



Wilton Park



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Conference report

Women in peacebuilding

Monday 18 – Wednesday 20 March 2013 | WP1191



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Executive summary

Thirteen years have passed since United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) was adopted on 31 October 2000, followed by a handful of subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security (WPS)¹ In support of the UN Secretary-General's (UNSG) 2010 seven-point action plan on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding and the UNSC's resolutions on WPS, the conference was convened to provide an expert forum to:

- identify constraints and opportunities;
- consider lessons learned and build on best practice;
- discuss ways forward for effective implementation.

The roundtable, off-the-record meeting was attended by some 60 participants from international and regional bodies, including policymakers and practitioners; representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs); human rights advocates; academics; and military and other specialists with expertise in women's participation in peacebuilding, mediation and conflict resolution. The conference was structured into sessions focusing on the seven different commitments that figure in the UNSG's action plan.

Key points arising from the discussion include:

- Despite multiple pronouncements and declarations, progress on the implementation of UNSC resolutions by UN institutions and member states has been generally disappointing. The UNSG's seven-point action plan is an important development for the UN and provides a robust policy framework. However, implementation within the UN needs to be intensified: the high-level commitments need to be translated into priorities, actions, measurable targets and indicators, and monitoring and reporting systems need to be devised to track implementation. UN institutions' efforts should be complemented and strengthened by state action. For member states, solid national leadership, champions and national action plans can all contribute to changing mind-sets, co-ordinating efforts and implementing initiatives within government. To date, however, only 39 national action plans have been drafted among some 140 countries.
- Financial support for the WPS agenda is critical. If the agenda is to be seriously pursued and not seen as purely a "make-work" project, greater resources need to be allocated responsibly and clearly to well-identified actions, targets and indicators, as with other frameworks (like the Millennium Development Goals, and Children and Armed Conflict).
- Formal peace processes remain virtually closed to women. Despite their active engagement in preventing, mediating and even ending violent conflict, women tend to be sidelined during peace processes. The number of women mediators and envoys remains very low. Gender issues are generally seen as remote or isolated from peace negotiations. However, such negotiations set the stage for power-sharing, the future constitution, and all subsequent stages of the transition out of violent conflict into post-conflict reconstruction and recovery.
- Armed conflict and militarisation generally lead to polarisation and a narrowing of the actors,

to “guys with guns”. UNSCR 1325’s principles provide important guidance for broadening political participation to include women’s and civil society organisations, from the very beginning of mediation and conflict resolution processes, as well as through all subsequent stages of the transition out of violent conflict, including peace agreements, and post-conflict financing and reconstruction. Simply adding individual women to the peace table is insufficient: women’s organisations need to be included and prepared to participate fully in peace talks through various capacity-building support mechanisms, for example conducting research, supporting broad consultations and developing bargaining positions.

- Robust post-conflict recovery frameworks must not focus on women’s economic development alone. They should also address their broader status, legal rights and access to services. Issues ranging from promoting women’s rights and removing discriminatory legislation and practices, including the rights to inheritance and to own land, should be covered, as well as building schools, clinics and court systems where they are needed. Parliamentary quotas are also important in ensuring that women are included in formal political institutions, although such quotas should be time-bound.

Women’s participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution: translating policy into practice and implementation

1. International rhetoric and declarations in support of the WPS agenda have been accompanied by neither a serious investment of resources -- financial, staffing and otherwise -- nor the institutional change and transformation envisioned. Despite a commitment in the UNSG’s seven-point action plan to earmark 15% of UN-managed funds for post-conflict reconstruction for women, barely 10% of these financial resources are allocated in this way. Consequently, calls for gender mainstreaming and for integrating a gender perspective within peace and security have often been viewed simply as adding to already heavy workloads and responsibilities.
2. UNSCR 1325 was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000 as a result of women’s international organising and advocacy efforts, while the WPS resolutions have been a rallying point for women’s organisations and civil society. However, where change has occurred it has largely been due to active civil society lobbying rather than strong national or international leadership.
3. UNSCR 1325 recognises and acknowledges women’s roles in preventing and resolving conflict. However, the resolution should be seen as a first step that requires the UN and member states to take further steps to develop architecture to support and increase implementation. Translating the WPS agenda from policy into practice requires that action plans, objectives, indicators and monitoring mechanisms be articulated, developed and closely monitored, while major institutions and their leaders must also be held accountable. Funds need to be allocated.
4. The challenges ahead are significant and wide-ranging. However, clear areas exist where greater implementation efforts must be prioritised. To do so, the mindsets of key international and national actors need to change and be accompanied by strong international leadership that can in turn develop and promote national leadership in countries where the UN is engaged. Also, generating and gaining access to gender-disaggregated data and analysis are also important to guide and inform all WPS initiatives. For example, in Rwanda, the National Gender Observatory has partnered with the national statistics bureau to identify and record incidents of sexual violence.

Priority areas for implementation

5. Involving women in mediation and formal peace processes remains a high priority given both women’s virtual exclusion and that gender issues are seen as isolated from peace negotiations. Gender equality needs to be addressed from the very start of dialogue and negotiation processes, since this early phase sets the stage for power-sharing, the future constitution and all subsequent stages of the transition out of violent conflict into post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. This exclusion can also contribute to a climate of

impunity. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that there are few women mediators, and until Mary Robinson's appointment in 2013, the UN had never appointed a woman as chief mediator.

