The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) – a joint project of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is launching an **online discussion** on the 'Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security in the Arab States' from **10 December 2015 – 17 January 2016.**

Concept Note
The implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Arab States
Taking stock and moving forward

Background

The Security Council adopted Resolution (S/RES/1325) on Women, Peace and Security on 31 October 2000. It reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. Participation is one of the four pillars of the UNSCR, along with Protection, Prevention, and Relief and Recovery, and it stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

Regrettably, insecurity and conflicts have continued since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, taking on new and increasingly challenging forms which impact women and girls disproportionally, and thus the broader efforts towards achieving gender equality. OECD's index for gender discrimination demonstrated the inextricable links between gender equality and international peace and security: fourteen out of the seventeen countries at the bottom of the index also experienced conflict in the last two decades.

UNSCR 1325 and the Arab States

Since the Arab uprisings, a number of countries in the region have experienced heightened political unrest and unprecedented violent struggles, with women and girls bearing the heaviest brunt of the systematic violence committed in conflict areas. Policy-makers and the international community recognize the rising security challenges related to these conflicts and call for accelerated action to prevent physical and sexual violence against women and girls - often being the prime victims of violent extremism and terrorism. It can be argued that this reality is the result of limited prevention and of the provision of relief, recovery and rehabilitation services to victims.

A 2013 UN Women report[1] found "a lack of policies and actions" aimed at reducing the impact of armed conflicts on women, and little enforcement, monitoring or reporting on the relevant provisions of UNSCR 1325 among countries

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[1] UN Women, 2013, Regional Consultation for the Proposed General Recommendation on Women's Human Rights in Situations of Conflict and Post Conflict Contexts for the Arab States &the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Amman, Jordan, available at:
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/Womenconflictsituations/RegionalConsultationAmmanJan2013.pdf

in the Arab region. The report recommended strengthening compliance with the UNSCR 1325, and that support be provided to governments and civil society in mainstreaming the provisions of the Resolution into national legislation, policies and programmes.

At a recent High-level meeting at the United Nations which marked the 15th anniversary of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the launch of UN Women's review 'Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325: Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace', the League of Arab States (LAS) recognized the representation of women as a vital element in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in peace building. As part of the United Nations review process of the Security Council resolution 1325, the representatives of the Arab League unveiled a regional action plan for Women, Peace, and Security for the Middle East and North Africa, calling for greater and more meaningful involvement at all levels of decision-making of women and girls to fight terrorism and achieve peace in the region and it grants resources and provisions to do so. Along with strengthened prevention of all forms of violence, including sexual gender-based violence during conflict, the plan also stresses on emerging issues, including refugees and extremist thinking.

Women's role and participation in the implementation of UNSCR 1325
Comparative studies from across regions show that women's decision-making power with regard to peace and conflict impact the likelihood of war. Female participation in parliament for example can reduce the risks of civil war[2]. It was found that as the percentage of women in parliament increases by five percent, a state is five times less likely to use violence when faced with an inter- national crisis.[14] Women's political participation can also be related to the political violence perpetrated by the state. A study conducted between 1977 and 1996 for example showed that the higher the proportion of women in parliament, the lower the likelihood that the state carried out human rights abuses such as political imprisonments, torture, killings, and disappearances. [3]

UN Women's Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 shows that uniformed female personnel are critical to gaining trust in communities and shaping peace operations to better respond to their protection needs. The study also compiles growing evidence that demonstrates how peace negotiations influenced by women are much more likely to end in agreement and to endure and that women are the best placed to detect early warning signs of radicalization in their families and communities, and act to prevent them.

However, while the percentage of women participating in transitional justice mechanisms is increasing, more needs to be done to make justice not merely transitional, but transformative. This includes women's full participation in all institutions, broader institutional reforms and enacting legal frameworks to address all forms of violence and promote gender equality. This e-Discussion also encourages respondents to propose examples and ideas on how to narrow the gaps between transitional and transformative justice mechanism according to their own country-specific contexts.

