

**Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)10
of the Committee of Ministers to member states
on the role of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 June 2010
at the 1089th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Noting that women, together with children, comprise a large proportion of civilian victims of conflicts, and that women, compared to men, have less access to resources, power and decision making before, during and after conflicts, and that their experiences of situations of tension and war and post-conflict reconstruction are significantly different from those of men;

Recognising, consequently, that women are often powerless to prevent conflict, that they are excluded from the negotiation tables during the resolution process and marginalised in post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation initiatives;

Considering that democracies can no longer afford to ignore the competencies, skills and creativity of women and must include women with different backgrounds and of different age groups in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building;

Recalling the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5), adopted in 1950 and its Protocols;

Recalling the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35), adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996;

Recalling the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197), adopted in 2005;

Taking into account Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of women against violence and Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making;

Bearing in mind the Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1212 (2000) on "Rape in armed conflicts" and Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1665 (2004) on "Conflict prevention and resolution: the role of women";

Recalling the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 on the protection of war victims and their two Additional Protocols of 1977, in particular, the provisions guaranteeing gender-sensitive treatment;

Having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and its Optional Protocol of 10 December 1999;

Having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court which entered into force in 2002;

Taking into account the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security and 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict;

Bearing in mind the OSCE decision on women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, adopted in December 2005;

Bearing in mind European Parliament Resolutions 2000/2025(INI) on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution and 2005/2215(INI) on the situation of women in armed conflicts and their role in the reconstruction and the democratic process in countries after a conflict;

Recalling the Action Plan adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005) where the heads of state and government of member states underlined that equal participation of both women and men is a crucial element of democracy and confirmed their commitment to achieving real equality between women and men and to combating violence against women;

Recalling the Declaration on gender equality: a core issue in changing societies and the Programme of Action and the Resolution on the roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict democratic processes – a gender perspective, adopted by the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Skopje, 22-23 January 2003), which encourages the integration of a gender perspective in all activities aimed at conflict prevention and resolution;

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (4th United Nations World Conference on Women, 1995) which recognise that women are increasingly establishing themselves as central actors in a variety of capacities in the movement for peace, and that their full participation in decision making, conflict prevention and resolution and all other peace initiatives is essential to the realisation of lasting peace;

Aware that, despite the international instruments and the action of non-governmental organisations, violations of women's human rights continue to occur in conflict areas and that without appropriate measures being taken to ensure their empowerment and security, balanced participation of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building will not be achieved;

Considering that the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security cannot be realised without fully understanding the impact of conflicts on women and men;

Recognising that balanced participation of women and men in all phases of conflict prevention and resolution and in the peace process is a prerequisite for establishing lasting peace, sustainable democracy and economic development;

Recognising that women can bring alternative perspectives to conflict prevention at local and community level,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

1. acknowledge that equality between women and men, strengthening the role of women in society and making full use of their knowledge and expertise promote peace and are a prerequisite for conflict prevention and resolution and peace building;
2. integrate a gender perspective into conflict prevention and resolution and peace building activities, including the allocation of necessary budgetary resources;
3. ensure a balanced participation of women and men at all levels of decision making in local, regional, national and international institutions, and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution, including peace negotiations and the democratisation of societies after conflicts;
4. ensure that women and men representing all spheres of society take part in conflict prevention and resolution and peace building using multitrack diplomacy;
5. effectively prosecute and punish gender-related crimes committed during and after conflicts, and provide mechanisms to prevent such crimes;
6. draw this recommendation to the attention of all national political institutions and international organisations;
7. adopt and implement the measures described in the Appendix to this recommendation;
8. monitor and evaluate progress arising from the adoption of this recommendation and inform the competent steering committees, in particular the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG), of the measures undertaken and the progress achieved in this field.

General measures

Legal framework and policy

1. Guarantee the protection of and respect for human rights of women before, during and after conflicts;
2. Guarantee that girls and boys are protected in accordance with their specific needs and taking account of their interests, and ensure that they are not exploited in any way. Girls and boys must be protected from falling victim to trafficking in human beings and must not be recruited as child soldiers and/or used as sex slaves;
3. Include provisions in national legislation that allow the prosecution of perpetrators of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, as contained in Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of women against violence;
4. Intensify efforts to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, *inter alia*, by devising measures such as national action plans, allocate resources and determine responsibility for its implementation;
5. Promote exchange of good practice between member states on the role of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building;

