Syrian women have been at the heart of the ongoing crisis in the country, and they should be at the heart of the politics leading to a peaceful and democratic Syria.

Women at the Heart of Syrian Politics

First Women Inclusion Strategy 2014-2018

SWFP

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1 INTRODUCTION

More than 33 months have passed now since the start of the Syrian conflict, which is by all measures unprecedented in the history of Syria. What started in March 2011 as an attempt by a portion of Syrians to call for the application of a number of social and political rights has turned within some few months into an armed battle of conflicting wills that turned Syrian regions, one after the other, into battle zones.

The innocent calls for democracy and freedom faded and gave way to the sound of machine guns, rocket grenades, heavy artillery, armoured vehicles, tanks, military helicopters and fighter jets. Within no time, Syria turned from one of the world's safest havens into the most dangerous place on the face of the planet. Devastation reached almost each and every part of Syria starting with Dar'aa, and followed by Homs, Damascus and Damascus Countryside, Hama, Deir Ezzor, Edleb, Aleppo, Raqqa, etc.

Syrians, who have on more than one occasion, received refugees coming from neighbouring Iraq and Lebanon, became themselves internally displaced or ultimately refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, and other parts of the world. Casualties exceeded a quarter million Syrians between dead or wounded. Lucky Syrians who are still alive today and who have once called for freedom became prisoners in big cells. Not only traveling across the country turned very risky, going from one area into another within the same city became extremely difficult due to barricades and long queues of cars waiting to be checked.

The picture became more and more nightmarish with the targeting of the country's infrastructure, especially the power sector. Shortages of fuel left Syrians no other alternative, but to depend on electricity even for cooking purposes. Heavy loads on electricity caused breakdowns that are to be added to works of sabotage that targeted power plants, and caused Syria's biggest city, Aleppo, to sink in darkness for months now.

The international dimension of the Syrian conflict added to its severity. The anti-regime pact led by the US, Britain, France, the Gulf States and Turkey not only provided arms to the different anti-regime militias, some of which are extremist fundamentalist Islamic groups closely linked to Al-Kaieda, but also imposed economic sanctions that tremendously affected the prospects of living of the ordinary Syrian citizen. The Syrian pound depreciated against the US Dollar, which caused prices to soar sky high. Basic commodities began to disappear, and if these existed, their extremely expensive pricing prevented the average citizen from acquiring them.

Apocalyptic as it is, Syria has become the battleground of international wills led by pro-regime Russian Federation and anti-regime USA. Syria is giving birth to a new international order, as it has once given birth to Christianity and Islam, to civilization and enlightenment. The bitter difference, however, is that this new international order is feeding on Syrian blood and rising up on piles of hundreds of thousands killed in the process.

2 WHERE WOMEN STAND IN THE SYRIAN CONFLICT

Before the break of the ongoing conflict in Syria, Syrian women have been struggling for the full implementation of the CEDAW to which Syria is a signatory. Like the rest of women in the Arab world, Syrian women were facing social exclusion and marginalisation due to major political, social and economic problems generally suffered in the Arab World. These problems relate to the following:

a) Absence of democracy and respect to women's and children's rights
b) Absence of human rights in general,
c) Military conflicts and civil unrests,
d) High underemployment and unemployment,
e) High illiteracy and poverty,
f) Slow diversification and reforms of economies,
g) Gender inequalities,
h) Lack of access of girls and women to services and control of resources,
i) Inequitable income distribution- both between men and women as well as among men themselves, and
j) Low levels of industrialization.

Women have suffered for centuries now from the practices of male-centred Arab societies. This has accumulated in making them inferior, weak and ultimately socially excluded. Therefore, Syrian women were trying to cope with international conventions on human and women's rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all kinds of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), both of which promote social cohesion, democracy, justice and right, through gender equality, economic empowerment, literacy, inclusion and peace building.

The break of the crisis and the atrocities committed by the different fighting parties brought this quest to a halt, as Syrian women found themselves immediately at the heart of the conflict. In their capacities as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, women suffered loss of loved ones, especially sons and husbands. Notwithstanding the traumatic aspects of such a loss, losing one's husband means that a wife has to stand up to the challenge of filling the vacuum. She has to be the breadwinner and the housekeeper at the same time. She has to afford the minimum acceptable standard of living to her children; an issue extremely difficult before the crisis, let alone crisis time that caused unemployment to rise to about 48%.

