

Activity Plan
September 14, 2009

Project Title: Regional Women's Lobby For Peace, Security and Justice in Southeast
Europe
<http://www.rwlsee.org>

Duration: October 2009-December 2010

INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and other international conventions and instruments, call upon state parties to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. During the war and in its aftermath, women of South East Europe were denied protection from gender-based violence including rape. Women were also often at the forefront of efforts to advance justice, peace and reconciliation. Nevertheless, today women still continue to be largely absent from official peace making processes.

Responding to the women's request in 2005 UNIFEM facilitated the first informal multi-country consultations among women in politics (including high-level government officials) and civil society from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo. This consultation was followed by meetings in Zagreb, Croatia, in July 2006 and in Vienna in September 2006 and April 2007. As a result of these consultations, the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South-East Europe was established, widely known under its more informal name, the Regional Women's Lobby (RWL).

UNIFEM continues to support the institutional development of RWL, which has been advocating women's involvement in peace-building and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania and Serbia.

The Regional Women's Lobby (RWL) for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (SEE) is composed of women leaders from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia that share a commitment to seeing their countries achieve full recovery from the devastation of the wars of the 1990s through advancement of justice and reconciliation leading to lasting peace, security and prosperity for future generations.

Participation in the RWL is grounded in mutual respect for diversity and the rights and dignity of all people, based on adherence to non-violence, non-discrimination, and respect for international human rights norms and legal standards. Recognizing that the attainment of lasting peace depends on achieving security for all peoples of SEE, the RWL seeks to promote a people-centred definition of security that transcends traditional military-centered notions of state security and places focus on the individual well being of women and men.

RWL members are prominent women politicians from the seven countries mentioned above and prominent women's human rights activists. For example, from Bosnia and Herzegovina the members are: **Meliha Alic, Minister of Education and Science, Nada Tesanovic, Vice-President of National Assembly of Republika Srpska, Lidija Zivanovic, Director Helsinki Citizen's Parliament and Memnuna Zvizdic, Director of Zene Zenama.** A full list of members and their titles is in Annex below. There are 27 members from 7 countries.

In their activities up to now the members of the RWL have prepared and disseminated over 15 press statements on important events in the region. In the run up to the latest elections in Croatia, Albania and Macedonia in 2009, the Lobby issued statements calling for increased support for women candidates and the politics of stability. The Lobby also reacts to specific events when needed; RWL members in Serbia, Sonja Biserko and Natasa Kandic where both

attacked in 2008 and the Lobby quickly issued statements condemning their attack and harassment and the oppressive atmosphere towards them and other human rights activists in Serbia.

RWL has also developed a strategic action plan and held press conferences on various themes related to women's political participation in the region. RWL has also engaged in high-level political meetings and interethnic dialogues. In 2006 RWL members met with Marti Ahtisaari, Special Envoy for the Kosovo Status Process, and presented him with a joint statement supporting Kosovo independence as a strategy towards peace and stability in the region. In the meeting the members also spent time discussing the participation of women in the negotiation process between Kosovo and Serbia. Following on the meeting with Mr. Ahtisaari, members of RWL were invited to meet with the UN Security Council Fact Finding Mission to Kosovo to discuss security and lobby for a just status decision.

In Kosovo, the Lobby has organized and participated in inter-ethnic dialogues between Albanian and Serbian women. In one of these dialogues Serbian women expressed their need for a generator for their town. A few weeks after the dialogue ended, RWL member Nekibe Kelmendi, Minister of Justice, managed to find a generator for the Serbian women and visited their town to deliver it personally.

Over time RWL has grown dynamically and expanded its activities and networking of women from these countries on all issues related to security and peace.

RWL is led by a Steering Committee comprised of seven members of RWL (one from each country). Responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to guide the RWL on strategic decisions regarding priorities for action in each country, regionally, and globally, identification of other needs (e.g. mobilizing assistance from experts to support RWL analysis) as well as decisions relating to management and resource mobilization. RWL is in the process of establishing an Advisory Board comprised of prominent international peace advocates and/or politicians, who can contribute knowledge and expertise that will strengthen the work of RWL,

The members of the Advisory Board are:

- Dr. Ursula Plassnik, Former Austrian Foreign Minister
- Ms. Elisabeth Rehn, Finnish Minister of State
- Ms. Osnat Lubrani, Director of UNIFEM Brussels
- Ms. Mirjana Feric-Vac, Vice-President of Socialist International and Vice-President of SI Women in CEE and SEE
- Ms. Ana Maria Gomes, Member of European Parliament and Vice-Chairwoman of Subcommittee on Security and Defense
- Ms. Luisa Morgantini, former Vice President of the European Parliament
- Ms. Doris Pack, Member of the European Parliament; Chairwoman of the Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South-East-Europe

Since January 2008, UNIFEM has been providing technical assistance in the form of an RWL Coordinator based in Croatia, who facilitates regular communication and information exchange among members, develops common advocacy strategies, issues statements and

press releases in reaction to political developments from a women's rights perspective in the Western Balkans and globally and also maintains the RWL website.¹

