

**Addressing the Persistence of Gender Inequalities  
in Conflict Prevention and Peace Processes**

**International Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, 4 – 5 April 2014**

**Opening Address by Mr Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson  
Minister for Foreign Affairs**

Dear guests,

It is a great pleasure for me to open this conference on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and how we can address the persistence of gender inequalities when it comes to conflict prevention and peace processes.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are integral aspects of Iceland's foreign policy. From bilateral relations to international cooperation, Iceland has been tireless in advocating for the agenda. Not only for the sake of ensuring basic human rights for women and girls, but for the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals and realising sustainable development. Iceland therefore firmly supports the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We furthermore emphasise the importance of mainstreaming gender throughout the new framework with specific targets and indicators.

Gender equality is identified as a cross-cutting issue and a specific objective in the Strategy for Iceland's International Development Cooperation 2013 – 2016 and the associated Gender Equality Policy. Furthermore, the resolutions on Women, Peace and Security play a key role in all our efforts towards peace.

The adoption of resolution 1325 marked a milestone in the history of the United Nations, as the Security Council not only recognized the impact of armed conflict on women and girls but stressed the importance of women's equal participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building.

However, here we are - fourteen years and six additional resolutions later. What have we achieved? Why has implementation been so slow? What are the main obstacles?

Dear guests,

Iceland published its second National Action Plan last year, after a review of the first plan from 2008.

Through the review process we learnt that no matter how high our ambitions and good our intentions are – we can never make the implementation successful without clear responsibilities, measurable indicators, defined budgets and a framework that actually monitors the results of our actions.

On a positive note, we also learnt that Iceland has indeed been a strong advocate for 1325. Using each and every opportunity, Iceland has promoted 1325 and the importance of its implementation, not only for the sake of basic human rights for women and girls, but for successful and peaceful conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

The EDDA – Center of Excellence at the University of Iceland, UNU GEST and other partners have done a great job in organising this conference and convening some of the foremost experts on this subject. I would like to thank the organisers for their excellent work and the experts for their participation. That of course includes the GEST fellows – and the former fellows! – participating in this conference.

Iceland supports the implementation of 1325 through various channels, such as UN Women, UNU GEST, OSCE and NATO. We know that our support has yielded results, but it will be very interesting to hear the story from our partners' side. Tomorrow morning, we will hear one such story when a representative from UN Women in Kosovo will tell this conference about Iceland's contribution to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the Balkans.

Dear guests,

May today and tomorrow be fruitful and bring us a step closer to bridging the gender gap in the field of peace and security.

Thank you.