



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

15 January 2016

Dear Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka,

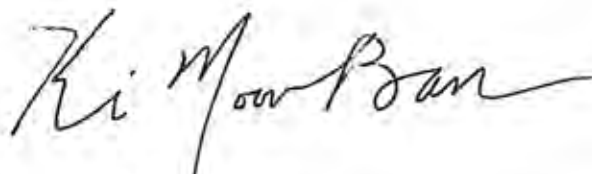
I would like to thank you for your letter dated 6 January 2016 on the London conference on the Syria crisis. I fully agree with you on the importance of the participation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding in Syria and reaffirm my strong commitment to ensure their meaningful participation at the peace talks. I have asked my Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, to follow up with you on this issue.

With regard to the London conference, I would like to note that the main objective of this important event will be the financing of humanitarian and resilience activities as outlined in the 2016 Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. The conference also aims to address the longer-term needs of those affected by the crisis through identifying ways to strengthen resilience by creating economic opportunities and jobs and providing education opportunities as well as to maintain pressure on parties to the conflict to protect civilians affected by the conflict.

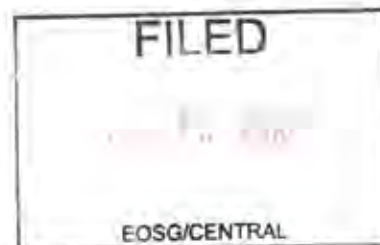
As such, the conference will deliberately not focus on the political process, which will be addressed separately by my Special Envoy. It will, however, include a strong focus on the situation inside Syria, the profound impact on women, girls and youth, and ways we can protect them from harm. It is my hope that we will raise significant and much needed resources for the humanitarian response, including for the activities of UN Women and other actors to enhance the resilience of women to the Syria conflict.

I wish to reiterate that I will continue to serve as a strong advocate for the rights of women and will ensure that due attention is given to the needs of women and girls during the conference in London.

Yours sincerely,

  
BAN Ki-moon

Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka  
Executive Director  
UN Women  
New York



16-00093/16-00332

W01/03/002

United Nations



Nations Unies

Executive Office of the Secretary-General  
Cabinet du Secrétaire général

To: OCDC (through DSG),

Please find attached, for your review and SG's signature, a reply letter to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, regarding the London conference on the Syria crisis.

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Political Unit  
14 January 2016

**Received in ODSG**

15 Jan 2016

**Seen by:**

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OCHA-OUSG Office

FICHE DE TRANSMISSION

TO: CdC A:	Date: 13 January 2016
FROM: Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator <i>Stephen O'Brien</i>	
SUBJECT: SG Letter to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka OBJET:	
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6 January 2016

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

I would like to commend your leadership in the ongoing peace efforts to end the crisis in Syria and in co-hosting the upcoming Syria Donors Conference in London on 4 February 2016.

**This letter is a request on my part for your continued support to help us ensure that this important Conference be a defining moment in affirming the importance of women's participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding in Syria, and in ensuring that dedicated resources are earmarked for women's participation and leadership in this area.**

As the historic passage of Security Council resolution 2254 guides the next steps towards a political solution, UN Women stands with you, ready to provide any support needed, to ensure that the women, peace and security agenda gets fully implemented and benefits the women and girls of Syria.

In response to the Syrian crisis, within the UN system-wide response, UN Women has been supporting Syrian women along two tracks. Firstly, engaging women's groups in peacebuilding efforts at all levels within the framework of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. Secondly, we have been working to enhance the resilience of Syrian women in temporary shelters and host communities in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

As part of its first track, UN Women's efforts are focused on ensuring that women have a seat and a voice in peace negotiations at all levels. We are supporting the Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy, a coalition of diverse Syrian women civil society representatives speaking in one voice for peace, in close collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy and the Department of Political Affairs.

His Excellency  
Mr. BAN Ki-moon  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
New York

Enclosed: The Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy Recommendation Paper for Inclusive Negotiations

FILE

*wom/03/002*

As underlined in the findings presented to the Security Council during the High-Level Review of the implementation of resolution 1325 and reasserted by resolution 2242, women's participation is key to successful peace negotiations and sustainable peace. In fact, evidence shows that women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years by 35 per cent. Yet, a study of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 revealed that only nine per cent of negotiators were women.

