

## Engagement Strategy

### Network for Strengthening the Role of Women in Building and Restoring Peace

#### Executive Summary:

The UNDP Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery (RCPR) Team based at the Asia Pacific Regional Centre (APRC) aims to strengthen its efforts in working through, with and for civil society organizations working on women, peace and development issues in conflict and post-conflict countries in Asia. To this end, an engagement strategy has been proposed which recognizes and seeks to support the leadership of women in conflict prevention, dispute resolution, reconstruction and peace building at the regional, national and community levels. The strategy focuses on implementation of UNDP's Eight-Point Agenda, which provides practical, positive outcomes for girls and women in crisis settings, and contributes to implementation of UNSCR 1325.

<b>Contributing to Regional Programme Document Outcome(s):</b>	Improved and effective capacity of Governments and CSOs to prevent, manage and respond to conflict and natural disasters
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<b>Contributing to Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery Output:</b>	Personnel from relevant regional and national organizations have the knowledge and skills in capacity assessment and capacity development strategies using conflict risk analysis and gender responsive assessment tools and methods
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<b>Results:</b>	Regional network of CSOs (working on women and peace issues) are able to advocate for gender-sensitivity of conflict prevention, peace building, post crisis reconstruction and economic recovery strategies regionally and nationally
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A set of knowledge products and tools drawn from experiences of women peace activists in the region to support their advocacy and action for gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention, peace building, post-crisis reconstruction and economic recovery strategies

Expanded number of skilled individuals in gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention, peace building, and post-crisis reconstruction and economic recovery in the region

*In the face of the mind-numbing brutality women face in conflict situations, can a viable nation emerge? Can a nation consolidate peace when half its population lives in fear? By passing Resolution 1325, the Council signaled that the UN will stand up for women. But eight years later, women are still waiting.....So, let us remember that peace is not simply the absence of war. It must include freedom from fear and an end to impunity.<sup>1</sup>*

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#### **BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE:**

Women all over the world have suffered disproportionately in times of crisis, whether from natural disasters or armed conflicts. Breakdown of peace and order, absence of rule of law and displacement of communities, impact women and children in more acute ways. Incidence of sexual and gender-based violence rise in times of crises, often as a weapon of war but also as opportunistic crime such as in refugee camps. Wives and relatives of combatants become proxy targets of violence, and women refugees in IDP camps become vulnerable to harassment, assault and exploitation.

The challenges faced by women as victims and survivors in different crisis settings have been documented and cited on several accounts, but their sensitivity to sources of conflict, their role in providing and caring for their families in times of displacement, their contribution to the re-establishment of communities, their appreciation for the risks of community breakdown, and their strategies to collaborate and serve as peace-makers are less recognized. As such their ability to be contributing members in post-crisis reconstruction and recovery has been and continues to be marginalized.

The United Nations has given special attention to address the security of women in crisis and conflict settings, and to ensure the participation and representation of women in peace negotiation and peace-building. Specifically, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 defines the responsibilities of both government and civil society towards this end. The UNSCR 1325 explicitly makes reference to (i) issues of prevention and protection of women and girls from conflict; and (ii) women's contributions to conflict resolutions and sustainable peace. The resolution also calls for measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of peace agreements.

Subsequent to SCR 1325, other resolutions were passed by the UN Security Council, namely SCR 1820/1888 and 1889, to ensure that conflict-related sexual violence would be outlawed and will cease. In June 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1820, acknowledging sexual violence as a tactic of war, and recognizing that impunity for conflict-related sexual violence impedes sustainable peace and security. SCR 1820 demands the "immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians"; it calls for women's participation in peace-talks, urges sanctions for perpetrators, and requires that sexual violence be excluded from amnesties. Building upon this, SCR 1888, unanimously adopted on 30 September 2009,

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Cravero, former Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and Chair of UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict in a letter to members of the UN Security Council in 2008

calls for concrete measures to operationalise and institutionalise commitments to addressing sexual violence as a security issue.<sup>2</sup>

Created in direct response to the “Calls to Action” of the June 2006 Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond in Brussels, *United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict* (“UN Action”) unites efforts across the UN system with the goal of ending sexual violence during and in the aftermath of armed conflict. According to its Strategic Framework 2009-10, UN Action is meant to support women’s engagement in conflict prevention activities, peace negotiations and post conflict recovery processes. This helps to ensure that sexual violence is on the agenda of the police, security forces, justice and social support sectors before and after conflict. It also promotes efforts to provide survivors with the economic security required to rebuild their lives. UN Action seeks to connect with governance and reform processes that improve women’s access to decision-making and strengthen their voices in public affairs, with the long-term goal of advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.<sup>3</sup>