Yet, this is one part of the suffering. The other part relates to the fact that the different conflicting parties have used and abused women with the aim of one side humiliating the other. This owes to the sanctity of women in the Arab world, and the consideration that women are the utmost source of honour to fathers, brothers and husbands. Hence, inflicting sexual abuse and even rape on women is bound to help bring psychological defeat and humiliation to a conflict side enemy. Human rights organisations have reported abundant cases of rape and sexual abuse in Syria during the past 33 months. Last but not least is the infamous “Jihad Al Nikah” practiced by Al Kaieda related militias, where abducted women are forced to have sex on the hour with these militiamen under fabricated arranged timed-marriage agreements.

The victim aspect of Syrian women comes short of telling a full story, as they have been very actively working to bring peace to Syria. Women activists and women organisations have set out, shortly after the start of the crisis, to promote better understanding of the crisis and how best to solve it. They travelled as individuals or as representatives of women organisations and met with important international political leaders with the aim to help forge a peaceful end to the Syrian conflict. On a different perspective, every Syrian woman tried individually, in her capacity as mother, wife, sister or daughter, to convince her close circle of men to put arms aside and seek political dialogue.

Nevertheless, the male-oriented and dominated local political society is still refusing to confess the positive role of women in bringing about peace and solidarity, and is trying to exclude women from any potential venue promoting a peaceful end to the crisis and the suffering of Syrians. This has been the case in Geneva I and is likely to be the same in Geneva II, unless women make a stand.

3 WOMEN INCLUSION STRATEGY

Based on deep understanding of the above, the Syrian Women Forum for Peace has embarked on an exercise that aims at building the first women inclusion strategy. The strategy seeks to ensure the full and effective participation of Syrian women in the decision-making process leading to a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict.

The exercise involved the design and delivery of a questionnaire that targeted a sample of Syrian women, with the aim to have the strategy based on the legitimate and true concerns of Syrian women, rather than one cooked in a foreign kitchen using ingredients that are strange to the Syrian cause.

3.1 The Questionnaire: What Syrian Women Want from Geneva II

About 550 women respondents from all walks of Syrian life responded to the questionnaire entitled “What Women Want out of Geneva II Conference”.

3.1.1 Sample Characteristics

The respondents to the questionnaire were of diverse characteristics that go as follows:

3.1.1.1 Age

The sample population was made of 548 respondents. The minimum age was 15 years and the maximum was 70 years. The mean was 32.7 years.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age (Years)	548	15.0	70.0	32.737	11.1244
Valid N (list wise)	548				

