



***Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.***

**PO Box 224, Enmore NSW 2042**

**www.afgw.org.au**

2 November 2011

The Hon Kevin Rudd MP  
Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Rudd,

**Re Representation of Women at the *Foreign Ministers Conference on Afghanistan and the inclusion of the Afghan civil society* to be held in Berlin on 5 December 2011 and also during the process of selecting Afghan representatives to take part in the preceding Afghanistan activities and the Civil Society Forum to be held 2/3 December in Bonn.**

The Australian Federation of Graduate Women (formerly the Federation of University Women) has written to you in the past concerning the importance of Australia's development of a National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and we have been delighted to see the government's progress on this and pleased to take part in the current consultation on the Draft Plan.

As you will know, at the heart of Resolution 1325 is recognition of the fact that it is essential that women be fully represented in all discussions aimed at conflict resolution and the development of a just and peaceful civil society. The International Federation of University Women, to which AFGW is affiliated, has been approached by a group of Afghan women. As a result, we now share their concern that Afghan women are not being adequately involved in the process of consultation that has been taking place during October in order to elect a group of 34 delegates to travel to the Civil Society Forum in Bonn, a forum that will precede the 5 December Conference of Foreign Ministers in Berlin and will formulate the positions on civil society to be expressed by the two representatives who will speak on behalf of Forum members at the Conference of Foreign Ministers.

We believe that Australia has a particular responsibility, over and above its normal obligations as a member of the United Nations, to pursue the fulfilment of the aims of Resolution 1325 in this situation because its active military involvement in Afghanistan has been predicated exactly on the hope of establishing a just and peaceful civil society.

Given the short time frame, we seek your commitment as Foreign Minister that Australia will, as a matter of urgency

(a) immediately take all steps within its power to ensure that the voices of Afghan women are heard during the Civil Society Forum and that their views are included in those transmitted to the Conference of Foreign Ministers;

(b) raise questions at the Conference if this appears not to have been the case; and

(c) ensure that any delegation from Australia to either the Forum or the Conference also includes women in its membership.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jane Baker  
President AFGW