

3rd FORUM DYNAMIC CITIES NEED WOMEN, 'Women and Armed Conflict'

24-27 September 2013 Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Metropolis Women International Network, representing the World Association of Major Metropolises with the network of member cities over the world, will continue to promote its initiative, 'Dynamic Cities NEED WOMEN', following the first forum in Brussels in 2007 and the second one in Seoul in 2009.

It is estimated that close to 90 per cent of current war casualties are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children, compared to a century ago when 90 per cent of those who lost their lives were military personnel.

Although entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex. Parties in conflict situations often rape women, sometimes using systematic rape as a tactic of war. Other forms of violence against women committed in armed conflict include murder, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization.

Despite this, women should not be viewed solely as victims of war. They assume the key role of ensuring family livelihood in the midst of chaos and destruction, and are particularly active in the peace movement at the grassroots level, cultivating peace within their communities. However, the absence of women at the peace negotiating table is undeniable.

The Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, identified the effects of armed conflict on women as one of 12 critical areas of concern requiring action by governments and the international community, and stressed the need to promote the equal participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels.

During its forty-second session in 1998, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women discussed the issue of women and armed conflict and proposed further action to be taken by member states and the international community to accelerate the implementation of the Platform's strategic objectives in this area, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all relevant policies and programmes. Among the agreed conclusions of the session were measures to ensure gender sensitive justice, address the specific needs and concerns of women refugees and displaced persons, and increase the participation of women in peacekeeping, peace-building, pre- and post-conflict decision-making and conflict prevention.

Since the Beijing Conference there have been important developments at the international level in the treatment of crimes committed against women in situations of armed conflict.

If you would like to know more about that and participate actively in the 3rd Forum held in Abidjan from 24 to 27 September 2013, please let us know in the address arucabado@metropolis.org. You will find more information about the Forum in the website www.metropolis.org.