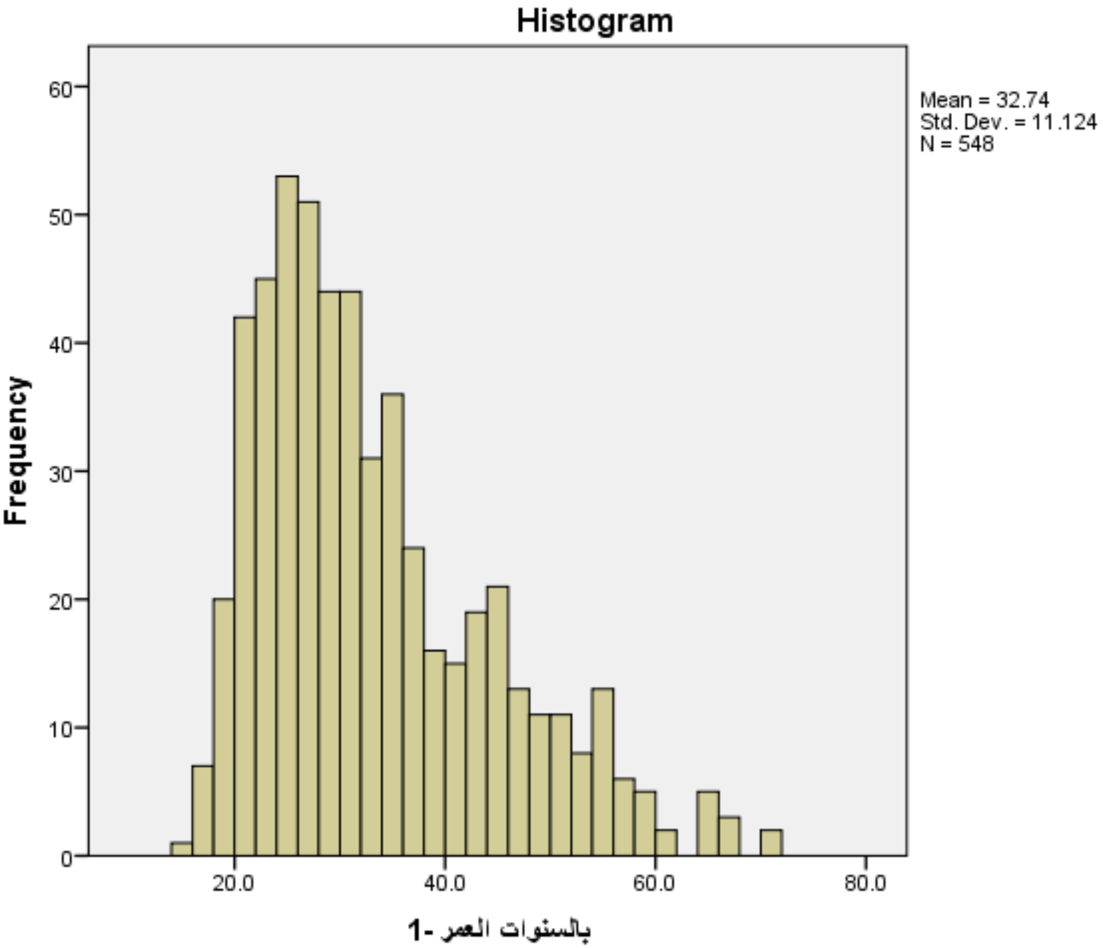
The following table illustrates the frequency of responses according to age.

Most respondents were young (20-40 years old) which reflects the viability of the survey. However, the women wisdom was put into consideration with good portion of the sample population at the age between (40-70), is the voice the mothers and grandmothers.

1- Age (years)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15.0	1	.2	.2	.2
	16.0	4	.7	.7	.9
	17.0	3	.5	.5	1.5
	18.0	11	2.0	2.0	3.5
	19.0	9	1.6	1.6	5.1
	20.0	19	3.5	3.5	8.6
	21.0	23	4.2	4.2	12.8
	22.0	22	4.0	4.0	16.8
	23.0	23	4.2	4.2	21.0
	24.0	22	4.0	4.0	25.0
	25.0	31	5.7	5.7	30.7
	26.0	23	4.2	4.2	34.9
	27.0	28	5.1	5.1	40.0
	28.0	20	3.6	3.6	43.6
	29.0	24	4.4	4.4	48.0
	30.0	35	6.4	6.4	54.4

	31.0	9	1.6	1.6	56.0
	32.0	13	2.4	2.4	58.4
	33.0	18	3.3	3.3	61.7
	34.0	14	2.6	2.6	64.2
	35.0	22	4.0	4.0	68.2
	36.0	13	2.4	2.4	70.6
	37.0	11	2.0	2.0	72.6
	38.0	10	1.8	1.8	74.5
	39.0	6	1.1	1.1	75.5
	40.0	13	2.4	2.4	77.9
	41.0	2	.4	.4	78.3
	42.0	11	2.0	2.0	80.3
	43.0	8	1.5	1.5	81.8
	44.0	6	1.1	1.1	82.8
	45.0	15	2.7	2.7	85.6
	46.0	5	.9	.9	86.5
	47.0	8	1.5	1.5	88.0
	48.0	8	1.5	1.5	89.4
	49.0	3	.5	.5	90.0
	50.0	10	1.8	1.8	91.8
	51.0	1	.2	.2	92.0
	52.0	4	.7	.7	92.7
	53.0	4	.7	.7	93.4
	54.0	4	.7	.7	94.2
	55.0	9	1.6	1.6	95.8
	56.0	4	.7	.7	96.5
	57.0	2	.4	.4	96.9
	58.0	5	.9	.9	97.8
	60.0	2	.4	.4	98.2
	64.0	1	.2	.2	98.4
	65.0	4	.7	.7	99.1
	66.0	1	.2	.2	99.3
	67.0	2	.4	.4	99.6
	70.0	2	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	