6. Peace agreements emerging from such exclusive processes generally fail to address gender or women's specific needs, roles, perspectives, contributions or participation in transitions out of violent conflict.
7. Civil society and women's organisations remain under-represented at donor conferences, including, most recently, the one on Mali. Post-conflict financing will not address women's needs if women are absent and excluded when priorities are being discussed and decided on.
8. Regarding women's participation in post-conflict governance, the introduction of parliamentary quotas has led to some positive experiences. Generally, however, women's grass-roots organisations have few opportunities to participate in planning and decision-making regarding reconstruction. Also, while women's employment in the public sector is important both for women and the community, there is little analysis of this issue and the opportunities to better promote and enhance it.
9. Where the rule of law and post-conflict justice systems are weak, violent perpetrators remain at large, threatening and/or employing violence and thus effectively blocking women's full socio-economic and political participation, while also affecting the participation of human rights defenders, journalists, returnees and others.
10. While efforts to end impunity regarding sexual and gender-based violence are important, those to prevent such violence are critical. The two are inter-linked.
11. Economic recovery is central to post-conflict stability, but more research and analysis are needed on how to better promote and facilitate women's economic development.
12. Women's organisations and movements in conflict-affected areas need 'user-friendly' financial support because grass-roots women are often inexperienced at proposal writing, preparing reports and the process of grant applications. Diplomatic missions in conflict-affected countries should be urged to reach out to, consult, and remain in contact with women's organisations and movements.
13. Access to resources and education remains a serious obstacle for many women throughout the world. Yet transitions from conflict offer important opportunities to address access to land ownership, inheritance and/or user rights, as well as access to education for girls that can create opportunities for social mobility and further economic and social development.

Women and gender perspectives on mediation and conflict resolution

14. Despite having been drivers of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda, some women activists have become fatigued because of the slow pace of change and implementation. Locating this agenda for change within a longer-term historical framework can be useful and offer broader perspectives on the deep-seated nature of the transformations required.
15. While conflict mediation efforts tend to invite the armed groups to peace talks, much more effort is required to broaden the political representation of participants and ensure that women and civil society are included. Social movements and women's movements have been important drivers of change. While the tendency is often to approach traditional formal leaders, these other actors need to be recognised, and both formal and informal leaders should be included.
16. Violent conflicts take place in polarised contexts heavily influenced by powerful men, institutions and elite networks. While UNSCR 1325 is useful in establishing norms, such norms are insufficient in transforming the nature of the conflict or the power of the warring parties. While armed conflict and militarisation generally lead to a polarisation and a narrowing of the actors, UNSCR 1325's principles can assist with broadening conflict resolution efforts and reintroducing a wider array of actors – and specifically women – from

the very beginning of dialogue and mediation processes, as well as through all subsequent stages of the transition out of violent conflict.

17. Peace agreements signal not only an end to violent conflict, but set the stage for the reconstruction of the conflict-affected society. However, gender and women's issues continue to be seen as remote issues divorced from peacemaking and peacebuilding as societies emerge from conflict.
18. Regarding civil society's involvement in peace processes, recent empirical research² on the role and inclusion of civil society reported two important findings: a dramatic reduction in the incidence of failure of peace agreements where civil society was involved, and that such involvement had no negative impact on the peace process.
19. Early in the process, systematic ongoing dialogues and consultations with civil society organisations (CSOs) are key. Furthermore, mapping the CSO actors should also be part of the mediation strategy early on. These consultations and dialogues should also inform local partners about the role of the UN in the peace process because local organisations and actors do not always understand the UN's role in peace processes and peacebuilding.
20. The agenda for consultations and negotiations is also key, and agenda items will frequently have gender dimensions to them, such as whether women can own or have access to land.
21. In complex conflicts where civil society actors and organisations may be difficult to identify, valuing women's experience can serve as a useful strategy. Given that simply including individual women in consultations and dialogue is insufficient, a much broader and more imaginative interpretation of UNSCR 1325 may be required. Such an approach increases the likelihood that partners can be identified and that a supportive environment for women's participation can be created.
22. In supporting wider participation in peacemaking processes, how do we ensure that women's groups and CSOs are organised and prepared for these processes? Given that few will likely have been involved in a peace process before, how do we assist and prepare them to participate? Do the women participating know, for instance, which issues will be discussed? In the Burundi process, for example, the men at the peacemaking table knew the agenda of the discussions well in advance.
23. The UN peace architecture contains some inherent obstacles to women's participation. We need to move beyond the current framework of including women in mediation. For example, the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) Vision 2020 aims at building a peace architecture that ensures local men and women are involved and participate thus strengthening their skills, providing key support and keeping rosters of this expertise. Also, by reaching out to civil society and bringing it to the negotiation table, there is a challenge to the power of that negotiation table. Grass-roots work needs to be acknowledged as being essential rather than secondary in nature.
24. In preparing for peace talks, women's organisations and CSOs need support in researching and defining their positions beforehand, as well as creating a broad consultation process. Based on such consultations, issue papers can be developed in advance to support the women involved in the talks and to feed into the preparation of their positions. Women also need to be on the mediation team itself.
25. Meeting with foreign delegations can be risky for women's groups and CSOs in some contexts. Consulting these groups beforehand regarding their own security issues is critical to avoid putting them at risk.
26. Concerning mediators' roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis UNSCR 1325, guidelines for mediators are important. However, as guidelines, they remain voluntary, and mediators are not obliged to use them. Institutions require legally binding commitments, combined with specific indicators and sanctions for each level within the various structures. How might these mediators be made accountable? What accountability exists among the most senior-level mediators? Perhaps mediators' performance reviews should incorporate the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the WPS resolutions as a criterion and offer positive

incentives like bonuses for those who integrate gender perspectives and women's participation into peace negotiations.

