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**Division for the Advancement of Women
Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
Department of Political Affairs**

Expert Group Meeting on "Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women – A framework of model provisions"

AIDE MEMOIRE

I. Background

In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2002-2006, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will review the thematic issue of "women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building" at its forty-eighth session in 2004. In order to contribute to a further understanding of this issue and to assist the Commission in its deliberations, the Division for the Advancement of Women is organizing, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Department of Political Affairs, an Expert Group Meeting on "Peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women – A framework of model provisions," to be held in Ottawa, Canada from 10 to 13 November 2003.

Peace agreements are crucial components of the peace process as they not only signify the formal cessation of armed conflict but also provide the framework for the reconstruction of political, legal, economic and social structures. As such, peace agreements are the basis for the ensuing institutional arrangements of a State or community. Their content will have a direct bearing on women's participation – as a reflection of women's inclusion in formal peace negotiations and as a determinant of their involvement in post-conflict peace-building. Explicit attention to the participation of women, and reflection of gender perspectives in such agreements is crucial to ensure that such agreements fully address the gender-specific consequences of armed conflict, the needs and priorities of women and girls in the aftermath of conflict, and their participation in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, and thus in the prevention of future conflict.

Women's participation in peace processes has been an important focus of international attention and is clearly addressed in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Platform, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, defined the need to "increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels" under Strategic Objective E.1, and urged Governments, as well as international and

regional international institutions, to integrate gender perspectives in the resolution of armed or other conflicts and foreign occupation.

The outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century,” reaffirmed this objective and called on Governments “to ensure and support the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making and implementation in development activities and peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building.”

Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, adopted in October 2000, calls on all actors to adopt a gender perspective when negotiating and implementing peace agreements and to address the special needs of women and girls during repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution also calls for measures to ensure the protection of and respect for women’s human rights, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary, and encouraged all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants. In addition, the report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security, presented to the Security Council in 2002, recommended stronger measures to integrate women in all steps of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building and urged that all peace agreements fully and explicitly integrate gender perspectives.

The issue has also been addressed by various United Nations entities as well as the Inter-agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security chaired by the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

To facilitate the implementation of these recommendations, various initiatives of the United Nations and civil society have focused on supporting and increasing the representation of women in peace negotiations and in peacekeeping operations. There is, however, increasing awareness that the presence of women at the peace table is insufficient to ensure attention to gender issues or the participation of women in post-conflict reconstruction, and that concrete and practical tools are needed to strengthen gender perspectives in peace agreements and in the subsequent institutional development.

One such tool is model provisions for peace agreements, which can serve several functions: identify the promotion of gender equality as both, one of the goals of the peace agreement, and a means for creating and maintaining a stable and peaceful society; and set standards to be met with respect to the participation of women and incorporation of gender perspectives in reconstruction, and in particular in the development of legislative, judicial, political, electoral, economic and social structures in post-conflict societies. Such model provisions can also serve as a valuable reference point, or guideline, for all actors involved in negotiating peace agreements in ensuring attention to gender perspectives.

II. Objectives

The objectives of this meeting are two fold: 1) to identify good practices and lessons learned for inclusion of gender perspectives in peace agreements and the processes preceding such agreements; and based thereon 2): establish standards to be met in peace agreements with regard to incorporation of gender perspectives. The meeting will provide the tools to help meet such standards in a variety of post-conflict situations through the development of model provisions to be included, or used, in peace agreements for promotion of gender equality and the participation of women.

The Expert Group will review case studies of selected peace agreements, representing a geographic balance, as well as both inter-State and intra-State conflicts around the world, and assess the extent to which they included gender perspectives and addressed women's participation within the following key areas of concern:

- political structures and electoral systems
- constitutional and legal systems
- judicial systems and access to justice
- reconstruction of social structures and civil society
- reconstruction of economic systems
- disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

The expert group meeting will discuss and identify obstacles and lessons learned, as well as good practices, where possible, in preparing and implementing peace agreements that are supportive of gender equality and the participation of women. Based on their discussions, and the lessons learned from case studies, the expert group will formulate a framework of model provisions for the promotion of gender equality and the participation of women, for use in future peace agreements.

III. Expected Outcome

The Expert Group Meeting will provide critical input to the consideration of "women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building" by the CSW at its forty-eighth session. A report, summarizing the discussions of the meeting and outlining the recommendations of the Group, will be produced.

IV. Method of Work

The expert group's discussions will be based on a background paper prepared by a consultant on behalf of the Division for the Advancement of Women, and experts' case studies of selected peace agreements representing a geographic balance and both inter-State and intra-State conflict situations around the world.

The expert group will work in plenary session and in working groups to assess and analyze the extent to which gender perspectives and the participation of women,

within the above-identified key areas of concern, were integrated into the various peace agreements, and discuss and review the implementation of these agreements. In doing so, they will provide critical assessments and lessons learned resulting from such past experience.

V. Profile of Participants

The Expert Group Meeting will be attended by ten (10) experts and one (1) consultant, appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. DAW/DESA will provide travel and daily subsistence allowance to the experts and the consultant. The criteria of geographical and gender balance will be respected in selecting the experts. The participants will be drawn from a variety of fields and expertise within the framework of conflict-prevention and resolution, peace management and peace-building.

VI. Documentation

The documentation for the meeting will include background papers prepared by the organizer(s) and case studies of selected peace agreements prepared by the invited experts. Observers of Governments, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations will be invited to contribute inputs from their perspectives. The expert group meeting will be conducted in English only.

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