Histogram
Mean = 32.74
Std. Dev. = 11.124
N = 548
Frequency
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
20.0
40.0
60.0
80.0
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3.1.1.2 *Marital Status:*

The following table illustrates the marital status of the respondents:

Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		6	1.1	1.1	1.1
	widowed	15	2.7	2.7	3.8
	single	229	41.8	41.8	45.6
	married	277	50.5	50.5	96.2
	divorced	21	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	

3.1.1.3 *Educational Attainment:*

Educational Attainment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	-	13	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Diploma	4	.7	.7	3.1
	Elementary	35	6.4	6.4	9.5
	Engineering	35	6.4	6.4	15.9
	Junior College	74	13.5	13.5	29.4
	Master	14	2.6	2.6	31.9
	Phd	5	.9	.9	32.8
	Post Graduate	6	1.1	1.1	33.9
	Preparatory	67	12.2	12.2	46.2
	Secondary	134	24.5	24.5	70.6
	Undergraduate	7	1.3	1.3	71.9
	University Degree	154	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were mainly educated women with 79% of the sample population attaining secondary and above educational accumulation.

3.1.1.4 *Income:*

The monthly income was another criterion considered as a variable. The following table reflects the breakdown of respondents according to their monthly income.

Breakdown of respondents by monthly input:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid		94	17.2	17.2	17.2

	10000 - 20000	192	35.0	35.0	52.2
	5000 - 10000	76	13.9	13.9	66.1
	Less than 5000	112	20.4	20.4	86.5
	More than 50000	74	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	

The table tells that 20.4% of respondents receive less than 5,000 SYP per month and 17.2% have no income. Based on the proper living conditions, only 13.5% earn more than 50,000 SYP per month. The data shows that the majority of the sample population is poor.

3.1.1.5 Family Members:

The following table reflects the size of the respondents' families. It is obvious that majority of the respondents has a size (3-6 members) where (4) is the highest with about 19% of the sample population.

The mean is 4.6 members.

Respondents Breakdown by No# of Family Members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.0	37	6.8	6.8	6.8
	1.0	23	4.2	4.2	10.9
	2.0	44	8.0	8.0	19.0
	3.0	62	11.3	11.3	30.3
	4.0	106	19.3	19.3	49.6
	5.0	86	15.7	15.7	65.3
	6.0	68	12.4	12.4	77.7
	7.0	54	9.9	9.9	87.6
	8.0	33	6.0	6.0	93.6
	9.0	15	2.7	2.7	96.4
	10.0	20	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	

3.1.1.6 Dependence rate:

It is clear that the number of dependent family members whom are supported by the respondents is almost four and less dependents (88%), of whom (14%) support 3 dependents.

From the analysis, only 8% of the respondents support more than 5 family members.

Number of dependent family members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.0	136	24.8	24.8	24.8

	1.0	134	24.5	24.5	49.3
	2.0	77	14.1	14.1	63.3
	3.0	76	13.9	13.9	77.2
	4.0	57	10.4	10.4	87.6
	5.0	26	4.7	4.7	92.3
	6.0	12	2.2	2.2	94.5
	7.0	12	2.2	2.2	96.7
	8.0	13	2.4	2.4	99.1
	9.0	3	.5	.5	99.6
	10.0	2	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	

3.1.1.7 Place of Birth:

The following table shows where the respondents were born. This is to give an idea about the coverage of the sample.

Respondents by Place of Birth					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Idleb	6	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Al-Hasakeh	150	27.4	27.4	28.5
	Al-Raqqa	7	1.3	1.3	29.7
	As_Swiedaa	81	14.8	14.8	44.5
	Al-Qunaitra	6	1.1	1.1	45.6
	Latakia	28	5.1	5.1	50.7
	Aleppo	35	6.4	6.4	57.1
	Hamah	12	2.2	2.2	59.3
	Homs	20	3.6	3.6	63.0
	Abroad	13	2.4	2.4	65.3
	Daraa	8	1.5	1.5	66.8
	Damascus	109	19.9	19.9	86.7
	Dier-Ezzor	14	2.6	2.6	89.2
	Damascus suburb	54	9.9	9.9	99.1
	Tartous	5	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	

3.1.1.8 Residence

The following table shows where the current locations of residence are. About 20% of the respondents resided outside the country and almost 80% are still living inside Syria. Thus, the output of the study would cover mainly the crisis' impact on the local community and part of the Syrian refugees.

