



# Women, Peace and Security: UNIFEM Supporting Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325

United Nations Development Fund for Women  
October 2004

This publication is dedicated to UNIFEM staff, particularly those working in conflict zones around the world, for their commitment, vision and courage.

## Acknowledgements:

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The Consultative Committee of UNIFEM provides essential guidance and advice to enhance the organization's programmes. Since passage of Security Council resolution 1325, Consultative Committee members have been the Netherlands (Chair 2001-2003), Croatia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Namibia, and Jordan (Chair 2004-2006), Canada, Mexico, Niger and Slovenia.

UNIFEM would like to acknowledge the steadfast support of its donors and partners, as well as the passionate dedication of the international and local non-governmental organizations and local women's groups. The organization is grateful to Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the European Union for their support to peace and security programming. UNIFEM would also like to acknowledge support from countries in which we work that are mentioned in this report. Critical support has also been provided by United Nations Foundation / UNFIP. United Nations organizations and UNIFEM national committees have encouraged and contributed to UNIFEM's programmes in conflict and post-conflict zones.

The preface and conclusion for this publication, as well as some of the analysis provided in the report, are based on "Women, War and Peace: Mobilizing for Security and Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", written by Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM, for the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture 2004, Sweden.

**UNIFEM** is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM works in partnership with UN organizations, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and networks to promote gender equality. It links women's issues and concerns to national, regional and global agendas by fostering collaboration and providing technical expertise on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment strategies.

# Contents

4	Preface
5	Introduction
6	I. Information, Early Warning and Conflict Prevention
15	II. Humanitarian Protection and Assistance
18	III. Peace-Building
26	IV. Gender Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation
41	Conclusion
43	Acronyms
44	Index

# Preface

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**WAR HAS BECOME** highly gendered. While the vast majority of fighters in armed groups are men, in conflicts throughout the world violence against women has been used as a weapon of war, not just to violate women, but also to humiliate men of the other side, and to erode the social and moral fabric of entire communities across generations. Women know what it means to have sons, brothers, husbands, and even daughters who have fought and died in conflicts. Many women and girls are forced to hide or flee, lest militia groups force them into slavery. Others actively join armed movements to seek protection from other armed groups, or seek retribution for the loss of loved ones. Thus women learn the cost of violence, extremism and exclusion, the cost of destroyed states and economies, and the cost of accumulated conflicts.

Women know what it means to be displaced, to face high rates of maternal and child mortality and low rates of access to education and health care. They know what it means to be excluded from public life, and not to be recognized as full citizens. In situations of conflict, women are the first to be affected by infrastructure breakdown, and carry the ever-increasing burden of caring and providing for their families, the injured and the wounded, while being forced to adopt survival strategies at the margins of war economies.

Women who have survived wars must find ways to live with the gross injustices that have filled their past and are haunting their present — acts of discrimination and violence committed before, during and even after conflict. In the recovery process, there must be peace with justice and equality. The consolidation of peace cannot be achieved unless there is justice based on the rule of law. While women are often the first victims of armed conflict, they must also be recognized as part of its resolution. The participation of women in peace-making, peacekeeping, and peace-building ensures that their experiences, priorities, and solutions contribute towards stability and inclusive governance.

Women in conflict zones throughout the world have mobilized within their communities and across borders to demand that the international community put an end to violence, urgently address the impact of war on women and their communities and protect the future of their societies, as well as women's role in shaping that future. It was this mobilization, with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), under the leadership of the Government of Namibia as president of the Security Council, that led to the formulation and adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. With this landmark resolution, women have shown it is possible to redefine international frameworks and policies using their own diverse experiences in conflict areas around the world.

Noeleen Heyzer  
Executive Director  
UNIFEM

# Introduction

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**SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325** (henceforth “resolution 1325”) was passed on 31 October 2000 and has been hailed as groundbreaking because of the sheer breadth of issues it addresses, which ranges from conflict prevention to peace negotiations to post-conflict reconstruction. This resolution is also considered historic because of the depth of change – in procedure, assessment, delivery, attitudes and habits – that will be necessary for it to be fully implemented. By adopting resolution 1325, the Security Council set ambitious goals for itself, but also reminded governments of standards that had already been set for gender equality and that still remain unmet.

In 2000, the Government of Namibia invited UNIFEM to prepare background materials for the historic debate on women, peace and security, and to address the Council together with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI). UNIFEM and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security supported women peace advocates from Guatemala, Somalia, Sierra Leone and the Organization of African Unity Women’s Committee for Peace and Development to speak to Security Council members during an Arria Formula meeting, in order to share stories of the effects war has had on their lives and communities. Their powerful testimonies evoked a strong response from Council members and helped to create an atmosphere in which a strong resolution could be passed.

UNIFEM has promoted resolution 1325 from the beginning. Building on its work in Africa throughout the 1990s, UNIFEM now works in over 30 countries worldwide to respond to armed conflict.<sup>1</sup> UNIFEM’s programming and advocacy follow a four-pronged strategy to:

1. Increase the availability of targeted **information** on the impact of conflict on women and their role in preventing conflict and building peace;
2. Strengthen approaches to humanitarian **protection and assistance** for women affected by conflict;
3. Foster the contribution of women to **conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building** at national, regional and international levels; and
4. Strengthen the focus on **gender justice** through administrative, constitutional, legislative, judicial and electoral reform in conflict-affected areas.

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<sup>1</sup> UNIFEM’s Women, Peace and Security programming includes activities in or relating to the regions and countries below:  
- Africa: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan and Angola;  
- Asia and Pacific and Arab States: Melanesia (Vanuatu, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea), Timor-Leste, the occupied Palestinian territory, Iraq and Afghanistan;  
- Latin America: Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Ecuador and Colombia  
- Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): Georgia, Armenia, Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kosovo.

UNIFEM is implementing this framework in close partnership with UN partners and with women's organizations on the ground through a variety of programmes. Alongside this work in the field, UNIFEM provides varied support at headquarters for the full implementation of resolution 1325. UNIFEM closely follows the work of the Security Council and provides technical expertise in conflict and post-conflict situations to incorporate a gender perspective that adequately address women's needs and promotes women's human rights. UNIFEM also offers support on programme planning, the deployment of peacekeeping missions and Security Council visits to countries in conflict or in crucial phases of post-conflict transition. And UNIFEM is an active member in a number of Inter-Agency forums in order to ensure that a gender perspective is included in discussions.<sup>2</sup>

This publication highlights UNIFEM's efforts to ensure that the international commitments made in resolution 1325, as well as in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women, are not hollow words, but that they are translated into action.

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<sup>2</sup> These include the ECHA Implementation Group on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, the UN Development Group (UNDG), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance, the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), the Framework for UN Agency Coordination Process for Countries in Crisis, The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Gender and Humanitarian Task Force and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security.

# I. Information, Early Warning and Conflict Prevention

***Aim: To increase the availability of targeted information on the impact of conflict on women and their role in preventing conflict and building peace.***

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**IN RESOLUTION 1325**, the Security Council emphasized the need for information and data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls. These would provide the basis for analysis and, ultimately, for action. Without information about the impact of conflict on women, or women's role in peace-building, the Security Council and the UN system cannot implement resolution 1325. There is also a growing recognition throughout the UN system and among numerous regional organizations of the role that women can play in conflict prevention and peace-building, and that women's experiences and perceptions are an under-utilized set of resources.

## Independent Experts' Assessment – *Women, War, Peace*

After resolution 1325 was adopted, UNIFEM commissioned two independent experts to assess the specific ways in which women are affected by war and the ways in which women contribute to building the peace. Elisabeth Rehn (former Defence Minister of Finland) and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (former Minister of Finance of Liberia) carried out assessment missions to Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Rwanda, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, Colombia, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The result of their visits was *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building* (henceforth, *Women, War, Peace*).

*Women, War, Peace* was launched around the world in 2002, including at international forums and regional organizations, and in war-torn countries. These launches created opportunities to draw attention and stimulate greater commitment to the issues covered by resolution 1325, and to draw influential decision-makers into a discussion on how best to implement it.

