



OVERVIEW OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL REPORT ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY

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As part of WILPF's action surrounding the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and the Global Study on 1325, we are pleased to share this brief guide to the October 2015 Secretary-General's Report on Women, Peace and Security. Please use this as guidance for your advocacy efforts locally, nationally, and regionally, to demand a feminist foreign policy that puts commitments into action!

I. Overview of progress and results of the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security

In pursuant to paragraph 16 of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2122 (2013), the Secretary-General was invited to commission a Global Study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) and to submit a report showing the result of such Study. The "Report of the Secretary-General on Women and peace and security"² highlighted good practice examples, implementation gaps, challenges, emerging trends and priorities for action in regards to the women and peace and security (WPS) agenda. The Report also included an update on the annual progress towards the implementation of Resolution 1325.

The Report compared key findings from the Global Study with those from the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, and those emanating from the consultations for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, discovering striking similarities, such as:

- Blatant violations of human rights and humanitarian law

¹ United Nations Security Council Monitor at PeaceWomen. With the contribution of Ghazal Rahmanpanah, Programme Associate at PeaceWomen. For more information on the PeaceWomen Programme, please visit: www.peacewomen.org

² Secretary-General Report S/2015/716

- Complex drivers of conflict
- Growing number of non-state armed actors involved in conflicts
- Changing nature of warfare due to new technologies and transnational connections
- Increasing challenges encountered by women and girls in having their voices heard and needs addressed
- Lack of systematic gender-responsive analysis and technical gender expertise
- Insufficient mapping of needs in planning and budgeting

These findings have underlined the need for:

- A stronger focus on prevention: addressing root causes of conflict to avoid escalation and protracted crisis³
- An end to increased militarization and greater investment in political solutions to conflict (i.e. dialogue)
- Improved information-sharing mechanisms to address threats, risks and violation on human rights
- Increased and enhanced participation of women in all areas of peace and security, accompanied by dedicated funding⁴

The SG Report was divided into several sections:

A. Behind the rhetoric: Women's leadership for peace

According to the Report, the Global Study examined and assessed the impact of women's participation on peacebuilding and post-conflict capacity building (i.e. constitution-making and national dialogues).

Despite still modest and contested (women are usually included by the mediators or the organizers of the negotiations, rather than by parties to the conflict), women's participation has consistently resulted in⁵:

- More stable and sustainable negotiations
- Improved implementation of agreements
- A positive impact on the durability of peace
- Addressing of new issues on the table; strengthening linkages to root causes of conflict
- The commencement, resumption or finalization of negotiations when the momentum had stalled or the talks had faltered

³ Reference to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goal n. 16

⁴ Existing evidence demonstrates that the inclusion of women leads to more sustainable peace and that women's participation significantly contributes to greater operational effectiveness of peace, security, and humanitarian efforts.

⁵ On a study of 40 peace processes – page 5/59 par. 12

For this reason, according to the Report, it is essential that all mediators and external actors supporting peace talks promote the inclusion of women's perspective in peace agreements via⁶:

- Consultations between mediation teams and women's civil society
- Stronger linkage between Track I and Track II processes, enabling meaningful transfer of information and recommendations to the mediator and negotiating parties
- Sub-national and local mediation initiatives to lay foundations for peaceful societies where women have leadership roles (i.e. use of "Insider Mediators"⁷; training and awareness-raising activities)⁸
- **Good Practice Example:** Norway's role in the Colombia peace process helped ensure inclusion of women and a gender perspective in the Havana peace talks.

The report also points out how fundamental it is to deem invalid all those peace agreements that include amnesty provisions for crimes of conflict-related sexual violence.

B. Building inclusive and peaceful societies in the aftermath of conflict

1. According to the report, the Global Study brought new attention on the post-conflict peacebuilding processes, highlighting how women and girls are usually inexistent when decisions about post-conflict recovery and governance are made. The report also underlined how several measures of the Secretary-General Seven Points of Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding have not been implemented, thus limiting women's participation in post-conflict peacebuilding processes.

