



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

#### Forty-eighth session

1-12 March 2004

Item 3 (c) (ii) of the provisional agenda\*

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: women’s equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building**

Statement submitted by International Alliance of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centres, International Federation on Ageing, Soroptimist International and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; All India Women’s Conference, Armenian Assembly of America, Baha’i International Community, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, National Council of Women of the United States, Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women’s Association International, United States Committee for UNIFEM and the World Young Women’s Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; and Altrusa International, Armenian International Women’s Association and United Nations Associations of the USA, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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\* E/CN.6/2004/1.

We, the international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Security Council and members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM, both applaud and direct your attention to the outstanding leadership of UNIFEM in the area of women's equal participation in conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building, a thematic issue for this forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

UNIFEM and women peace activists were partners in bringing to the forefront the situation of women worldwide that led to the adoption in October 2000 of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The Security Council has recognized UNIFEM's important role in directing attention to the needs of girls and women of all ages affected by armed conflict as well as UNIFEM's contributions in promoting the role of women in bringing gender issues to bear in finding solutions in conflict resolution and peace building.

UNIFEM promotes women's leadership to ensure that women have an equal voice in shaping policies that affect their lives. In the area of governance and peace-building, UNIFEM's work focuses on peace and security, by promoting assistance to women in armed conflict situations and supporting their participation in peace processes as well as strengthening institutional mechanisms, legislation and policies in support of gender equality.

In its July 2003 report to the General Assembly, UNIFEM recorded five significant achievements in 2002 in this area:

- Strengthened gender focus in information collection and exchange to improve prevention and early warning mechanisms. The highlight of this area was the launch of *Women, War, and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment of the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role In Peace-building*, a follow-up to Security Council Resolution 1325. Two experts undertook 14 missions to document women's experiences as survivors, peace-builders and aspiring policy makers in conflict and post-conflict situations. The experts made 22 key recommendations as an agenda for action toward the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.
- Improved protection and assistance for women affected by conflict focusing on preventing gender based violence and sexual exploitation.
- Making women and gender perspectives central to peace processes by leveraging the political, financial and technical support needed to impact peace processes nationally, regionally and internationally.
- Expanded support for enhancing gender equality and women's rights in post-conflict peace-building nations such as Afghanistan, Kosovo and Timor-Leste.
- Strengthened gender focus in electoral, constitutional, legislative and judicial processes in many countries by building women's capacities as candidates and voters, judges and lawyers.

UNIFEM's work in peace-related activities in 2002 alone embraced 25 countries. In Afghanistan, UNIFEM has devoted special energy to strengthening the capacity and programmes of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to address the formidable challenge of bringing women into the mainstream in the development of new legislative, judicial, political, electoral, economic and social structures.

Through its efforts UNIFEM is helping to foster a new definition of global peace and security, not one of the traditional weapon-based security, but a vision grounded in economic and social justice as the basis for development with human rights and human development as the focus.

The NGO Committee wholeheartedly endorses UNIFEM's important work and urges increased financial support from Member States and private funders. We need the leadership of UNIFEM to achieve a secure and peaceful future free from violence and discrimination.

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