

Letter written in response to the Association of World Citizens's appeal for Syrian women at the negotiation table (January 2014)

Dear Sirs,

Thank you very much for your letter that we read through carefully. The topic you have raised in it is very important and urgent. We share your opinion that often peace agreements around the world fail apart at a starting rate because of the failure to include a broad range of stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes.

Russia has always been in favour of greater role of women in conflict settlement process. That is why the Russian Federation supported the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 calling on UN Member States to "increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts".

On January 22, 2014 the Geneva II peace talks initiated by the Russian Federation and the United States have started. One of the main goals of this forum is to stop bloodshed and violence in Syria, to set up necessary conditions for an inclusive national dialogue between all-Syrian political, ethnic and confessional groups, between the government and the opposition. It is the Syrians themselves who should decide their country's fate.

From the very beginning we supported the idea of a broader process of national reconciliation in which a large spectrum of Syrian society should participate, including women organizations.

We would like to note that Syrian women take part in the conference as members of the government delegation - Bouthaina Shaaban, President adviser and Luna Alchebel, President press secretary. As for the opposition delegation it does include women as well.

We hope that Syrian women will take an active part in the post-conflict reconstruction of Syria, the building of a new Syrian society in which there will be no gender discrimination.

Very grateful for your considerations,

Vladimir Sergeev,
Director of the Department of the International Organizations, MFA of Russia