

**THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S STATEMENT TO MARK  
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE, 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015**

This year, 2015, the international community is marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1325) on "Women, Peace and Security".

In October 2000, for the first time, the UN Security Council dealt with gender issues and women's experiences as agents in building peace, preventing conflicts and guaranteeing security. What has been achieved in the last 15 years on that specific domain? Whilst indeed some progress should be noted, unfortunately, in different parts of the globe women and children continue to be the major victims of conflict, and struggle day by day in trying to survive and to overcome the hardships which are still their present lot...

More than ever, women need to be critical actors in peace building. Their participation in the political process and their contribution to the substance of peace negotiations is now widely recognized as a tool for attaining sustainable results. However, 15 years after the UNSC Resolution 1325, women notably continue to be excluded from participation in peace processes and their pivotal role in conflict resolution and in the planning of the future society is still marginal - and that despite the intense efforts of women's organizations and movements throughout the world.

How then can women change this situation?

There needs surely to be kept in mind that one of the most important contributions that women can make in peace negotiations is precisely to "think outside the box", and to get out of the accepted paradigm that brought about conflicts in the first place. Most especially, they need to let their voice be heard on the matter!

Why women's voice? Why it is so important that we insist that there is a women's voice? This is because resolution 1325 highlights (inter alia) the challenge of education and the challenge of making people aware. More than ever then there is a need for women in leadership positions – women who will make their voices heard, especially when the foundations of society are in danger.

As emphasized, one of our most important tasks in the promotion of peace, is thus to give women a voice by giving them the courage, strength and commitment to take risks that will lead to change and to development. But there are no shortcuts to such

empowering which emanates from education and consciousness-raising. Moreover, the need for action must also be encouraged to follow the rhetoric. It is here, at this juncture, that women's organizations throughout the globe can play a major role through pressure and perseverance. As a past President of the Israel National Council of Women, Leah Aharonov, said many years ago "The road to peace and development is not an easy one. It is long and frustrating, with many setbacks, but we must provide a framework for dialogue and democratic participation. We are promoting the political and economic empowerment of women. We are educating for tolerance and respect and we are certain, that all our efforts, will ultimately lead to peace building and the promotion of sustainable human development..."

Accordingly, in the world of today (one which sadly sees military conflicts in varying regions still continuing, and where the humanitarian impact of the consequential plight of refugees has grown into great significance of late), let ICW-CIF therefore call to women throughout the globe to imagine peace... and dream peace and never give up... With shared technologies and resources, the results could thus be endless... But even more important to all of us women is the prospect of a future which could be filled with peace and prosperity for our children and for generations to come.