



Gender Concerns International & UNSCR 1325 10th Anniversary



**Special bulletin on Dutch NAP and its
scope in Afghanistan and the region**

Overview of 1325 related activities of Gender Concerns International

This bulletin contains a series of documents including reports, press releases and campaign materials illustrating a range of activities carried out by Gender Concerns International in relation to UNSCR 1325

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1) Gender Concerns International at New York 1325 celebration

UNSCR 1325 - NATO and US commitment in Afghanistan

Gender Concerns International is participating in events taking place in New York in autumn 2010 to mark the 10th anniversary of the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

Building on several years of lobbying and work in support of effective implementation of UNSCR 1325, particularly in Afghanistan and the region, Sabra Bano is delighted to have been invited to speak as a panel member at the launch of a new report on Afghan women in New York on 28 October 2010.

At the event, the new report on Afghan women by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, commissioned by Cordaid, will be presented. Sabra Bano will respond to the report alongside other panelists, including a representative from the Afghan Women's Network. The focus of Ms Bano's contribution will be to comment on the level of commitment among US/NATO policymakers to implementing UNSCR 1325 with regards to Afghanistan. She will also speak about pioneering work on 1325, and the gender dimension of the Afghan conflict.

2) Kashmir and 1325

The Hague, Netherlands MDGs and the Challenges of Earthquake Reconstruction, June 7th 2007



Mrs. Simone Filippini Head Directorate Emancipation (DSI/ER) during the questions and answers session together with the First Lady Mrs. Fakhriya Zulfarnain, wife of President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gender Concerns International director Sabra Bano

During the past few years, Gender Concerns International has been the only European organization raising its voice in favour of the women in Kashmir. In 2007 the organization launched a signatory campaign „Hello Sirs!“ that targets the few most powerful people in this world who are more able than many to stop the horrible crimes regularly being committed against the women victims of this conflict. These powerful people are predominantly the male heads of states, in India, Pakistan, Indian and Pakistan Administered Kashmir, the USA and at the UN, EP and NATO. Since the death of Asia Jeelani in a mine blast accident while monitoring elections in Srinagar (Indian Side of Kashmir) in 2004, Gender Concerns International was deeply moved by this atrocity and started to draw attention to plight of women on both sides of Kashmir.

In 2005, Gender Concerns International organized a Sharing Experience Interaction Conference in Srinagar and observed the ground realities of heavy militarization and militancy in the area. In relation to our work in Azad Kashmir, Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International visited the earthquake destroyed areas in Azad Kashmir. In the aftermath of the earthquake it was largely women that were subject to gender-based

discrimination starting from the early phase of post disaster rehabilitation actions. Since women are disproportional agents of force, power and assaults in conflict zones, such as Kashmir, the absence of a gender component in furthering the development of such a region causes gender blindness in the whole peace procedure. Not adopting a gender perspective refers to a fundamental lack of understanding development in terms of implementing the UN resolution 1325, as well as targeting Millennium Development Goal 3 and 5, which tackle women's empowerment and gender equality.

Gender Concerns International has experience in Pakistan Administered Kashmir as well as India Administered Kashmir and therefore considers the aspect of enabling a platform for women of Kashmir to meet very high.



Gender Concerns International organising Functional Networking Meeting WCA 1325 and at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Hague, Netherlands
Public Meeting at municipality: Gender Justice and Peace in Kashmir
June 7th 2007

City diplomacy is also incorporated into Gender Concerns International activities and policies. In 2007 the first lady of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Mrs. Fakhriya Zulqarnain, was received by the vice-mayor of The Hague, Sander Dekker. Gender Concerns International introduced the first lady and other Kashmiri women of the delegation to the municipalities of The Hague and Haarlemmermeer in order to talk about the situation of women in Kashmir after the earthquake and collaborate on a local level for post-earthquake reconstruction.



*At the City Hall vice Mayor Mr. Sander Dekker welcomes the First Lady Mrs. Fakhriya Zulqarnain
In The Hague, Netherlands*

***Haarlemmermeer, Netherlands
The Prospect of Cooperation
June 7th 2007***



*The First Lady Mrs. Fakhriya Zulqarnain is received by
Mr. Tom Horn the Alderman of County
Haarlemmermeer*

In January 2009 a meeting in Pakistan helped analyze and seek ways to improve the basic human rights situation of women in the region and to give Kashmir international attention regarding UNSCR 1325, particularly in Europe. Relating the work of Gender Concerns International in Pakistan to the efforts of UNIFEM Pakistan through Brussels liaison will certainly help women in Kashmir.



منظر آراؤں سے ملنے پر تنظیم کوپ کے زیر اہتمام خواتین کے حقوق کے حوالے سے متحدہ کاسٹریس سے جامعہ اے نوبل یونیورسٹی میں گیلانی خطاب کر رہی ہیں۔

3) The Dutch National Action Plan (NAP) and its impact on women in conflict areas.