Gender mainstreaming strategy

6. Set up mechanisms for enhancing gender mainstreaming in all processes of conflict prevention and resolution and peace building, and adopt measures to involve both women and men in all processes;
7. Explore the use of gender budgeting of all conflict prevention and resolution and peace building activities to ensure a more efficient use of resources;
8. Integrate a gender perspective in the recruitment processes of international staff and in the training given to staff taking part in conflict prevention and resolution, and peace building missions;
9. Publish, on a regular basis, gender-disaggregated data and statistics on the participation of women and men in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building and monitor progress in this area;

Education

10. Introduce and develop education on human rights, including gender equality, in school curricula, and remove gender-based stereotypes from curricula, text books and educational materials at all education levels;
11. Ensure that adequate systems are in place to guarantee education of children in conflict, post conflict and fragile situations;
12. Support and/or establish gender-sensitive peace studies within higher education programmes;

NGOs and civil society

13. Acknowledge the crucial role of civil society and support its conflict prevention and resolution and peace building activities so as to establish long-lasting peace, and allocate resources for developing non-violent models for conflict prevention and resolution;
14. Promote the establishment of international networks of women who have experienced conflicts and/or have been involved in peace building initiatives with a view to pooling examples of good practice;

15. Involve young people, girls and boys, in conflict prevention and resolution, peace building, reconstruction of society after conflicts, and in the setting up and development of effective communication processes;

Media

16. Encourage the media to:

- present all the different roles both women and men play in conflict;
- avoid stereotypical representation systematically presenting women as victims and men as aggressors;
- promote research on the media coverage of women and women's initiatives in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, and peace building;
- take part in public debate on this issue, in both towns and rural areas;
- promote educational programmes on television, radio and on the Internet on the different roles both women and men play in conflict prevention and resolution, and peace building;

Specific measures concerning conflict prevention

17. Adopt national conflict-prevention policies and strategies integrating a gender perspective;

18. Develop and promote early warning mechanisms integrating gender-specific indicators to prevent conflict;

19. Promote the role of women in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to open new opportunities for dialogue and pave the way for new models of conflict prevention;

20. Organise training seminars in intercultural learning and conflict prevention with a special focus on gender-specific issues for policy makers and civil servants, especially those sitting on decision-making bodies at the highest level;

21. Grant resources and give support to NGOs, in particular to women's NGOs working at grassroots level, to prevent conflict and build peace;

22. Publish and disseminate studies on the impact of conflict on women and men, and their roles and relations;

23. Fund research on root causes of masculine violence, which can often lead to severe problems in post-conflict societies, and devise global responses to this violence, based on an integrated and multidisciplinary approach;

Specific measures concerning conflict resolution

24. Progressively increase the number of women nominated to high-level decision-making posts in international organisations and international missions, including diplomatic posts;

25. Appoint more women as mediators in international mediation committees in charge of peace negotiations, and facilitate and promote the participation of women in field missions, including reconstruction, peace building and observation missions, in order to achieve a gender balanced participation;

26. Engage in multitrack diplomacy so as to involve the largest possible number of actors in resolving conflicts within and between states, and ensure the equal participation and input of women's organisations in informal and formal peace initiatives at all levels through systematic consultation with them, ensuring that their expertise and women's priorities are reflected in formal and informal peace processes;

27. Ensure that third parties involved in peace negotiations, including mediators, are trained to take a gender sensitive approach;

28. Ensure that women benefit from humanitarian aid by providing better control over access to and distribution of such aid, and that they play an active part in all stages of humanitarian assistance operations;

29. Integrate a gender perspective in the arrangements and procedures for granting asylum and receiving refugees and other displaced persons;

30. Give women refugees and other displaced women the opportunity to play a key role in camp planning, management and decision-making so that women's interests are taken into account in all aspects of running a refugee camp, especially resource distribution, security and protection;

Specific measures concerning human security

31. Ensure the protection of human rights defenders, both women and men, in conflict and post-conflict situations;

32. Take account of the important role and the particular needs of women when implementing protection policies and sustainable solutions, including voluntary return, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons in safety and dignity;

33. Ensure that security measures do not restrict freedom of movement for women and girls in post-conflict situations;

34. Ensure the protection of women and girls inside refugee camps against violence and sexual abuse by providing better security measures;

35. Ensure that, in the context of humanitarian assistance, sufficient attention is given to assistance concerning sexual and reproductive health, including obstetric care, nutritional support for women during pregnancy and breastfeeding, family planning, and HIV prevention and treatment services;

36. Acknowledge the importance of continuous education during and after conflicts as a survival strategy and, to this end, provide a safe environment for educational activities;

37. Pay the utmost attention to cases of men, women and children reported missing in connection with armed conflicts, and take appropriate measures to search for, locate and identify them;

