

Women
for Peace &
Participation



Women for Peace & Participation

Promoting Opportunities for Social inclusion

**Urging the International Community to
Support Effective Inclusion of
Women in the Afghan Peace process**

Position Paper for the Brussels Conference

5th October 2016



Ongoing insecurity and insurgency in Afghanistan calls for an urgent need to work towards an inclusive peace and reconciliation process. The current peace process started in 2010, with no major breakthrough and achievements to date. The only formal peace agreement that has taken place occurred last week involving Hezb e Islami Hikmatyar group. Parallel to this process remains the urgent need for the full inclusion of women and youth in the peace process.

Some progress has been made to involve the voices of women in the peace process, including securing formal seats for women in the High Peace Council. Yet, little has been achieved in terms of practical and substantive inclusion of women in decision-making processes. Recent comments on women's rights made by the head of national security during the ceremony announcing the peace agreement with the Hezb e Islami were nominal and do not secure women's achievements nor their development. It is essential that women occupy key positions to influence the peace process in order to secure their effective participation.

Women in Afghanistan play a critical role in bridging the social divide, connecting communities and individuals. Women involved in the peace process play vital roles in both formal and informal capacities, effectively changing the narrative of peace building in Afghan society where violence has long been considered a means of realizing interests. Women play a critical role of shifting the focus towards the attainment of peace, justice and human rights. However, women involved in formal and informal peace processes in Afghanistan lack the necessary resources to invest in developing their own rationale, to become more influential in decision-making and to act in their own capacity. **Adequate resourcing is thus essential in order to allow women's contributions to reach their full impact within the peace process.**

Recommendations:

We strongly recommend that greater focus is given to women peacebuilders at the grassroots, national and international levels, to enable their efforts to achieve the full impact on peace efforts, and to secure the rights of women in Afghanistan. This should be achieved through the allocation of financial and policy support directly to individuals, groups and organizations promoting an inclusive peace process.

The international community should strengthen existing efforts to support the participation of women at all levels of formal peace negotiations; the Afghan government should be held accountable for women's representation in this sphere.

The government of Afghanistan should develop a clear strategy for women's involvement, with an action plan charting the implementation of such a strategy with clear and measurable outputs.

Women must be included in future economic opportunities, through a policy of gender mainstreaming in income generation sectors, such as mining, trade and production.

It is essential that direct financial support to women peacebuilders is provided at the grassroots level, as they play an essential role in bridging communities and addressing key issues that underpin enduring peace in the country, including the prevention of youth radicalization in the war affected areas.

About WPP

The goal of Women for Peace and Participation is to promote social and political inclusion, and ensure the provision of opportunities for excluded groups of women and youth. We engage with conflict affected communities within their home communities and their relevant diaspora, such as refugee groups and individuals. This approach facilitates the inclusion of women and youth in social and political processes, by further linking their demands and recommendations to help shape policies for a safer future for all.

WPP aims to achieve this vision by working with marginalised individuals in conflict-impacted countries and regions. Specifically linked to Afghanistan, we currently work on developing networks of individuals and groups within Afghanistan and in the diaspora. We seek to provide platforms for women and youth to engage with policy makers and governments in order to raise their concerns and influence policies affecting their lives and the lives of their fellow Afghans.

CONTACT: Email: info@womenpp.org Website: www.womenpp.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WPP2012 Twitter: www.twitter.com/womenpp