4th December 2007 Launch of NAP 1325 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs followed by a discussion with invited partners of Gender Concerns International from Kashmir and Afghanistan



Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International was given the honour of signing the Treaty regarding National Action Plan 1325 on behalf of the platform *Vrouwen voor Duurzame Vrede* (VDV) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on 4th December 2007.

In the presence of **Minister Bert Koenders** and **Eimert van Middelkoop**, Sabra Bano pledged strongly to all the signatories to contribute to the policies of the National Action Plan 1325, especially when it comes to the peace and security for women in conflict zones.

The National Action Plan outlines the aims and objectives of future action goals to combat poverty and to maintain gender balance. It has an equality policy which is designed

to take action against inequality.

Guus ter Horst, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister **Ronald Plasterk of Education, Culture and Sciences** took part in signing the Treaty on NAP 1325. Initially, Ms. Bano signed the Schokland Treaty on the 30th of June 2007 alongside other notable development organizations, involved in the process towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. Gender Concerns International has been and is still actively working towards the achievement of the 3rd Millennium Development Goal, which involves the promotion of gender equality and the empowering women. We believe that if this goal is realized, this will inevitably have a positive impact on all other Millennium Development Goals.

In order to highlight the position of women in conflict zones as a demonstrative example of how the NAP 1325 could be addressed to the work of women in conflict zones.



Robert Dijksterhuis, head of the gender division at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

4) Women in Afghanistan and the region

Talibanization and Women in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Time for a Fare Share in Development Assistance for Women

16th – 21st May 2009



Participants of the exclusive meeting with Dutch MPs.

Summary Awareness-Raising Activities 18-20 May 2009

Expert Meeting Dutch Parliament

In the morning of the 18th of May 2009, from 10:00 to 12:30, an expert meeting on 'Women and Talibanisation' took place at the Dutch Parliament. Present at the meeting - which was organised by Gender Concerns International in cooperation with the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) and specifically with Member of Parliament Chantal Gill'ard - were not only women from the region Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also representatives of the

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives of the U.S., Pakistani and Afghan embassies and individual gender experts.

The expert meeting has been regarded very fruitful by all participating parties and there has been found consensus on several issues. More coordination on all policy levels is needed to make sure that future and present funding will reach its grassroots objectives, especially with regard to development aid for women. There is a general willingness of all parties to focus on gender issues and, moreover, the parties present at the meeting have agreed on continuing their support for gender issues.

Debate at The Hague University (Haagse Hogeschool)

In the afternoon a debate took place at The Hague University on 'Women and Talibanisation' with reference to the upcoming European elections. After an opening speech by Peem Breebaart, President of The Hague University, speeches were given by Ms. Zohra Rasekh, the acting director of Human Rights and Women's International Affairs in the Afghani Ministry of foreign affairs and member of CEDAW, Ms Taqdeez Gillani, director of the Cultural Academy at Azad Jammu & Kashmir and chairperson of HOPE, and by Afifa Azim, founder and director of the Afghan's Women's Network. Furthermore, Europarlementarian and Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) candidate for the upcoming European elections, Emine Bozkurt spoke on the reference of Talibanization for the European Union. After these highly informative speeches an interactive panel discussion was started in which the audience could address the panel of Pakistani and Afghan gender experts.



Mrs Gillani



Mrs. Zohra Rasekh

Meeting Rotterdam City Council Representatives

In the afternoon of the 19th of May Gender Concerns and her two guests from Pakistan and Afghanistan met with four representatives of the Rotterdam City Council under which Ms. Karin Duys (CDA) and Josine **Sturman** (SP). Discussed was the possible role of these representatives and the City of Rotterdam in supporting the fight of Gender Concerns International and its partners for the position of women in the region of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Meeting Amsterdam City Council Representatives

In the evening of the 19th a similar meeting took place in Amsterdam. However, besides representatives of Amsterdam's City Council, also some other interested parties were present at this meeting held in theatre Perdu. The meeting turned out into an interactive discussion between all the parties and resulted in the exchange of ideas how the city of Amsterdam could support the women and development in the region Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Regional stakeholder meeting, Kabul, July 2009

As signatory to the Dutch Schokland Treaty and to the Dutch National Action Plan on 1325, Gender Concerns International is committed to highlighting the gender dimension of the Afghan conflict within a broad regional context. This initiative is a direct response to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 which calls for the enhanced contribution of women in peace, security and development processes especially in conflict and post-conflict areas.