Current residence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Abroad	110	20.1	20.1	20.1
	Syria	438	79.9	79.9	100.0
	Total	548	100.0	100.0	

3.1.1.9 Social Activities

The respondents who admitted their involvement with a civil association represented 22% of the sample population. However, only 10% were part of women association.

About 8.4% of sample population was new to the civil work with 1-year membership.

3.1.1.10 Leadership:

Despite the fact that only 10% of the sample population said that they are members of civil associations, 22% of the sample said that they were in a leadership role. Thus, we can explore interpretation of community-based activities.

3.1.1.11 Women rights and issues:

To examine respondents' familiarity with women rights and issues, the research team raised three questions that relate to UN resolution 1325, CIDAW and advocacy training. The results were:

- Only 10.9% of the respondents had a previous training in advocacy
- 29.7% of the respondents know about CIDAW
- 34.1% of the respondents heard about UN resolution 1325.

The sample reflects good understanding of women rights and issues.

3.1.2 Impact of the Crisis on the Sample Respondents

To examine the impact of the crisis on the Syrian women, the research team asked 24 questions that cover political, economic, cultural and social issues. The questions and answers are summarized as follow:

- 22.3% of the sample were forced to immigrate outside Syria
- 42.9% of the sample were forced to change their houses more than once
- 38% of the sample were hosted by their relatives for a while
- 56.9% of the sample received IDPs in their own houses
- 28.8% lost their homes
- 31.8% said that their houses were looted
- 22.4% of the sample said that they lost their work, knowing that not all the sample were working before the crisis
- 7.5% of the sample lost their bread winner because of the crisis

- 19.3% of the sample declared that they lost one of their family members in the crisis
- 17.5% of the sample declared that their workplace was destroyed
- 42.3% of the sample responded with a positive answer to losing their savings
- 5.1% of the sample declared that they were exposed to body violence
- 3.1% of the sample declared that they were exposed to sexual abuse
- 52.7% of the sample mentioned that their psychological situation was hurt
- 26.6% of the sample said that they did a harmful compromises because of poverty
- 28.5% of the sample admitted harmful compromises because of fear and pressure
- 39.4% of the sample couldn't reach health care services
- 68.6% of the sample lost their purchasing power to afford basic needs
- 22.3% of the respondents said that the crisis forced them to stop their educational attainment
- 31% of the respondents said that their family members were forced to stop their educational attainment
- 52.6% of the respondents mentioned disagreement with relatives on political attitudes that was a source for family conflict
- 47.1% of the respondents said that they changed their social and cultural habits to adapt to the new conditions in the place where they reside.
- 1.6% of the respondents said they were armed and participated in the military operations.

3.1.3 Further findings

- The majority of whom were forced to immigrate outside the country are from Damascus, Damascus countryside and Al-Hasakeh
- Some governorates were affected more to force its people to be internally displaced. This is clear in governorates of Damascus Suburb, Damascus, Homs, Aleppo and Deir Ezzour. While it is not the case in other hosting communities such as As-Swidaa, Tartous and Lattakia.
- Changing residency was more obvious in Deir Ezzor, Damscus Countryside, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Lattakia and Hasakeh. The people of the hosting communities such as Lattakia were forced to move from other hot areas in the country to their original roots.
- Women who were forced to be IDPs were mainly married women (109 of 277) followed by single women (71of 229). This reflects family movement and displacement.
- Similarly, who immigrated outside Syria were mainly married (81 of 277) compared to singles (34 of 229)
- 131married women out of 277 were forced to change homes compared to 87 single women out of 229 respondents changed homes.