In April 2008, UNIFEM supported an RWL Strategy and Planning meeting in Istanbul to institutionalize RWL. Outcomes of the meeting included:

- Establishment of the RWL Steering Committee, consisting of RWL members from seven countries in the region;
- Establishment of an RWL Advisory Board comprised of international experts who advise RWL on strategies and render support to their advocacy at various international forums;
- Discussion of a draft of the RWL Charter that articulates its guiding values and priorities;
- Agreement on criteria to enlarge the group in the RWL Charter, which will include two new members from each of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and
- Adoption of an RWL draft work plan for 2008-2009 that incorporates plans for inter-ethnic dialogues; a regional conference on Women, Peace and Security in Kosovo to commemorate the 8th Anniversary of SCR 1325; research on security and women; press releases and statements on specific political developments and key events; and advocating at high-level political meetings women's participation in peace-building and security sector reform.

On 27 October 2008, RWL organized, with UNIFEM's support, a regional conference entitled: "A Secure Future for Our Region: What does it take? Women Leaders Speak Out." Guest speakers included the President of Kosovo, representatives of EULEX and ICO, the Ministers of Internal Affairs, Justice and Mining and Energy, the Head of the Kosovo Border Police, representatives of civil society organizations and many others. The conference was covered by Kosovo's television channels (Radiotelevizioni i Kosovës (RTK), Kohavison (KTV), TV Dukagjini, Radio Televizioni 21 (RTV 21), and RROKUM). The outcomes of the conference included:

- Declaration by RWL members addressing the status of peace and security in the region, presented to the United Nations Security Council in November 2008; and
- Concluding recommendations that called for: a long-term plan for regional economic development that takes women's needs fully into account; a 30 percent quota for women in all structures and levels of decision-making (with a special focus on the security sector and security institutions and decision-making bodies); and establishment of a regional commission for fact-finding on war crimes that draws on resolution 1820 recommendations.

The conference was followed by a planning meeting and a field visit to the Serb enclaves in Kosovo, which enabled RWL members to meet women from this minority group and hear about their needs, and to improve RWL's efforts to advance peace and security in the region. The visits confirmed that women in Serbian enclaves share the same struggles that all women in Kosovo face, including lack of paid work and limited access to services and information. The issue of isolation in the enclaves was perceived as less important, although this perception might not be entirely accurate, but rather a strategy to avoid discussing politically

¹ www.rwlsee.org

sensitive issues for fear of impeding the new dialogue between Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbian women.

A third strategic meeting took place in Zagreb in 2009 in conjunction with the prominent members of the RWL Advisory Board (see names above). The outcomes of this strategic meeting were:

1. Finalization of the RWL forward strategy based on the Board's comments and feedback;
2. Clarification of the role of the Advisory Board in supporting RWL and amplifying its voice;
3. Agreement on methods of communication with the Board and plans for follow-up.

The RWL's focus on peace and stability in SEE is more important than ever. In the next few years, SEE will have to deal with several important issues. The events surrounding the status of Kosovo have had serious repercussions throughout all of SEE, but in Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Macedonia especially. Bosnia & Herzegovina is facing increasing instability and stalemates in its own political situation, and Serbia finds itself facing questions of its future progress over the issue of Kosovo's status and transitional justice. During this important time the promotion of human rights, a gender perspective and tolerance are crucial steps to ensuring that conflict in SEE does not resume down the road. The two specific focus areas for RWL in this project period are promoting a women's conception of security within the Euro-Atlantic integration context and promoting and supporting the process of transitional justice in the SEE region.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND ACTIVITIES

The project contributes to both long-term impacts (outcomes) as well as short-term concrete results (outputs).

Outcome 1:

Strengthened capacity of gender equality advocates, including youth and minorities, to influence peace and security agendas and support inclusive democratization at national and regional levels in the Western Balkans.

Output 1.1

Establish a vibrant SEE regional forum for women leaders to exchange information and experience with respect to the political situation in their countries and region.

Activity 1.1.1

Provide technical support for RWL to coordinate their activities (RWL Secretariat-International Consultant: Writing Policy Papers, Sending out a monthly news bulletin, Media relations, Coordination, Communication, RWL website maintenance, Documentation)

BUDGET: 40 workdays @ 200 USD = 8000 USD, Communication costs and website = 500USD, Total **8500 USD**

Activity 1.1.2

Organize an exchange visit by members of the RWL to Brussels to meet with policymakers in the European Parliament and Council, European Commission, Foreign Affairs Committee, think tanks and civil society networks (e.g. European Women's Lobby, WIDE, Concord gender working group).

BUDGET: **12,000 USD** for travel and accommodation of RWL Steering Committee and 2 RWL Advisory Board Members

Activity 1.1.3

Support organizing one RWL Steering Committee meeting for members to come together, strategize on future actions, develop and follow up on an annual plan of focused action, engage in analysis and discussion of selected political developments and reach consensus and common position on key issues, and one joint RWL SC and Advisory Board meeting focusing on raising visibility and advocacy.

BUDGET: **15 000 USD** for travel and accommodation

Output 1.2

Within the SEE Euro-Atlantic integration debate increase the prominence of a women's perspective of the concept of "security" through advocacy actions.