27. With quotas, claims are sometimes made that women are "unqualified" for high-level positions. So the issue of how "qualifications" are defined needs to be carefully examined. What are the assumed criteria when judging whether candidates are "qualified" or not?
28. When developing mediation teams, the question must be posed: When we finally put women on mediation teams, do they understand the gender dimensions of these teams? Because not all women understand gender issues, it is insufficient simply to include women on mediation teams.
29. Recommendations made during this session included:
 - the standardisation of civil society involvement in dialogue and mediation processes. This will require discussions and consultations about the criteria for civil society engagement;
 - the creation of an international civil society fund with more flexible application and reporting requirements to support the work of grass-roots women and community activists;
 - the employment of gender advisors who are well versed in peace and security matters; and
 - the creation of a WPS advisory group, or alternatively including WPS in mediation support and security frameworks, since parallel universes currently exist.

Practical experience of promoting women's participation in peace processes

Preparing women for peace negotiations

30. Women are rarely invited to participate in formal peace processes. In Myanmar, where numerous peace processes are underway with 19 different armed groups, open participation for the public has been announced; however, the nature and extent of this involvement remain unclear.
31. Concerning barriers to women's participation in political dialogue and peace processes, some male leaders view women as ill-equipped to participate at the negotiation table. So challenges remain related generally to men's mindsets, but specifically to the military mindset, prompting the question of how to empower and prepare women to be at negotiation tables where these mindsets prevail.
32. Women's access to participation at the negotiation table varies considerably from no formal limitations on their participation to outright restrictions; however, with the former, mechanisms and criteria have often served to limit women's access to the negotiation process. For example, armed groups may permit only their own women members to participate, or a certain number of years of engagement within a group may be required.
33. When planning peace processes, the various parties are preoccupied with strategizing and discussing various political issues. Such preparatory processes are seldom concerned with women's participation. So defining and gathering women's concerns, perspectives, issues and positions are key to preparing for the start of talks

Strategic focus points for women activists

34. Women activists and CSOs need to work at two key levels: firstly with strategic actors, such as male MPs, champions, or mediators; and secondly with women and women's organisations to involve and broaden the grass-roots base by creating, for example, women's peace forums, open women's peace networks or women's peace tables with the broad participation of women of all ideological backgrounds.
35. Women can be involved in two ways: through the direct involvement of women on both

sides of the negotiation table; or through the broader involvement and mobilisation of women via outreach to professional women, women academics, religious leaders or other officials. In conducting such outreach work in the Philippines, women's organisations integrated UNSCR 1325 and WPS matters into other social issues, including access to health care and social services. They also worked to counter "spoilers". In 2009 women's mobilisation efforts in the Philippines led to the passing of the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710), which enshrined and institutionalised women's equality.

36. Long-running conflicts change over time, and the situation on the ground for the average person generally worsens. Since peace processes are political processes, citizens can and sometimes do reject the resulting peace agreement, which is why informal and formal community leaders need to be engaged. It is also important to include parliamentarians, since the peace agreement must pass the test of constitutionality.
37. Again in the Philippines, women's organisations mobilised around a four-point plan of action: to build up constituencies and support for the peace agreement; to prepare Muslim women leaders to manage health and other services in the post reconstruction period; to bridge the cultural and religious divides, including countering negative stereotypes of Muslims that had emerged during the conflict; and to create a citizens' fund to provide concrete post-conflict support to local initiatives without layers of bureaucracy. In terms of lessons learned in the Philippines, working with government was essential, even if there were some disagreements. Secondly, despite failing to get onto the formal peace panel, women's organisations subsequently approached key leaders and urged them to consult with the women's peace forum. It is critical that peace and security be anchored in existing law.
38. While external donor assistance can be important, internal organisation and mobilisation are key. Without this domestic women's constituency for peace, little can be achieved. Also, civil society must learn how to work with government, because women cannot go around it; but in working with government, allies need to be chosen strategically.
39. In the Colombian case the seven-point action plan does not currently relate to Colombian women, nor to the peace process yet. The "women as peacebuilders" stereotype is seen as unhelpful and oversimplifies women's various roles in armed conflict. In Colombia, women are involved at all levels of the conflict, including considerable numbers in armed groups. The UN's approach to working with Colombian women has been somewhat simplistic, as women are expected to adhere to a single position. In reality, Colombian women have a whole range of different experiences, perspectives and approaches.
40. Colombian women activists have developed Women for Peace, which is a network that welcomes all women regardless of their ideological position and organises consultations on key political, economic and social issues. During a consultation no party may leave the table until an agreement is reached, and women should be involved in meaningful discussions. Women's participation should not be tokenistic and should focus on key issues such as transitional justice and a legal framework for peace. The next consultation will focus on victims. Issues which should be addressed through the peace process include women's inequality, access to health, land issues, political participation and access to decision-making institutions.
41. The UN is now developing a strategic plan for supporting Colombian women's rights in the peace agreement. Beyond its logistical support in convening civil society consultations, the UN could also be more proactive, for example on the reintegration of women combatants.
42. A number of mechanisms and experiences have been developed globally by women's organisations for inserting themselves into high-level negotiations with international participation. In Liberia and much of West Africa, the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) is an excellent example of women activists engaging with violent armed groups and bringing them to the table. The framework for peace talks in Liberia was broad enough to incorporate CSOs in the peace talks; however the armed groups were unwilling to have women's conflict-related issues integrated into the agenda for talks. While MARWOPNET made some initial concessions on the agenda for talks, its activists managed

to incorporate women's issues of "geographical coverage" within the broader consultation process and then to promote women's political participation through this coverage and representation.

43. There may be important opportunities to work with men champions, as well as with young men and youth generally, which need further consideration as successful experience to date has been sparse.