- 90 respondents out of the 110 women living abroad received displaced people in their homes, which reflect the fact that most immigrants are approaching relatives abroad not camps.
- 80 respondents out of the 110 women living outside Syria said that they lost their homes, which reflects a long-term remedy process. Especially knowing that 75 respondents said that their homes were looted.
- The research showed that the governorates that are not under the state control witnessed the most of the looting cases. This applies to Damascus Suburb, Deir Ezzour, Homs and Aleppo.
- Syrian refugees were more affected in terms of continuing their education where more than 50% of the Syrians who are living outside Syria mentioned that their family members stopped their education. Similarly, Syrian refugees were less capable to get their basic needs.
- Access to health care services was less affordable to refugees than to local citizens (70% to 30%)
- Women who have been raped were mainly singles (9) followed by married (5) and (3) widowed. It was mentioned that (8) raped women were university graduates.
- The age of raped women was between 16–45 with the majority between 20 and 40. One case was reported to be a child (16).
- Most of the raped cases do not know about CIDAW (13 of 17). Similarly, they don’t know about UN resolution 1325 (12 of 17).
- Educational attainment was affected at all educational levels. However, according to sample ages, evident was proofed in preparatory, secondary and university levels.

3.1.4 What Syrian Women priorities are?

Syrian women expressed their priorities, the respondents to the survey showed the following attributes:

Statement: I demand a free democratic nation

- 91.8% of the respondents were positive about this statement, while 6.8% were neutral, 0.4% were negative and 1.1% did not respond.

Statement: I demand fair and sufficient representation in decision-making positions.

- 92.7% of the respondents agreed to the statement, 5.3% were neutral, 0.7 % disagreed and 1.3% had no saying.

Statement: Women should be part of the peace making process

- 92.3% of the respondents supported this statement, 4.7% of the respondents were neutral, 1.6% were against and 1.4 had not responded.

Statement: Women should fairly be compensated for losses inquired

- 96.5% of the respondents supported the statement that women should be compensated for the losses they had because of the crisis. 2.4% were neutral about this statement and the remaining 1.1% had no saying.

Statement: All UN women, peace building and disbarment related resolutions should be respected

- 88.7% of the respondents agreed to this statement, 7.5% were neutral and 2.0% disagreed with the statement. The remaining 1.8% had no response.

Statement: Women rights of education, ownership and work should be respected

- 97.4% of the respondents supported this statement. 0.2% disagreed, 0.5 were neutral and 1.8% had no saying.

Statement: Women freedom of movement is right to be respected and protected against abuse.

- 94.7% of respondents supported this statement, 2.9% were neutral, 0.5% were against and 1.8% had no saying.

Statement: Women should fully participate onto cultural and social life

- 94.9% of the respondents agreed that women should fully participate in both social and cultural life. 2.7% were neutral about the statement, 1.8% had no saying and 0.5% opposed the statement.

Statement: Women have the right to choose their mates and to get birth.

- 96% of the respondents agreed to the statement. 1.8% were neutral and 1.8% had no saying. Only 0.4% were against the statement.

Statement: Women should participate in the reconstruction process

- 91.1% of the respondents agreed to the statement, 5.8% were neutral, 1.8% disagreed and 2.2% had no saying.

Statement: Emphasis should be placed on women economic empowerment

- 92.7% of the respondents agreed to this statement, 3.6% were neutral and 0.9% disagreed.

Statement: I support reintegrating female combatants in society following disarming process.

- This was the most controversial issue where only 71.2% of the respondents who supported the statement, 17.7% were neutral and 9.1% were against the statement. 2% had no saying.

Statement: There is a need for economic programmes that help rebuild women affected projects and credibility.

- 93.4% of the respondents supported this statement, 4% were neutral and there were no objections.

Statement: Special programmes should be tailored made to reintegrate the affected child females.

- 91.6% of the respondents supported this statement, 4.7% were neutral and 3.6% had no saying.

Statement: There is a need for gender oriented development media.

- 74.5% of the respondents supported this statement, 17.2% were neutral and only 1.5% were against. The remaining 6.9% did not provide with inputs.

3.2 ROADMAP TOWARDS GENDER SENSITIVE PEACE BUILDING

The Syrian Women Forum for Peace has come recently to adopt a seven-point roadmap in orders to achieve its objective of reaching a gender sensitive peace building process in Syria. The roadmap involves two stages, i.e. conflict and post conflict.