38. Support trans-border co-operation between women's NGOs in combating gender based violence and disappearances;

39. Encourage women's access to the media and to information and communication technologies so that their expertise can influence public debate and decision making with regard to peace and security;

Specific measures concerning peace building

International criminal law

40. Ensure that national legislation is compatible with the substantive and procedural provisions regarding gender related crimes as laid down in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

41. Take all the necessary steps to ensure in particular that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity are recognised as war crimes by the national legal order, when these acts are committed in the course of armed hostilities;

42. Take all the necessary steps to ensure in particular that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity are recognised as crimes against humanity by the national legal order when these acts are committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack and are recognised as genocide by the national legal order if committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, racial, ethnic or religious group;

43. Punish gender-related crimes, committed by combatants and all other actors, including peacekeepers and international and humanitarian staff, and take measures to prevent trafficking in human beings, especially in women and girls;

44. Ensure appropriate protection to all persons called to testify before the national courts and international tribunals in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during and after conflicts;

45. Ensure special legal protection and provide legal assistance free of charge and social support to victims in order to facilitate their reporting of perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations committed during and after conflicts, and in order to prevent them from becoming repeat victims;

46. Establish mechanisms to guarantee compensation for victims, in accordance with the conditions under national law;

Transitional justice and reconciliation

47. Set up, as far as possible, mechanisms such as truth and reconciliation committees to deal with past human rights violations;

48. Put an end to the culture of silence, support the victims of gender-based violence so that they are accepted by their community and society as a whole, and in the event that truth and reconciliation committees are set up, establish places where women and men feel safe to talk;

49. Draw up programmes designed to introduce new strategies for working with those who are both the victims and the perpetrators of gender-based violence;

50. Provide relevant information, documents and results of research concerning all the institutions/bodies which are responsible for transitional justice;

Combating violence

51. Include in peace building programmes, action plans to combat violence against women;

52. Ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated in demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration programmes;

53. Pay particular attention to the integration of female combatants recruited by armed groups or armed forces in demilitarisation and demobilisation programmes, provide adequate reintegration programmes, and support vulnerable male groups, such as conscientious objectors, forced conscripts and war prisoners;

54. Provide gender-specific psycho-social support as a peace building tool in order to reduce hatred, fear and traumatism, and create opportunities for confidence building activities between women and men;

55. Ensure that all parties included in peace building missions have, and implement, a code of conduct;

56. Ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated in the security sector reform;

57. Provide training in gender equality and in dealing with gender violence for all actors involved in peace building, including police officers and armed forces;

Empowerment of women

58. Take all the necessary steps to ensure that women are informed of their political and civil rights and involved in drafting and/or reviewing national laws;

59. Take all the necessary steps to ensure that women are registered on the electoral rolls and abolish family voting; substantially increase the number of women on electoral committees and the number of female electoral observers with a view to achieving the balanced participation of women and men;

60. Take all the necessary steps to guarantee women's socio-economic rights, including employment, as well as their property ownership and inheritance rights, and support in particular female-headed households and female orphans in so far as they may suffer particular gender-based discrimination;

61. To promote the access and rights of women to health information and services, in particular as regards sexual and reproductive health, including women's access to post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception for rape victims, whilst affirming strong support for and a commitment to the full implementation of the Cairo Programme for Action, adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 1994, as well as of the ICPD Programme of Action agreed at ICPD+5, the Copenhagen Declaration and Action Programme, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals;
62. Ensure that the women affected by conflicts, including refugee women and other displaced women, are actively involved in peace building activities and in the planning and implementation of reconstruction initiatives;
63. Ensure that equal consideration is given to women's and men's specific needs and interests when formulating reconstruction programmes and devising development co-operation programmes, and explore the use of a gender budget analysis of humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction in order that both women and men benefit equally from the resources provided by international and national donors;
64. Ensure the availability of translations of international documents on gender equality and peace building, and their dissemination, targeting in particular decision-makers, civil servants and the wider public at local, regional and national levels;
65. Translate into national languages important decisions, including peace treaties, and disseminate them to the wider public, in particular to women in both towns and rural areas, and ensure that women and men have the opportunity to provide and receive information to and from national and international actors without discrimination based on the grounds of sex;
66. Encourage the media to use the information provided by civil society, including women's NGOs, to ensure regular and informed media coverage of issues concerning women and of civil society's contribution to national reconstruction and rehabilitation;
67. Encourage research on the consequences of women's exclusion from and/or men's over-representation in peace negotiations, and on women's contribution to conflict resolution and peace-building activities, and the impact they have on peace processes; disseminate the results widely and use them in framing national and regional policies that respect and make creative use of women's potential.