Identifying robust strategies for economic recovery

44. Since poverty can trigger conflict, promoting economic stability and growth to address poverty and vulnerabilities is essential and benefits the entire society. Improving women's living conditions, livelihoods and status in transitions from conflict necessarily involves a variety of robust economic development programmes. Such programmes should be multidimensional and address women's often-marginalised status. This understanding implies that while promoting economic activities and job creation is critical, as a recovery strategy it is insufficient. Multidimensional programmes need to address both women's immediate, short-term and longer-term strategic needs. Structural and institutional barriers that limit and/or undermine women, their rights and status need also be addressed including:
- Promoting women's legal status and rights by strengthening and/or advocating new legislation, such as domestic violence laws, women's inheritance rights, rights to land ownership and/or user rights;
 - strengthening women's inclusion and participation in economic decision-making bodies;
 - ensuring women's access to public sector employment and implementing gender quotas, for example establishing a 60% ceiling or quota to limit the number of either gender in work schemes;
 - improving women's access to finance, small business training and markets;
 - restoring and/or expanding government services and improving women's access to basic services; and
 - in some cases, providing access to domestic fuel sources by instituting rural electrification programmes and promoting and making available clean cooking fuels to limit the time women and children spend gathering firewood and other household tasks.
45. Women must be systematically included in economic stabilisation programmes like community work schemes and emergency work programmes that repair and reconstruct local infrastructure critical to local communities, livelihoods and post-conflict trade. Women, internally-displaced people (IDPs), returnees and former combatants are particularly in need of such programmes.
46. Because governments tend to be the largest employers post-conflict, women need to be at the forefront of service delivery. However, they are often forgotten in the restoration of government services that are key to establishing a lasting peace. By promoting women's public sector employment, women become role models.
47. In the immediate aftermath of conflict there are often particularly vulnerable groups of women – refugees, IDPs and former female combatants – who urgently need access to emergency employment.
48. To hold host country governments and international agencies like the UN accountable, pressure and constant reminders from a variety of actors can be very effective. However, because the UN is mandated to work primarily with national institutions, these efforts and initiatives need to be integrated into national policy schemes. Should the government refuse to include gender-responsive action, it is extremely difficult for the UN to compel it to do so.
49. New social, political and economic opportunities emerge as a result of conflict. So identifying gender disparities is important, but other opportunities for addressing such disparities may

also exist. If women could shift into some economic sectors where men predominate, they would likely benefit economically, but it is unclear how to facilitate such shifts. Over the long term, implementing the WPS agenda means transforming political and economic governance, and preparing women in the process, as entrepreneurs, economic decision-makers and policy-makers.

50. In its Learning on Conflict and Gender in Africa initiative, the World Bank has been examining how men can be more engaged in women's economic empowerment with a more positive outcome for women and the entire community. Economic development programmes have frequently been criticised for failing to engage with gender norms. In engaging male youth, their vulnerability to becoming engaged in criminal groups is countered, as well as the socio-cultural expectations and social pressures on young men related to masculinity. However, many gaps remain, such as: what is the role and impact of the family in demobilization, disarmament and re-integration (DDR) processes; and what are the effects of efforts to include men in addressing gender-based violence.
51. DDR as a field is faced with numerous challenges: it is a top-down, externally imposed process and may even be a dying endeavour, partly because the term suggests a linear process. The "disarmament and demobilisation" components are usually separate from the "reintegration" component, and these components are also run by different agencies. Disarmament and demobilisation may have failed before reintegration starts, and the needs of former women combatants are often overlooked. With longer-term development actors, a challenge has been ensuring the adoption of adequate eligibility criteria to include former women combatants because many have been left out of DDR programmes. Women are often the most successful community-based agents for reintegration of former combatants. They should be consulted on their needs for security in the local community.
52. Regarding the UNSG's commitment to earmark 15% of post-conflict funds to promote gender equality, it is difficult to know how much has been allocated across the entire UN system, because the UN is made up of several institutions with different reporting and budget monitoring systems. Within the UN Development Programme's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, 18-19% of the budgetary resources are allocated as such; however, within the broader UN system different gender markers have often been added later to the systems in place, making it hard to calculate and compare the various figures.
53. Other frameworks within the UN, such as the Millennium Development Goals and Children and Armed Conflict, have received a large infusion of resources; however, with UNSCR 1325, such provisions were not made. Furthermore, there is no baseline data before the resolution's adoption against which to measure achievements.
54. Neither conflict sensitivity, nor gender and development analysis has been implemented across the World Bank and UN systems. Few donors have such institutional capacity themselves. Accountability and reporting requirements are uneven: a local CSO may have to fulfil significant reporting requirements for a grant of a few thousand dollars, while millions of dollars might go missing without proper accountability.
55. Local CSOs in rural and peri-urban areas tend to know their local communities well and should constitute a sustainable local resource, although most would benefit from training in proposal- and report-writing. For UN and donor agencies, however, working with rural NGOs and those outside the capital and large cities is more time- and cost-intensive, which results in higher UN overheads.
56. The UN system is not a flexible system – due largely to the tremendous number of constraints on its ability to be so, ranging from budgetary allocations to donors' agendas and priorities for the structuring of funding. However, the system also has many positive aspects, such as international peacekeeping forces and the provision of important forums (like the annual Committee on the Status of Women) where the international community can reach agreement, as well as declarations that can be used to advance women-related agendas.
57. The structuring, constraints and conditions on funding are all very problematic (see paragraph 94). Immediate post-conflict support usually comes from emergency funds, while

it takes time to attract longer-term development funding. Specifically in terms of DDR, the gap between the two types of funding and the different conditions imposed on each can result in a rift between disarmament and demobilisation, on the one hand, and reintegration, on the other.

