



Associate Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security

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**Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman, QC MP**  
Minister for Women and Equality  
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

26 February 2010

*Dear Harriet*

**Commission on the Status of Women, New York, March 2010**

From my recent discussion with Baroness Kinnock, I understand that you are to attend the Commission on the Status of Women in New York next week. I thought it would be useful for me, on behalf of the APG on Women, Peace and Security, to send you a brief note ahead of the Commission to highlighting Section E of the Beijing Platform for Action, relating to *Women and Armed Conflict*. This is very closely linked to the APG's work on women, peace and security issues, namely UN Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889.

In my discussion with Baroness Kinnock this month I suggested that it would be beneficial, in light of the current FCO-led policy review, for you to be briefed ahead of your trip to New York about the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP) – I hope this has happened. The UK has a positive record when it comes to women, peace and security issues at the UN level. At the national level, HMG was one of the first governments to develop an Action Plan in 2006 – the strategy covers the HMG's development, diplomatic and military work overseas; it is led by the FCO and jointly owned with the MoD and DFID. With developments at a global level since the National Action Plan was first developed, we risk losing our position as a global leader in the field without a new and revitalised strategy. This makes the current review very welcome. As part of this I would like share a couple of thoughts you may consider at the CSW, these are broadly akin to my discussion with Baroness Kinnock.

1. The current NAP does not include any mechanisms to monitor its effectiveness and impact. Last October, Security Council resolution 1889 called for the development of a set of global indicators to monitor the implementation of women, peace and security resolutions worldwide. We are expecting the publication of the global indicator report in April with civil society consulting on these indicators in New York on 12 March. In addition to HMG integrating similar indicators into our own framework, it might be appropriate for the UK Mission to the UN in New York to host the launch of this UN report. This would be a powerful reaffirmation of the Government's commitment. I am pleased monitoring and evaluation methods are being considered at the UK level and was one of the points raised in the recent public consultation exercise on the NAP's future. The CSW provides a good opportunity for you to discuss progress on this at the UN level, and I would be very grateful for an update on this when you return.
2. It is equally important that we consider women, peace and security issues in the UK, as well as in our work overseas. Conspicuous in their absence as part of the NAP are specific provisions relating to Northern Ireland. Indeed, in its concluding remarks on the UK in 2008, the CEDAW Committee noted "*with regret the lack of information provided on the implementation of resolution 1325... in Northern Ireland*". It will be important for HMG to consider this further, and discuss the possibility of the Northern Ireland Office buying into the NAP's implementation. There is a growing body of support for this in



Northern Ireland itself, and work is underway to establish an All-Party Group in Stormont which will consider these issues at the devolved level. I think it would be valuable for you to use your time at the CSW as an opportunity to informally consult with other partners and civil society on how this can be moved forward.

As I say, the UK has a strong record on women, peace and security issues, and it is vital this is maintained. I look forward to hearing the outcomes from discussions around Section E of the Beijing Platform to Action during this year's CSW discussions in New York, and how the international community links this to the wider women, peace and security agenda. As I am sure you concur, women are not mere victims of conflict as many see them, rather they are great agents for change and an untapped resource for building peaceful and sustainable futures for torn communities. More than half of armed conflict reignite within a decade of peace; at the heart of this problem lie deeply flawed security priorities and peacebuilding efforts which mostly exclude 50 per cent of the population – women. I would urge you to bear this in mind while at the CSW and include specific comments on Section E during your speech to the Commission. I would welcome an opportunity for you to engage with the APG when you return.

*Best wishes*

*A. M.*

**Anne Milton MP**  
Joint Chair

CC: Baroness Kinnoek, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office