



Background Paper

Committee: UN Women

Topic B: The role of women in post-conflict recovery

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Since the beginning of their existence, nations all around the world have suffered from internal conflicts as well as international conflicts and wars. These humanitarian crises affect the health, safety and well being of a nation's community. As men, women also carry the weight of reconstructing their wrecked communities and relationships. In government and through civil society, women globally contribute to all four largely accepted pillars of post-conflict recovery: security, governance, justice and reconciliation, and socio-economic development. Their leadership in these areas can work as a "window of opportunity" to empower women, promote gender equality, and advance women's position in society. However, women are still seen as war victims. Likewise, the different ways in which women contribute to the rebuilding of countries rising from the aftermath of an armed conflict are not recognized.

Women are constantly excluded from peace negotiations and there are a lack of formal employment opportunities mainly due to discriminatory practices which still take place in political and socio-economic development. Males often dominate peace negotiations and keep women at the margins. This means discourses and practices employed are closer to men's reality rather than women's, which as an outcome, women lack recognition in reconstruction arrangements that are generally part of the peace agreement. Furthermore, women often lack legal rights to start businesses and work in diverse economic and political sections. In addition, women also suffer from violence, which is another factor for their lack of participation.

The UN's work in support of women in post-conflict recovery follows the Security Council resolution 1325. It was adopted in 2000 by the 15-member body, which is called 'for action to reverse the egregious and inhumane treatment of women and girls during conflicts, the denial of their human rights and their exclusion from decision-making in situations of armed conflict, in peacemaking and peacebuilding'. Nonetheless, this didn't stop the exclusion of women in the effort of countries trying to recover. It however helped the situation in a few countries, for example, in Rwanda. With many efforts, in its main economic sector, females have started to dominate rather than men. Research has shown that, in a country where women hardly owned any land, nowadays, 11% of the land is owned by women, 83% is jointly owned by married couples and only 6% by men themselves.

Denmark, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Uganda are some countries that have approved national plans for the recognition and inclusion of women in post-conflict actions for recovery since the year 2000. Meanwhile, several countries are drawing up action plans on Resolution 1325: Argentina, Australia, Burundi, France, Ireland, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and South Africa. Liberia was the first country in a post-war situation to adopt a national action plan. Despite these efforts, the issue hasn't been diminished enough globally and a lack of involvement of women in post-war recovery continues.

In conclusion, as Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) expressed, when talking about women's work, "It should not be invisible. It should not be unpaid. And it should be recognized and properly funded,". The endorsement of women's participation in a country's recovery is a very important factor for a more efficient reconstruction and repair of the country. Gender barriers have always been an issue for societies all around the world and breaking them is the start for a more developed society, especially for a society going through a reconstruction process. Women's efforts should not be ignored, they should be acknowledged and should not go unpaid, this is what this committee is looking for.

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Note: These links may work as good information sources.

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