

PROJECT FIVE-O

DRAFT ORAL STATEMENT – 22 February 2004

Statement from Project Five-O to the
48th Commission on the Status of Women

I am Reiko Aoki, Convenor of Project Five-O, a partnership of five international organizations—the International Council of Women, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the International Federation of University Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International. Together we voice the concerns of over half a million members in 120 countries.

Security Council Resolution #1325 affirmed the important role of women's participation and a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. However, two years later an Independent Expert Assessment, commissioned by UNIFEM, found that the UN System, governments and NGOs had not done enough to put the resources and means to protect women in place nor have more than token numbers of women been involved in decision-making in post-conflict reconstruction.

We fully support the Report of the Expert Group that peace agreements offer the best window of opportunity for a country to establish, protect and promote women's human rights, including economic, social, physical, legal and political rights, and, therefore, sustained efforts must be made to support the participation of women in formal peace processes and to build the capacity of women to effectively engage at the negotiating table. It is only by the equal inclusion of women in peace processes can women's experiences and expectations for conflict resolution, including attention to physical security, be included.

We call attention to and support the suggestion made in the report of the Secretary-General on women's equal participation in conflict prevention and peace-building that the Commission take note of the recommendations of the expert group meeting in their entirety and call for their systematic use by all actors in peace processes.

We would also like to voice the concern that peace agreements must contain not only the language of, but specific provisions for, implementation of gender equality and equal participation. Further, all actors in peace processes have a responsibility to ensure gender-sensitive implementation of agreements.

We also call on governments to give women equal opportunities to rebuild their communities after conflicts and to value their understanding of family and social needs as well as their strength and wisdom. Women should have equal opportunities to devise programs and in budgetary decisions at the community level.

We urge governments to promote reconciliation and peace-building in conflict resolution and peace-building as part of an on-going philosophy. We ask governments to promote a culture of peace and encourage widely the banning of weapons.

We must all encourage a culture of peace, not war, by teaching our children to respect the rights of others to be different, to embrace religious tolerance, and to believe that there are ways to resolve differences other than through violence and war.