Resolution 2242 also highlights linkages between women's engagement in peace and security, effective humanitarian action and preventing and countering violent extremism. In Syria, this is demonstrated starkly in the pivotal role that Syrian women have played in brokering local ceasefires to date, and their potential role in the conclusion of an inclusive agreement.

**It is essential to build on these efforts to ensure women's meaningful participation and inclusion in peace negotiations.** The UN system is uniquely positioned to ensure that the planned intra-Syrian peace talks fully engage women and civil society. In this connection, I take the opportunity to share with you the proposal of the Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy calling for the full inclusion of women and civil society in the upcoming peace talks. UN Women remains at the disposal of the Office of the Special Envoy to explore options to respond to this call.

Under the second track, UN Women is following a three-pronged strategy to enhance women's resilience to the Syria conflict: i) increase women's role in the design and delivery of emergency aid to ensure that it benefits men and women equally and increase its effectiveness; ii) strengthen the economic empowerment of both Syrian women refugees and women in host communities in order to create win-win options and diffuse local tensions over limited resources; and iii) support women's engagement in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and prevention of violent extremism.

UN Women looks forward to sharing this experience with partners at the Syria Donors Conference. In particular, we believe that an objective of the UN system should be to ensure that the outcome of the Conference is fully gender-responsive and that all efforts to end the conflict, build peace and reconstruct Syria fully take gender perspectives into account.

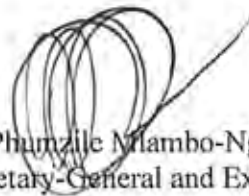
Ensuring the meaningful participation of women at the peace table is critical to this; as is earmarking a minimum of 15 per cent of all funding relating to peace and security for programmes whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs and advance gender equality – as recommended by the Global Study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325. This call was reiterated by yourself

in your annual report on women, peace and security in October in relation to funding allocated to new peace and security threats, including countering violent extremism – a critical issue in the current Syria context. **We believe that these two elements, women's participation and earmarked funding, should be included as an objective of the Conference.**

In this context, the historic Security Council resolution 2242, adopted to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 and the High-Level Review of its implementation, provides an essential basis for this and all peace processes.

It is my great hope that with your support and the help of Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, the meaningful participation of women in the peace talks can be ensured, so as to give sustainable peace in Syria a greater chance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka  
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director



Dear Special Envoy DeMistura,

The Syrian Women's Initiative thanks you for your public and private commitment to include women in the Syrian negotiations, the inclusion of the Syrian Women's Initiative in the May 2015 Geneva Consultations, and the several additional consultations you had with members over the past several months, both inside Syria and abroad.

As you are aware, hard data shows that a more inclusive process for negotiating peace leads to a more sustainable peace.<sup>1</sup> In light of this evidence, there is an opportunity to ensure that the intra-Syrian peace talks under the auspices of the UN are modeled to maximize inclusivity of all segments of Syrian society, including women and civil society.

The SWIPD reiterates that women must be full and equal partners with men at all negotiating levels and in all processes of negotiation and the implementation of peace, democracy and reconstruction in Syria. We call for women's participation as members of political party delegations, and as independent and impartial women's civil society. Both forms of participation must be included in the intra-Syrian peace negotiations.

We attach a paper with recommendations for this participation, as a direct party in the negotiations and also in a Women's and Civil Society Forum.

Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy  
17 December 2015

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<sup>1</sup> Peace agreements are 64 percent less likely to fail when civil society representatives participate. Women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years by 20 percent, and the probability of it lasting 15 years by 35 percent. Analysis of 40 peace processes since the end of the Cold War shows that in cases where women were able to exercise a strong influence on the negotiation process, there was a much higher chance that an agreement would be reached than when women's groups exercised weak or no influence. In cases of strong influence by women an agreement was almost always reached. Global Study on 1325: "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace" (Oct 2015) <http://wps.unwomen.org/en>

**The Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy (SWIPD)**  
**Recommendation Paper for Inclusive Negotiations**  
**December 2015**

**Recommendations for Track 1**

***Negotiating Parties***

The intra-Syrian negotiations should include 4 delegations in all aspects and levels of the negotiations: (i) at the decision-making table, (ii) in working groups on thematic areas as they arise, and (iii) in committees on procedures/processes.