The roadmap builds on seven points each of which has a number of measures:

Commitment	Measures
Point One: Conflict Resolution **All efforts should be taken to ensure more systematic action for women's participation in and the availability of gender expertise to, peace process.**	a- Appointment of women as chief mediator/special envoy to lead peace processes.
	b- Include gender expertise, at senior levels, in mediation support activities.
	c- Adopting strategies for the inclusion of more women in negotiating parties.
	d- Establishing new forums and civil society organizations to ensure engagement between women's CSO and mediation and negotiation teams

Point Two: Post-Conflict Planning **Efforts should be exerted to ensure better institutionalization to ensure women's participation (and apply gender analysis to) all post conflict planning processes so that women and girls specific needs and gender discrimination is addressed at every stage.**	a. undertake a comprehensive review of existing institutional arrangements for incorporating gender issues into post-conflict planning
	b. Applying principles to all post-conflict strategies and planning processes.
Point Three: Post-Conflict Financing **The international community should be ready to increase the financing for gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment in post conflict situations.**	a- All peace-building projects should be supportend (for women and men.)
	b- Set a platform for work and investment to achieve gender finance post-conflict
Point four :Gender-Responsive Civilian Capacity **Civilian capacity building in order to meet the women needs and skills to be part of the rebuilding of the state institutions to be gender sensitive ones, and less prone gender discrimination.**	a. Actions should aim to address the women and girls needs in post-conflict phase.
Point five :Women's Representation in Post-Conflict Governance **The UN must ensure technical assistance to conflict-resolution processes and countries emerging from conflict promotes women's participation as decision-makers in public institutions, appointed and elected,** **including through the use of temporary special measures such as positive action, preferential treatment and quota-based systems, as enshrined in international human rights law**	a. ensure technical assistance to build a comprehensive management structures, processes for conflict resolution and to countries emerging from conflict, includes a careful assessment of temporary special measures, including quotas for women
	b. Consider addressing gender discrimination at every stage in the political process.
	c. public administrative reform to ensure full consideration of measures, including quotas and fast-tracking promotion schemes, to increase proportion of women in state institutions at all level, and capacity-building to improve their effectiveness

Point Six :Rule of Law **Ensuring and working for the rule of law during the stages of the conflict will systematically promote women's and girls' right to security and justice.**	a. Put immediate, long-term efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence and gender.
	b. legal services and support for women and girls
	c. Minimum standards of gender-responsiveness to be established (options for ensuring implementation incorporated into the technical advice activities of relevant UN actors) such as reparations programs and related bodies
Points Seven : Economic Recovery **Efforts should be exerted to ensure that women's equal involvement as participants and beneficiaries in local-development, employment-creation, and frontline service delivery in post conflict situation.**	a. adopt programs of local development and local infrastructure based on participatory / community development approach, which requires your direct involvement of women and women's civil society organizations in setting priorities, identifying beneficiaries, and monitor implementation
	b. Post-conflict employment programs should specifically target women as a beneficiary group. A range-of-parity principle should be applied to ensure that neither sex receives more than 60 percent of employment person-days. In addition employment programs must ensure that women workers receive daily payments directly and that barriers to equitable participation are addressed
	c. Promote women to be in "frontline" service-delivery agents in health, agricultural extension, education, and the management of natural resources, including forests.

3.3 SYRIAN WOMEN CONVENTION

The Syrian Women Forum for Peace facilitated a meeting on the 6th of January 2014 in which more than 60 women exchanged ideas and views on the prospects for peace and women inclusion in any potential peace process concerning Syria.

Meeting attendants signed a convention that called for:

1. The necessity to put an end to ongoing violence in the country and take all possible measures to stop export of arms and armed militia into Syrian territories
2. The necessity to lift the siege imposed on some areas of the country, and to facilitate relief for the besieged

3. The sanctity and integrity of the country, and the rejection of any political settlement founded on ethnic, religious or sectarian basis
4. The rejection of international intervention in shaping up the future constitution and political system of Syria
5. The necessity to stop trading on human issues
6. The necessity to lift the sanctions imposed on Syria, and to facilitate flow of goods and services into the country, in order to accelerate the process of economic recovery
7. The active participation of all Syrian residents through allowing more political freedoms, and allowing the civil society and the media to act freely
8. The promise of a future Syria founded on real citizenship and fundamental human rights
9. The necessity to have all women living in Syria participate in the negotiation process as true representatives of the Syrian fabric
10. The necessity to merge Syrian women in the democratic process, and to ensure their active participation in disarming militants, reconstruction of Syria and transitional justice
11. The necessity to decide on the fate of women hostages and prisoners, and to ensure they are not used as means of pressure
12. The necessity to have international cooperation economic programmes designed to economically empower affected women, and to educate the children of Syria