In support of these, UNDP has outlined an eight point agenda which provides practical and positive outcomes for girls and women in crisis, and is also a core element of the corporate Gender Equality Strategy defining how UNDP takes serious note of this issue. So while at the international level there are dialogues and growing commitment to recognize the contribution of women in peace building and to engage them in formal peace-making processes, this is yet to be mirrored on the ground as women continue to be underrepresented in peace negotiations around the globe<sup>4</sup>. These commitments to address social, political, economic and security needs of women in crisis settings needs to be leveraged as an opportunity for programmes to be more responsive to women’s specific needs and to support women’s groups and networks in their untiring efforts.

An array of organizations and women leaders in the region are working in countries that have recently been affected by conflict, with a growing need to support them with funding, training and giving them space to voice their demands, needs and contributions. These groups would benefit through a platform to voice their demands, needs and contributions to influence decision-making processes that shape the fundamentals of peace and security. With support, these groups can serve as peace movements, network with a larger constituency within and across countries, bring forward the contributions of women as peace makers and communicate and have a voice with national leaders and the international community.

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<sup>2</sup> This follow-on resolution mandates coherent and strategic leadership by the United Nations in the form of a Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on sexual violence in conflict (OP 4). It further calls for a team of rapidly-deployable experts on rule of law (OP 8), Women Protection Advisers, as needed (OP 12), annual reports on implementation (OP 27), the development of joint UN-Government Comprehensive Strategies to Combat Sexual Violence (OP 23), and improved data including trends, emerging patterns of attack and early-warning indicators (OPs 24; 26).

<sup>3</sup> Stop Rape Now: UN Action Against Rape in Conflict Strategic Framework 2009-2010, November 2009.

<sup>4</sup> In 2009, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) reviewed 21 major peace processes held since 1992 and found that women constituted less than 8 percent of delegates to talks and less than 3 percent of agreement signatories.

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**REGIONAL VALUE ADDED:**

Against the backdrop of persistent conflicts and disasters in the region, UNDP's Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery (RCPR) programme was formulated to support and strengthen regional and national capacities to prevent and manage risks, and respond to and recover from crisis. The RCPR has a very strong gender focus and aims to work in support of the issues related to women, peace and security. The RCPR in support of the UN system-wide action plan<sup>5</sup> seeks to shape an engagement strategy and network across four countries in the region to enable women's participation in building and maintaining peace, both as an end as well as a means to influencing other issues (such as creating more accountability, providing the space for voicing women's needs and priorities, as well as influencing the access to financing and aid for their priorities).

The engagement strategy is also informed by recent e-discussions<sup>6</sup> on UNDP's global knowledge networks that highlighted common elements such as lack of formal participation of women in post-conflict agenda-setting, the importance of addressing women's specific post-conflict needs and the gender dimensions of conflict/post-conflict capacity development initiatives. Some gaps which the engagement strategy will seek to address:

- Women's groups and grassroots organizations have immense amount of knowledge and experiences about women, peace and security issues, but their collective strength to function as a network, benefit from one another and upscale good practice working in conflict/post-conflict countries remains untapped.
- In order to translate rhetoric into action, some countries (albeit a limited number) have taken the first step to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) on 1325. The UNINSTRAW has developed a guide that documents experiences from some countries and provides guidance on the "how to" of developing such a NAP. However, UNINSTRAW also notes, 'regional action plans and initiatives could ideally play a complementary and mutually supportive role with NAPs. Despite this, to date, action to implement Resolutions 1325 and 1820 at the regional level has largely been lacking.' Such regional level support remains a notable gap, especially in Asia.
- The UN/UNDP in conflict affected countries is working with and for women's organizations and groups in implementing projects on the ground. However this remains adhoc, not always demonstrative of sustainable support to such organizations. Additionally, programmes in such countries have often been criticized for being gender-blind. A stronger engagement between UNDP COs and such organizations could help make future interventions in conflict affected countries more gender-responsive.
- There is a need to connect and raise awareness about existing global policies and commitments, such as on SCR 1325, 1820 and 1888, and support the capacities of organizations to translate these commitments into realities on the ground. Such support could be in the form of skills development such that organizations are

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<sup>5</sup> The UN system-wide action plan on this issue identifies four themes of prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery

<sup>6</sup> The consolidated replies from the e-discussion are an input into the SG's report on women's participation in peace building

better able to engage in formal peace processes and articulate the specific needs, roles and vulnerabilities of women, as well as in the form of simplifying complex policies such that organizations on the ground are aware of existing mechanisms and commitments and are able to hold governments accountable.