The launch of *Women, War, Peace* and its targeted recommendations has inspired action and advocacy on the ground. In May 2003, UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer travelled to the DRC to launch the report, engaging with Congolese women and convening the UN system to respond to women's

priorities. Congolese women leaders called on the international community to:

- Recognize the impact of war on women and girls, including by ending impunity for perpetrators of violence against women;
- Consider and address the requirements of women ex-combatants and dependants in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes;
- Incorporate women leaders in the transitional government structures and in post-conflict reconstruction and reform;
- Strengthen the ability of women's organizations to participate in the transition to peace and reconstruction process; and
- Provide immediate support for HIV/AIDS programmes that address the disproportionate disease burden carried by women.

Building on the momentum from the launch in the DRC, UNIFEM joined other UN agencies in an assessment of gender-based violence that resulted in a comprehensive, inter-agency, multi-million dollar programme to strengthen medical assistance, support women's networking and advocacy and promote legislative reform to combat violence against women.

## Information sharing in electronic and traditional media

Information sharing allows women's groups to exchange the resources they have developed, to learn from each others' experiences, and to raise the visibility of their work in order to reach key decision makers. In this way, the information gap noted in resolution 1325 can be filled by organizations closest to situations of armed conflict. In **Colombia, Fiji, Uganda, Burundi, Somalia** and the **Southern Caucasus**, UNIFEM supports women's dialogue and activism, particularly around resolution 1325, through electronic and traditional media. The Internet offers women who may never have a chance to meet an opportunity to communicate with one another and to have access to resources that might not otherwise be available to them. And using traditional media, (e.g., print, television, radio, film, etc.) for advocacy around peace-building ensures that women's messages reach a broad audience.

UNIFEM launched a new communications strategy in **Colombia** in early 2004 to increase coverage of issues related to internally displaced women through print media and interviews and programmes on television and radio. The weekly newspaper *El Espectador* published a four-page article that focused attention on the situation of Colombia's indigenous displaced women. UNIFEM supported the women's association ECOMUJER to produce and broadcast a series of five radio programmes on protection for displaced women and girls, transmitted to the Colombian provinces of Nariño, Putumayo and Cauca. UNIFEM also participated in and promoted five radio programmes on different issues produced by UN



Radio and broadcast in the 14 regions of Colombia. UNIFEM received approximately 10-20 positive letters after each of the five programmes was broadcast.

In **Fiji**, UNIFEM supports a local women's network, femLINKpacific, to produce a community magazine, *femTALK 1325*, on women's role in peace-building and conflict prevention. The newsletter is distributed throughout the Pacific Islands and is linked to the UNIFEM Web portal on women, peace and security ([www.WomenWarPeace.org](http://www.WomenWarPeace.org)) and other international Websites.

In Africa, UNIFEM collaborates closely with local NGOs, the UN Country Team and regional organizations to share information on peace-building. For example, in **Uganda**, the NGO Isis – Women's International Cross-cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) and the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), and in **Kenya**, the African Centre for Women and ICT, which runs the Horn of Africa Women Knowledge Network (HAWKNet) are valued UNIFEM partners. In **Burundi**, UNIFEM supported a local women's network, *DUSHIREHAMWE*, and journalists to produce a newsletter on women's role in peace-building and conflict; it is now being distributed throughout the country. In **Somalia**, UNIFEM participates in the Information Group established by the UN Country Team and recently began collaboration with IRIN Radio to support capacity building for women journalists.

## IGAD and UNIFEM support women's groups through the Internet

E-advocacy for conflict resolution and peace-building is taking shape through the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace process for **Somalia** as well as the SWAN initiative which is linking Sudanese women's groups through an IT platform to share information and influence the peace process. In partnership with IGAD, UNIFEM's support led to establishment of an Internet-based advocacy space for women. Through e-mail links, women delegates at the peace talks are (a) accessing technical expertise on key issues like constitution-building and DDR from the external resources which exist through the international 1325 Network, and regional organizations like the Federation of African Women's Peace Networks (FERFAP) and Women as Partners for Peace in Africa (WOPPA), and (b) lobbying key negotiators at the conference through e-mail and other IT systems.

UNIFEM's *Women for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in the Southern Caucasus* has supported creative initiatives around peace building through film and education. The films are the result of a competition held in **Azerbaijan**, **Georgia** and **Armenia**. In 2003, six hundred young people throughout the region, between the ages of 8 and 22, took part in a film competition, creating one-minute films on

“Youth and Peace”. These films explored issues of conflict resolution and peace-building and were shown at festivals and media events throughout these three countries by a wide range of stakeholders, including national and international NGOs, local and national TV networks, as well as UNIFEM and UN Agencies. In Georgia, for instance, UNICEF showed the films at the Tbilisi launch of its global “Leave No Child Out” campaign. The winning films were also entered in contests worldwide, and many won prizes, honorable mentions or other recognition. One film won a UNICA Medal at the Croatian *Minute Movie Up* film competition in May 2004. Another won the first prize in the short film category of the *Kids for Kids World Film Festival* in Rome. And a number of the films were selected to be shown at international film festivals in the United States, Finland, and Greece (the latter by special invitation). The extraordinary publicity and media coverage, as well as the honors and other positive feedback the films received, acknowledged the potential of women and youth as peace-builders.

The regional network of Southern Caucasus Regional Coalition – Women for Peace also has a list serve for sharing and updating information. All the national coalitions that make up the Regional Coalition have participated in numerous televised and radio discussions to promote their message of peace. One wide-reaching media appearance occurred on International Peace Day in 2003, when the South Caucasus Regional Coalition “Women for Peace” broadcast a message on radio MIR – broadcast throughout the CIS countries – urging listeners to think about the advantages of peace in their societies.

## Web portal on women, peace and security

At the international level, UNIFEM’s Internet portal ([www.WomenWarPeace.org](http://www.WomenWarPeace.org)) gives visibility to the Fund’s programming in this area and ensures quick access to resources on women, peace and security for UN agencies, NGOs and governments. In this way, the portal addresses the paucity of information and knowledge about the impact of conflict on women, noted by the Security Council in resolution 1325. Rather than providing ad hoc information to Member States, UN agencies and NGOs, the Web portal aims to facilitate ongoing, current and routine consideration of information by and about women, peace and security. It provides gender profiles of countries and areas in conflict, including those on the Security Council agenda, and particularly highlights the peace-building activities of women. It also offers thematic resources on the nexus of conflict, gender and issues such as displacement, violence, health, HIV/AIDS, justice, reconstruction, prevention, small arms and trafficking, among others. The portal aims to provide support to other entities collecting and analyzing information to prevent conflict and its resurgence or escalation, and to test information collection models. Since October 2003, when UNIFEM launched its Web portal, [WomenWarPeace.org](http://WomenWarPeace.org) has had nearly 3 million hits.

## E-discussion on resolution 1325: What's next?

UNIFEM's Web portal on women, peace and security provided a platform for a moderated E-discussion on resolution 1325, hosted in collaboration with the International Women's Tribune Centre and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Participants addressed both what has already been done to implement the resolution in their respective regions and what is still needed to advance the women, peace and security agenda. Participants also made concrete recommendations for implementation, including the need for greater accountability, the setting of specific targets, the establishment of reporting mechanisms and taskforces to monitor implementation, and the sharing of lessons learned at the grassroots level. Over 300 women and men representing governments, the UN, NGOs, educational institutions and the media from more than 25 countries participated.

## Early warning and conflict prevention

Threats to civilians in conflict situations – and especially to women – have made it abundantly clear that gender analysis must be an integral part of early warning activities and conflict prevention measures. To be effective, strategies that are designed to prevent deadly conflicts must consider, and have timely information by and about the primary targets of war. The last decade has seen a proliferation of early warning indicators – lists of circumstances or events that predict food crises, imminent refugee flows, or outward signs of violent conflict such as cross-border trade disruption, sudden public displays of military-style weapons and increased crime rates or human rights violations. Too often these lists have not incorporated gender-sensitive indicators that could fine-tune how information is collected and analyzed by security institutions. Signs of instability at a grassroots level that are generally overlooked when using gender-blind indicators can help to anticipate conflict before it erupts or spreads, and can also help decision-makers better understand the economic, social and political causes of conflicts.

