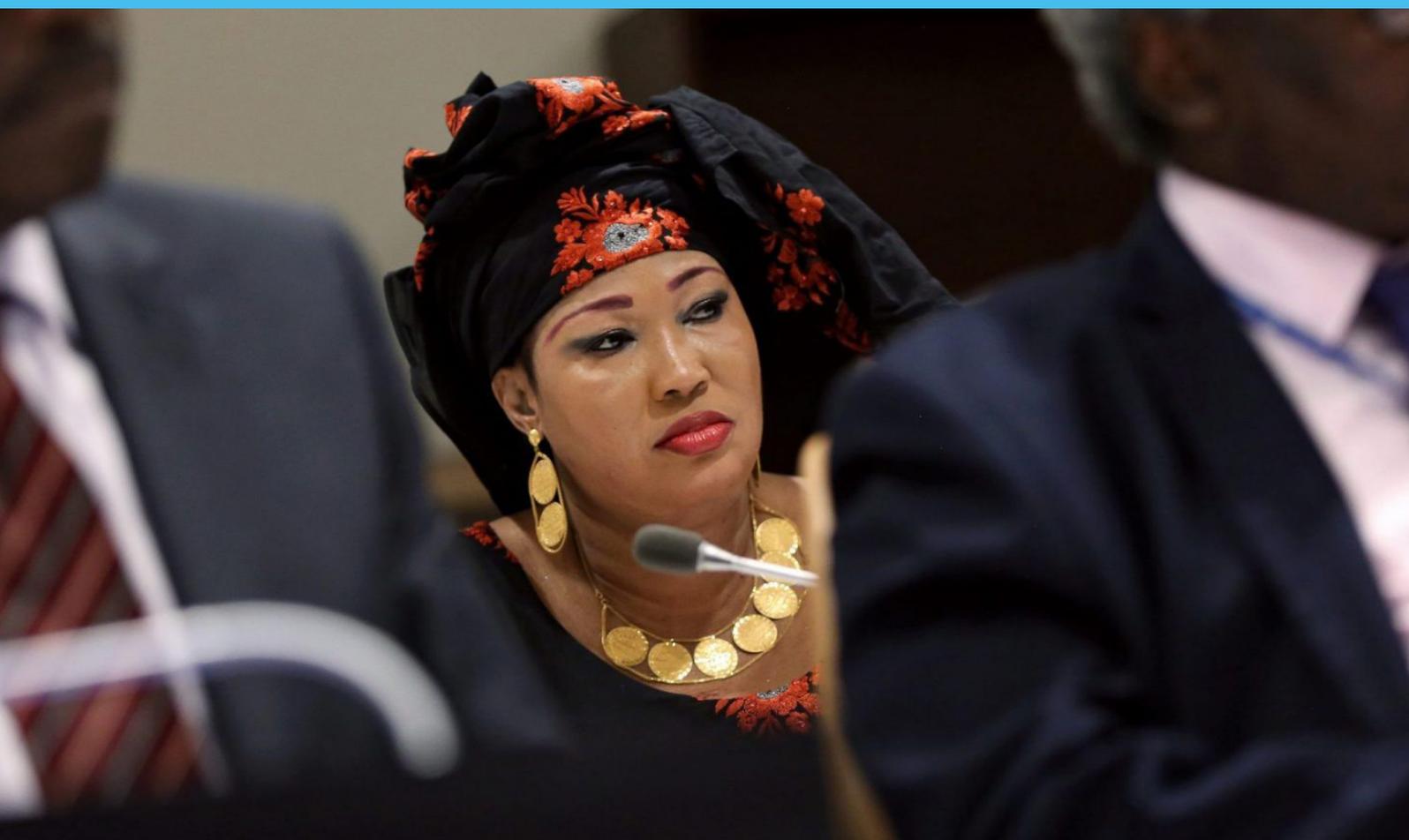


SUMMER 2020

From conception to inclusion

20 years into the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

EVENT REPORT



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In light of the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, Friends of Europe and the Brussels International Center brought together the power of local knowledge from those working in the field and the policy expertise from international institutions to explore different pathways and political alternatives for a transformative Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

Resolution 1325, adopted in October 2000, urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in peace and security. It also underlines that structural violence against women and girls is intrinsically linked to violent conflict, making it clear that special measures must be taken to protect women and girls from gender-based violence.

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Charlotte Isaksson, Senior Gender Advisor at the EEAS

Twenty years on, many of the WPS agenda's provisions remain little more than pious intentions. Although the inclusion of women in peace and security has improved in the past two decades, there is still a lot to do.

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The general sense among participants was that there have been many positive developments since the adoption of UNSCR 1325. 20 years ago, there was a lack of awareness of the need of applying gender perspectives to peace and security and leaders did not see need for having a gender advisor. Nowadays, it is seen as a requirement that most acknowledge as essential. Moreover, institutions have finally addressed the issue of sexual violence in conflict, a topic that was once considered taboo. However, now that the policies and tools are there, they need to be used and implemented effectively so that they reach those they were designed for.

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Paivi Kannisto, Chief of the Peace and Security Section at UN Women - [52:06](#)

The implementation of the WPS agenda is a matter of political will and budget allocation. It is essential to hold governments and institutions accountable for their promises so that they provide direct support to the WPS agenda via funding.

One illustrative example is the unfolding of the implementation of Colombian peace agreement. Rosa Emilia Salamanca argues that this agreement is considered one of the most inclusive agreements because women organisations in Colombia took the WPS agenda and made it theirs. They fought relentlessly to ensure that women were included in the entire peace process and that the agreement included gender provisions. However, due to a lack of political will and resources, the agreement has yet to move from good intentions to implemented reality.

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Rosa Emilia Salamanca, Director at Corporación de investigación y acción social y económica (CIASE)

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The implementation of the WPS agenda is not only about inclusion but also about tackling the socioeconomic issues that disproportionately affect women, making them more vulnerable to poverty and sexual and gender-based violence. The focus should be on improving security for women so that they can become active participants. Protection and participation are equally important – you can't have one without the other. “Improving local security will enable greater gender equality, therefore promoting women's role in conflict resolution” said Ilot Muthaka during his closing remarks.

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More work needs to be done to effectively close the gap between local and international institutions, and ensure that local voices are listened to. Charlotte Isaksson argued that the initiatives and current measures must be continuously re-evaluated to review who has a voice, what their role is, and how effective their participation should be. Citizens in conflict and post-conflict settings must be given a stronger voice. They will require reforms “higher up in the pyramid”. Institutions need to find a balance between symbolic activities and activities that directly affect people in conflict-affected areas in a positive way.

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Leaders need to understand that inclusion is not only about numbers; a gender lens should be applied to all aspects of peace and security. There is an overemphasis on counting numbers – this alone will not lead to success. WPS has to cut across all aspects of peace and security, including cyber, counterterrorism, defence investment, defence planning, etc. The WPS agenda is not a matter that affects only women; it impacts everyone's security.

[The full debate can be watched here.](#)