1. Track 1 negotiations should comprise of four delegations each with equal numbers of delegates participating: government, opposition, women's civil society and broader civil society.
2. The government and the opposition delegations should each comprise of at least 30% women.<sup>2</sup>
3. The women's civil society delegation should be equal in number to each of the other delegations.
4. The civil society delegation should be equal in number to each of the other delegations, and comprise of 50% women.
5. While allowing for flexibility in the process, the negotiations should be conducted in the spirit and intent of substantively including all delegations; thus, a two-tiered process that marginalizes some delegations into the position of less important actors should be avoided.
6. All delegations should be able to influence the content of the agenda which should take into account the issues, needs and interests of all negotiating parties.
7. All delegations should be involved in making or confirming the decisions on all substantive issues in the negotiations.
8. Each negotiating delegation should have the resources to appoint a support team to provide administrative and technical assistance. This support team should include at least 30% women.
9. Women's and civil society organisations should be included in any commissions, committees, governing bodies and processes established to take forward decisions made in the negotiations. Women must form at least 30% of these bodies and processes.
10. Technical and support teams that are established to take forward decisions made in the negotiations should include at least 30% women.

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<sup>2</sup> The negotiating team should be 30% women and any support team should be 30% women.



## **Recommendations for Track 1.5**

### ***Women's and Civil Society Forum***

A formal Women's and Civil Society Forum should be established as part of Track 1. It should comprise of a wide diversity of civil society actors to add expertise, both technical skill and rooted experience, to the negotiations. This should be established whether Track 1 negotiations include four delegations (*as above*) or are confined to two delegations (*government and opposition*).

1. The Women's and Civil Society Forum should have a formal status in the negotiation process that is recognised by the Special Envoy and his team, all negotiating parties and international actors.
2. The Forum should be mandated to discuss and form consensus positions and recommendations on substantive topics in the Track 1 negotiations and issues critical to peace and stability in order to enrich and assist Track 1 negotiations. It should discuss the Track 1 issues, identify gaps and raise important issues that are missing from the agenda, study matters referred by the negotiating parties or the Special Envoy, and offer views and creative solutions for consideration by the negotiating parties.
3. The Forum should comprise of a diverse spectrum of civil society with representation across sectors; one sector group should come from women's organisations; the representatives from other sector groups should include equal numbers of women and men.
4. The Forum should have 2 co-chairs, one woman and one man.
5. The Forum should be mandated to report regularly to both the Special Envoy and directly to the negotiating parties in person on their work and recommendations. The Special Envoy should ensure that the Forum's work and papers form part of the agenda and discussions in Track 1, and that the co-chairs<sup>3</sup> report regularly in person at the negotiations table.
6. The negotiating parties should be required to discuss, consider and respond to the papers and recommendations that come from the Forum. The Special Envoy and at least one representative of each of the negotiating parties should come to the Forum regularly to update the Forum members on progress in the negotiations, and to respond to recommendations of the Forum.
7. The Forum should be invited to review and endorse the final agreement reached by the negotiating parties.
8. The UN should put in place a mechanism to decrease the vulnerability of civil society organisations to facilitate their involvement in the Forum.

### ***Selection of Forum Participants***

9. The Special Envoy should establish criteria for and oversee the selection of members of the Forum. The Special Envoy might consider a combination of election/nomination from various sectors along with appointment by the UN to fill gaps.

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<sup>3</sup> Or other strand/specialist representative as appropriate/required.

10. Criteria for selection might include: civil society organisations by sector (e.g. women's organizations, peace activists, human rights advocates and organizations, humanitarian organizations, monitoring organizations, youth organisations, business associations, trade unions, professional associations); gender, expertise, age, geographic location, ethnic and religious diversity, grassroots representation; and pragmatic/strategic considerations (e.g. reputation/influence/closeness to decision makers).
11. The requirement to reach at least 50% women in the Forum should be made clear to each nominating sector.

#### **Recommendations on Technical and Logistical Support**

1. UN Women should establish a Gender Expert Technical Support Unit to accompany the process to assist the Special Envoy and the delegations in gendering the process and content. The Unit should have resources to bring in gender experts with specific competencies in the areas under discussion as required. The Gender Expert Technical Support Unit should be a resource for all the women participating in negotiations. The Unit should also support the Women's and Civil Society Forum.
2. The UN and individual governments should support the women's delegation and civil society's delegation with salaries, training, travel and logistical support.
3. The UN and individual governments should ensure that the Forum is resourced and logistically supported to function effectively to fulfil its mandate throughout the negotiating period.