H.E Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon

H.E Ambassador Said Djinit

H.E Ambassador Ameerah Haq

Ms Mary Robinson

Distinguished Members of the civil Society

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and honour for me to speak in front of this distinguished assembly, I would like, first of all, to thank UNIFEM for giving me the opportunity to speak today to represent the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) to the United Nations (UN) on United Nations Security Council (UNSCR) 1325 which I co-chair with H.E Ms Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative. CSAG advises the High-Level Steering Committee, which comprises the heads of UN agencies and entities, to encourage the UN to coordinate implementation of UNSCR 1325 throughout the UN and its member states. CSAG also advocates for the full participation of women’s groups and civil society in the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.
As such, we are applauding UNIFEM’s initiative in organizing **Global Open Days** for women, peace and security, which took place from June to August 2010 in twenty post-conflict countries. These Global Open Days mark an important achievement for us as they underscore the centrality and criticality of women’s voices for effective peacebuilding. They were an innovative way for women peacebuilders across the world to penetrate the UN apparatus and to be given an opportunity to articulate their needs and exchange their experiences in conflict and post-conflict situations.

With the same vision, CSAG has been able to organize throughout the year High Level Consultations on women, peace and security. In Zimbabwe, for instance, CSAG members led a prevention mission that brought together women from different backgrounds and fostered their initiatives to promote human rights, democracy, and UNSCR 1325. This resulted in the signing of a Manifesto committing the women from Zimbabwe to work together on a common agenda for women’s empowerment. In Guinea, following the recent conflict of September 2009, CSAG supported a solidarity mission led by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) to investigate the issue of impunity of rape while looking into protection mechanisms for the victims.

CSAG has been supporting African countries not only in implementing National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325, but in going beyond and putting in place Regional Action Plans on UNSCR 1325. CSAG members have also been advocating at the highest level calling on member states and the UN system to take urgent action to meet their commitments. For example, CSAG members attended meetings with EU officials and convened a roundtable discussion with civil society to advance the women, peace, and security agenda in Europe. Similarly, in Africa, CSAG convened a consultation with Civil Society on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Kampala at the margin of the African Union Summit. CSAG members were then able to approach African Union Members States to share the group’s recommendations.

Indeed, each of our consultations emphasized the following points:

- That there is a need for greater participation;
- That there is no peace without justice;
• That protection and security for women during and after conflict should be strengthened by linking existing Human Rights mechanisms with UNSCR 1325 to establish relevant indicators that will contribute to the prevention of violence against women;

• And that further allocation of greater and more sustainable resources for women in recovery processes is needed.

I am sure that my colleagues will highlight these priorities.

But for now, please allow me Secretary-General to emphasize that it is essential that the spirit embodied by the Open Days be translated into deeds, most especially ensuring accountability to women throughout the peace building processes. We are already seeing light with the creation of UN Women under your leadership, with your action plan on women’s participation in peacebuilding, which is another milestone, and with the recommendations presented in your report during the Security Council Retreat. However much remains for the ten years to come and we must all recognize our responsibility in bringing the voices of voiceless women into all of our work at the international level. And we within civil society have much work to do - in broadening those voices that participate, in reaching out more effectively to marginalized women.

There is ample evidence that when women participate in the peace process, there is likelihood to end conflict, to save lives, to save resources and to bring lasting peace. We know that investing in women, peace and security is the right strategy -

Secretary-General, we believe that the Open Days represent an exemplary shift in how women’s peace groups engage with the UN at the field level. We look forward to more opportunities for this type of interaction and dialogue, and express our sincerest hope that the process will continue and become systemic.

I Thank you for your attention and I would now like to invite my colleague Safaa Adam from Sudan to present the report of the Open Days.