58. Addressing women's rights and situations in complex environments like rural Pakistan is particularly difficult due to conflict and geographical isolation. There are various barriers including serious security threats to community workers (and assassinations); a climate of impunity; biases against women's mobility and work outside the home; the mountainous topography; and the need for government permits to access certain areas of the country. These barriers impede service delivery and outreach programmes to women in remote areas that sometimes have no locally available services. In some socially-conservative regions local councils even exclude women, while many women parliamentarians are frequently unwilling to discuss women's rights or participation. So working to reduce and remove obstacles to women's political participation remains a focus – be they community leaders or members of political parties. Community outreach programmes are most effective when local people are approached as stakeholders with a share in the programme rather than beneficiaries. A long-term approach is needed for helping communities apply their own resources for economic recovery.

Ensuring gender-responsive capacity-building

59. While UNSCR 1325 remains little known in some parts of the world, it is an important national and even regional tool. Efforts to develop regional action plans have not progressed very far, although action at the regional level is felt to constitute another significant level of engagement. The regional dimensions and transformative potential of UNSCR 1325 need more attention. Within the African Union advocacy and pressure are needed to advance the WPS agenda specifically vis-à-vis mediation and regional economic communities. There is a need to examine how the various national action plans have been developed and implemented and to learn from these experiences.
60. There are differing understandings of the notion of capacity-building, ranging from the basic provision of training and specific skills to local organisations to more comprehensive efforts to build up institutions and civil society. The UN seven-point action plan encompasses both. There is also a need for cultural sensitivity and knowledge of context in providing support.
61. There is long-standing experience of capacity building in women's organisations in Burundi pre-dating the adoption of UNSCR 1325, as well as more recently, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Women's groups in Burundi had asked for training and support to improve their organisations and to help them develop their own agendas, despite the divisions among them. As a result, these organisations managed to prepare their agenda before their male negotiating counterparts, and speeded up the process. However, they still had to work hard to create space for themselves at the negotiation table.
62. In the DRC, the process of travelling around the country to consult with women was lengthy. UN Women and other women's organisations were important in supporting local women's organisations. Peace mediation support offered to the DRC did not, however, include support to women's CSOs: only armed groups and parties to the conflict were included in international mediation support. While women's CSOs were not at the formal negotiation table, a mechanism was established where two women present at the formal talks were linked with women civil society representatives in a room outside. This mechanism may work well if one fails to get to the formal negotiation table.
63. Elections often trigger violence, and there are a number of examples in Africa where women have organised to prevent conflict breaking out, including in Senegal and Kenya. Early warning systems and monitoring are key to recognising and reducing violence, enhancing the credibility of the entire electoral process. In Senegal, women's organisations mobilised in both rural and urban areas. They provided early warning monitoring using cell phones, including when acting as election observers at voting stations. The cell phones also ensured a measure of personal security. A contact group of wise women was also formed to

encourage dialogue among rival political parties, as well as provide outreach to religious groups, traditional chiefs and others. During the Kenyan election period, UN Women, along with local civil society organisations and the Angie Brooks Centre, established the Women's Situation Room (WSR). With 500 trained observers in the field, over 1,200 reports were made to the Situation Room in just three weeks, ranging from electoral complaints, threats, damage to property, and a small number of violent incidents. The WSR concept saw recent success also in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as Senegal. In North and South Kivu provinces in the DRC similar early warning systems are needed to alert neighbouring communities and document violations, even if prosecution can only happen later. At the regional level ECOWAS has developed both a Gender Development Centre and a Conflict Prevention Framework that has WPS as one of its pillars.

64. As the Arab uprisings have demonstrated, youth can play a critical role in societal change, and capacity-building efforts should also engage youth. In many countries the political leadership does not include the younger generation; similarly, many women's organisations could also benefit by involving and developing younger women leaders. Men can be important gender advocates too and need to be engaged.
65. Experiences with women parliamentarians have sometimes been disappointing, because there is no guarantee that they will take up or even raise key issues for women, much less women's rights. Sustained education and information programmes should be organised to encourage awareness of gender-responsive approaches among parliamentarians.
66. To promote women's rights among the mass media, journalists need to be brought on board and trained to become more gender sensitive. In some countries the media fail to cover important women's issues, while in others they sometimes fuel conflict or politicization of issues

Furthering inclusive governance

67. Women are often viewed as the ultimate victims of violent conflict and are forced to pick up the pieces of the broken socio-economic fabric. Some 30% are forced to lead their households, and in many cases they live in rural areas with very limited resources. However, women are not only the ultimate victims of conflict, but also very frequently the ultimate agents of change. African women, for instance, are estimated to contribute 70% of production, but own just 1% of the land.
68. In promoting women's role and participation in political governance, country-specific measures or quotas are often seen as essential tools. Globally, 23% of parliamentarians are women; however, in countries with quotas, this number reaches 24%, while in countries without quotas the figure is 7%. Quotas often encourage women to be politically ambitious. That said, affirmative action initiatives like quotas need to be time-bound.
69. Quotas alone are insufficient. They must be complied with, and women parliamentarians must be put in winnable situations. Proportional representation as a voting system is crucial, and women candidates need to be included high on party lists. For women parliamentarians to be effective, there needs to be a critical mass of around 30%; having less than 30% can actually backfire and make the situation for women parliamentarians worse. Women parliamentarians tend to pass legislation that is family- and community-friendly, thereby contributing to a better society and greater economic growth.
70. Electoral processes and civic education are also essential to mobilise voters, engage the media and prepare women for public positions. Women candidates and parliamentarians often need resources, because they rarely have access to the same resources as men. It is very important that women parliamentarians are seen to be delivering after being elected. Too frequently, however, women who consider running for election are the victims of threats of violence against themselves or their families, as well as death threats, or even assassination, such as the Iraqi woman parliamentary candidate who was killed for running for office. Such threats are a reflection of the political system and of the issues at stake.
71. In terms of grass-roots organising, Liberian women's experiences have been a beacon to

many. Women's peace activism first started when courageous women started speaking with armed groups and telling them that what they were doing was wrong. Many of these women initially came from Christian churches, but decided to reach out and include their Muslim women sisters to form the Mano River Women's Peace Network. This network has continued to grow transnationally and is active in several West African countries, but has also reached out to women in other conflict-affected areas in Africa such as Rwanda.