UNIFEM has developed a set of gender-based early warning indicators for testing in four field-based pilot projects in **Colombia**, **DRC**, the **Solomon Islands** and **Central Asia** which aim to demonstrate the utility of incorporating gender-specific characteristics of latent, escalating and full-blown conflict into prevention efforts. The more obvious gender-based early warning indicators relate to violence against women precipitating and triggering cycles of violence, the feminization of poverty and increased economic burden placed on women during conflict, increases in forced or voluntary prostitution, and the decline in women's access to health, education, employment, credit and land. Less obvious indicators relate to gender-specific ways in which women leaders working to prevent conflict or its resurgence are silenced through threats of rape and threats of injury or death to children, which are common yet largely undocumented. Other indicators include inflammatory rhetoric, propaganda and graffiti, which very often manipulate

gender roles and symbols to arouse hatred of “the enemy”. Social codes enforced by armed groups are relevant and useful in predicting the patterns violence may take, therefore prompting appropriate protection initiatives.

During the field-based testing phase, UNIFEM will be working closely with the UN Inter-Departmental Team on Coordination, UN Country Teams, governments and NGOs to enhance their understanding of the relationship between gender and security. UNIFEM's experience in this field has proven that the process may be as important as the results. As analysts and practitioners become familiar with the information offered by using gender-based early warning indicators, they will not only learn more about the impact of armed conflict on women, but they will also appreciate the critical role women can play in its prevention.

As a result of this catalytic work on gender and conflict prevention, UNIFEM was called on to provide background papers and support to individual delegations and regional groups preparing for the 2004 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), specifically on women's role in conflict prevention. The final text agreed by governments emphasized the need to “improve the collection, analysis and inclusion of information on women and gender issues as part of conflict prevention and early warning efforts; ensure better collaboration and coordination between efforts to promote gender equality and efforts aimed at conflict prevention; support capacity building, especially for civil society, in particular women's organizations, to increase community commitment to conflict prevention; continue to make resources available nationally and internationally for prevention of conflict and ensure women's participation in the elaboration and implementation for strategies for preventing conflict.”

## Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation

The process of disarming, demobilizing and rehabilitating former combatants involves and has implications for women, whether they participated in combat, have family members who did or are members of a community trying to integrate ex-fighters. While some women joined armed groups of their own free will, large numbers were abducted into combat and/or forced to become sexual and domestic slaves. But no matter how they came to military groups, women are routinely neglected during the DDR process. As with the case of early warning and conflict prevention, information on the gender dimensions of DDR has been largely absent.

UNIFEM's *Women, War, Peace* assessment recommended a lessons learned study that would evaluate the extent to which gender has been mainstreamed throughout DDR efforts undertaken by the UN system. UNIFEM conducted a scan of the UN's DDR efforts from which key lessons learned and recommendations were gleaned. Two in-depth case studies, one on Liberia and one on Bougainville-Papua New Guinea, add to the compendium of materials that form UNIFEM's publication on Gender and

DDR, "Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration". The final product in the publication is a Standard Operating Procedure on Gender and DDR that was developed in close collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery as part of an inter-agency process to develop a coherent UN approach to DDR.

UNIFEM has also contributed to strengthening information on disarmament and demobilization efforts in the field, drawing attention to the needs of female as well as male ex-combatants in the **Great Lakes Region**, and helping to document the experiences of female ex-combatants in **Colombia**.

UNIFEM and UNDP collaborated with the UN Mission in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (MONUC) and civil society to develop a national strategy for ensuring women's participation in all stages of the DDR process and to ensure the needs of female ex-combatants, women and girls associated with fighting forces and dependants are not overlooked. In August 2004, UNIFEM co-organized a workshop for former women combatants in **Rwanda** who are members of the Ndabaga Association, the first organization for demobilized women in the Great Lakes region. The workshop was the first time since Ndabaga's inception in 2001 that its membership from all Rwandan provinces was able to meet together. This builds on work begun in October 2003 in partnership with the National Reconstruction and Demobilization Commission to maintain the centrality of women in the upcoming phases of national reconstruction and development. As a result of UNIFEM's efforts, a record of women ex-combatants has been established and an assessment of their social conditions and economic needs carried out.

And in **Colombia**, UNIFEM's Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women is supporting a research initiative to gather testimonies from female ex-combatants on the multiple effects of violence in their lives. This project grew out of opportunities created by the International Meeting on Women and Armed Conflict, which was held in Bogotá with UNIFEM support in June 2002. The meeting created a space for women from throughout Colombia to exchange experiences among themselves and with women leaders from Central American post-conflict countries such as Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador.

At the international level, and in addition to its focus on DDR, UNIFEM continues to work towards the incorporation of a gender perspective in policies and programmes that address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Negotiations on the illicit traffic of SALW have traditionally not included a gender dimension. This has meant that the ways women are affected by weapons in their communities have been ignored and that women have not been adequately recognized as stakeholders, participants and contributors. As a result of UNIFEM's participation and the distribution of advocacy materials at the Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in July 2003, gender-sensitive language was incorporated in the UN inter-agency statement delivered at the BMS.

During the BMS, UNIFEM also participated in the International Action Network on Small Arms women's network planning sessions. UNIFEM helped the group articulate a forward-looking strategy and define its goals in relation to the SALW agenda both within and outside the UN system. To take advantage of the presence of many leading experts in SALW, UNIFEM also co-hosted an expert group meeting on gender and small arms with the Small Arms Survey, a leading research body on SALW. The meeting included representatives from the Department of Disarmament Affairs and academia, as well as the research community and NGOs, and helped define further priorities and methodologies for research on gender and SALW.

Since the BMS, UNIFEM has continued to be an active member of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) group that is chaired by the Department for Disarmament Affairs. In addition to supporting CASA's research database project, UNIFEM has participated as the gender experts in several conferences organized by other CASA members. For example, in April 2004, UNIFEM participated in a meeting held in San Salvador, El Salvador geared towards training researchers in SALW. UNIFEM's intervention comprised of sensitizing the researchers the region on gender perspectives of SALW and presenting the findings of UNIFEM's Expert Group Meeting on Identifying the Research Gaps in Gender and SALW held in July 2003.

## Gender Considerations in Peacekeeping Operations

Recently, the Security Council has included reference to gender issues and resolution 1325 in a number of assessment missions and peacekeeping operation mandates with clear and positive results. For instance, the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Political Affairs (DPA) organized an assessment mission to Haiti in March 2004 that included gender advisors from UNIFEM and DPKO. Through a consultative process with the UN system, the donor community, women's organizations and the Ministry of Women's Status, the gender advisors worked to collect sex-disaggregated data, identify the specific needs of women and suggest programming that would address gender inequality and violations of women's rights. The UNIFEM advisor and other members of the team met with the Minister for Women's Conditions and other government officials. They also met with 25 local women's organizations in order to reflect their concerns and priorities in the assessment report and recommendations; some of these organizations had never before had the opportunity to offer their expertise and perspectives in such a venue. The women's organizations highlighted key priorities facing Haitian women: poverty, violence against women, political participation and peace and security. As a result of these early consultations, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was able to incorporate these priorities directly into its mandate and placed a specific focus on women in such areas as MINUSTAH Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programmes, its support to electoral processes and its support for the protection and promotion of human rights.

## II. Humanitarian Protection and Assistance

*Aim: To strengthen approaches to humanitarian protection and assistance for women affected by conflict.*

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**LEAVING HOMES, PROPERTY** and community behind, women become vulnerable to violence, disease and food scarcity. Internally displaced women face additional dangers because they remain invisible to the international community within the borders of countries in conflict. Camps for refugees and the internally displaced often fail to provide women security and essential services. As a result of these failures a camp can become dangerous and deadly, when it was intended to provide refuge.

Progress has been made in developing policies and guidelines relating to protection and assistance for women. Yet violence against women continues and often increases even as armed conflict draws to an end. Gender-specific threats to women and girls compound the challenges of ensuring their protection and the delivery of aid. As a catalytic fund, UNIFEM does not provide humanitarian services, but through inter-agency collaboration and by dispatching technical experts to emergency settings around the world, the Fund generates recommendations, identifies key national women's groups and mobilizes resources to strengthen the humanitarian response. Examples of UNIFEM work on the gender dimension of protection and assistance are in **Afghanistan, the DRC, Sudan, West Africa, South America, Somalia and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)**.

