The Association of War Affected Women presents its annual report concerning the programs and activities implemented during the year 2012, working towards a peaceful Sri Lanka.
Association of War Affected Women

The Association of War Affected Women was established in 2000 to create a space for war affected women, specifically mothers and wives, of those who are missing to come together across the divide to work for peace. The Association of War Affected Women is committed to achieve sustainable peace in Sri Lanka and believes that peace has to be negotiated through an inclusive process.

We are also deeply committed to safeguard democracy and rights of all, specifically women’s rights and advancement. As we believe that people’s rights have to be safeguarded and democracy has to be strengthen in order to create a conducive atmosphere for peace to prevail. We are working towards a peaceful Sri Lanka, where all its peoples will be able to live with dignity, enjoying equal rights.

**Reporting period:** 1st January 2012 – 31st December 2012

**Our Vision:** Peaceful prosperous Sri Lanka where all its peoples are living with dignity enjoying equal right

**Our Mission:** Work towards strengthening democracy, women’s advancement and equal participation in order to achieve sustainable development and permanent peace in Sri Lanka

**AWAW carried out three major projects in 2012 and they are:**

1. The Launching of Sri Lankan Women’s Agenda on Peace, Security and Development
2. Project “Women Defining Security, Realizing UNSCR 1325”
3. Project “Strengthening democracy and good governance through Women’s Political Participation”
1. The Sri Lankan Women’s Agenda on Peace, Security and Development

The Sri Lankan Women’s Agenda on Peace, Security and Development was prepared by the Association of War Affected Women and presented to the government of Sri Lanka on the 16th and 17th of August, 2012.

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Columbia University and Peace is Laud

The Survey

A survey was conducted previously in all the war affected districts including both Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa to ascertain information in four broader themes, women in poverty alleviation, women in decision making, gender mainstreaming and women in post conflict rehabilitation. Information on the current situation, the issues, and suggestions for improvement were collected through Focused Group Discussions attended by the women leaders of community based organizations. Qualitative information was collected by using an open ended questionnaire. The information gathered provides an overview of the ground realities. The survey was conducted from February to July 2012 by a team headed by a Gender Expert.

Recommendations for the Four Areas of Concern

Women’s Security and Safety

- Demobilize and disarm all paramilitary groups
- Speed transformation from militarization to normalcy
- Replace uniformed men by women wherever possible
- Implement the National Action Plan of the National Framework Proposal for Reintegration of Ex-combatants into Civilian Life in Sri Lanka
- Expand services of the women’s desks in police stations (in local language)
- Ensure awareness of UNSCR 1325, 1820 at all levels
- Sensitive awareness-raising programs
- Ensure 50 percent of the members of Civil Security Councils are women
- Provide legal counseling for women
- Ensure effective reintegration of women ex-combatants
### Women in Decision Making

- Policies which ensure the appointing of not less than 33% of women to all governing bodies
- Ensure that all political parties have not less than 33% of women candidates in their nomination lists
- Introduce a quota for women at all levels of governance
- Build capacity skills of women to take up leadership positions in community-based organizations and subsequently in political bodies
- Empower women to face challenges in accessing positions of governance
- Advocate for increased representation of women in political and institutional structures from the village level upwards
- Ensure representation of women in all decision making bodies
- Policy reforms at all levels that promote equal opportunities by appointing women to higher decision making levels both in public and private sectors and ensuring their implementation.

### Rebuilding, Recovering and Reconciliation

- Bring women’s concerns and discriminations to the authorities
- Create a platform for women affected by war to discuss their issues
- Facilitate women’s involvement in post-war reconstruction efforts to ensure that their societies are founded on justice and inclusion
- Facilitate a social dialogue between women’s groups from the North and East and other districts
- Include women and consider their concerns at the decision-making levels of reconstruction, resettlement, and reintegration processes
- Ensure that housing infrastructure facilities, water, transportation, and services such as education and health care are available for all resettled people
- Set up (by the local authorities) grievance committees to assess the needs and problems of those who were affected by war to expedite a speedy recovery
- Develop mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the Language Policy
- Implement social integration programs through cross-cultural events such as sports, interfaith dialogues, and exchange visits
- Include peace education and nonviolent dispute resolution mechanisms in the school curriculum
- Ensure that special community-level programs are in place to address the concerns and needs of female ex-combatants
2. Strengthening Democracy and Good Governance through Women’s Political Participation

Description of the Project

Through the implementation of this project, AWAW seek to empower a greater number of women in Sri Lanka, mainly in the Northern and Eastern provinces with the necessary skills to engage effectively in public life.

