

WOMEN GRADUATES–USA

WG-USA is the USA affiliate of Graduate Women International

Resolution

Issue: Peace and Security – UN SDG’s

Resolution Title: Peace and Security – Essential Components of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Resolution Number: 2014.2.R10

Resolution Text:

WG-USA RESOLVES to establish a working group to consider the issue of incorporating either a core goal, or as a cross-cutting issue across all goals, for the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals framework that is aimed at ensuring a long-lasting, non-violent, and socially just world for all, using strategies that include unarmed civilian peacekeeping (UCP) that provide for a sustainable peace so that economic development might take place. Measurements must include justice, equality and inclusion, and not just the absence of direct violence.

Supporting Statement:

Women Graduates-USA (WG-USA) supports human rights for all and has established specific resolutions and actions that address issues related to gender equity, freedom from violence, access to education, economic parity, opposition to slavery, protection of women in conflict areas of the world, sustainable development, and women’s participation in decision-making in all human endeavors. WG-USA recognizes peace, respect for human rights and good governance as core elements of well-being, not optional extras. WG-USA has adopted the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as its ‘moral authority’ and to provide the framework for action.

In 2001, as affiliates of IFUW, WG-USA supported the passage of the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Resolution 1325 that reaffirms the important role of women in the “prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction.” Resolution 1325 also calls on all parties to a conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. In 2012, WG-USA resolved to support and advocate for UCP as a non-violent technique for

safeguarding civilians in situations of violence, and particularly as an effective measure in protection of women and children.

The 13 years since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed to have seen the fastest reduction in poverty in human history, demonstrating that intentionally planned and measureable outcomes, along with a global partnership, can have a most positive effect on humanity. *However, to fulfill the vision of a sustainable world, the Post-2015 agenda must go beyond the MDGs, which lacked the ability to reach enough of the very poorest and most excluded people, and were silent on the devastating effects of conflict and violence on development.*

Armed conflict has been recognized as one of the most significant structural barriers to development, with the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda stating that, “violence and fragility has become the largest obstacle to the MDGs”. One-and-a-half billion people live in areas affected by fragility, conflict, or large-scale, organized criminal violence, and no low-income fragile or conflict-affected country has yet achieved a single MDG. (World Bank 2011:1)

By 2015, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), estimates that more than 50 percent of the total population living in extreme poverty will reside in places affected by conflict and chronic violence. The reality is that in the past 35 years over 40% of regions producing peace agreements have relapsed into violence within five years, most often having reached a “peace” at the point of a gun. And then there are the dangers confronting people who flee to refugee camps, where some relief may be afforded, but certainly no “development” can take place.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported on June 20, 2014 that the number of people living as refugees from war or persecution exceeded 50 million in 2013 for the first time since World War II. Most victims of violent conflict are civilians – the majority of them women and children – who are often deliberately targeted, causing flight. Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, reports, “The average amount of time people worldwide are living in displacement is now a staggering 17 years.”

The nexus between sustainable development, peace and stability recognizes that sustainable development cannot be achieved in a situation marked by violence, threats to the rule of law, criminal enterprises, fragility and armed conflict. The President of the UN General Assembly has said, “Achieving the overarching goal of the eradication of extreme poverty will simply remain an elusive ideal and dream, out of reach of those who most need it, unless we work together to end conflict and instability, and to promote inclusiveness, good governance, the rule of law, and human rights, including the right to development for all.”

Governments, people and experts from across the world have also called for peace and governance to be top priorities:

- The UN General Assembly unanimously agreed in September 2013 that any new development framework should promote peace, governance and the rule of law.

- Groups of member states have called for peace to be a priority: for example, the 54 member States of the African Union agreed that peace should be one of six core pillars for the new development framework, stating that it “is essential for the achievement of the continent’s development aspirations”.
- 1.5 million people, through the MyWorld survey, consistently placed protection against crime and violence and honest and responsive government among the top seven development priorities;

The High Level Panel of Eminent Persons identified building peace and effective, open and accountable institutions as one of five transformative shifts – in fact all the major expert report inputs into the September 2013 Report of the UN Secretary-General called for a significant focus on issues of peace and governance.

Plan of Action:

- WG-USA will establish a short-term working group to compile information related to this resolution by 30 November 2014, and share the information with the membership, and with other IFUW affiliates, NGOs, and NGO networks who share an interest in this issue and would offer input.
- The working group will solicit responses from WG-USA the membership, and the Program and Advocacy committees through electronic and/or conference call means that will be used to formulate a position paper that would be shared with IFUW and any network in which we are partnering.

The working group and WG-USA delegates/participants in the 2015 CSW will identify meetings and workshops where it will be beneficial to share the ideas from the position paper, and take the steps to disseminate our recommendations. Further actions will be determined by the process being used to gather comments for the development of the 2015 SDGs.

Proposed by Kathleen Laurila, WG-USA CIR



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