In **Afghanistan**, women's centres have been established in refugee and IDP areas in order to improve displaced populations' access to humanitarian assistance. UNIFEM has revived a previously dormant inter-agency theme group in the **DRC**, and as a result has been active in developing a joint programme on responding to the nexus between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. UNIFEM is now part of the gender theme group in Khartoum in **Sudan**, and is activating the UN gender theme group for the south. During a field visit to Khartoum and the Darfur regions of Sudan, UNIFEM successfully lobbied for the establishment of a sexual and gender-based violence working group under the Protection Task Force to address the issue of sexual violence. These mechanisms have maintained the visibility of gender and women's human rights issues within the inter-agency coordination and decision-making structures.

In **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Ghana**, UNIFEM has supported refugee and internally displaced women to gain skills, build capacity and empower themselves. Along with UNHCR and international NGOs like the International Rescue Committee, UNIFEM provided Liberian refugee women with skills training in non-traditional sectors such as construction and brick making. As a result, women built their own houses, schools, dormitories and even women's centres in the refugee camps. With the end of armed conflict in

Liberia, these new skills are proving critical to women's livelihoods and their ability to return to productive lives in their homes of origin.

In **South America**, UNIFEM is forging strong relationships with UN agencies to assist and support strengthened protection mechanisms for Colombian women. UNIFEM and UNHCR have developed joint programmes in Ecuador, and UNIFEM has supported a gender evaluation of Colombia's public policy on displacement conducted by UNHCR. UNIFEM's focus on displacement in the region is particularly important since there has recently been a sharp increase in the number of refugee asylum applications from Colombian refugees, half of which are filed from the Ecuadorian border province of Sucumbios. Despite this fact, an assessment of reports submitted by UN inter-agency missions to the Ecuador-Colombia border identified a lack of gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data. As a response, UNIFEM engaged an expert to undertake a gender diagnosis of displacement and the refugee situation and to provide recommendations for all actors (NGOs, the UN system, and the governments of Colombia and Ecuador) on promoting protection for refugee women.

Both grassroots and UN approaches are necessary to ensure protection for women and girls during and after a conflict. In the **oPt**, both approaches have been combined. UNIFEM has become active in local UN coordination efforts, including the Consolidated Appeals Process for humanitarian aid in the oPt and the UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Advocacy Group. In addition, following the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in the oPt, UNIFEM, in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), commissioned the Women's Studies Institute of Birzeit University to conduct a study on the impact of armed conflict on Palestinian women.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of the findings and in coordination with UNDP, UNIFEM developed a programme of assistance to Palestinian women that takes into account the deteriorating situation on the ground. This community-based women's empowerment programme, Sabaya, began with a focus on the newly rehabilitated women's centre of Allar village (in the northern West Bank).

UNIFEM also strengthens protection and promotion of human rights through inter-agency theme groups on gender and human rights in the field<sup>4</sup> – including by chairing those in **Iraq, Somalia and Sierra Leone**. In Iraq, UNIFEM contributes expertise on gender to the UNDP-led governance cluster. In Somalia, the human rights theme group has advocated for issues of gender justice and greater use of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as a reference document for analyzing existing legal structures. Lastly, to improve coordination and information-sharing on gender, women's human rights and HIV/AIDS amongst UN agencies in Sierra Leone, a UN Gender Theme Group has been established and is chaired by UNIFEM.

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<sup>3</sup> Produced in April 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Burundi, the Eastern Caribbean, Ecuador, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, and Iraq



## UNIFEM's work to alleviate the impact of HIV/AIDS on women in post-conflict Sierra Leone

In **Sierra Leone**, UNIFEM provides advice on issues of gender, human rights and HIV/AIDS as part of a collaborative, inter-agency programme in the context of a peacekeeping operation. UNIFEM's UN partners are UNAIDS, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations / the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The focus of the programme, which began in 2001, has been two-fold:

- Awareness raising for peacekeepers on codes of conduct and on issues around gender and human rights in the host community, as well as the importance of adopting safe behaviour.

The UNIFEM Gender and HIV Adviser has consolidated knowledge and information from many UN and international partners in order to provide guidance and training for the peacekeepers on gender and HIV/AIDS. Despite the challenges faced with rotations and cultural diversity, the focus on continuous interventions among peacekeepers has made a large difference both within the UN mission as well as among the host community. This programme has filled a major gap in the response of peacekeepers to HIV/AIDS and provides a model that can be replicated in other peacekeeping missions. According to Hirut Befecadu, the HIV/AIDS Policy Officer of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, "The workshop on Gender, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS, provided by UNIFEM and UNFPA for both military and civilian staff of UNAMSIL, was extremely useful. It was the first time that we had a comprehensive training on those inter-related issues and staff members who could not participate but heard about it have asked for a similar programme."

- Strengthening programmes within communities to reduce the vulnerability of women by promoting reproductive health and safe sex, as well as increased sensitization on sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

The inter-agency initiative promoted gender equality and human rights as an integral part of the national response to HIV/AIDS. UNIFEM fosters collaboration between government departments and women's organizations working on gender, women's human rights and HIV/AIDS. As a result, the National AIDS Secretariat, the body with the responsibility of coordinating the national response to HIV/AIDS, trained its personnel on integrating gender and human rights in all programming, including military responses.

In partnership with the International Centre for Migration and Health and with support from UNFPA, UNIFEM conducted a study to examine the knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and practices that increase or decrease women's vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS in three districts in Sierra Leone, and also examined the gender and human rights attitudes that account for the higher HIV prevalence rates among women in Sierra Leone. The results will inform the design of community-based HIV/AIDS programmes, as well as policy level interventions.

# III. Peace-Building

*Aim: To foster the contribution of women to conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building at national, regional and international levels.*

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## Peace Processes and Negotiations

**PEACE PROCESSES PROVIDE** a unique opportunity to transform institutions, structures, and relationships within society. Women's active involvement and the articulation of gender equality at this critical period are fundamental both to ensure the legitimacy of the decision-making process, to encourage a broad base of participation and to make sustainable peace and development possible. Yet, women remain largely excluded from equal participation in peace negotiations, and are thus denied their basic human right to take part in the decisions that will set the course for their country. Although a few women have been able to participate in peace talks in different capacities over the past decade, peace negotiations remain dominated by male leaders who also often represent parties to conflicts.

The Security Council recognized and sought to minimize this disparity in resolution 1325, which calls on Member States and all parties to conflicts to include women at the highest levels of decision-making, especially in peace negotiations and the implementation of peace agreements. Resolution 1325 thus builds on other international instruments calling for equal participation of women and equal opportunities in decision-making processes – namely, the Beijing Platform for Action and the CEDAW.

Over the years, UNIFEM has been working to strengthen the capacity of women's groups, NGOs and networks so that they can have greater influence on the formal peace negotiations that will lay out a blueprint for a country's post-war future. UNIFEM supports women's outreach and advocacy efforts to raise awareness about their rights among community members and decision-makers. UNIFEM's role as a convener also extends to bringing women leaders and groups together to exchange and share information and experiences relating to conflict resolution and peace-building.

As an example, in **Liberia**, UNIFEM collaborated with the Ghanaian Minister of Women and Children Affairs and the Mano River Women's Peace Network to provide support to Liberian women's groups during the peace negotiations in Accra, Ghana. In August 2003, women's groups and women leaders gathered at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Accra to analyze lessons learned from the two months of negotiations and strategize on how the negotiations might better include women and gender perspectives. The resulting document, the Golden Tulip Declaration, was submitted to the negotiating

parties, high-level UN personnel and diplomatic leaders, contributing a focused agenda once the peace agreement was signed. In the declaration, the participants called for UNIFEM to be mandated to empower and support the results of the Golden Tulip conference. UNIFEM, in collaboration with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, has also provided technical support to the Liberian Women's NGO Secretariat (the umbrella women's NGO body) to undertake broader consensus among women nationally. UNIFEM also supported the National Women's Conference, which led to the development of a multi-sector women's agenda. UNIFEM is committed to continue its support for the post-conflict governance and peace process in Liberia

The challenges of building effective alliances to advocate for greater women's participation in conflict resolution and peace-building are similar around the world. Women's movements in conflict and post-conflict countries are not necessarily unified; since they reflect clan, ethnic, political and regional alliances, they may have significant political differences to overcome. Women's organizations also face gender biases that limit their participation in decision-making. UNIFEM has addressed these challenges through three main strategies: (i) creating a bridge between disparate groups of women to enable them to develop a common agenda; (ii) helping incorporate a gender dimension into the drafting and implementation of peace accords; and (iii) assisting in brokering space for grassroots peace agenda within mainstream political processes. These strategies have been applied both regionally and nationally.