AWAW trained 75 women on political participation and leadership, 15 each in the selected 5 DS divisions in the district of Mannar, namely: Mannar, Nanattan, Manthai West, Musali, and Madhu. The areas are the following:

1. Advocacy and Lobbying
2. Media and public speaking
3. Knowing your governing structures
4. Project proposal writing and budget preparations
5. Networking and coalition building
6. The content of UNSCR 1325 and 1820
7. Conflict resolution

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FOKUS Forum for Women and Development

Lessons Learned

- The women in the northern part of the country are much more eager to participate in politics than in other regions of Sri Lanka.
- Despite the enthusiasm to engage in politics, most women remain politically immature and further political training is needed.
- Women gain a significant amount of knowledge regarding political administration, due to their previous level of the awareness of Sri Lanka’s political apparatus, which was very low compared to other regions.
- The interaction among northern and southern women (particularly with Sinhala women) was a great opportunity which opened the ground to overcome the fear of speech and mutual dialogue. It became a safe space for them in which they could get to know other women.
Workshops at Mannar District

Goal

Contribute to the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security in order to achieve sustainable peace in Sri Lanka through a process of women claiming their rights and spaces.

The Program

The program has been already implemented in the 10 targeted districts of North and East of Sri Lanka: Vavuniya, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Anuradhapura, Jaffna, Trincomalee, Polonnaruwa, Mullaitivu, Ampare and Batticaloa.

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Topics discussed during the workshops

→ Introduction of the United Nations
→ Main UN objectives
→ Introduction to the United Nations Security Council
→ Duties of the UN Security Council
→ Administrative structure of Sri Lanka
→ UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
  o Background
  o Who should take action?
  o The four pillars

Lessons Learned

Participants have successfully gained new experience and knowledge which allows them to practically implement UNSCR 1325. The importance of opening dialogue between women and police officers to build trust became evident.
UNSCR 1325 Workshops
4. AWAW meeting with the High-level UN delegation in Kilinochchi

Description of the meeting

A high-level UN delegation comprising of the following individuals visited Kilinochchi on the 8th of December, 2012.

1. H.E. Mr. Tsuneo Nishida, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Japan to UN
2. H.E. Dr. Palitha T. B. Kohona, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Sri Lankan to UN
3. H.E. Mrs. Simona Mirela Miculescu, Permanent Representative of Romania to UN
4. H.E. Dr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to UN
5. H.E. Mr. Usman Sarki, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to UN
6. H.E. Mr. Geoff Doidge, High Commissioner of South Africa in Colombo
7. H.E. Mr. Fabrizio Arpea, Ambassador of Italy in Colombo
8. H.E. Mr. Marcelo L. DA S. Vascondelos, Ambassador of Brazil in Colombo
9. Dr. David Phillips of Columbia University
10. Dr. Patrick Burgess of Columbia University.

The purpose of their visit to Sri Lanka was to observe progress of reconciliation and reconstruction in the post-war Sri Lanka. Therefore AWAW facilitated a meeting with local women of North and East in Kilinochchi to discuss and to understand about the current situation in the post-war Sri Lanka through the eyes of local women who were affected by war.

Issues raised by women at the meeting

- Women’s Safety and Security
- Women and Development
- Women in Decision making
- Rebuilding and Reconciliation

Questions raised by the Delegation

- Count of Women in Police Force
- Count of Women in Governance
- Who curtail the freedom of movement of women
- Status of resettlement
- National Action Plan on 1325
AWAW meeting with the UN delegation

Chair of AWAW visited Katmandu on April 5th, 2012 for “Katmandu for Geopolitics & Peace Operations”

6. GPPAC Regional Meetings

Chair of AWAW visited Katmandu on August 5th, 2012 for the GPPAC Regional Meeting

7. ICAN – MENA Region Women’s Conference

Chair of AWAW visited Turkey on September 11th, 2012 for ICAN – MENA Region Women’s Conference

8. N- Peace Planning Meeting

Chair of AWAW visited Manila on October 8th, 2012 for N – Peace Planning Meeting
9. GPPAC 1325 12th Anniversary

Chair of AWAW visited New York on October 30th, 2012 for GPPAC 1325 12th Anniversary

10. Egyptian Women’s Dialogue

Chair of AWAW was invited to facilitate Egyptian Women’s dialogue in Alexandria on the 20th of November, 2012
11. AWAÅW hosted US Ambassador, H. E. Madam Patricia Butenis for a farewell dinner
A special thanks to our donors;

- US Embassy Public Policy Office
- FOKUS
- Columbia University
- Oak Foundation
- Global Fund for Women
- Peace is Laud

For their generous support, without which we would not have been able to walk our journey thus far.