72. There have been some setbacks in Liberia, specifically during the past parliamentary elections, when far fewer women parliamentarians were re-elected, although Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson was returned to office. Many male candidates organised to beat the women parliamentary candidates. There is, however, a women's caucus in parliament which is seen as very effective.
73. Many women leaders are ageing, and younger women leaders need to be encouraged, mentored and developed. The Angie Brooks Centre in Liberia was developed specifically to train and develop young women. Similarly, an institute has been set up at the University of Liberia to provide peace and justice training to various actors. A network of peace huts, which is a women's initiative now covering all 16 counties in Liberia, has also been established. Peace huts serve a variety of purposes, such as conflict prevention and resolution on: domestic disputes; local crime prevention; assisting women with land rights; assisting cross-border women traders exposed to personal security threats while travelling such as rape and theft; and creating marketing networks to purchase women's produce. Liberian women peace activists have managed to establish important institutions to promote peace and women's rights, as well as a host of programmes such as exchanges between Sierra Leonean and Ivorian police and a joint military-civil society mapping and development of gender policies within the military. Successful programmes like the peace huts also raise questions related to the proportionality of funding and funding disparities: expensive security sector reform programmes versus low-cost peace hut networks.
74. Women's representation in post-conflict governance depends greatly on the degree of organising and mobilisation by women well in advance of the peace talks. Peace talks and the resulting peace agreements offer important opportunities to ensure women's representation and participation during transitions from conflict. Gender-sensitive capacity-building initiatives with political parties and women leaders like those of International Alert can very much support and contribute towards the peace process. What is written in the peace agreement is frequently later integrated into the constitution, so the absence of women's representation during peace talks generally leads to peace agreements in which women's needs and rights are absent, followed by a post-conflict period in which women's roles and rights are often sidelined or overlooked.
75. The politics of protest is different from the politics of both participation and governance, as evidenced today in countries like Egypt, which has been under despotic rule for decades. Women must start as early as possible to organise themselves politically, and while donor support can be useful, there is no substitute for domestic political organising. Frequently, this process begins only before an election, and while this is better than nothing, it is already very late. Years in advance of elections, organising efforts need to happen at every level -- local, district, provincial, national. Such efforts lead to greatly increased opportunities for being involved in post-conflict governance. Leadership development efforts should also focus on enabling women to take on key ministerial posts: in South Africa, women leaders were prepared in advance of peace talks, and their engagement reshaped the entire security agenda into a human security agenda.

Promoting rule of law and security

76. Without the rule of law and security, peacebuilding efforts are ineffective. The breakdown of both is a leading cause of conflict all over the world. There are, however, different understandings of these concepts. Security sector reform (SSR) is essential both to prevent the re-emergence of violent conflict and enhance public security. SSR's ultimate aim is also to promote and support the rule of law. The rule of law is a principle of governance in which all entities – including the state – are accountable to laws that are publicly made, equally

enforced and independently judged. Measures are required to ensure that both equality before the law is promoted and implemented, and powers are separated.

77. To re-establish the rule of law and undertake SSR, robust frameworks to guide these processes are necessary, as is co-ordination among different levels and parts of government. A multilayered approach is also needed that does not focus exclusively on security actors but examines various laws, policies and procedures. Key national actors should also be involved, such as women's organisations, community and religious leaders. Understanding the rights and condition of girls, boys, women and men before, during and after the conflict should inform this approach, as should a vision for the society being created.
78. These frameworks should be multidimensional in nature and not only address legal guarantees. Frameworks should support the examination of the range of customary, local and national laws. Equality and non-discrimination issues need to be promoted and mainstreamed across the legal system. For instance, discriminatory laws related to marriage and citizenship that negatively affect women need to be changed. Legal systems must be developed to properly investigate crimes. Women and girls need to be empowered and informed of their rights, and civil society and other institutions need to be strengthened and involved. The accomplishment of such institutional change requires gender-sensitive reforms.
79. Given that justice systems in many countries are complex and multi-facetted, including, for example, customary and/or tribal law, religious laws and military courts, more work needs to be done to address these other systems of justice in relation to women's rights and situations.
80. Sierra Leone established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Special Court, as well as another reconciliation mechanism, *Fambul Tok*, which means "people coming together". Rule-of-law frameworks should not, however, be donor driven, but be nationally owned and locally developed to address local needs. In terms of the challenges faced, there are problems relating to co-ordination, insufficient funding, unaddressed corruption, lack of sex-disaggregated data and the resilience of patriarchal rural networks
81. Customary courts were courts of first call in many parts of Sierra Leone. Those dispensing justice in these courts often held discriminatory attitudes towards women, and representation by a lawyer was not permitted. Initially the strategy was to build up the regular courts. Later, however, this strategy was revised to better address women's issues and monitor the outcomes of customary courts by training those working in these courts and appointing women as judges. In the past, there were no appeal procedures in military courts, which meant that some people were executed without proper legal process. Appeal processes have since been introduced.
82. Under the Justice Sector Development Programme and Office, SSR is being integrated into the wider rule of law within Sierra Leone. Regular security sector reviews are undertaken and security sector committees are convened. Both of these processes involve many women. Women's participation has transformed what would have simply been "security reviews" into "human security reviews", where women's and community security concerns are dealt with.
83. There are also successful examples of linking security sector actors to local committees and/or women's organisations, as with the mobile phone link system in Liberia, and elsewhere. Similarly, in rural Haiti, local security committees were convened to discuss with local police attacks on women at community water points. Such information-sharing and consultation led to police patrolling these areas.
84. There are two main strategies for integrating gender into SSR: gender mainstreaming and equal participation. When security sector actors ask for support in implementing gender-sensitive SSR reforms, it is critical to examine and assess both men's and women's participation at all levels within the sector, and men's and women's involvement and participation in decision-making processes within the security sector. Two years ago the

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces developed a gender self-assessment guide that the Sierra Leonean police have since tested. This case study is documented and available on-line³. Similar assessments are under way in other countries.