Example of good practices
Positive results can be found where quotas and other temporary measures were adopted the framework of UNSCR 1325 or executive decisions and appointments were made to ensure women's participation.
In South Africa for example, Women's significant participation in the transition period led to the enshrinement of gender equality in the country's new constitution. The constitution provided for a new Commission on Gender Equality and included a requirement that women comprise 30 percent of all new civil servants. In Liberia, Leymah Gbowee and others brought together Christian and Muslim women who pressured warring parties into the 2002 negotiations that ultimately ended years of distractors war. Recognizing that achievement, the Nobel Committee awarded Ms. Gbowee the 2011 Peace Prize for her "nonviolent struggle for… women's rights to full participation in

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[2] Melander, "Gender equality and intrastate armed conflict." 14 Caprioli and Boyer, "Gender, Violence, and International Crisis," 514. 15

[3] Erik Melander, "Political Gender Equality and State Human Rights Abuse," Journal of Peace Research 42, no. 2 (March 2005): 149-166.

peace-building work." These kinds of cross-sectoral alliances frequently devise creative approaches to breaking impasses during a stalled peace process and Liberia is one well-known case[4].

Objective of the e-Discussion

The objective of this e-Discussion is to illustrate how women in politics and other policy makers active in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 have responded to persisting challenges and new opportunities that are particular to the Arab region. It seeks to encourage knowledge sharing among different audiences from experts and academia to practitioners and policy-makers from across regions with a view to collect case studies and best practices which can be replicated in the Arab region. Respondents are encouraged to highlight efforts of regional responses and strategies and identify fruitful partnerships for increased coordination, implementation and monitoring of UNSCR 1325 in the Arab region.

The e-Discussion will remain open over a period of **5 weeks (10 December 2015 – 17 January 2016)**. iKNOW Politics structured this e-Discussion along three main blocks: a) Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS); b) Strategies and Monitoring; and c) Partnerships and capacity- building. Each title consists of a related set of questions. Respondents are invited to send contributions to as many questions as they see fit throughout the duration of this e-Discussion.

The responses to the e-Discussion will be compiled into a **consolidated reply** which will be shared with the iKNOW Politics members and partners. The examples provided will be incorporated into the thematic resource page on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and made available on the iKNOW Politics platform. Furthermore, it will used for additional background material of future trainings on UNSCR 1325 in the Arab Region.

I.   ADVANCING the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS)

1.1. To what extend has UNSCR 1325 been implemented across the Arab States? What are the main implementation gaps and challenges?
1.2. What progress has been made in promoting women's leadership and participation at all levels in the implementation of UNSCR 1325? What are the main limitations preventing women from having a greater role?
1.3. What are the most effective mechanisms and structures within Parliaments to advance the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (e.g. caucuses)?

II.   STRATEGIES and MONITORING

2.1. Are there particular budgetary constraints related to the WPS Agenda? What mechanisms are in place to allocate budget to the WPS agenda?
2.2. What accountability mechanisms need to be developed to ensure monitoring and reporting on UNSCR 1325?
2.3. National Plans of Action (NPAs): what good practices exist in the Arab States and beyond and what is the role of parliaments in calling for NPAs through their oversight function?

Please keep reading or Block III and related question on next page

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[4] Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies Marie O'Reilly October 2015. https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Why-Women-Brief-10.12.15.pdf

III.   PARTNERSHIPS and CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1. What role do civil society and women's organizations play in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and how can parliamentarians cooperate with these stakeholders? Please share concrete examples.
3.2. What type of capacity-building efforts are effective and which venues/formats are best to enhance cross-regional learning and exchanges of best practices?
3.3. Are there topics that need particular attention and capacity building in light of the recent conflicts (i.e. refugee crisis, increased radicalization and extremisms)? Are there any examples already available?

Please feel free to respond to as many, or few, questions as you like–there is no requirement to provide responses to all the questions! Please participate by emailing iknowpolitics@unwomen.org or by posting your comments online in the iKNOW Politics forum here.

You do not have to follow the indicated timelines to send us responses to the set of questions. However, for consistency purposes and to facilitate moderation and debates, we advise to follow the recommended timelines.

We warmly encourage members to forward this message to their networks and invite those working in the areas covered by this e-Discussion to participate. Please note that responses to the e-Discussion are not automatically shared but are first directed to the facilitation team for compilation.

We are looking forward to a rich and lively e-Discussion and to receiving your contributions!
The iKNOW Politics Team