around the world. Other developments of concern include targeted violence and human rights violations linked to terrorism committed against women and girls, violent extremism and transnational organized crime, together with growing tensions, political violence and restrictions on human rights in countries and regions that were progressing on a path towards peace. Similarly, the “increased representation of women at all decision-making levels” as affirmed in UNSCR 1325, as well as increased inclusion of women in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict, have not become the norm, but remain marginal. This can be partly explained by cultural and institutional barriers to women’s participation – especially the existence of patriarchal values, which tend to impede women’s advancement. Preventing violent conflict and identifying non-violent means of resolving tensions as part of the broader prevention aspects of resolution 1325 (2000) and related policy commitments still remain the least explored, with this area of work remaining seriously underfunded.

While injustices and inequalities embedded in gender relations are a long-term threat to development and stability, gender equality represents a safeguard to the spread of radicalization and violent extremism. It is critical, therefore, that women’s leadership be tapped into as a critical resource for peace.

In General Recommendation No. 30 (2013), the Committee reaffirms the synergy between the CEDAW Convention and Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security and highlights in particular the strong linkages with Security Council Resolutions, 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 1983 (2011) and 2106 (2013). All these resolutions which are important political frameworks for advocating regarding women, peace and security, unfortunately do not include any clear mechanisms for monitoring implementation so as to ensure accountability as well as full implementation of the principles enshrined therein. At the same time, as all the areas of concern addressed in these resolutions find expression in the substantive provisions of the Convention, their implementation must be premised on a model of substantive equality and cover all rights enshrined in the Convention.

The CEDAW Convention is the *authoritative* legal instrument on women’s human rights and a binding source of international law for those 188 States that have ratified or acceded to it. It is also one of the critical tools for moving the gender equality

agenda forward in conflict and post conflict situations. The Preamble of the Convention together with its 16 substantive provisions establish the requisite normative framework for the full protection of women in armed conflict and the advancement of their fundamental human rights in post-conflict contexts. As stated in the Committee's General Recommendation No. 30, *"protecting women's human rights at all times, advancing substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict and ensuring that women's diverse experiences are fully integrated into all peacebuilding, peacemaking and reconstruction processes are important objectives of the Convention"*.

In addition to the substantive rights guarantees, the Convention contains a periodic reporting and review process under its article 18, which requires all States parties to report on measures they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention including in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. Under Article 18(1), States parties undertake to submit a report within one year of ratification, and thereafter at least every four years "and further whenever the Committee so requests".

The Committee commends the recognition by the Security Council of the need for a significant implementation shift, without which, women and women's perspectives will continue to be underrepresented in conflict prevention, resolution, protection and peacebuilding for the foreseeable future. The Committee is of the view that full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda requires profound paradigmatic shifts in political and technical processes across all institutions.

Referring to the CEDAW Convention, specifically articles 2, 3, 5, 7 and 18, and to General Recommendation No. 30 (2013), the Committee is pleased to make the following submission to the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000):

- i) Substantive equality approach** - Emphasizing the need for a concerted and integrated approach that places the implementation of the Security Council Agenda on Women, Peace and Security into the broader framework of the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the Committee recommends that the implementation of Security Council commitments reflects a model of substantive equality and takes into account the impact of conflict and post-conflict contexts, including violations concerning conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, on women's equal enjoyment of all rights enshrined in the Convention.
- ii) Monitoring and reporting** - States parties are urged to provide information to the CEDAW Committee as well as to other treaty bodies on the implementation of the Security Council Agenda on Women, Peace and Security, in particular Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013), including by specifically reporting on compliance with any agreed United Nations benchmarks or indicators developed as part of that agenda. Using the CEDAW reporting procedure to include information on the implementation of Security Council commitments can consolidate the Convention as well as the Security Council agenda and broaden, strengthen and operationalize gender equality.

iii) Capacity building for women in peace and security - Build a critical mass of female experts in peace and security to drive the UNSCR 1325 agenda forward and ensure the same through continuous and concerted efforts towards capacity building and specialized training for women on mediation, negotiation and conflict transformation;

Develop a database of female experts in the field that support the implementation of UNSCR 1325;

iv) Participation of women - Appoint more women to high-level decision-making positions and peace processes as Special Envoys, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs), mediators, negotiators and peacekeepers;

Ensure that the terms of reference and mandates of all mediators and peace building actors are gender-sensitive and incorporate a gender perspective, thus ensuring that there is, from their part, accountability towards the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

v) Regional dialogue, collaboration and strategic networking -

Establish/build synergies among peace and security practitioners, experts, governments and regional bodies and enhance their collaboration towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through sharing experiences;

vi) Earmarking special funding and resources for UNSCR 1325 - Provide special funding for UNSCR 1325 initiatives and ensure that both national and international peacebuilding and development agencies mobilize funds that are earmarked for the needs of women and children;

Given the serious implications of the lack of financial support to civil society on the sustainability of peace, provide specific funding targeted for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at all levels;

Ensure that funds targeted at peacebuilding incorporate gender equality considerations;

Develop mechanisms to ensure the availability of flexible funding specifically for the protection of women in armed conflict, the increased participation and involvement of women in senior-level decision-making processes, and other UNSCR 1325-related activities;

Encourage international agencies and donors to set aside urgent action funds to facilitate rapid responses by women in crisis situations.

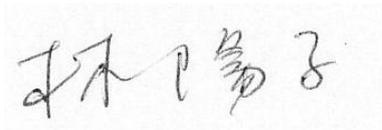
The Committee makes the following specific recommendations to national Governments and international, regional and sub-regional organizations:

a) For national Governments that have not yet done so, to develop as a collaborative effort with civil society, including women's rights movements and organizations, National Action Plans on the implementation of Resolution 1325(2000) which include a clear roadmap, indicators, timelines and modalities towards implementing and operationalizing the resolution ;

- b) Work together with civil society in developing regional Action Plans on UNSCR 1325, in particular, where necessary, to address current conflict or post-conflict situations;
- c) Boost women's capacities to participate in and contribute to formal and informal peace talks and dialogue processes by investing in skill development of women leaders, including women from marginalized populations, including through the establishment of rapid, intensive training units;
- d) Generate dedicated funding earmarked for activities aimed at improving the security situation of women in conflict zones;
- e) Situate counter terrorism and violent extremism responses within the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and, in the design of measures, engage women as leaders and partners in prevention and response frameworks;
- f) Introduce/adopt and implement quota for women's participation in relevant positions in foreign and security policy;
- g) Increase investment in building the capacity of women's organizations and local civil society networks working in conflict and post-conflict settings and on non-violent means of resolving tensions and addressing their root causes;
- h) Strengthen early warning mechanisms and risk assessments with gender-sensitive indicators;
- i) Use and report on gender-sensitive early warning indicators for conflict prevention as developed by the UN and civil society organizations and increasingly involve women in early warning and crisis management mechanisms, supported by latest modern information and communication technologies.

I thank you for the laudable work that you are undertaking, and I offer you the full support of the CEDAW Committee. Let me also reiterate my commitment and availability to provide further input and continue our discourse on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Yoko Hayashi
Chairperson,
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women