- It has been acknowledged that women and their voices are conspicuous by their absence in planning for peace, reconstruction and recovery, at the national and local level. Assessments already completed at the country level, can help to better understand factors that need to be addressed prior to designing training and follow-up support. However there still remain gaps in understanding what specific support can be provided across countries to bolster their effective participation in such dialogues.
- There has been documentation and case studies to understand the challenges, good practice and lessons learned about women in conflict/post-conflict situations. However there continues to be lack of policy space to discuss, acknowledge and act on the specific needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings, their complex roles during conflict, and their intimate relationship with the indigenous processes of conflict prevention and peace building.
- Tools on conflict-risk analysis and post-conflict planning and recovery exist, but these are not necessarily gender-sensitive, leading to analysis and subsequent interventions that are not responsive to the gender differentiated needs of women and men.
- There are very few networking opportunities for civil society organizations that are working to address similar challenges in different contextual parameters to share, discuss and learn from one another. Additionally, such platforms and opportunities remain one-off workshops, with few prospects for sustained support.
- While the participating countries have made initial efforts on UNSCR 1325, there has been little change in policies to address this issue. There is a need across countries, to create an interface where relevant government counterparts (e.g. national machinery, women MPs, National Commissions for Women etc) and key civil society actors can engage and have a collective strategy to address these issues and advocate for policy changes which support women's empowerment.

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**COUNTRY CONTEXTS:**

While the network would be open to organizations from other countries, four countries have been identified to form the core of the network, based on: (i) being recently affected by conflict in the region; (ii) where there is an existing base of organizations that can be part of such a network and can benefit from an engagement across countries; (iii) where there is the potential for results to trickle down in support of smaller grassroots organizations; and (iv) where the UNDP country programmes and priorities are aligned with and can benefit from being part of a such a regional initiative. While the four countries have a different political landscape and are on different stages of the development spectrum, there are common gaps in including women's specific needs, voices and vulnerabilities into peace building and recovery efforts. Below is a note on each country to allow for better alignment of such a regional initiative in support of country-level efforts:

**Indonesia:**

Despite the declining incidents of communal violent conflicts, and relative peace and calm in Indonesia, the country remains conflict-prone. Indonesia's journey towards a mature democracy is still challenged by the potential of violent conflict, in large part because of fragility due to lagging and uneven development, high levels of youth unemployment, corruption and poor governance, increasing pressure from the ongoing decentralization and democratization process (which may lead to local election disputes or conflicts), and worsening horizontal inequalities. Conflict prevention measures in post-conflict areas such as Aceh, Maluku and Central Sulawesi are highly relevant due to the unfinished reintegration process, the existence of remaining IDPs and the tendency of segregation among communities by religion or ethnicity. Conflict remains a latent issue in Indonesia, largely due to the existing diversities of the country; and women, children and the elderly often find themselves the most vulnerable, and hence in need of special measures and interventions.

Gender mainstreaming features as one of the cross-cutting issues in the government's 2010-2014 National Priorities. Over the last decade, the government has succeeded in raising awareness on the need to empower women and widen access to political, professional and social opportunities. At the same time, this has not yet meaningfully translated into planning and budgetary commitments for reform. To expand the number of women participating in the political process, raising the quality of participation remains a challenge and women need to be better trained and empowered to progressively shape national and local laws to create an enabling environment for women.

A recent article<sup>7</sup> highlights that the roles of women have been recognized as being especially important in conflict situations in Indonesia, where complex social and economic issues are the drivers of violence rather than the traditional disputes over territory or sovereignty. The article notes that in peace talks to end such conflicts the critical issues

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Vatikiotis and Rohaiza Asi (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue), published in The Jakarta Post, Monday 22 March 2010

relate more to matters of community relations and local economic wellbeing, in which women are often more involved than men. However, the aftermath of conflicts reveals a lack of attention to the resettlement of IDPs, to compensation for lost property and other vital ingredients for long term reconciliation and peace in the community. During the drafting of the peace accord between the Free Aceh Movement and the GOI, women's participation was limited in the decision-making process, resulting in their exclusion in the development of the reintegration process. So while it is evident that women play an important role in conflict management at the grass roots level, their involvement in political decision-making levels remains low.

