



"We exist to empower women and communities by giving them a voice to fully participate in decision making for equality, development and peace."

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Suva, Fiji Islands

Statement delivered by Sharon Bhagwan Rolls on behalf of the Pacific Media and Policy Network on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security):

Launch of the network's policy advocacy handbook: "Peace Talks: Localizing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in our Pacific Region"

We are pleased to be able to share with officials gathered for this week's annual Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) meeting at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat headquarters a handbook whose development began in Nadi in June 2006.

The journey stems from the Regional Workshop on Gender, Peace and Security which preceded that year's the Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) meeting and brought together FRSC officials and Peacewomen to raise awareness and understanding of gender issues in conflict, peace building and security in the region in order to facilitate a shift towards more gender responsive security frameworks at national and regional levels. An agreed outcomes document was adopted and included a series of recommendations for endorsement by the subsequent FRSC meeting.

In addition to the opening up of dialogue spaces between government officials and CSO leaders, an immediate results was the establishment of the Pacific's regional media and policy network on UNSCR1325 and our Peace Talks Program. These initiatives were developed to address women's poor representation in decision making on peace and security issues regionally and to progress the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Our partners are Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in Bougainville, Vois Blong Mere Solomons based in Honiara, Ma'afafine moe Famili in Tonga, the Catholic Women's League in Fiji and more recently the regional steering group of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders.

Our collaboration has resulted in the development, production and distribution of women's peace-media initiatives as well as our annual "1325" Policy document which bring the voices of women from our local communities into the official Peace and Security spaces such as the FRSC and the broader regional and global peace and security architecture.

The voices are also presented in the DVD which accompanies the handbook.

In 2007, our regional network recognized that not only did we need to continue to negotiate for women's spaces, but, we also needed to invest in our preparation, in developing and delivering our messages, when we got to the table, and to invite other partners to the table as well.

However, as activists, while we knew how to mobilize, part of our journey has also been about negotiating our way into the next level and the challenge has been to understand how those spaces work and having the skills to work in those spaces.

We are therefore very grateful for the support of the International Women's Development Agency and AUSAID who have invested in our Peace Talks model which we regard as a practical process in building capacity to work in and negotiate formal spaces, as well as enable an inter-generational forum of Peacewomen to discuss peace and security issues and invest in building their capacity to liaise with significant government stakeholders.

This handbook is an outcome of that process and a tool for our goal to train a group of women who will be confident to represent their communities at high level meetings and in planning for human security and keeping the peace in the region.

It is designed as a facilitator's handbook, to help women and men improve their knowledge and understanding of UNSCR1325 and the regional Peacewomen's network, and suggest ways trainers can effectively train others about peace and human security. It is designed for this region and uses information from Pacific women supported by their experiences and stories, so it is relevant and meaningful to Pacific people.

The handbook is a product of the Pacific which provides:

- Materials and information that can be used by individual people or civil society organizations to learn about UNSCR1325 and to train others about how UNSCR1325 can be made more useful in the Pacific
- Trainers and workshop participants more skills and confidence to campaign for UNSCR1325 at the national and regional levels.
- Assistance for members of women's NGOs find ways to start and keep up talks with parts of government and other agencies working on peace and human security, so that they can know more about women's efforts already taking place on peace; and also encourage governments to make commitments to UNSCR1325 and other international policies such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), especially as they affect women's security.

The handbook is designed to assist you if you:

- need or want to understand women's human rights issues
- who have been working directly with the community
- are interested in the role of women in formal and informal decision-making processes and who see the importance of women being involved in decisions about human security
- want to lobby for changes in policy and practice, and
- are interested in educating the community about the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325).

The production of the handbook has been a collective and participatory learning process, interwoven with policy level interactions with UN and PIFS officials, the diplomatic corps as well as other “1325” activists and mentors.

We would also like to thank Koila Costello-Olsson for writing this manual and to Seona Smiles our editorial consultant, as well as Claire Rowland and Barbara O’Dwyer who assisted in reviewing the content. I would also like to mention Felicity Hill of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) who in 2008 helped develop our annual “1325” report and Sanam Anderlini whose work has been an inspiration and guide for many of us. Special mention must be made of the FemLINKPACIFIC regional and local correspondents and volunteers who took time to use this handbook when it was in its draft form to try it out for a year.

We also acknowledge all our partners in the Pacific who are a part of this regional project and continue to believe in the importance of UNSCR1325 and building a peaceful Pacific based on justice and the attainment of human security.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge the support of the UNDP Pacific Centre and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in particular the leadership of the Political Division who since 2006 have been willing to journey with us recognizing that only by opening up the spaces for women and civil society, can we strengthen collaborative action for enhancing peace and human security in our region.

Finally this handbook is a guide to consider how we can advance and integrate UNSCR1325 into regional and national peace and security policy and practice to ‘open the doors’ to women’s participation and ensuring that they are automatically included in peace talks, peacebuilding, indeed all issues that affect their communities.

An environment must be created that views women as a legitimate part of regional peacebuilding even though (armed) conflict is one of the most gender-segregated activities we know and even though women have made up the majority of the membership of the world’s peace movements, ten years on since the adoption of “1325” too many official peacebuilding processes are still almost exclusively a male activity.

We therefore hope that this handbook will contribute in some way to enhancing women’s participation for peacebuilding and in particular preventive action by enabling and strengthening partnerships with officials and policy makers to achieve the goal of women’s participation in all levels of decision making processes both in the normal day-to-day processes that govern their life and living standards and in those particular circumstances that arise before, during and after violent conflict.

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FemLINKPACIFIC is a Fiji-based women’s non-profit community media organization helping women communicate with each other and have a stronger presence in community and national affairs. The organization empowers women and communities by giving them a voice to more fully participate in decision making for equality, development and peace. Strengthening the role of women in defining measures of human security and having space to share their experiences,

perspectives and knowledge about peace making with policy makers is a key facet of FemLINKPACIFIC's program. Working in communities throughout Fiji, Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tonga, FemLINKPACIFIC helps women to form and put their views and recommendations on peace and human security. Their stories and recommendations have been analyzed and documented in annual regional policy publications on United Nations Security Resolution 1325, most recently Policy for Peace in our Pacific Region (2009).

As a regional media network catalyst on UNSCR1325, FemLINKPACIFIC is working towards achieving the objectives of:

- a trained core group of regional women's Non Government Organizations and Peacewomen who can effectively engage in the annual South Pacific Forum Regional Security Committee meeting to promote the adoption of UNSCR1325, and to represent their communities in the regional security planning process
- a regional secretariat of peace-women, modeled on the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security¹, to effectively identify and support regional Peacewomen, share regional perspectives and experiences of conflict, and promote Peacewomen as key participants in regional meetings and as government advisors. This secretariat will also be responsible for lobbying for national and regional government commitment to adopt UNSCR1325.
- preparing and distributing annual policy papers on the implementation of UNSCR1325 to include recommendations based on women's real experiences for adapting UNSCR1325 to conflicts in the region, and gender-sensitive indicators of peace and security and promoting UNSCR1325 in the region.

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