## Supporting Coalition-building and Influence in Peace Negotiations

For women to participate effectively in peace-making and peace-building, it is particularly important that women's groups identify their common priorities and from them develop a strong, unified agenda. UNIFEM programmes in the **DRC** and **Somalia** have used such strategies as helping to build a network of women's organizations, supporting women in setting a strong agenda, and bringing women from opposing sides of the conflict together in dialogue to help women play a more important role in the formal peace process.

In the **DRC**, UNIFEM worked with the office of the Facilitator of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), former President Ketumile Masire of Botswana, to address gender aspects of the peace process. Key to this strategy's success was that UNIFEM and Femmes Africa Solidarité worked with Congolese women to identify women leaders from all sides of the conflict and brought them together to articulate a common agenda on women's participation in peace-building.

Once this agenda was formulated, UNIFEM and many partners supported the women to participate in the ICD meetings in Sun City in 2002 and helped them lobby the official delegates to the peace talks. Building on the Sun City meetings, UNIFEM assisted women to organize peace demonstrations and reconciliation conferences in Kinshasa and other provinces inside DRC. In March-April 2003, UNIFEM also provided

financial and technical support that enabled the Women's Peace Caucus to attend a conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, organized by Mrs. Zanele Mbeki. The conference brought together over 300 participants from the DRC and South Africa. Guided by previous declarations and plans of action, the Conference came up with a declaration and an inclusive plan of action for the transition period. The Johannesburg Conference coincided with an important session of the ICD in Pretoria, and provided a unique opportunity for participating women to influence the session and process.

UNIFEM was able to leverage crucial support from the African Union, the Facilitator's Office and the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the inter-Congolese dialogue, which translated into women providing meaningful input, along non-partisan lines, into the national peace-building processes. Women's efforts and contribution to the ICD, through UNIFEM's support, have been publicly and officially recognized by the ICD Facilitator. The impact of over two years of lobbying by women from civil society in the DRC is reflected in article 51 of the Constitution adopted in April 2003, which guarantees women's full participation in peace-building. However, the gap between theory and practice remains, as seen in the low number of women in key ministerial positions in the Government of National Reconciliation in the DRC. Although UNIFEM's support to women involved in the DRC peace process has translated into greater access for women in the transition government and avenues for constitutional reform, these interventions require sustained, long-term support.

In **Somalia**, similar strategies were well employed to increase women's impact on the peace process. From the outset of the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, underway in Kenya since 2002 under the auspices of the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the UN Political Office for Somalia supported the UNIFEM-led efforts to mainstream gender in the Somalia peace process. UNIFEM and the IGAD Women's Desk helped Somali women come together across factional lines to define a common agenda – including a call for women's representation of at least 25% in governing structures – for their role in peace and reconstruction.

With support from UNIFEM, UNDP and the Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development, the IGAD Women's Desk established the Women's Resource Centre to provide women delegates and observers to the Somali peace process a space to organize, to access information on advocacy strategies and to obtain knowledge and skills essential to influencing the peace process. The space also enabled Somali women to meet and learn from prominent women from Burundi and South Africa who had been part of their own countries' peace processes.

These combined efforts resulted in a sustained presence of 35 Somali women delegates and observers at the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, integration of specific women's rights issues and gender equality commitments in the negotiated Charter, and the adoption of a 12% quota for women in the National Assembly and 25% for regional assembly seats. Although a 12% quota was less than the

women delegates had hoped for, the women at the peace talks saw it as an important outcome of their participation and the starting point for longer-term advocacy effort.

## Bringing a Gender Perspective to the Drafting Stage and Consolidating the Peace

In addition to helping women's organizations strengthen their own ability to take part in the formal peace process, UNIFEM has also worked with parties to the negotiations to ensure that women's perspectives are effectively included in the drafting of the accords. In **Burundi**, for instance, UNIFEM began providing training and assistance to women leaders in 1997. These women first gained access to the Burundi peace process as observers, rather than active participants in peace negotiations. In June 2000, the facilitator of the peace process, former South African president Nelson Mandela, invited UNIFEM to brief the country's 19 negotiating parties about gender issues. As a result, each of the negotiating parties appointed two women representatives to attend the historic All-Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference convened by UNIFEM in partnership with the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, as well as with support from DPA, the UN Department of Public Information, and DPKO. More than 50 Burundi women met with Mr. Mandela and presented proposals to bring a gender perspective to the draft peace accord. Nineteen of their recommendations were included in the final accord, demonstrating recognition of the central place that women's rights and opportunities should occupy in democracy, governance, peace and security, and reconstruction.

Building on the achievements of the All-Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference, diverse activities were carried out to strengthen women's involvement in the peace process, including workshops to enhance interaction between women and political leaders; training workshop aimed at enhancing women's capacity to engage in government peace-related programmes and activities, through the Ministry for Peace Mobilization and National Reconciliation; forums aimed at fostering co-existence and at bridging the gap between refugees, returnees and internally displaced women, while helping them to take advantage of opportunities and cope with the challenges of reintegration and reconciliation; peace initiatives in refugee camps in Tanzania; and efforts to give visibility to women's peace initiatives through a networking newsletter. UNIFEM also supported a capacity-building and awareness-raising event organized by the Ministry in charge of Peace Mobilization and National Reconstruction in October 2003, which highlighted women's participation and contribution to the peace process. The event brought together over 100 key national stakeholders in the peace process, including the President of the Republic. In June 2003, women's organizations presented a declaration to the UN Security Council and the UN Multidisciplinary Missions to Central Africa, with technical support and facilitation by UNIFEM.

## Women's Organizing Around a Culture of Peace

Where there is no active or formal peace process underway, women work to build a culture of peace through national or international dialogue and collaboration. Networking can be a powerful tool for women as they seek to have a positive impact on countries and regions wracked by conflict. Networks bring women together around crucial issues of common concern and strengthen their power as a constituency and their ability to advocate on behalf of peace and gender equality. A key aspect of UNIFEM's work towards peace-building is its support for national and regional women's networks, including in the **Arab States, Colombia, Melanesia** and the **Southern Caucasus**.

In the **Arab States** region, the Suzanne Mubarak Women International Peace Movement has been instrumental in engaging women to work actively towards the goals of preventing conflict, building peace and achieving progressive implementation of relevant UN resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 1325. In September 2002, the Movement held a regional conference on "Women for Peace: Dialogue for Action", for which UNIFEM provided technical preparatory support as part of a larger UN Task Force. The conference culminated in the endorsement of the Sharm El-Sheikh Call for Action, which urged "all women groups, associations and organizations, to join the movement, utilizing it as a platform for making silent voices heard, a forum for dialogue and information sharing, a means of building alliances to enhance strength from consolidated action". The meeting also paved the road for a much larger conference scheduled for 2004 (in Geneva) to institutionalize the women for peace movement in accordance with resolution 1325.

Follow up to the Sharm El-Sheikh conference has included local and regional workshops, organized by the Suzanne Mubarak Women International Peace Movement. The first regional workshop, which was jointly organized by UNIFEM, brought together 52 participants from 14 Arab countries. A senior representative of UNIFEM took part as a guest speaker, offering perspectives and practical steps on how to achieve implementation of resolution 1325, as well as other international conventions. The workshop generated a number of recommendations, and culminated in the Cairo Declaration, which included calls for implementation of resolution 1325, respect for the Geneva Convention with a special focus on provisions related to the protection of women and children during armed conflict, greater inclusion of women in UN delegations and relief organizations sent to conflict areas and the appointment by the UN Secretary-General of women as special representatives and envoys in conflict areas.

UNIFEM has supported women's coalition-building in **Colombia** by networking women's organizations and supporting their development of a national, common agenda. As part of this coalition-building, UNIFEM aimed to strengthen indigenous and Afro women's movements as key actors in the peace process by supporting both of them to develop a peace and development agenda. Moreover, as part of the process of implementing resolution 1325, UNIFEM is supporting the Governmental Machinery for the

Advancement of Women (Consejería para la Equidad de la Mujer) to train Colombian women leaders in peace-building and peace negotiations skills.