In Ambon, Poso, and Aceh, women have been recognized to have led several inter-religious and peace dialogues at the grassroots level<sup>8</sup>. And while there have been considerable achievements in conflict management and peacemaking through efforts of both the government and civil society, promoting the role of women remained a weak area in the peace efforts in each of these regions.

A thematic assessment in Central Sulawesi and North Maluku highlighted that peace activists and women's organizations had attributed a number of challenges and weaknesses<sup>9</sup> at the individual, organization and community levels that limited their roles in peace building. The gaps identified ranged from lack of financial support, the need for skills building around advocacy, negotiation and networking, to the lack of education and awareness about peace processes and conflict resolution. The organizations also asserted the need for facilitating and promoting women's participation in various forums (such as seminars, workshops and conferences) at local, national and international levels.

At a recent roundtable<sup>10</sup>, the Minister for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection acknowledged that the socialisation of the UNSCR 1325 had been dismal and that despite it, women were not going to be automatically invited to the peace table, as structural, political and cultural change was both needed and possible. However, even when there are women representatives at the peace table, gender inclusive issues and perspectives do not necessarily make it on the agenda. The preoccupation with security and reduction of violence often obliterates other important issues. Due to greater interaction with the local community through their grassroots activities, many women have a greater awareness of the situation on the ground and are able to raise other issues such as social and economic often ignored in formal peace processes, yet critical in contributing to lasting peace. One of the recommendations from the Roundtable was to have civil society groups link up with efforts being made by the government on drafting a NAP on women and security in line with the UNSCR 1325. While these efforts are significant, it is important to be mindful and make collective efforts to fill gaps that have been identified through previous experiences<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup>Conflict Management Strategies in Indonesia: Learning from the Poso Experience (Workshop Report available at [www.hdcentre.org](http://www.hdcentre.org))

<sup>9</sup> Thematic Assessment on Women and Peace-Building in Central Sulawesi and North Maluku, 2004

<sup>10</sup> Roundtable on "Women at the Indonesian peace table: Enhancing the participation of women in conflict resolution", Jakarta March 2010

<sup>11</sup> The head of the Muslim delegation in Malino II peace talks on Maluku, indicated at the Roundtable on "Women at the Indonesian peace table: Enhancing the participation of women in conflict resolution", that the absence of women in the negotiating team was a result of lack of a 'ready stock of potential women' who could be part of such a team.

## **Nepal:**

In 2006, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement brought an end to a decade of armed conflict in Nepal, but long-lasting peace remains insecure amidst political and social tensions. The impact of the armed conflict has also left a divided society with a precarious economy. 2010 is set to be an important year in the Nepali peace process, following the slow progress last year in implementing the peace agreement and the creation of a new constitution. Owing to outstanding issues on demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants and calls from some regions for autonomy, the country continues to witness serious and sometimes violent political conflict. The civil war may be over and a democratic government in power, but Nepal's fragile peace continues to be tested. Local peace building efforts are well placed to advocate for inclusive governance and address issues of gender, caste, ethnicity and exclusion. Support is still needed to an already strong & vibrant civil society to help bridge the divisions created by conflict, local peace building.

While Nepal has endorsed international agreements on human rights, women's economic, social and cultural rights and CEDAW, there is a big gap between these commitments and their implementation. Despite women's crucial participation in political movements their role in crucial areas of decision-making regarding war and peace has been neglected, excluding them both as beneficiaries of and contributors to the process. They continue to be disadvantaged in opportunities including access to business, trade and industry, gainful employment, entrepreneurial and skill development opportunities, education, health etc. And while conflict has affected both men and women, the resulting nature and degree of gender-based violence in the form of sexual violence, rape, unwanted pregnancy, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and the associated stigmatization and rejection by family and society have put women in a particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged position.

While political leadership have announced a series of reforms and committed to provide women 33% of seats in the institutions of governance, the recently published Interim Constitution involved 4 women in the draft committee, and no women were represented in the peace negotiation that produced the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The post-conflict peace building efforts require creating equal social, economic and political outcome for both women and men. In 2001, Nepal ratified CEDAW's Optional Protocol, providing Nepali women the power to bring claims of gender discrimination directly to the UN committee. However, the awareness around such commitments and provisions remains limited. For there to be long-term, stable peace and development in Nepal, it is essential that restraints of the past are addressed and the new possibility for inclusive peace is explored.