Example:

Post-conflict large-scale foreign investments focus on areas where women are usually under-represented (infrastructure, markets, industries, agriculture). Economic recovery for women, in fact, is often limited to micro-credit or micro-enterprises⁹

Instead, peacebuilding initiatives should and must:

1. Support women's **economic, political, and social** empowerment
 - UNDP suggests the introduction of an indicator to track the proportion of women beneficiaries of temporary employment projects
2. Address Violence against Women (VAW) during and after conflicts as well as the root causes of conflicts
3. Include long-term development strategies to benefit women

⁶ Although offered through the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts, the demand for gender-specific expertise emerging from peace negotiations, in fact, remains lower than for other areas of mediation standby expertise, evidencing a lack of awareness of the importance of gender perspective as part of process design.

⁷ Women engaged in civil society's activities and/or working for organisations in the field

⁸ I.e. Indonesia, Nepal, Niger, Timor-Leste, Cyprus, Colombia, Lebanon

⁹ UNPD study: in six conflicts, less than 4% of economic recovery spending allocated for women's economic empowerment and gender equality

4. Incentivize women's participation in **governance** (elected and non-elected bodies) through¹⁰:
 - 4a. Context-specific temporary special measures: target trainings, public awareness, party quotas
 - 4b. Capacity-building support for elected women
 - 4c. Involvement of women at the local level to plan and deliver services by putting more attention on women in non-elected posts and in the civil service
5. Increase number of women in **Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, security services and civilian oversight**, through¹¹:
 - 5a. Consideration of specific needs and priorities of women and girls ex-combatants or associated with armed forces
 - 5b. Vetting security sector recruits for conflict-related crimes against women and vetting confidentiality for women reporting crimes (See Democratic Republic of Congo)

C. Protecting and promoting the rights and leadership of women and girls in humanitarian setting

According to the report, the Global Study highlighted the strategic importance of women's leadership and participation in decision-making on humanitarian issues – and how, in case of crises and emergencies, even the most basic human rights of women and girls are endangered:

- Exacerbation of all forms of physical violence against women and girls
- Limited access to medical care with higher rate of maternal mortality
 - for instance, no medical assistance in 90% of the displacement sites in Central African Republic
- Limited access to education (net enrolment ratios in secondary school at 44.7% in 2015, compared to the 45.2% in 2011)
- Increasing number of discriminative laws (currently, 27 countries have laws that discriminate against women and their ability to hold custody of and confer nationality to their children)

These findings underlined the importance of inclusion of gender analysis within needs assessment, of gender issues in the humanitarian cluster coordination systems and of gender equality into all discussions leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

¹⁰ Studies have found an inverse correlation between corruption levels and proportion of women in parliament and that developing countries with highest representation of women have emerged from conflicts (see Rwanda)

¹¹ Security sector actors are often the main perpetrators of violence during and after conflicts

D. Access to Justice for Women

The Global Study underscored the need for justice mechanisms to address not only violations, but also the inequalities that render women and girls vulnerable.

The study suggested several approaches prioritizing empowerment¹²:

1. Give consideration to the full range of human rights violations that women experience, through:
 - 1a. Right to truth - Mechanisms for truth seeking, reconciliation commissions, fact-finding missions, protection for who denounce crimes, respect for victims' privacy, commissions of inquiry, reparation programs
 - 1b. Guarantees of non-recurrence
 - 1c. Access to legal aid to ensure a fair trial and sentence: both for victims and female perpetrators of crimes - who are usually subjected to abuses themselves
2. Ensure that the support to the prosecution of perpetrators is equal to the focus and investment victims need to rebuild their lives, and that protecting mechanisms for the security of victims and witnesses are in place:
 - 2a. Informal Justice Systems - Women's Tribunals in context where official processes insufficiently address women's demand (*See* Bosnia)
 - 2b. Plural Legal Systems - Exclusion of religious or customary laws from constitutional laws
3. Incentivize incorporation of the Rome Statute into domestic contexts.
4. Design processes that facilitate women's active participation and increase programming on women's access to justice, by:
 - 4a. Increasing political will, expertise, funding, capacity support, and civic education efforts
 - 4b. Creating programs that encourage women to pursue legal careers
 - 4c. Assuring Minimum quotas in administration justice
 - 4d Increasing number of female police officers, women judges

E. Preventing conflict: the origin of the women, peace and security agenda

Prevention efforts are usually the least funded of all the peace operations deployed. According to the report, studies show that women are usually first to experience rising insecurity in society, while also first to be aware of the valued information necessary for early prevention¹³. They, however, lack means of reporting or information sharing. Thus, there is a need for:

¹² "changing the future by addressing the past"

¹³ i.e. accumulation of weapons or planning of violent attacks

- 1, Early warning indicators that integrate gender consideration and are gender-sensitive (i.e. Restrictive freedom of movement for women; Increased risk of attacks in public areas; Lack of willingness or inability to access fields or gardens due to threat).
2. Participation of women in the design, implementation, and monitoring of these indicators.
3. Increased use of and equal (men and women) access to technology (i.e. drone and satellite monitoring systems, mobile phones and internet platforms).
4. Strengthening of community-level mediation, dispute resolution and conflict mitigation mechanisms.
5. Inclusion of gender expertise across all relevant UN entities (*See [UN integrated mission in Timor-Leste](#)*).
6. Increased data availability on countries' control mechanisms for illicit small arms and light weapons, as well as implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as an additional mechanism for increased security for women and girls.
7. Equal role for women in peace building and state building.

F. Keeping the peace in an increasingly militarized world

According to the report, in an increasingly militarized world, consultations for the Global Study have emphasized the need for a stronger focus on non-violent forms of protection of peace, prevention of conflict and political solutions to crises. The study also examined the efforts made by a range of actors to integrate gender perspective and expertise in peacekeeping operations, to engage and include women in key sectors, including military and police forces, and to address sexual exploitation and abuses.

Findings:

1. Almost every mandate of UN peacekeeping now includes specific provisions to protect women's rights and needs, as well as precise elements on conflict-related sexual violence. However, there still remains:
 - a. No gender sensitive benchmarks to track progress
 - b. Insufficient dedicated leadership, scenario-based gender equality and human rights training, resources for effective implementation and monitoring/accountability measures still needed
2. An Increased number of women in armed forces, however:
 - a. Numbers are still low (women only 4% of the military in the United Nations as of July 2015)
3. In 2015, the United Nations automatically undertook investigations on 18 allegations on sexual exploitation and abuses committed by UN peacekeepers and the Secretary General made a series of proposals on his "Special Measures for the protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse report" for member states and UN agencies to follow.

G. Countering violent extremism: Women, peace and security in a new context

The Global Study underscored the direct impact of violent extremism on women and girls' basic rights. Examples of human rights violations due to violent extremism include:

- Restriction on education, health care, public life
- Forced labor, forced marriages, forced pregnancies and forced participation in military operations (e.g. girls used as suicide bombers by Boko Haram in Nigeria)

According to the report, there is a strong linkage between sexual violence and the objectives of extremist groups, citing the use of sexual violence as a deliberate tactic and strategy of war.

Military and security solutions are not sufficient, and thus, there remains a distinct need for:

1. Policies and programmes supporting good governance, sustainable development and promoting human and women rights
2. Approaches that help understand the reasons behind men AND women radicalization (women are not only victims, they can also be perpetrators of extremist violence) and understand the impact of counter-terrorism strategies on women's life, which requires
 - 2a. investment in gender sensitive research and data collection
3. Empowerment and inclusion of women as part of preventative measures against terrorism radicalization (i.e. Countering Violent Extremism; Counter-Terrorism)
4. Intensification of criminal investigations, facts finding, and terrorism financing tracking
5. Utilisation of media to counter extremist narratives with messages of gender equality, good practice, and conflict prevention
6. Training of women religious leaders and increased women's access to secular education

H. Addressing obstacles to implementation: The role of key actors

The Report examined the initiatives taken by several stakeholders to accelerate action, to measure progress and deliver better results on the ground, and highlighted how greater investments are needed for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

Findings and initiatives:

National level

- As of March 2015, 53 states have adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement the women, peace and security agenda. Twenty countries are currently in the process of preparing theirs. However, there are still several gaps to be filled

Examples of good practice: Australia and Sweden (High-level champions)

Human Rights mechanisms and Security Council resolutions

- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- The Human Rights Council process of Universal Periodic Review

Regional and Sub-regional level

- Intensified cooperation between UN and regional and sub-regional organizations:
- As of May 2015, five organizations (ECOWAS¹⁴, the EU¹⁵, IGAD¹⁶, NATO¹⁷ and PIF¹⁸) have adopted dedicated regional action plans on women, peace and security
- “Protection of Arab Women: peace and security” by the League of Arab States
- Peace, Security and cooperation framework by the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Framework of cooperation on conflict-related sexual violence
- NATO Military guidelines on the prevention of and response to Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence
- Appointment of High-Level Representatives or Envoys on Women, Peace and Security
- Monitoring and evaluating processes (see Council of the EU)