Activity 1.2.1

Organize an international conference on Rule of Law and European Integration from women's perspective in SEE; Corruption, access to justice, and freedom of movement (linking to 10th anniversary of Resolution 1325). To be held in Skopje May or June 2010. Guests would be high-level politicians from the region, experts and advocates targeting the media with the advocacy component of the conference. This conference would build on the October 2008 RWL regional conference in Pristina. (see <http://www.rwlsee.org> for outcomes of first regional conference.

BUDGET: **40 000 USD**

Activity 1.2.2

Commissioning research on security sector and women (7 countries) - pilot project on early warning reports to be used for advocacy ad awareness-raising.

BUDGET: **50 000 USD** for contractual services/consultant

Activity 1.2.3

Provide technical and financial support for RWL advocacy on peace and security in 7 countries of the region. RWL will hold press conferences in each SEE country to present their recommendations and goals in strengthening the involvement of women in peace and security decision-making processes.

BUDGET: **10,000 USD**

Activity 1.2.4

Conduct research across the region for two analytical short papers:

- First on rule of law from a women's perspective; Ursula Plassnik has pledged to disseminate this paper at her visit to the Security Council in November 2009 when Austria takes over presidency.
- Second an analytical paper mapping 1325 NAPs in the region to be published and disseminated by RWL. With recommendations on improvements in implementation and the possibilities of initiating NAPs in countries that do not have them yet.

BUDGET: 20 work days @ 200 USD = **4000 USD**

Outcome 2:

Break barriers of mistrust and ethno-centric politics and promote better understanding between the different national groups of SEE as a strategy to increasing long-term peace and security.

Output 2.1

Women's regional peace networks supported to engage in inter-ethnic dialogue and to contribute to major ongoing political processes at national and sub-regional level.

Activity 2.1.1

In the lead up to the November 2009 municipal elections in Kosovo, conduct a social inclusion initiative in the form of a tour of RWL members from Serbia and Kosovo plus Elisabeth Rehn (RWL Advisory Board member) through the Serbian communities in Kosovo. The tour would happen in the accompaniment of the media and would raise awareness of the importance of mobilizing the Serbian communities to be involved in building a sustainable peace in Kosovo and participating in the elections and encouraging support for women candidates from all ethnicities and parties in these municipalities.

BUDGET: **5000 USD** (travel of Elisabeth Rehn and Serbian RWL members to Kosovo and their accommodation, plus the one-day rental of a bus to conduct the tour with and have the media ride along)

Activity 2.1.2

Establish an official platform at the political level for dialogue between women politicians from Kosovo and Serbia. These interethnic dialogues are a follow-up of the successful initiative at the civil society level. These dialogues would happen in April 2010 in a politically neutral location.

BUDGET: **25 000 USD** for travel and accommodation for these women politicians

TOTAL BUDGET: 169 500 USD

Annex 1: Members of RWL

Albania

- * **Majlinda Bregu, Minister of Integration**
- * **Eglantina Gjermeni, Member of Parliament**
- * **Marieta Zace, Deputy former Minister of Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities**

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- * **Meliha Alic, Minister of Education and Science**
- * **Nada Tesanovic, Vice-President of National Assembly of Republika Srpska**
- * **Lidija Zivanovic, Director Helsinki Citizen's Parliament**
- * **Memnuna Zvizdic, Director Zene Zenama**

Croatia

- * **Morana Palikovic Gruden, Member of Zagreb City Assembly, Deputy Speaker of City Assembly**
- * **Biljana Kasic, Coordinator of Women's Studies Center**
- * **Gordana Sobol, Head of the Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality**

Kosovo

- * **Nekibe Kelmendi, Minister of Justice**
- * **Igballe Rogova, Executive Director of Kosova Women's Network, Member of the Kosova Women's Lobby, Member of the Women's Peace Coalition.**
- * **Teuta Sahatqija, President of the ORA political party**
- * **Edita Tahiri, President of the ADK political party**
- * **Luljeta Vuniqi, Executive Director of Kosovar Gender Studies Center**

Macedonia

- * **Teuta Arifi, Member of Macedonian Parliament**
- * **Irina Pockova, President of Women's Chapter of SDA political party of Sv. Nikola**
- * **Savka Todorovska, President of the National Council of Women of the Republic of Macedonia**

Montenegro

- * **Ljubomirka Mira Asovic, President of League of Women Voters of Montenegro**
- * **Nada Drobnjak, Head of the Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality**
- * **Slavica Strikovic, Board Member of Women's Action NGO**

Serbia

- * **Sonja Biserko, Director of Helsinki Committee for Human Rights**
- * **Natasa Kandic, Director of Human Rights Fund**
- * **Vera Markovic, Vice-President of the Social Democrat Union**

- * Natasa Micic, President of Civic Alliance of Serbia**
- * Stasa Zajovic, Coordinator of Women in Black Network, Member of Women's Peace Coalition**
- * Ljiljana Radovanovic, Member of Women in Black Network, Member of Women's Peace Coalition**