## **Sri Lanka:**

State commitment to equal rights without discrimination on the grounds of sex commenced with granting of universal franchise to all in 1931, and is clearly articulated in the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka. The progress towards women's empowerment was enhanced

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with the establishment of the Women's Bureau in 1978, ratification of CEDAW in 1981, formulation of government policy on women (Women's Charter) in 1993, establishment of the National Committee of Women (NCW) in 1993, formulation of a National Plan of Action of Women in 1996, establishment of the Women and Children's Desks at police stations in 2000, and formulating protective legal reforms such as the Penal Code amendment in 1995 and the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act No. 34 in 2005. Currently, Sri Lanka is implementing the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security with the support of UNFPA and other UN agencies.

Notwithstanding the above positive factors there are number of issues that impede the advancement of women in Sri Lanka in the areas of social, political, cultural, legal and economics spheres. Its strong cultural norms and deeply rooted prejudices reinforce gender stereotypes that work against women, often manifesting in high levels of GBV, low levels of participation or obstacles to access justice mechanisms.

Representation of women in political institutions in Sri Lanka has been minimal in the 60 years since independence. This is despite Sri Lanka's favourable human development indicators for women, the constitutional guarantee of equality and policy statements making commitments to equal representation, and sustained activism and advocacy on this issue by civil society organizations. Furthermore, of the small number of women represented in political institutions in Sri Lanka, the great majority of them come from political families and from the Sinhala community<sup>12</sup>.

Peace talks in 2002-03, while not successful in ending the conflict provided an entry point for women's inclusion in the broader peace process. Working through the all-female Subcommittee on Gender Issues (SGI), women pushed for their participation and for attention to common issues of concern in all stages of negotiations and reconstruction. And even though the SGI was not directly represented at the negotiating table, it brought women's priorities to the forefront of the negotiations agenda. In fact even prior to the establishment of the SGI, several women's groups had committed themselves to identifying and discussing the needs of people on the ground, and were able to successfully lobby their sets of priorities with the international community. These experiences from 2002-03, present several lessons for the future in Sri Lanka that would allow for greater participation of women as proficient to relay issues of exclusion and inequality that could be part of future policy making processes at the national level in Parliament, as well regionally through the Provincial Councils in Sri Lanka.

During the armed conflict, women and girls were considered to be at higher risk of violence, due to a confluence of breakdown of traditional family protection mechanisms, and involvement of armed personnel, para military and guerrillas. During the armed conflict, forced conscription by LTTE used female suicide bombers and military cadres. The traditional gender identity of "women as victims of war and men as rescuer" was changed at an early stage of the war in Sri Lanka. Women were used not only as propagandists,

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<sup>12</sup> Stocktaking Report on Women's Political Empowerment, UNDP

fundraisers, spies, and service providers but also as combatants and more organized way of using them as human bombs by the LTTE. Forced recruitment of child soldiers, led to deprivation of basic human rights of both boys and girls in the North and East. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teenage girls were forced to marry at an early age to avoid joining with LTTE, leading to underage marriages, unregistered marriages, teenage pregnancies and sexual violence.

Looking towards the future- in order to achieve long-term stability it is essential that efforts are drawn towards putting strong foundations in place through national and local institutions, complemented with efforts that help cultivate strong peace building and social cohesion movements, and address specific needs of those who are most vulnerable (such as supporting war widows to recover) on the ground. Hence the need for strong local community groups which can help strengthen livelihoods options, address psycho social issues, restore confidence and help build cohesion between the different communities.

#### **Timor-Leste:**

The desire of the Government of Timor-Leste to move forward more purposely with national development, post conflict, is captured in its slogan “Goodbye conflict, hello development.” The Prime Minister, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao, is directly handling the formulation of Timor-Leste’s Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030, which bears the theme “On (the) road to peace and prosperity.” The plan commits to achieve double digit economic growth throughout the coming decade and beyond and thereby aims to converge with upper-middle-income countries within the next twenty years.