85. Working on gender is not the responsibility of women alone, and scant attention is often paid to gender-sensitive oversight. Leadership frequently has to be pressured into taking this on. Policies and programmes for empowering and encouraging women's involvement and participation within the sector should also be incorporated. For instance, empowering women's voices to provide meaningful insight into the security sector is important in Bosnia, as are women judges. While more than half of the judges in Bosnia are women, the justice system is not gender sensitive. To support the creation of more gender-sensitive courts, annual short-term human rights training is provided, while gender-sensitive research is supported on such issues as gender-based violence and childcare following divorce.
86. Gender mainstreaming within SSR does not mean simply adding women to the mix. While equal representation is important, on its own it is insufficient. Action on policies and structures are crucial to creating a gender-sensitive security sector. In the process, reforms should empower local actors and reach out to local communities. Given that security is a sensitive matter and lies at the heart of a country's sovereignty, SSR should not be externally imposed.
87. Few victims in Sierra Leone wanted to prosecute perpetrators, but many wanted social justice. The law covering the TRC was not focused on reparations for victims, many of whom were women. Amnesty provisions formed part of the peace agreement, so relatively few perpetrators came to the TRC. Male perpetrators were covered by the DDR programmes.
88. Unfortunately, the reparations process started very late because securing the funding took some time. The international community seems less interested in funding reparations. In the end, due to a large infusion of funds from the UK, reparations involved a long process with symbolic monetary reparations (\$100) and, in some cases, skills training programmes. In 2010 the president and a number of other men made a public apology to the women of Sierra Leone.
89. There is a tendency to focus on the technical issues of SSR rather than the broader political issues that should drive the reform process. Political will is about engaging in regular dialogue with a variety of actors to obtain a full picture of where human security meets national security. The various local and national security needs should inform and shape these processes. Prior to the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, police forces and security personnel did not protect citizens, but were used for surveillance purposes and ultimately to oppress and repress citizens. Reforming the security sectors in these countries so that they protect citizens and are gender-sensitive remains a tremendous challenge.
90. Countries such as Zambia that have managed to deal with tensions and avoid the outbreak of violent conflict need to be studied vis-à-vis their conflict prevention practices to inform the field of conflict prevention.
91. Transitional justice can have a tremendous transformative potential in which broader political measures are taken to reform the legal system. In Sierra Leone, changes that can be linked back to the TRC include the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission, revisions in laws, and the introduction of reporting mechanisms. That said, some of the TRC recommendations have not been implemented, for example that 50% of government employees be women.
92. In terms of definitions of violence and gender-sensitive security, a 2011 report on the global burden of armed violence⁴ stated that 525,000 people are killed each year around the world by such violence. Some 50,000 people are killed in violent conflict, almost 400,000 are victims of intentional homicides and 66,000 victims are women. Such figures suggest that traditional ideas and understandings of violence need to be broadened.

The way forward: lessons learned and next steps for implementing the seven-point action plan

93. While the experiences of grass-roots women's organisations have at times been both encouraging and discouraging, developments at the international level are not promising (for example the recent CSW meeting). The UN is very good at talking about accountability and gender mainstreaming; however, to move this agenda forward, member states and CSOs need to hold the UN and its leadership accountable. While leadership is important, it frequently changes, and with it political will. Therefore, specific gender objectives and targets must be developed and closely followed by continuous monitoring rather than general calls made within the UN for gender mainstreaming. More active global organising is also needed. Within the UN only a handful of the 35 Special Representatives of the Secretary-General are women, and most Country Representatives are men.
94. There are two funding-related issues. Firstly, gender is chronically underfunded compared to other issues. Despite a great deal of rhetoric about the importance of gender, this discourse does not translate into funding. Secondly, most budgets are divided between humanitarian funding usually for more life-saving aid and longer-term development-oriented funding. Gender is practically absent from humanitarian aid or treated as an add-on. However, the underfunded area of "early recovery" offers important opportunities where some corrective gender issues could be addressed, funded and incorporated. Currently, "early recovery" is underfunded, and within "early recovery" gender is underfunded.
95. Several topical issues also deserve greater attention, such as the role of natural resources in conflict-affected countries. One in four conflict-affected countries has natural resources, and an estimated 40% of all conflicts are related to resources and the resource curse. Secondly, women's property rights and, more specifically, land ownership and inheritance rights are among the most crucial overlooked questions.
96. The seven-point action plan does not reflect on national-level implementation. Some view the process of peacebuilding as being more of a circular process with conflict resolution at the centre. The process starts with who is at the negotiation table, where participants need to be broader than simply the "men with the guns", and the wider community needs to be present. This first step is absolutely key and foundational for all the subsequent stages, including economic recovery. So all of the elements are like spokes in a wheel in a circular process.
97. Efforts in the early 2000s to involve women in the Sudan peace process between north and south were met with resistance and claims that involving women would destabilise the entire process. However, the Norwegian mediator was supportive and emphasised the importance of involving women at the negotiation table. Because most male participants had been living abroad in exile, women's participation was essential because women were more in touch with the day-to-day realities facing people and communities.
98. Before a peace process starts, men are normally trained for six to seven weeks in leadership development, mediation processes, and other skills. These men generally become the future leaders, and therefore women also need to be involved in these training processes and prepared for peace talks. That said, peace processes happen all the time, and one needs constantly to consider different ways of organising them.
99. Regarding national action plans, only 39 exist among 140 countries, and no resources are allocated to such plans, indicating that this project is not serious and becomes a 'make-work' project. That said, there is a need to pay attention to other UN resolutions (such as the rights of people living with disabilities, indigenous people's rights and children's rights). The WPS agenda has to be integrated into countries' policies and practices for women to stand a chance.⁵
100. The private sector has become a key actor. Large international corporations make decisions themselves and also shape and influence government decisions. So advocates for women's rights need to work on private-public partnerships and consider how to work with

these actors.