However, uneven data on women’s representation in senior positions prevents a fair assessment

United Nations

- Creation and implementation of indicators to measure UNSCR 1325 implementation (UNSCR 2122)
- The Secretary-General’s Seven Points Action Plan on gender responsive peacebuilding
- Strategic results-based frameworks on Women, Peace and Security

The three frameworks, however, overlap or present significant gaps:

- As of May 2015, women only led 40% of peacekeeping missions – different percentages according to agencies and levels – but lack of senior level women leadership
- There are currently several initiatives to accelerate progress (i.e. at least one woman in selection panels; High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operation report), however the need for dedicated high-level representation on women, peace and security in the UN system and specifically in UN-Women remains.

¹⁴ Economic Community of West African States

¹⁵ European Union

¹⁶ Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

¹⁷ North Atlantic Treaty

¹⁸ Pacific Islands Forum

Data

The report and the Global Study both underlined the continued scarcity of reliable data (i.e. no data for 36% of the indicators). Causes for this include:

- Inadequate coordination between security institutions and national statistical systems
- Lack of political will
- Limited statistical capacity
- Safety and confidentiality concerns

Despite these limitations, however, several initiatives are driving coordinated methodology for data production:

- The International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes
- The Friends of the Chair to the Statistical Commission on Indicators on Violence Against Women
- The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics
- The Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa
- The Minimum Set of Gender Indicators
- The Praia Group

Civil Society

According to the Report, the Global Study sought to capture the diverse voices of civil society activists. The Study underlined the inadequate engagement from Member States with civil society, and the continued targeting of members of civil society and women's human rights defenders via threats and violence.

Media

The Report recognized media's pivotal role in spreading messages related to Women, Peace and Security (*See Fiji*). However, gender-specific violence and threats against women journalists still represent a deep wound in society, as well as a concrete obstacle to the spreading of these messages.

Financing the WPS agenda

The inability to allocate sufficient funds to the implementation of the WPS Agenda remains a major failure in its implementation. Causes include:

- Most international donor aid in support of gender equality is allocated to social sector - not to peace and security sectors
- Not enough and not efficient systems to track the gender focus of resource allocations
- Large volumes of resources remain unmarked in UN entities that do not use gender markers
- Funding gaps in special funds such as the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the UN Fund for Gender Equality and lack of coordination and knowledge sharing

-National spending larger on military initiatives than on investments for sustainable peace and development.

I. Security Council

According to the SG report, the Global Study and the High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operation both highlighted similar deficits within the Security Council's implementation of the WPS Agenda, such as the need for:

- Collaboration between the broader UN system, Member States, and civil society for the sake of quality information sharing and analysis as well as implementation support
- Strengthened linkages between information reported and the resulting actionable recommendations
- Increased capacity-based investment in order to compile, analyse, and report relevant data within and throughout all UN missions.
- Inclusion of sex-disaggregated data analysis (SADD)
- Consistent and meaningful engagement between the Security Council and women's civil society (via local women and organizations in the field)
- Designation criteria, referral processes, delisting and humanitarian exemption when adopting targeted sanctions
- Increased political will, accompanied by constant oversight by the Security Council (i.e. via mechanisms to mainstream gender perspective in all Council outcomes)

II. Concluding observations and recommendations

The Report highlighted the unquestionable evidence proving that women's participation increases the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, the credibility and quality of peacekeeping, the pace of economic recovery in post-conflict settings and the sustainability of peace agreements.

According to the Report, the Global Study is a call to accelerate action on the transformative vision of Resolution 1325 (2000) and puts forward a set of critical recommendations for regional and international organizations, Member States, and civil society. These recommendations are:

1. Bring women's participation and leadership to the core of peace and security efforts, including responses to new and emerging threats.
2. Protect human rights of women and girls during and after conflicts, especially in the context of new and emerging threats
3. Ensure gender-responsive, contextual planning and accountability for results
4. Strengthen the inclusion of a gendered architecture and technical expertise
5. Finance the Women, Peace and Security Agenda