



Recommendations on Women's Inclusion in the Afghan Peace Process

Twenty-one members of the Afghan Women's Network—traveling from Herat, Balkh, Bamiyan, Kabul, Badakhshan, Parwan, Logar, Takhar, and Nangarhar provinces—gathered together in April 2014 to discuss how to advance women's inclusion in the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program. They returned to their provinces to consult women in their communities and provincial-level decision makers on the issue of women's active participation in the peace process. In June 2014, they reunited to exchange lessons learned from both successes achieved and challenges encountered. Based on their experiences, they assembled the following recommendations for how national and international actors can ensure women's meaningful participation in the efforts to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Objective 1: Increase Women's Representation in APRP Decision-Making Bodies

To increase the likelihood that women in civil society will have access to official APRP bodies and that the policies and practices of those bodies reflect women's interests, women must have formal representation in all related decision-making bodies.

1. The Chairman of the High Peace Council should direct the Provincial Governors to increase the number of women on the Provincial Peace Councils to a minimum of 30% women on each council, including instruction that women should be included in formal decision-making within the councils; the Provincial Governors should work with women's NGOs based in their provinces to identify capable women to appoint.
2. The High Peace Council and Joint Secretariat should review and revise the directive requiring a minimum of three women on each Provincial Peace Council to elaborate on specific criteria for female members, including a commitment to engaging women in communities and the ability to dedicate substantial time to APRP activities.
3. Monitoring of the Provincial Peace Councils' effectiveness by the Joint Secretariat should include specific metrics on each member's participation in community outreach activities, commitment to women's engagement, and the amount of time contributed to the work of the council per month.

Objective 2: Broaden Women's Access to Information & Resources

Women in civil society require information on the activities of the High Peace Council and Joint Secretariat in order to build trust in the process at the provincial level. Further, in order to support APRP outreach efforts, women require resources but have limited knowledge of the funding options available to support their efforts.

4. Provincial Peace Councils should partner with civil society organizations, particularly women-led organizations, to expand the scope and impact of community outreach efforts.



5. The Joint Secretariat should make information on APRP small grants and similar resources available to women's groups at the provincial level to improve the ability of NGOs to support outreach related to the peace process. The Secretariat can do this through:
 - a. Social media and radio programming;
 - b. Workshops in provinces for women's NGOs and Community Development Councils;
 - c. Trainings for Provincial Peace Councils—particularly the women members—that aim to ensure all members are clear on the resources available and the processes to access them.
6. The Joint Secretariat should hold regular monthly meetings with women civil society representatives during which Gender Unit staff members share information about the activities of the High Peace Council and women share information about the work they are doing to promote peace.
7. The Joint Secretariat should improve the transparency of APRP budget allocation by making publicly available a list outlining the location, activities, and implementing actors resourced by the APRP Trust Fund and posting related information on a public website.
8. International donors should ensure the overall APRP budget has a specific allocation to resource the APRP Gender Work Plan and related activities in support of women's inclusion in the peace process.

Objective 3: Expand the Active Engagement of Women in the Peace Process

Acknowledging women's integral contributions to the goals and objectives of the APRP, it is critical to ensure that women are meaningfully engaged in the implementation and monitoring of APRP activities.

9. The Joint Secretariat should task their Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist to assemble monitoring bodies to evaluate adherence to APRP policies and the impact of funded programming. Monitoring bodies should:
 - a. Operate at the national and provincial levels;
 - b. Include government and civil society representatives;
 - c. Conduct monitoring activities outside of their home provinces;
 - d. Track indicators that specifically evaluate: women's participation in the peace process; the impact of reintegration on women's security; and women's access to community recovery assistance.
10. Provincial Peace Councils and Provincial Joint Secretariat Teams should establish resource centers for women in the provinces from which women can retrieve information on the objectives, activities, and structure of the peace process. Provincial women's peace committees should also be created and encouraged to use the resource centers for meeting space and outreach activities.
11. International donors should reserve funds specifically to document the work women are currently doing to advance the peace process at the provincial and national level; these stories and examples should be widely disseminated.