Ambitious as it is, the Plan may nevertheless be realistic because of Timor-Leste’s extraordinary economic situation. The importance of political stability and sustained peace cannot be overemphasized in a young nation that has recently gone through a new round of crises. The April 2006 rebellion by members of the military triggered renewed conflicts mainly in the capital city of Dili with young people mobilized to spread mayhem by burning homes, looting government offices and attacking civilians. Massive displacement of people resulted, such that camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) had to be set up in Dili and other districts, and these were maintained for as long as up to 2009. There were also losses in human lives, and destruction of property and infrastructure. The armed attacks on President and Prime Minister in February 2008 further underscored the need for strengthening state institutions, making peace and stability, rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs, and strengthening institutions of governance (including the security sector) as priorities. Balanced economic growth across the country’s districts and effective poverty reduction benefitting all without discrimination are important strategies for sustaining peace in Timor-Leste. It is widely acknowledged that youth, which forms majority of the population, can be drivers for both peace and conflict; hence their energies need to be channelled to productive pursuits. Expanding employment opportunities for the youth, many of whom have acquired education since independence, is thus an important goal of the Government.

An issue that remains unresolved ten years after independence is justice for the victims of human rights violation during the 25 years of protracted armed conflicts in Timor-Leste, from 1974 to 1999, between the Timorese resistance and the Indonesian occupiers as well as among the various Timorese political factions, including armed groups. Women, who were raped, abducted and turned into sexual slaves in the context of the political conflicts over the period 1974-1999, have not yet gained justice.

The Commission on Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR)<sup>13</sup> received testimonies for 853 cases of rape and sexual slavery and conducted 200 more additional interviews that led it to conclude that the actual number of conflict-related sexual violence that took place over the 25 year period could be in the thousands. Rape was the most commonly reported sexual violation, at 46.1 percent (393 out of 853) of all sexual violations documented by the Commission. Sexual harassment and other acts of sexual violence accounted for 27.1 percent (231 out of 853) while sexual slavery represented 26.8 percent (229 out of 853) of the reported cases.

The National Parliament of Timor-Leste endorsed the CAVR report in December 2009 and issued a resolution instructing one of its committees to draft two bills, one on a programme of reparation and the other on the institution that will administer the reparation programme. The bills on National Reparations Framework and establishing the Public Institute for Memory were approved on first reading early this month of July 2010 and remanded the bill for further technical review and for public consultation to Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Justice, Public Administration, Local Government and Government Legislation. On June 6 and 7, Committee A of the national Parliament held public consultations with local and international NGOs and representatives of religious faiths and international organisations.

There are two important areas where the UNDP Country Office sees this regional initiative to add value to its work on the ground, supporting national stakeholders achieve sustainable peace with justice and economic recovery with strong focus on poverty reduction and the achievement of the national targets, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. These are:

1. Ensuring that economic development and poverty reduction policies, strategies and programmes including the Strategic Development Plan for Timor-Leste 2011-2030 pay full attention to the economic rights of women and youth for employment and

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<sup>13</sup> The Commission on Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation Timor-Leste (CAVR) was established in 2002 by the UN Transitional Administrator, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, on the basis of the resolution by the first National Congress of the CNRT (Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense) in August 2000. The mandate of the Commission was to establish the truth about the human rights violations which occurred in Timor-Leste throughout the 25-year mandate period. The scope of this mandate included determining the factors such as the context, causes, antecedents, motives and perspectives which led to the violence, whether they were part of a systematic pattern of abuse, the identity of persons, authorities, institutions and organisations involved in the violations, and whether the violations were a result of deliberate planning, policy or authorisation on the part of the state, political groups, militia groups, liberation movements or other groups or individuals.<sup>1</sup> The Commission was also mandated to examine the role of both internal and external factors, and to determine accountability for the violations (Regulation 2001/10.)

livelihood as well as for access to quality social services, with particular focus on MDGs; and

2. Supporting initiatives of the national stakeholders, both government and civil society, to provide transitional justice to human rights victims during the conflict, in particular women victims of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

In UNDP's view, these are important steps to sustain peace building in the country. UNDP in Timor-Leste is currently designing a new project on Peace Building and Social Cohesion which builds on results of previous work with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS), to establish and capacitate the Department of Peace Building and Social Cohesion. The department will aim to sustain the processes of peace building and facilitate the participation of women and youth in peace building. UNDP also plans to work more effectively on enhancing women's participation and role in peace-building, especially by supporting the work of existing women's organizations and civil society groups.

Civil society organizations in Timor-Leste are actively working for peace and reconciliation including at the grassroots levels where community dialogues and other peace-building initiatives are taking place. The grassroots movement of women and youth for peace in Timor has the potential of having upstream policy implications, by filling the gap in citizenry engagement and creating greater accountability. There is strong advocacy efforts for the government of Timor-Leste to prepare a national plan for gender equality, through which the agenda of women and peace-building could be further supported. It would be important to have strong civil society groups that are able to participate effectively to bring forth the issues and priorities, which they witness and are aware of on the ground.