In **Melanesia**, UNIFEM brought stakeholders together around the issue of peace, security and implementing resolution 1325. Fijian representatives, who had the benefit of a stronger national machinery and more active women's groups, were therefore able to provide support and knowledge to women representatives from the other Melanesian states as they developed their strategies and programme plans. Through these examples and others, women around the world have proven that they can find common ground in the interests of peace, and that stronger women's organizations are better able to confront gender bias and influence decision-making.

Despite the central role women have played in initiating dialogue and reconciliation, most approaches to peace-building have either ignored or marginalized issues of gender and women. Women consistently remain a minority in participating in conflict transformation activities, including formal peace negotiations; they receive less attention than men in peace-building policies and gender analysis rarely informs peace-building strategies.

UNIFEM's Southern Caucasus programme, with offices in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, aims to back women's commitment to the maintenance of a long-term peace. UNIFEM aims to increase support from strategic partners at all levels of government and civil society for the inclusion of women's voices in the peace-building and development agendas in the region. Believing that support for an inclusive peace movement is crucial at both community and policy levels, UNIFEM works with decision makers to create an enabling environment for inclusive dialogue while at the same time stimulating grassroots demands for engagement. UNIFEM formed partnerships with national NGOs and individuals working in peace-building, women parliamentarians, locally elected leaders, deputy ministers, women in political parties, women in the presidents' offices and other government / public service positions, media, international NGOs, UN agencies, and foreign diplomatic missions to advance project activities. For example, members of the Armenian Peace Coalition organized the conference *Parity Democracy: Women and Power – Policy of Achieving Gender Equality* which brought NGOs together with representatives of the government and the national defense and security apparatus to discuss the National Action Plan on improving women's status (NAP)<sup>5</sup> under drafted. Government and NGO participants alike agreed to support efforts to convince the National Assembly to adopt the NAP, which would allow it to receive funding from the national budget. As a result of this conference, the final draft of the NAP refers to resolution 1325 and underlines the role women can play in conflict resolution and peace-building.

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<sup>5</sup> 2004-2010 National Plan of Action on Improvement of Women's Status in the Republic of Armenia and Enhancement of their Role in the Society

In 2002, a series of trainings and workshops took place throughout Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. One result was the formation of national coalitions for peace in each country (Coalition 1325 in Azerbaijan, Peace Coalition and Syunik Peace Club in Armenia, and Unity of Women for Peace Network in Georgia). These national coalitions in turn formed a regional alliance, establishing the Southern Caucasus Regional Coalition - "Women for Peace". This coalition is the first regional mechanism of its kind supporting women to be involved in joint regional actions. Despite the ongoing conflicts in the region, women are eager to pursue exchanges and joint actions and to share successes, lessons learned and best practices. They are securing a higher profile and stronger influence through their collective identity. The national and regional coalitions also provide a framework for sustainability by creating discussion and dialogue around the rights of women at all levels of the society through increased information and public awareness, successful advocacy and lobbying and awareness-raising activities. The Regional Coalition publishes a regional quarterly journal, and implements joint regional projects supporting resolution 1325 in collective efforts to have women's voices heard in the peace and development process of the region.

The top-down, bottom-up approach used by UNIFEM in the Southern Caucasus has contributed to the increased confidence, interest and capacity of women to take active part peace and development processes. The focus of these efforts is on women's human rights and promoting women to decision-making positions. For example, the Network of Women Elected in the Local Councils in Georgia, supported by the Women Parliamentarian's Club, initiated a campaign to lobby Parliament for an amendment to the electoral law that would impose quotas to achieve gender balance in political party lists. As a result of women's advocacy efforts, the amendment was presented and discussed three times in the Georgian Parliament. Although it was not adopted, the initiative was widely reviewed and covered in the media and generated public discussion around the necessity for gender balance at the decision-making level.

Throughout the Southern Caucasus project, UNIFEM has worked to increase the access and capacity of marginalized groups to make their voices heard and plan a role in shaping the peace process. The development of the first Azeri Network of internally displaced (IDP) women, for instance, was also the first opportunity for IDP women to speak with a united voice and be heard on issues of peace, security and gender. The network has already demonstrated its potential to act as a bridge for peace. In December 2003, for the first time, Azeri IDP members of the network openly declared their desire to meet with Armenian women – a desire that was matched by their Armenian counterparts. The Southern Caucasus project is supporting the groups to carry out their wish and for the first time, since the conflict started, meet the people, once their neighbours, and begin a dialogue and open communications. Participants hope to generate a common will to find solutions to the problems and needs of women in both societies.

Similarly, in Georgia, the women leaders from the IDP community and those living in Abkhazia actively participated in people-to-people diplomacy activities with a series of public diplomacy meetings held in



Gali between December 2002 and April 2003. As a result of these meetings, twenty IDP women leaders and twenty women living in Sukhumi were trained in conflict resolution, peace-building and mediation. The final stage, supported by UNIFEM and Kavina till Kavina, resulted in the people-to-people diplomacy held and facilitated by Georgian and Abkhazian women in Moscow in November 2003. This first meeting between women leaders of Abkhazia (whether Abkhaz or ethnic Georgians) resulted in the creation of a list of possible joint or parallel activities to enhance women's role in public and political life.

UNIFEM's Southern Caucasus project recently expanded into conflict zones in Georgia to support local initiatives by women. In 2002 a local NGO created a Women's Peace Council in the Gali region of Abkhazia, Georgia. In December 2003, the Council organized the first ever Gali Women's Forum to bring Gali residents' social concerns to the authorities, and to build the confidence and capacity of women (former IDPs) by bringing their opinions to the attention of decision-makers. Recently, the Council organized the first informal meeting of women leaders from Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli – the first step made by women to re-establish trust between Georgian and Abkhaz communities in this region.

Women leaders from the Tskhinvali region of Georgia have also been actively involved in the people-to-people diplomacy meetings with Georgian women, which created a solid foundation for subsequent activities aiming to promote a culture of peace and widening the circle of women leaders involved in peace-building activities. Through trainings and seminars, joint projects are underway to introduce peace education courses in selected secondary schools and thereby to facilitate the first networking and collaboration between Georgian and Ossetian teachers living in South Ossetia.

Finally, local print and broadcast media and educational institutions have also proven able to stimulate discussion and thereby raise awareness of the contributions women can make – and indeed are already making – to creating a culture of peace. UNIFEM-supported advocacy efforts have been multi faceted resulting in the printing of over 500 books of postage "peace" stamps (one for each of the three countries in the region) and the production of a regional calendar featuring artworks from all three countries with the theme "women for peace." At academic institutions, curriculum on gender and peace-building is now offered in 24 institutes of higher education. The University in Sukhumi also offers the course, where questions of peace and security are a daily concern and reality. Opening discussions about women's role in conflict prevention and peace-building helps to increase knowledge around these issues, and to create a cadre of sensitized future decision-makers and networks advocating for conflict prevention and peace-building.

## IV. Gender Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation

*Aim: To strengthen the focus on gender justice through administrative, constitutional, legislative, judicial and electoral reform in conflict-affected areas.*

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**CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN** reach new levels of brutality and frequency in times of armed conflict. During a country's transition to peace, unique opportunities emerge to promote gender equality and gender justice, particularly in the context of peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction processes and structures. Taking account of the needs, capacities and constraints of women in post-conflict countries, UNIFEM seeks to promote their full participation in and contribution to peace processes and related decision-making bodies as well as the rehabilitation and reconstruction processes, including in the development of institutional policies and structures.

Given the importance of strengthening the legal foundations of a post-conflict society as a cornerstone of peace-building and restoring public trust, UNIFEM's programmes seek, through building strategic partnerships and technical support, to (a) enhance the focus on achieving gender equality in constitutional, legislative, and judicial reform and (b) facilitate women's equal participation and decision-making in those processes and institutions. To this end, UNIFEM strives to promote an enabling environment for the participation of women in such processes and institutions through training and civic education; provision of information and policy research analyses regarding women's rights; capacity-building programmes for civil society and women's organizations; support to national women's machineries and governmental bodies seeking to attain gender justice; and initiatives to encourage women to become candidates for leadership positions.