The Afghan Women's Network (AWN) and Gender Concerns International (GCI), a Dutch NGO based in The Hague, co-organized a regional stakeholders meeting to discuss the gender relevance of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 regarding the increased involvement of women in the peace, security and development processes in fragile states. This meeting was held in Kabul, Afghanistan from 6-7 July 2009 and the following countries were represented: Afghanistan (also the host), India, Iran, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Delegates from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were invited but could not attend.

Summary of the conclusions and outcomes of the regional stakeholders meeting in Kabul

It had been very beneficial for Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries to come together to share experiences and lessons learned and to discuss options for the future regarding the situation of women in these countries with regard to UNSCR 1325 and the Hague Declaration.

There was unanimous agreement that a regional approach and strategy was very appropriate and would have more force and impact; this should be in coordination with other regional networks and complementary to country-level activities.

There was agreement that such a regional body should also have a role in monitoring international development assistance flows, with the task of ensuring that a “fair share” is channeled to women’s development priorities.

A follow-up meeting, either in The Hague or in one of the participating countries, was necessary to detail out the content and structure of this regional network i.e. its mission, activities and funding needs.

All three representatives from Pakistan invited participants to visit their regions and offered to host the next regional meeting in one of their locations. Similarly, all other country participants expressed such support.

The Kabul Declaration should be used by all country participants to advocate, lobby and raise awareness about the particular challenges facing women in this region.

Gender Concerns International agreed to initially act as the secretariat for any follow-up work to this meeting. This will be carried out in partnership with the five participating countries, which constitute the “core founding group” for this regional initiative.



Afghan Women's Movement from First Women's Council to Kabul Conference



17-18, July, 2010

The purpose of this conference was to bring a joint and collective voice of Afghan women that seems to be excluded from the grand Kabul Conference which is taking place on July 20, 2010. We, the women from different provinces, have come together to solidify our voices at the capital of the country. We call on the Afghan government and international interlocutors to address women's needs and concerns according to the priorities that were set by Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), Afghan Constitution (2004), National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA) at the center of the Kabul conference.

Gender Concerns International was heavily involved in preparing the first women's council. UN Special Representative Staffan de Mistura (photo) highly appreciated the cooperation of Afghan women and welcomed the bringing out of a collective voice.



5) Women at the Flashpoint: 2010 and beyond

Women's voices from Afghanistan and the neighboring countries

On 14 January 2010 Gender Concerns International (GCI) organized a conference entitled "Women at the Flashpoint: 2010 and Beyond – Women's Voices from Afghanistan and the Neighboring Countries" that took place at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

It was organized as a follow-up to the Kabul Conference in July 2009 to raise awareness about the plight of women in the conflict zone of Afghanistan and its neighboring countries, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, India, and Tajikistan. The conference was opened by Ms. Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International and the moderator was Ms. Alice Bouman-Dentener from the Dutch Women's Council (NVR).

Prior to the conference the second stakeholders meeting of the Regional Gender, Conflict and Development (RGCD) Platform took place at the Gender Concerns International office from 12 -13 January.



Regional Strategy Meeting on 13 January 2010



Ambassador-at-Large Melanne Verveer delivering her Keynote Speech at Women at the Flashpoint conference

Melanne Verveer thanked Gender Concerns International for organizing a conference that was urgently needed. Ambassador Verveer focused on Security Council Resolution 1325 addressing women, peace and security: “After almost a decade since its adoption, there has been little progress in recognizing the important role women need to play in this area. As foreign ministers and other leaders gather in London at the end of this month to discuss progress in Afghanistan, the voices of women need to be heard, because Afghan women are critical to their country’s future.”

6) The Hague Recommendations

At the strategy meeting of Women's at the Flashpoint, „The Hague Recommendations“ were drafted as a follow up of the Kabul declaration from July 2009. The Recommendations covered the following key areas:

Women's Participation in the Peace and Security Process

Women's Political Participation

Women's "Fair Share" of Development Assistance

Women and Security

Cross-Cutting Recommendations



The conference began with a viewing of the short film "Kabul Point", marking the formal establishment of the Regional Gender, Conflict and Development Platform at the Regional Stakeholders meeting in Kabul in July 2009.



Koen Davidse of Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Chaudhry of Pakistan, Counsel General Dr. Jamshed of Afghanistan, Ambassador Lydia Morton of Australia

7) Gender Concerns International present at the 54th session of the CSW in New York.

8 March Side Event

Gender Concerns International organized a successful side event to the 54th session of the Commission of the Status of Women in New York on 8th March 2010. The event was centered around a special experts panel including Sarah Taylor, executive Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in New York, Robert Dijksterhuis, Head of the Gender Division of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Head of the Dutch Delegation to the 54th session of the UN CSW and Afifa Azim, Director of the Afghan Women's Network. The meeting was chaired by Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International and was concluded with the remarks of Alice Bouman-Dentener, President of the Women for Water Partnership. Gender Concerns International valued being present at the 54th session of the CSW, because it was a great opportunity to interact with like minded organizations to gain support on gender issues. It was a pleasant atmosphere which led to fruitful debates and the construction of texts and resolutions to which Gender Concerns International was able to give crucial notes on strategy and content. The main focus of Gender Concerns International was on the successful side event, which concurrently led to future opportunities of cooperation and advocacy.



