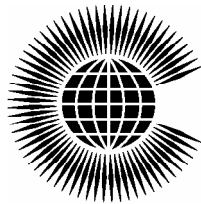


Commonwealth Secretariat



First Meeting of the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group

Helmsley Hotel, 212 East 42nd Street, New York
25 February 2006

Update on the Proposed Commonwealth Working Group on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security; (UNSCR 1325)

Background

At the Commonwealth Beijing+10 Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting held on 27 February 2005 in New York, the Secretariat proposed the formation of a Commonwealth Working Group to monitor the promotion and implementation of UNSCR 1325.

The idea to establish a Commonwealth Working Group on UNSCR 1325 was in response to the request by the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, at the 4th Year Review of UNSCR 1325 (October 2004), urging member states to strengthen the implementation of the resolution and ensure increased women's participation and representation at all levels of peacebuilding, conflict resolution and post-conflict processes. It was also envisaged that the formation of the Working Group would constitute the Commonwealth's contribution to implementing this landmark resolution.

At their Beijing+10 Meeting, Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers tasked the Commonwealth Gender Reference Group with discussing the issue of establishing a Commonwealth Working Group on UNSCR 1325. At a specially convened meeting held on 1 March 2005 in New York, the Commonwealth Gender Reference Group requested that the Secretariat prepare and circulate a proposal to Ministers on the Commonwealth Working Group on UNSCR 1325 to include: its mandate and strategic focus to ensure no overlap with other global mechanisms for monitoring UNSCR 1325; membership of the Working Group consistent with its mandate and strategic focus; and its sources of funding and feasibility.

Throughout 2005, the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Section remained actively engaged at the global level with developments on UNSCR 1325, and judged it best to await the outcome of the October 2005 UN Security Council's 5th Year Review on UNSCR 1325 before proceeding with the formation of the proposed Commonwealth Working Group.

At the 5th Year Review, a proposal was made by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security to the Security Council through the UNSC President, Ambassador Motoć, for the creation of a Working Group on UNSCR 1325 within the Security Council as

a mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the resolution. The Commonwealth Secretariat is keeping track of this development.

Commonwealth Secretariat Activities in Support of UNSCR 1325

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Section has undertaken activities in support of UNSCR 1325, which include the following:

- Gender mainstreaming through the work of the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Good Offices Role;
- Nomination of women candidates to the Secretary-General, as potential envoys for deployment to Commonwealth member countries likely to experience conflict;
- Membership and active participation in the Interagency Task Force on UNSCR 1325, chaired by Ms. Rachel Mayanja, UN Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (UN/OSAGI);
- Collaboration with other partners in the area of gender, peace and security, e.g., a project developed jointly with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Commonwealth member countries for 2006;
- Publication of a book titled *Gender Mainstreaming in Conflict Transformation: Building Sustainable Peace*, to be launched at the 50th Session of CSW, which includes a chapter on UNSCR 1325, and Commonwealth country and regional case studies on Bangladesh, Cyprus, India, Jamaica, the Pacific, Papua New Guinea, the Mano River sub-region, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka;
- Advocacy and awareness-raising of the Secretariat's work on gender, peace and conflict through interventions at the UN Security Council's 4th and 5th Year Reviews of UNSCR 1325 held in 2004 and 2005, respectively. The Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General addressed 4th Year Review and provided an update of efforts by member countries and the Secretariat to promote the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and the Gender Section addressed the 5th Year Review; and
- Collaboration with other partners including the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Recommendation to Ministers

The proposal to create a Commonwealth Working Group on UNSCR 1325 should not be pursued until the status of the NGO recommendation on the establishment of a Working Group on UNSCR 1325 within the Security Council is known.

This is to ensure effective use of the Secretariat's limited resources to provide support to member countries in situations of conflict, avoid duplication of efforts globally, and continue targeted interventions through existing mechanisms.