



**Communiqué of the Commemoration of the 15th
Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution
1325 (UNSCR 1325) in West Africa
Accra Ghana, 20 & 21 October 2015**



The **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** in partnership with the **West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)** convened a meeting to commemorate **the 15th Anniversary of the UNSCR 1325**, which brought together about 45 participants from Ministries of Women Affairs and Gender, representatives of Civil Society Organizations, Media and Development Partners from West Africa.

The commemoration hosted by the Ghana Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection took place at Mensvic Hotel in Accra Ghana, from the 20th to 21st of October 2015. The theme of the meeting was **“15 Years of Implementing UNSCR 1325 in West Africa: Looking Back and Looking Forward”**.

The meeting was convened to review the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in West Africa, share the successes and lessons learned in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, examine the challenges of implementation of NAPs, and to strategize on how to fast track the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in West Africa.

The Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection represented by the Deputy Minister, Honorable John A. Ackon, delivered the keynote address and formally declared the conference open. The Honorable Minister expressed appreciation for the choice of Ghana as the venue of the Conference and appreciated the ECOWAS Commission and WANEP for their efforts in ensuring a strong and effective women participation in peace processes as enshrined in the UNSCR 1325. He conveyed the greetings of the President of the Republic of Ghana and pledged Ghana’s support for the outcomes of the conference. The ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender, Dr. Fatimata Dia Sow represented by Director Gender, Dr. Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe and the Executive Director of WANEP, Mr. Chukwuemeka Eze delivered the opening statement and welcome remarks at the meeting.

OBSERVATIONS

The conference:

1. Noted the progress made by West Africa on the development of UNSCR 1325 Regional Action Plan and NAPs.
2. Noted the tangible achievements made in the three pillars, namely prevention, participation, and promotion of the UNSCR 1325.
3. Noted the inclusion of additional pillars – protection and prosecution in the NAPs of some countries.
4. Recognized that more work needs to be done not only to strengthen the operational implementation, but also to apply specific set of indicators as a common basis to track and document the implementation of UNSCR 1325 by relevant regional, government and civil society organizations.

5. Identified insurgencies, electoral violence and identity crises including ethnicity and religious conflict as the current/emerging peace and security challenges in the region.
6. Identified impunity and inadequate access of women to justice as main drivers of violence against women in the region.
7. Observed the poor documentation and dissemination of outcomes of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 processes.
8. Observed inadequate funding and lack of political will as a key factor militating against the implementation of National Action Plans for the UNSCR 1325.
9. Observed the low level of awareness on the provisions of the UNSCR 1325 especially among state security actors and other key stakeholders.
10. Underscored the need for partnerships, alliances, coordination and collaborations among key stakeholders for the successful implementation of UNSCR 1325.
11. Raised concern on the continued hostage of the Nigerian Chibok girls.
12. Welcomed the Global Study on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and the establishment of Global Acceleration Instrument to support implementation of 1325.
13. Expressed commitment to the new UNSCR 2242 on women, peace and security passed on 13 October, 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the two-day deliberation, the participants arrived at the following recommendations:

PREVENTION:

- The participants underscored the need for investment in national early warning and early response mechanisms as approved by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government ensuring the critical role of women and CSOs in the various early warning pillars.
- The promotion of Alternative Dispute Resolutions or Mechanisms within Member States.
- Promotion of peace education and culture of peace in all Member states
- Governments and CSOs/Networks should continue to sensitize and raise awareness on the content of the resolution including translating it into the various ECOWAS languages

PROTECTION AND PROSECUTION

- Capacity building for security officers, law enforcement agencies and judiciary including religious and traditional court systems.
- Fully implement international, regional and national instruments to promote and protect the rights of women.

- Improve women's access to justice and establish appropriate sanctions for perpetrators of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

PARTICIPATION

- The need to increase the participation of women in all ECOWAS and its member states' peace processes including in the enlistment of women in the ECOWAS Panel of the Wise, National Peace Infrastructures, Mediation support services among others.
- Establishment of database of women with expertise in women, peace and security and other areas related to development.

ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORTING

In order to ensure full compliance of all Women, Peace and Security Resolutions, the UN should mandate its member-states who ascribe to the UNSCR 1325 to develop Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks.

- Disseminate best practices in M & E framework as well as key indicators for monitoring implementation.
- Member States are encouraged to submit Periodic Reports to ECOWAS as a means of tracking implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the region.
- Set up Multi-stakeholder taskforce including CSOs, Academia and Gender Ministries to ensure the implementation and monitoring of NAPs.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

- The AU and ECOWAS should make resources available to support the implementation of NAPs in countries that already have them in place as well as countries that are yet to develop NAPs. The required fund could be made available from the recently established financial mechanism "Fund for the African Women" or any other source;
- Annual National Budget should make provision for the activities relating to national action plans and such should be included as an indicator of country compliance to the principles of UNSCR 1325.
- Strategic engagement with the Private Sector for possible funding of concrete NAP activities.
- More information and guidance to be provided to Member States and CSOs in the ECOWAS region on how to access funding for work on implementation of UNSCR 1325 through the recently established Global Acceleration Instrument.

PARTNERSHIP, ALLIANCES AND COLLABORATION

- Women led organizations/networks should partner with executive, legislature and judiciary for increased women participation in decision making;
- Women organizations should partner with the media for popularization of UNSCR 1325, sustenance of the issue in the public domain and generation of support for the resolution among journalists.
- Women organizations/networks should partner with men from diverse backgrounds, religious/traditional institutions to strategically and innovatively address the patriarchal systems that resist women's advancement.
- The participants called on UN Women to make available the report of the Global Study on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325, in addition to facilitate the process of review and validation of the study.

KEY OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

- *Communique*
- *Conference Proceedings documenting presentations and all support documents.*