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#### SCOPE AND ELEMENTS OF THE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY:

Through this engagement strategy, a regional network will be formed comprising of the UNDP regional CPR team, UNDP Country Offices<sup>14</sup>, partner civil society organizations and key government actors that are working on gender equality and women's empowerment in conflict/post-conflict situations. Additionally the network will also involve select training and research institutes which can help shape new research and knowledge on this issue and help build and anchor capacities in the region. ▼  
The overall scope and components which will form the basis of the engagement strategy and regional network:

- **Knowledge sharing and networking:**
  - **Exchanging** experiences among practitioners and partner organizations to share relevant lessons learned and innovative practices across the region on the issue of strengthening women's leadership in peace dialogues and post-conflict recovery.

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<sup>14</sup> Timor-Leste, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Indonesia have been selected based on their high-risk to conflict and their potential to engage in and benefit from such a regional network

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- **Collaborating** on developing knowledge products and tools on conflict-risk analysis, and conflict prevention and recovery that engages and benefits network members.
  - **Connecting** practitioners to one another, to relevant resources and with ongoing UNDP projects, such that they can also be more engaged in the delivery of priorities aligned with UNDP's country programme and CPR initiatives. The Regional team will also connect national organizations with ongoing efforts at the corporate level, pertaining to UN resolutions and policies.
- **Capacity Development:**
- **Identifying gaps:** specific capacity deficits and needs of civil society and grassroots organizations to engage effectively in peace dialogues and recovery efforts. These needs could be articulated in the form of support needed for national plans on 1325 (an issue for which there is growing concern at the corporate level), information gaps on processes related to peace dialogues, access to financing for recovery or training needs on communications and negotiations etc.
  - **Adding value:** Training institutes and organizations already working in the area of women, peace and security will be engaged in the development of content of the specific training materials<sup>15</sup> (which respond to identified gaps). These modules can be used and adapted by training institutes within their own curriculum.
  - **Strengthening capacities:** Using the training material, one/series of training of trainer sessions will be organized to further strengthen the capacities of partner organizations in the network.
  - **Transferring capacities:** The RCPR Team would encourage and support the UNDP COs and partner organizations in their respective countries to subsequently deliver the training to other grassroots organizations in the region.
  - **Sustained support:** The network will serve as a peer support group among countries, and the RCPR team will provide technical support and link the in-country organizations with possible funding and resource mobilization opportunities.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:**
- The network will help create a regional advocacy agenda to support stronger participation of women in peace and recovery efforts. The lessons from knowledge and experience sharing sessions within the network will be captured and synthesized into advocacy notes that can be used at different regional and global forum.
  - Using the network to raise awareness about global policy commitments and platforms, by simplifying them and making information more

<sup>15</sup> The training material could contain a combination of (i) substantive content such as simplifying existing global commitments and resolutions, understanding peace processes; as well as (ii) skills building around negotiations, advocacy etc

comprehensive, practical and accessible for organizations working on the ground.

- **Ensuring linkages:** Providing a regional platform through the network would allow for organizations working in high-risk countries to benefit from each other's experiences and for their individual experiences to be documented into lessons to highlight common challenges, solutions and strategies. These organizations can also serve as the lead agencies which will help connect smaller, local grassroots organizations in their respective countries with ongoing efforts across the region. Such information when synthesized could also help shape and influence current and future CPR initiatives and programming for UNDP country offices. The regional network will benefit from other initiatives and development of knowledge products which the RCPR Team will be involved in. For instance, the development of gender sensitive conflict risk assessments will benefit from experiences drawn from these organizations, as well as in turn be of use to them in their own work. Also work planned by the RCPR Team on economic recovery and livelihoods development in post-crisis contexts can be shaped by the challenges and needs articulated through the regional network.
- **Sustainability:** This initiative aims to enhance capacities of institutions and initiatives that already exist in the region, and not to develop a new or stand alone initiative. UNDP *does not* see its role as a training centre, but rather as a facilitator for capacity building for advancing women's participation and leadership in peace building in the region. As a consequence, the long-term sustainability of the regional network relies on it being rooted in institutions and networks in the region. It provides an opportunity to share lessons, compare experiences and build on new ideas within a fairly structured plan that can help support capacities through a sustained engagement approach. The prospect for individuals and organizations to acquire new skills and apply them in their current work, as well as call upon support can truly result in sustained capacities being developed.