Panel members Sarah Taylor, Robert Dijksterhuis and Afifa Azim with Gender Concerns International Director Sabra Bano

8) Flowers for Peace campaign



Flowers For Peace

Send a Rose to the Women of Afghanistan to Support their Participation in Peace and Security Talks Now!



Flowers for Peace Campaign draws attention to the Contribution of Women to bring Peace and Security in Conflict Zones and Fragile States. The Campaign hopes to serve as a platform for those who are willing to support Women's struggle for self organization, right to prevention and protection and Women's participation in political decision making at high level international and national consultations.

Flowers for Peace Campaign in its essence is a tribute to and a celebration of Women's Worldwide Struggle to bring security and development to Fragile Living Conditions



Gender Concerns International is a gender and development organization based in The Netherlands. Gender Concerns aims to promote a gender-balanced society, build capacity for gender equity in targeted communities and to connect and facilitate communication on gender equality amongst individuals, groups and organizations on various levels.



Ambassador Morton, Sylvia Borren and Dieny Scheffer received Flowers for Peace at Campaign Launch in Peace Palace

“Timely and Courageous Campaign” – Says Australian Ambassador Lydia Morton at the Flowers for Peace Campaign Launch on April 26th. NVR president Dieny Scheffer adds: “Flowers are a great symbol of peace for the world and women need peace”.

UN Rapporteur Margot Wallström receives Flowers for Peace

On 19th May 2010, Gender Concerns’ Brussels Office Presented Flowers for Peace to Margot Wallström, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to the United Nations. Wallström showed her appreciation and support for the campaign.



Asma Jahangir at an Exclusive Session on Pakistani Women

The renowned Pakistani Human Rights Advocate Ms. Asma Jahangir will attend an exclusive session on 27th of May 2010, at the office of Gender Concerns International, when she is visiting the Netherlands to receive The Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award 2010.

9) London Conference: Gender Concerns' Silent Diplomacy for Women as stakeholders in Peace, Security and development issues in Afghanistan

Text of letter to UK government regarding presentation of the Hague recommendations to the London Conference

Subject:

Recommendations "Women as Stakeholders in Regional Peace, Security and Development issues"

To,

The Right Honourable David Wright Miliband, MP.

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

United Kingdom

Herewith I am pleased to hand over these recommendations to you via the British Ambassador His Excellency Paul Arkwright on behalf of Gender Concerns International and the members of the Regional Platform. I hope that these recommendations will be passed on to the London Conference participants and the delegates of the International Community.

These recommendations are voicing the voice of the women of Afghanistan and the region. From Kabul to The Hague we have worked hard to convince the International Community that women are equal stakeholders in peace, security and development matters concerning Afghanistan and the region.

As a believer in silent diplomacy I myself have written a letter to British Prime Minister Gordon Brown that was handed over to the British Embassy on 29th December 2009 here in The Hague requesting an inclusion of Afghan and international women's organization to the London Conference. Today we have received a positive note from 10 Downing Street stating that "your letter is receiving attention."

I hope that this also means that our recommendations will be considered seriously and forwarded further to the International Community. Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Bert Koenders has supported our initiative, as well as a great number of the representatives of the International Community present here in The Hague.

I hope that the London Conference will be a milestone in integrating both the International and the Afghan women's voices to the posed challenges that the conference is aiming to address to. As women of the European Community we support your efforts in bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan and the region and hope that there is a recognition and visibility for the efforts that we are putting together for a just and a fair governance of law and order in Afghanistan. Thank you,

With warm regards,

Sabra Bano

Director, Gender Concerns International

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10) Diaspora/Minorities Workshop

Museum of Communication, The Hague

As a result of its Diaspora/Minority Platform created in 2008, Gender Concerns International initiated the Diaspora workshop on the role of migrant organizations held for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of UNSCR 1325 on October 19, 2010.

“Beyond 10 years on UNSCR 1325” which was led by Gender Concerns International together with MWPN (Multicultural Women Peace Network), aimed to highlight the interest and contribution of Dutch women of non-Dutch origin who have contributed to strengthening the Dutch NAP on 1325 and to consult and agree on recommendations to take to Dutch and UN policy-makers.



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The only Gender and Development organisation in the Netherlands

Our Themes:

Gender and Democracy

Gender and Disaster Management

Gender Justice in Conflict and Peace

Gender and Minorities

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