Accountability for crimes against women is an important aspect of gender justice. Non-judicial methods, such as truth and reconciliation commissions and traditional mechanisms, can play an important role in establishing accountability for crimes against women in war, without which it is extremely difficult to overcome the destabilizing cycles of violence and retribution. A combination of methods may be appropriate in order to ensure that all victims secure redress, and rebuild trust in relationships. Given the limited number of cases that national and international courts can handle, traditional and community-based approaches, such as Gacaca in Rwanda, are being viewed in some cases as a complementary, if not alternative, system of justice and reconciliation. However, it is essential that traditional justice mechanisms are consistent with international human rights norms and protect the rights of witnesses, victims and defendants.

## Ending Impunity for Crimes of War

Violence in women's lives does not end with the end of armed conflict. As society rebuilds, mechanisms must be put in place to combat impunity and strengthen rule of law. UNIFEM has provided support to mechanisms of justice and national reconciliation in a number of cases so that they can adequately respond to crimes against women. In **Peru**, the Violence Against Women Trust Fund grant supported the NGO Comisión de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Commission, or COMISEDH), to ensure that sexual violations against women were addressed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). These efforts were rewarded when the Peruvian TRC gave specific consideration to gender issues. The success of the Peruvian TRC has prompted its replication in **Colombia**, which UNIFEM is also supporting. And in **Sierra Leone**, UNIFEM has supported national reconciliation by providing training on women's human rights. UNIFEM has also supported the national reconciliation process in **Rwanda**, which combined current and traditional justice systems to address the severe backlog of genocide suspects waiting to be tried.

In September 2001, **Peru** established its TRC with a mandate to analyze the political context that allowed violence to take place, investigate human rights violations, and ensure accountability of those directly and indirectly responsible for the violations, as well as to promote and restore peace and reconciliation in the country. With UNIFEM's technical and financial support, COMISEDH undertook a project to investigate sexual violations of women during the internal armed conflict and was later commissioned by the TRC to present their findings and recommendations. COMISEDH successfully lobbied the TRC to include sexual violations against women as a weapon of war. Moreover, the TRC created a gender sub-committee in response to pressure from COMISEDH and other women's and human rights organizations. Peru's TRC repatriated 3,000 women from Ayacucho y Huacango who were victims of sexual violence in the conflict. And in June 2003, the TRC also recommended to the Integral Programme on Reparations that persons who were sexually violated during the armed conflict and children born as a result of such violation should be entitled to compensation. With this recognition of their suffering, and material support, they are better placed to resume their roles in society.

Countries around the world have looked to the Peruvian TRC as a valuable model in their efforts towards achieving reform and reconciliation through peace, justice and democracy. Currently, UNIFEM is committed to using the Peruvian experience to support a possible TRC in **Colombia**. Women's organizations in Colombia have been part of the effort to convene a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address the long history of conflict that has ravaged Colombian society. Since early 2004, UNIFEM has been working with its partners to replicate the Peruvian experience for a Colombian TRC. In March, two of UNIFEM's partners – Iniciativa de Mujeres por la Paz and Red Nacional de Mujeres – convened a gathering of women's NGOs to discuss truth, justice and reparations in the Colombian conflict and post-conflict, and to apply the experiences of Peruvian women to the Colombian context. Julissa Mantilla, who

led the gender subcommittee of the Peruvian TRC, shared the findings and described the activities that COMISEDH had undertaken in investigating sexual violations of women during the internal armed conflict, and offered recommendations to the Colombian women's movement on how to bring a focus on crimes against women into a Colombian TRC.

**Sierra Leone** has also turned to a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address the crimes that were committed against its citizens during the war. Declared over in January of 2002, this civil war raged for over a decade, leaving half of Sierra Leone's prewar population displaced, 50,000 dead, 100,000 mutilated and over a quarter of a million women raped. The conflict in Sierra Leone highlights the different roles women can play in the context of war and its aftermath. While women were coerced into serving as sex slaves and human shields for Revolutionary United Front (RUF) fighters, those attached to rebel groups often also protected abducted women and girls. In a region of continued civil turmoil, women's peace-building strategies at both local and international levels will remain crucial to the future peace and security of Sierra Leone.

In the aftermath of the conflict, the UN completed the disarmament of 45,000 female and male combatants and agreed along with the government to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which will prosecute individuals who bear "the greatest responsibility". UNIFEM is implementing activities to strengthen the capacity of the Sierra Leone TRC to adequately and sensitively address violations of women's rights during the civil war and ensure gender justice in the post-war period.

The act establishing the TRC in Sierra Leone directs it to pay "special attention to the subject of sexual abuses" and refers to the importance of confidentiality and witness-sensitive procedures when investigating gender-based crimes. UNIFEM successfully lobbied for the inclusion of gender initiatives in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission agenda. Based on the South African model, the Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commission now includes a witness protection programme in order to encourage women to disclose gender-based violence. As a follow up, in 2003 UNIFEM organized a three-day training for TRC Commissioners and staff on how to ensure gender sensitivity in the processes and practices of the TRC. As a result of the training, defendant statement forms have been amended to better capture their experiences and witnesses are now to be given a choice of venues for their hearings, ranging from private to more public forums. UNIFEM also supported a two-day training for local NGOs to explain the TRC process and identify areas in which they could be involved. As a result of this workshop, women's NGOs have made submissions to the TRC and facilitated female witnesses to testify.

## National Reconciliation in Rwanda

The devastation wrought upon Rwandan society by the 1994 genocide had a tremendous impact on the ability of the justice system to hold violators accountable and offer any form of redress for victims. Thousands of suspects were rounded up and put in prisons around the country to await trial, creating a backlog of some 110,000 cases. It was estimated that going by standards of current judicial processes, it would take nearly 300 years to try all the cases. In the meantime, resources needed to keep the suspects in prisons continue to be stretched beyond the limit. Prisons are severely overcrowded and feeding and clothing the inmates is expensive. And keeping suspects in prison without trial indefinitely denies them due process. It has also been debated whether the judicial system is amenable to circumstances in which societal healing is so essential.

In light of these factors, Rwandans turned to the Gacaca as an alternative judicial process. It is an adaptation of the traditional judicial system that combines judicial fairness with reconciliation of the involved parties. The aim of UNIFEM's peace and security programme has been to ensure that Gacaca judges are aware of gender issues as well as concepts of reconciliation and peace-building so that the trials are not prejudicial to women. UNIFEM carried out an assessment to identify the gender dimensions of the Gacaca system. Seventy Gacaca officials, comprising unity and reconciliation programme officers, the director of prisons, police and the executive secretary of the Kigali-Ngali province, were trained. And judicial officers handling sensitive cases involving genocide received specialized training on the nexus between gender issues and concepts of reconciliation.

## Women's Political Participation and Leadership

During the transition to peace, a window of opportunity exists to put in place a gender responsive framework for a country's reconstruction. UNIFEM has worked with and supported women in a number of ways during the key reconstruction and rehabilitation phases of conflict. In the spirit of resolution 1325, UNIFEM has been especially active promoting women's leadership to ensure that women have an equal voice in shaping the policies that affect their lives and choices. UNIFEM programmes in **Afghanistan**, **Iraq**, **Rwanda** and **Central America** have sought to strengthen institutional mechanisms and legislation, to reform policy in support of gender equality, and to increase women's representation and leadership in decision-making.

UNIFEM works with women's organizations at the grassroots level and has supported the development of women's centres throughout **Afghanistan** in order to provide capacity building and training programmes.

As of June 2004, four Provincial Women's Development Centres (Parwan, Kandahar, Herat and Ghazni) have and five Women's Community Centres (in Shyamli plains and Mazar) had been established, targeting in particular IDP and returning women, widows and poor women. The centres had supported 14 different projects, all of them implemented by Afghan NGOs and offering a range of courses and services to provincial women. On International Women's Day, for example, all of the centres held workshops on Women's Rights and the Election. The women's centres have also provided literacy training, income generation projects, health education and legal advisory services. At the time of writing, 1,630 women had benefited directly from these trainings and services, and an additional 7,480 had passed through the centres. The provincial and local women's centres have also been important sites in the roll-out of pre-election programmes on voter education and women's political participation. Broad-based forums on women in politics were held with UNIFEM support in these and other locations to encourage dialogue around women's political participation.

