

# Women's Economic Empowerment in the United Nations Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda

Claire Duncanson  
University of Edinburgh

# RESOLUTION 1325

Security Council Resolution 1325 (SCR1325)



**UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED ON:**

**20 OCTOBER  
2000**



**KEY PROVISIONS:**

Increased participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making



Attention to specific protection needs of women and girls in conflict



Gender perspective in post-conflict processes



Gender perspective in UN programming, reporting, and in SC missions



Gender perspective & training in UN peace support operations

**Marks the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women**

**FOUR PILLARS:**  
Participation  
Prevention  
Protection &  
Relief and Recovery

**KEY ACTORS:**  
the Security Council;  
Member States; UN  
entities; the Secretary  
General; and parties to  
conflict.



**PeaceWomen**

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
CYNTHIA SULARZ



## Security Council Resolutions:

# Women, Peace and Security

## Women's Leadership in Peace Making and Conflict Prevention

YEAR RESOLUTION	OVERVIEW
2000 <b>1325</b>	Affirms the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict peacebuilding and governance.
2009 <b>1889</b>	Stresses the need to strengthen implementation and establishes indicators for the monitoring of resolution 1325; calls for the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Security Council on women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding.
2013 <b>2122</b>	Addresses persistent gaps in implementing the WPS agenda; positions gender equality and women's empowerment as critical to international peace and security; recognizes the differential impact of all violations in conflict on women and girls, and calls for consistent application of WPS across the Security Council's work.
2015 <b>2242</b>	Establishes the Informal Experts Group (IEG); addresses persistent obstacles to implementation including financing and institutional reforms; focuses on greater integration of the agendas on WPS and counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism; calls for improved Security Council working methods on WPS.

## Prevention of and Response to Conflict-related Sexual Violence

YEAR RESOLUTION	OVERVIEW
2008 <b>1820</b>	Recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war and a matter of international peace and security that necessitates a security response.
2009 <b>1888</b>	Strengthens efforts to end sexual violence in conflict by establishing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and team of experts on rule of law and sexual violence in conflict, deploying expertise and improving coordination among stakeholders involved in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.
2010 <b>1960</b>	Establishes a monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence in conflict.
2013 <b>2106</b>	Focuses on accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict; stresses women's political and economic empowerment.

For more information, visit [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security)

# Research Questions

- Are the concepts of women's economic security, rights and/or empowerment mentioned in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) which make up the core of the WPS agenda? Or in the wider architecture developed to implement the agenda? Or in implementation itself?
- If so, where and when?
- How are they conceptualised?

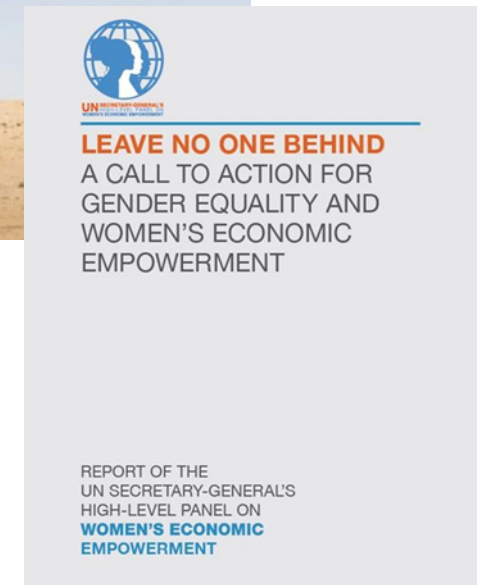
# Women's Empowerment

- “the processes through which women gained the capacity for exercising strategic forms of agency in relation to their own lives as well as in relation to the larger structures of constraint that positioned them as subordinate to men” (Kabeer 1999; 2001).



# From 'smart economics' to 'win-win' logics

- “Gender equality is a core development objective in its own right. It is also smart economics. Greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation, and make institutions more representative.”
- “Women’s economic empowerment is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do.”



# What is wrong with 'smart economics'?

- **Impact on women** – intensified double burden – increasing care responsibilities in time of austerity, and integrated into markets on terms that rarely benefit them (rather, achieves development on the cheap)
- **Impact on gender** – reinforces gender binaries (altruistic women/egoistic men)
- **Impact on solution**
  - Detracts attention from structural changes required in economy – from growth to prosperity
  - Undermines women's collective ability to reflect critically on the nature of unjust social and economic relations and institutions and act to change them

# Rights-based empowerment

- Cornwall and Rivas (2015) argue for a return to rights, which they suggest are “the higher-order normative principles that underpin feminist engagement with development,” that can move the focus from an “aiding the other” paradigm, to one that understands the need to respond to structural injustices at multiple levels, global and local.
- Others call for more attention to be paid to economic rights in peacebuilding precisely because rights language is empowering (Rees and Chinkin 2015; Cahill-Ripley 2016, 233)
- ‘a woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions’ (Golla et al., 2011)



# Women's Economic Empowerment in WPS UNSCRs, UNPRSTs, and UNSG Reports

- Women's economic empowerment is neglected
- Both logics in evidence
  - “Investment in gender-responsive economic recovery leads to important results for societies as a whole. For example, women are more likely to spend their incomes on family needs, including health care and education, thus making a large contribution to recovery.” (UNSG 2015).
  - “Economic recovery should aim to be transformative, encompassing not only the state of the inherited economy but also what the future economy should be and how women can lead, contribute to and benefit from a transformative recovery programme. Initiatives must provide tailored approaches for particularly vulnerable groups of women.” (UNSG 2015)
- Win-win is dominant, but there are significant disruptions
- Even win-win has slightly different character from WDR, High Level Panel.

# Women's economic empowerment on the ground in conflict-affected areas

- Smart economics/win-win logic dominant
  - many (but not most) fall into the category of support for entrepreneurial activities
  - projects are mostly quite small in scale, given the extent of the challenge
- Again, there are disruptions to the smart economics logic
  - job creation and decent jobs e.g. Palestine
  - land rights/reform e.g. Liberia
  - women part of post-conflict recovery planning in Yemen
  - Inclusion of women in public administration a focus of UNDP
- UNSG's 7-point action plan's third commitment that at least 15% of UN managed funds in support of peacebuilding are dedicated to projects whose principal objective is to 'address women's specific needs, advance gender equality or empower women' has double-edged impact

# Concluding thoughts

- Neglect of women's economic rights, security and empowerment in WPS must be challenged by WPS-advocates
- Conceptualisation of women's economic empowerment must be rights-based if to be transformative for women, and further gender equality and peace
- Both the smart economics/win-win logic and a more transformative logic exist in WPS agenda-setting documents and implementation
- Smart economics dominates, but there are disruptions and thus spaces for advocacy and action