



Afghan Women Advocating for inclusion at Bonn Conference Women Advocates in Bonn

02-06 December 2011 - Afghan Women's Network (AWN) will facilitate a delegation of 10 Afghan women for an advocacy initiative around the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn. The women's rights advocates will meet with policy makers, officials and media outlets in Bonn and Berlin to promote and publicize Afghan women's perspectives and solutions for a better Afghanistan. Topics of discussion will include reconciliation, reintegration, transition process and international engagement through 2014 and beyond, in accordance with the agenda for the Bonn Conference on 05 December 2011.

AWN members started the process of consultation when women's groups returned from the London Conference in 2010 where only one woman at the London Conference was invited in to address the plenary, representing the voices of half the population. The need to mobilize for greater inclusion and a stronger voice through mobilization of women groups and relevant stakeholders became readily apparent. AWN was the key advocate for inclusion of women in the Kabul Conference and Consultative Peace Jirga, and also has been lobbying for at least 25% women's inclusion in the 2011 International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn.

The mobilization and consultation process resulted in the development of the Afghan Women Position Paper, which is a product of consultations with over 5,000 women and women's organizations; discussions engaged the Afghan government, local women activists and civil society organizations. Since then, AWN's Working Group refined the recommendations that emerged, consulting seasoned civil society organizations and leaders before the Position Paper was finalized in early October. The Position Paper was shared through press briefings, individual meetings with members of the international community and the Afghan government.

AWN appreciates the Afghan Civil Society Forum being convened ahead of the Bonn Conference. AWN delegates will serve complimentary role, further amplifying the opinions and voices of Afghan civil society, with a specific focus on women's perspectives. AWN's advocacy platform is an extension of two years of focused advocacy on women, peace, and transition, and more than 15 years of advocating for women's rights. The delegates will hold meetings, briefing sessions and media interviews as part of the advocacy initiative. They will meet with key policy makers both from Germany and other international community members, particularly female global leaders, and will speak to the implementation of recommendations and perspectives outlined in the AWN Position Paper.

Some of the recommendations focus on the following:

- Women leaders and women-focused organizations should be included in the design, monitoring and evaluation of provincial security indicators. These indicators should be used to guide transition-related decisions.
- Considering the recent developments around talks to the Taliban, the time is ripe for a national dialogue on reconciliation, one that will engage ordinary Afghans in discussions on how to ensure rule of law, access to justice, and protections for women's and human rights at the local and national levels. Women must play a meaningful and substantive role in designing and carrying out this dialogue.
- An allocation of 25-30% of the APRP budget for community recovery projects should be reserved for programming that directly benefits women.
- International aid beyond 2014 must have a clear gender allocation, specifying that a percentage of the aid that will go to women-focused projects and initiatives, either through the Afghan government or the local non-government organizations.
- Women's organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as a bridge between communities on both sides of the border, should be engaged in a regional people-to-people dialogue supported by the international community.

This advocacy initiative around Bonn Conference has been entirely planned and initiated by the members of AWN, however technically, logistically and financially supported by the Institute for Inclusive Security, Care International Offices in Afghanistan and Germany, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and UNWOMEN Afghanistan Country Office.

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