101. Many women peace activists have been very polite in WPS advocacy efforts; however, maybe it is time to become more critical and exert more pressure. But it is difficult and challenging to find the space to be critical. Women activists did not wait for UNSCR 1325 to be adopted, but in fact had organised and mobilised globally a women's peace agenda that resulted in UNSCR 1325.
102. Greater solidarity, for example to organise visits to women's organisations in conflict-affected countries, is key; these visits will not happen unless women peace activists undertake them. Further promotion of the WPS agenda is also needed, for example the convening of regional discussions in the Asia Pacific region.
103. To echo the European Peacebuilding Platform's work and analysis of the European Union and the WPS agenda, many of the challenges have been articulated, such as unspecified action plans, insufficient implementation and poor monitoring, along with a series of recommendations. Similarly, gender needs to be incorporated into the post-2015 development agenda.
104. Where the situation is very difficult for women, a women's commission may be useful and can be located between government and civil society. It can provide security and space for discussion. In Egypt and the Middle East, the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda towards women may well lead to a severe deterioration in women's status and require crisis prevention efforts.
105. Getting key stakeholders to listen is critical, as is the issue of how messages are presented. It is important to present work on gender and security as benefitting broader society, while emphasizing the economic benefits of WPS. Similarly, getting military leaders to meet with civil society leaders has often been a challenge, but can be very productive. The need remains to engage male champions in the debate and get their buy-in and participation in local, national and regional dialogue.
106. UN organisations could work with regional organisations based on principles of complementarity to better integrate WPS and reduce isolated efforts. Secondly, in the post-Beijing period, the responsibility for accountability and the related mechanisms was not delegated to or held by more senior UN bodies and offices, but located in offices with little, if any power to make significant change happen.

Conclusions

Implementing the UNSC WPS resolutions: Implementation efforts need to be intensified and better focused by establishing specific, measurable targets, actions and indicators for implementation within the UN system and by UN member states. Responsibility for implementation needs to be clearly delegated within institutions and their leadership, and monitoring and reporting systems to track and check implementation must be created. UNSCR 1325- and WPS-related targets should be incorporated into work plans and performance review systems.

Committing financial and human resources for implementation: The commitments to the UNSCR WPS resolutions need to be accompanied by a serious commitment of human and financial resources to enable this work (as with the Millennium Development Goals and other UN frameworks). Adequate human resources also need to be allocated to move the WPS agenda forward within member state institutions, the UN, WB and other international agencies.

International women's advocacy and organising: In light of the disappointing implementation of UNSCR 1325 over the past 13 years, international women's organising, advocacy and pressure on the WPS agenda need to be increased.

Support for domestic women's advocacy and organising: While donors can emphasise the importance of gender equality and mainstreaming and also support local women's organisations, nothing can replace the importance of mobilising and organising women within a particular country. Local women's and civil society organisations in conflict-affected areas also need an

international civil society fund with more flexible application procedures and reporting requirements to support their grass-roots work.

Integrating WPS expertise into mediation support and security frameworks: WPS expertise needs to be integrated into mediation support and security frameworks either by creating a WPS Advisory Group to facilitate this integration, or by integrating WPS principles into mediation support and security frameworks. Gender advisors who are knowledgeable on peace and security matters need to be employed.

Need to focus on mediation and peace processes: Setting the stage for all subsequent stages in the transition out of violent conflict, mediation and peace processes create power-sharing frameworks and agreements – serving either as an interim constitution or being integrated into the country's constitution. Yet political participation in these processes remains very narrow, and women's organisations and civil society are virtually excluded. Given their pivotal foundational role, advocacy and implementation efforts should focus on broadening political participation in dialogue and peace mediation efforts, and the success of these efforts should be closely monitored. Guidelines for mediators are useful voluntary tools; however, institutions require legally binding documents.

Standardising civil society involvement in dialogue and mediation processes, and the criteria for this engagement: Civil society involvement in dialogue and mediation processes should be standardised as far as possible, and criteria for civil society engagement should be discussed and developed through a consultation process.

Laura E. Mitchell

Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) June 2013

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¹ These were UNSCR 1820 (2008), UNSCR 1888 (2009), UNSCR 1889 (2009) and UNSCR 1960 (2010)

² See Desirée Nilsson, "Anchoring the peace: civil society actors in peace accords and durable peace", *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, 38(2), 2012: 243-66.

³ This case study has been documented and is available on-line at: [http://issat.dcaf.ch/content/download/4421/39075/file/Gender%20Self-Assessment%20Guide%20for%20the%20Armed%20Forces%20and%20Justice%20Sector%20-%20\(2011\)%20DCAF.pdf](http://issat.dcaf.ch/content/download/4421/39075/file/Gender%20Self-Assessment%20Guide%20for%20the%20Armed%20Forces%20and%20Justice%20Sector%20-%20(2011)%20DCAF.pdf)

⁴ See the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development's report, *Global burden of armed violence 2011*, <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence/global-burden-of-armed-violence-2011.html>

⁵ To find a variety of WPS resources translated into numerous languages, see <http://www.peacewomen.org>