



Regional Women's Lobby Declaration Urging for Greater Role for Women in Local Peace-building

30th January 2018, Prishtina, Kosovo

On 29th -30th January, 2018, the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (RWL SEE), which comprised of representatives from 7 countries of the region, in close partnership and with the financial support of UN Women and the Swedish Government, held meetings with women from the municipalities of Partesh and Klllokot, as well as other Kosovo municipalities, to discuss women's empowerment and participation in peace building at the local level. The aim of the meetings was to include more women from different Kosovo communities in an inter-ethnic dialogue and peace processes in line with the UN Security Council resolution 1325 in order to advance women, peace and security agenda with a focus on municipalities in Kosovo.

Chaired by Dr. Edita Tahiri, the Chairperson of RWL SEE and the participation of RWL SEE Steering Committee members, Gordana Sobol from Croatia, Irina Pockova from Macedonia, and Nuna Zvizdić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the meeting also involved participants like women politicians and civil society representatives from municipalities, municipal mayors, assembly members, the Ministry of Local Government Administration of Kosovo and other local activists.

In these two day meetings, the participants focused on how to increase the role of women in local governance and peace building as well as European-integration processes considering local women as relevant actors of change and the necessity of their empowerment. Topics of discussion involved issues such as: how women can be more involved in peace building and governance at the local level; the current situation; the motivations and barriers to women's participation in these relevant processes; and how cooperation and networking with women at the national and regional levels could impact the empowerment of women at the local level. In addition, the meeting participants discussed local women's role in EU integration processes as well as the role of women in the implementation of peace agreements, namely Brussels Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia facilitated by the EU.

Following a constructive, sincere and forward looking discussions and ideas, participants agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

- Participants emphasized that peace building is more likely to succeed when it includes more women at the local level
- Highlighted that inclusive local peace building efforts are critical to the success of the overall peace building
- Noted with concern that women in the local level remain marginalized in decision making levels, with no women mayors and few women in municipal directorates, while due to the quota women are represented in the municipal assemblies.
- Expressed readiness to engage in assuming greater role and responsibilities within the local peace building and good governance, despite the barriers which can sometimes even take the form of threats or offenses made by male politicians
- Called for support ensuring greater role for women in local peace building and local governance so that municipal governance is not considered as a men's business only
- Reiterated that women represent half of the population and their capacities as well as their involvement can help resolve daily concerns of the community, among others issues such as education, employment, transportation, security.
- Emphasized that women's economic empowerment contributes greatly to the effectiveness of peace building and post-conflict prosperity; hence, urged governments and both international and regional organizations to support women employment and entrepreneurship
- Acknowledging the crucial role of women in improving inter-ethnic relations, reconciliation and multiethnic democracy, called for increasing women participation in the local government, required that quota of 30% for women applied in the parliament and municipal assemblies should also be introduced within the government at both national and local levels
- Emphasized the importance of sustaining political momentum for ongoing peace building processes for empowering women, promoting gender equality and protecting women's human rights, while warning that discrimination against women and girls in the access to social and economic opportunities and justice could obstruct effective peace building.
- Expressed commitment for the promotion of women regional cooperation, highlighting that RWL SEE offers an inspiring model of this kind. It also provides a forum for collaborative efforts of women at the local, national and regional levels for seeking common solutions for the advancement of women's role in peace building and stability in Kosovo and the region.

- Called for speeding up the European and Euro-Atlantic integration for Kosovo and other Western Balkan countries as a way of ensuring sustainable peace and stability in the region and preventing any undesired and dangerous developments that could harm our future.

RWL SEE and participants in the meetings expressed their heartfelt acknowledgement to UN Women and Head of Kosovo office, Ms Flora Macula, as well as to the Swedish Government, as their strategic partners, for their valuable support, cooperation and generosity extended throughout RWL SEE's journey for women's empowerment.

The Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast Europe (RWL SEE) represents a successful model of regional cooperation of women for peace building and democratic governance in countries of the South Eastern Europe that can be used as a model for peace processes in other regions of the world. It works and advocates for the empowerment of women for achieving sustainable peace, democracy, justice, security and reconciliation in post conflict countries; respect for different cultural values; and the creation of a new future for the region within the Euro-Atlantic integration.

Members of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in the Southeast Europe (RWL SEE):

Albania: Eglantina Gjermeni, Marieta Zaçe, Majlinda Bregu

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Memnuna Zvizdić, Nada Tesanović, Lidija Živanović, Ismeta Dervoz

Croatia: Grodana Sobol, Morana Paliković Gruden, Lovorka Marinović

Kosovo: Edita Tahiri, Teuta Sahatqija, Luljeta Vuniqi

Macedonia: Irina Pockova, Teuta Arifi, Savka Todorovska

Montenegro: Nada Drobnjak, Slavica Striković, Ljubomirka Mira Asović

Serbia: Sonja Biserko, Natasa Mičić, Liljana Radovanović, Stasa Zajović