3.4 The First Women Inclusion Strategy 2014-2018

The ultimate objective of the first Women Inclusion Strategy is the materialisation of the aspirations of all Syrian women with regard to enjoying equal opportunities in shaping the political, social and economic future of their country. The strategy, hence, is based on the following objective:

The strategy seeks to ensure the full participation of Syrian women in the peace process through better institutionalization, and application of adequate planning processes that address all sorts of gender discrimination with a view to reach a free and democratic Syria that provides equal opportunities for all, and fully respects women's rights.

To achieve the above overall objective, the strategy builds on a number of pillars and measures designed to address the different challenges that set women aside from full participation in the political life of Syria. These pillars and measures are:

Pillar ONE	To unite all Syrian women under one representative umbrella capable of streamlining all efforts towards the full representation of women at the forefront of Syria's political life.	
Description		
Women institutions in Syria are still weak and fragmented, and when it comes to politics, women are part of political parties with different, and sometimes, conflicting views over the future of Syria, on the one hand, and the potential role and rights of women on the other. Thus, it is mandatory that women unite under an all-inclusive umbrella that enjoys unity of purpose.		
Measure 1.1	**During Conflict**	Establish the Women National Democratic Movement (WNDM), which shall work to strengthen the participation of Syrian women in the peace process through emphasizing dialogue as the only alternative to violence. WNDM shall work with CSOs and international organisations to ensure the appointment of women as mediators/special envoys in the peace process.
	Post Conflict	Turn WNDM into a full-fledged political party serving to bring and sustain democratic practices in Syria, and to ensure women's protection, equal rights, and ultimately strong political representation at the highest decision making circles.
Pillar TWO	Ensure better awareness on the part of women and the Syrian society at large of women's rights as expressed by the CEDAW and UN Resolution 1325	

Description		
The effective promotion of women's rights requires the design and implementation of a number of activities and communication programmes that are bound to reach the greatest majority of Syrians, and make them more aware of the importance of fully respecting women's rights, and the effective role they could play in bringing about a better Syria.		
Measure 2.1	**During Conflict**	Design and deliver TOT and training modules aimed at equipping Syrian women with profound knowledge of their rights as expressed by CEDAW and UN Resolution 1325.
	Post Conflict	
Measure 2.2	**During Conflict**	Launch media campaigns aimed at bringing better understanding by the Syrian society of the rights of women as expressed by CEDAW and UN Resolution 1325.
	Post Conflict	
Pillar THREE	Capacity building support to Syrian women to enable them shape strong understanding of politics, and have them better equipped to play the role of mediators/special envoys in the peace process.	
Description		
Syrian women need adequate capacity building support to enable them have better understanding of local and international political dynamics, and thus make them better equipped politicians capable of acting as mediators in any potential negotiations.		
Measure 3.1	**During Conflict**	Design and deliver special training modules to better equip Syrian women with local, regional and international political dynamics.
	Post Conflict	
Measure 3.2	**During Conflict**	
	Post Conflict	Ensure technical assistance by international donors to build comprehensive management structures to help Syrian women be more politically equipped, and to help conduct temporary special measures, including quotas for women
Pillar FOUR	Ensure all Syrian post-conflict laws fully respect and strongly protect rights of women.	
Description		
It is mandatory that post-conflict Syria should be providing equal rights and opportunities to women, and hence a full and systematic legal review should be conducted to modify or abolish laws and regulations that do not provide full equality for women, and have them replaced by new ones that are not gender biased.		
Measure 4.1	**During Conflict**	
	Post Conflict	Conduct full systematic review of the Syrian Constitution, Primary laws and related regulations with the aim to bring full respect of women's rights, and protection of women

		against gender based violence.

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCING

The Syrian Women Forum for Peace shall implement the Strategy until the Women National Democratic Movement is established. From then on, implementation of the strategy shall be the task of WNDM.

WNDM shall be the vehicle organisation responsible for the implementation of the different activities of this strategy during and after settlement of the conflict in Syria.

Funding the strategy shall be made available from:

- SWFP and later WNDM membership fees and other financial resources
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Grants provided by local and international organisations
- State funds of post-conflict Syria