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#### MEMBERSHIP AND ROLES WITHIN THE REGIONAL NETWORK:

The engagement strategy provides the opportunity for civil society organizations and training institutes working on issues related to gender and conflict to organize themselves through a regional network, bound by the common work and shared commitment to inclusive peace, women's empowerment and development.

The UNDP Regional Centre will:

- Serve as an overall facilitator for the engagement and regional network;
- Link national and local organizations with regional and global knowledge on gender and conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and peace building;
- Facilitate a mapping exercise to identify common capacity and knowledge gaps;

- Support and facilitate the development of training material;
- Support development and implementation of country level plans
- Organize one/series of TOT with lead civil society organizations;
- Document lessons learnt from participating countries and share through regional and global forums;
- Explore policy platforms at the regional/sub-regional level to showcase the work of the network and participating organizations.

UNDP participating COs will:

- Support identification and participation of lead civil society organizations from their respective countries;
- Engage in the network to share lessons and experiences of UNDP programmes and CPR initiatives;
- Support the lead organizations in their respective countries to carry out trainings/consultations (as per country plans) to engage and train grassroots organizations.

Lead civil society organizations will:

- Participate in regional networking events and knowledge sharing;
- Disseminate regional and global knowledge and information to local grassroots organizations;
- Organize national trainings/consultations with grassroots organizations as per their country level plans;
- Communicate lessons, challenges, lessons learned from the grassroots to the regional network.

Criteria for participating lead CSOs are the following<sup>16</sup>:

- The organization does not belong to the state and does not seek governing power (i.e., political parties are not part of civil society);
- The organization operates and is formally established as a not-for-profit organization;
- The organization's mandate, values and ways of working are guided by principles of human development and gender equality;
- The CSO must be established as an organization and have legal capacity to enter into agreements with UNDP

Key government counterparts working on gender equality and women's empowerment will:

- Participate in regional networking events and knowledge sharing;

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<sup>16</sup> As per UNDP's policy to engage with CSOs

- Disseminate and advocate for greater attention to women, peace and security issues with other relevant government actors in their respective countries;
- Help shape a regional policy advocacy agenda on the theme of women, peace and security

Key training institutes will:

- Engage in mapping capacity deficits and gaps in training materials, in support of advancing women's leadership and participation in peace and recovery efforts;
- Engage in adapting and developing the training materials

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#### **MONITORING RESULTS:**

Given the existence of numerous networks with uneven progress and no sustainability, monitoring will be a critical aspect. Since this initiative is a part of the regional CPR programme, it will be included in the reviews and evaluation that take place for the entire programme. In addition, a monitoring framework will operate at different levels to gauge the effectiveness and success of this initiative.

At the **output** level, some of the indicators of success could include:

- network established and functioning
- curriculum and modules developed
- trainers and facilitators identified and trained
- regional capacity development events held per year
- national level plans/initiatives in place
- national level plans/initiatives implemented

In terms of measuring the effectiveness and development impact of the project, at the **outcome** level, some indicators may include:

- evidence of capacity of partner CSOs enhanced
- evidence of improved dialogue between women's CSOs and governments
- evidence of stronger role of women in peace building and recovery efforts
- evidence of improved advocacy on women's voices and needs in peace building and recovery efforts
- evidence of strategic linkages, influence over global and regional peace efforts

Easy to use tools such as surveys will be used to review the effectiveness and relevance of the network for the members (participating training institutes, CSOs and UNDP COs).



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## **ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to establish and sustain the network, it is critical that the engagement strategy be rolled-out in a phased approach.

### **Phase I**

This has involved a process of building consensus, ownership and collaboration among representatives from civil society, government and UNDP across the four countries. The engagement strategy has been developed through a process of consultation and at the first face-to-face meeting the strategy and network in support of implementing the strategy was launched. The members agreed on naming the network N-PEACE (engage for peace, equality, access, community and empowerment) and identified common concerns and issues that could be addressed through a multi-country approach, in support of efforts on the ground for strengthening the role of women in building and restoring peace.

**Phase II** would include (i) implementation of country plans; (ii) advocacy for strengthening the role of women in building and restoring peace. The RCPR team will support not only the development of country plans, but also explore funding opportunities in order to support their implementation.