In April 2004, UNIFEM supported a series of roundtable discussions on "Women in Politics" in collaboration with the National Democratic Institute and the Afghan Women's Network. These discussion forums aimed to identify actions to support women candidates in the pre-election phase and to anticipate the support that would be needed for candidates who had been elected. The "Women's Political Participation Committee" was formed as a result of these roundtables and has received support from UNIFEM and the National Democratic Institute, among others. The Committee works to encourage strong political participation by women as activists, members of political parties, candidates and elected holders of office. It has held a number of voter education workshops for women, as well as meetings with 21 different political parties, to strengthen women's participation in the democratic process. Participants lobbied for women to be nominated to key party positions, to be better represented within political parties and to make up a larger proportion of each party's electoral candidates during the parliamentary election. This discussion prompted most of the parties to promise that 25% of any seats they won in the parliamentary election would be reserved for their female members. On 23 September 2004, the Committee organized a conference, with UNIFEM support, on women's role in the future political structure of country that brought together three presidential candidates, women activists and the media for an open dialogue on women's political participation. These forums were important in creating links between policy-level and community-based organizations and institutions from diverse backgrounds.

After the official end of hostilities in **Iraq** was announced in 2003, UNIFEM resumed programming and immediately began on-the-ground consultations with Iraqi women, UN agencies and NGOs to assess their urgent needs and priorities. The worsening security situation and the bombing of the UN in August 2003 delayed an intended nationwide women's consultation to develop a common agenda for post-conflict reconstruction and transitional reforms, which had originally been planned by UNIFEM and UNDP in consultation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. However, women

continued to strive for their voices to be heard, for their needs to be recognized and for their skills to be valued and utilized in the transitional period.

UNIFEM's involvement in the UN Development Group's Technical Working Group on Iraq supported the incorporation of a gender perspective into the needs assessment process. An annotated background note on gender and a gender checklist were produced covering all fourteen sectors of the UN and World Bank joint assessment for Iraq so that assessment teams could address women's needs and concerns and pay attention to gender difference from the outset. This checklist has since been replicated and adapted for use in Liberia, Haiti and Sudan.

In 2004, as the UN supported preparations for national elections, UNIFEM acted as a broker between local women's groups and the UN system, including for Special Advisor to the Secretary-General, Lakhdar Brahimi, and for the DPA Elections Advisory team. UNIFEM arranged meetings with Iraqi women for Mr. Brahimi and the Elections Advisory team so that women's concerns could be taken into account when establishing the transitional governing structures, and to set in motion the nomination of qualified female candidates to positions within those structures. UNIFEM and the Iraqi Ministry of Planning jointly convened one of these meetings. Ninety women representing various NGOs from across the country came to present their demands to Mr. Brahimi. Invoking Security Council resolution 1325, they called for the creation of an Iraqi Women's Higher Council in the new transitional administration, nominated 50 women for high-level positions in the new government and recommended that the vice presidency be filled by a woman.

UNIFEM and women's organizations (including the Iraqi Women's Network and the Advisory Council for Women's Affairs in Iraq) followed up these meetings with initiatives to increase women's participation in the selection process. Nomination forms for both the Electoral Commission and the Interim Government were distributed among Iraqi women, public relations campaigns were undertaken to encourage women to nominate themselves for positions, and women received guidance in filling out and submitting the forms. These efforts were rewarded: on 1 June 2004, six women were among the 30 ministers named to the new Iraq Interim Government; of the 1,878 nominations received by the UN electoral assistance team, 111 were female nominees, and two women were named to the nine-member Commission.

Other examples of the positive results wrought by Iraqi women's advocacy include overturning the Iraqi Governing Council's controversial Resolution 137, (which would have "cancelled" Iraqi family laws and moved family issues from civil to religious jurisprudence, where they would be governed by Shari'a law), and obtaining language on gender equality and a 25% goal for women's legislative representation enshrined in the Transitional Administrative Law.

In **Rwanda**, UNIFEM's work to mainstream a gender dimension into the national justice system extends to legal and constitutional reform. From 2000 on, UNIFEM funded a Legal and Constitutional Commission (LCC) in Rwanda and provided technical and financial support to women parliamentarians to facilitate their participation in the constitutional reform process. UNIFEM supported the LCC to mobilize, educate and involve women at the grassroots in the process of drafting a new constitution.

In November 2002, when the government of Rwanda called a national conference to review the draft constitution, UNIFEM successfully lobbied for the increase of the number of women at the conference to be increased from 6% to 20%. The LCC trained women in a broad range of the political skills needed to defend the gender equality provisions during the first discussions on the draft Constitution in Parliament, and UNIFEM supported the participation of 70 women in the constitutional review conference.

Several years of capacity building for and advocacy by Rwandan women paid off with the adoption on 4 June 2003 of the new Rwanda Constitution, which includes "gender equality and women's promotion" as one of its key principles, sets aside at least 30% of decision-making position at all levels and in all sectors for women, and calls for the establishment of a Gender Commission and a Gender Observatory. UNIFEM built on this achievement by co-sponsoring a women's celebration of the new constitution on 6 July 2003, at which UNIFEM distributed an illustrated brochure on the 22 articles of the constitution that include references to women's rights and gender equality. The event was a further opportunity for UNIFEM to lobby high-level government officials in attendance on the need to translate written promises on gender equality into concrete action. Elections for the President, Senate and Parliament were held in March 2004 and the results were remarkable: a woman contested for the presidency; 48% and 30% members of parliament and the Senate, respectively, are women. Women were also appointed to 32% of Cabinet positions in the new government.

In **Central America**, UNIFEM is supporting efforts to increase women's participation in peace-building by strengthening their understanding of how political and economic policy decisions are made and influenced, as well as their knowledge of economic policy-making during the post-conflict period. In 2002, UNIFEM supported its local partner, Las Dignas, to help formulate a "Pact for Women's Participation in Politics," in other words, a common agenda for women's organizations on how to increase women's participation in the political sphere. As a follow-up to this common agenda, in February 2003, UNIFEM supported Las Dignas in organizing a workshop for 30 women from **El Salvador, Guatemala** and **Nicaragua** on increasing women's participation in politics from a gender perspective. The workshop resulted in a definition of a gendered approach to participation in politics, identified entry points for women leaders to engage more strategically in influencing decision-making on gender issues, and analyzed the links between participation and advocacy.



## Promoting a Gender Equality Agenda

As previously stated, the period of post-conflict transition and rehabilitation often provides an opportunity for constitutional and legislative reform, thereby creating an entry point for enshrining gender equality and justice in these foundational texts. UNIFEM's Peace and Security programme strives to enable women to take advantage of this moment by supporting their full participation in the processes through which such reform takes place. UNIFEM programmes in **Kosovo, Afghanistan, Somalia and Timor-Leste** illustrate different facets of that support.

Women are among the most vulnerable groups in **Kosovo**. Compared to men, they have unequal access to health services, education, employment and decision-making, among other things. At the same time, women tend to be the "bearers of poverty" through their role as family and community caregivers. UNIFEM's work in Kosovo has sought to promote gender equality through various means, including assessments of the status of women in Kosovo, support for women's participation in political processes, legislative reform, and maintaining a focus on gender issues in the public discourse.

In September 1999, UNIFEM established the Gender Task Force in Kosovo, an institutional mechanism set up to coordinate work on gender equality and to ensure that gender issues be made visible and remain at the forefront of public dialogue. Members include UNIFEM, the UNMIK Office of Gender Affairs, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Kosovo Women's Network, the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, the Star Network and other international women's NGOs. Over the past five years, the Gender Task Force has addressed such issues as trafficking in women and girls, women's participation in civil administration, women's economic rights and opportunities and gender, leadership and governance. In 2000 and 2001, the Task Force hosted two conferences: "Participatory Evaluation: Gender in Kosovo's Development" and "Women: Bridges of Peace in the Rebuilding of Society". These conferences, held at a time when Kosovo was seen to be moving from a state of emergency to the development phase of post-conflict reconstruction, grew out of the need to map existing gender programmes and review what progress had been made towards gender equality over the previous year.

### Promoting Gender Equality during Transition

Kosovo's post-conflict transition period, with its shift towards democracy and a free trade environment, represented an opportunity to bring attention to gender issues within the community. Women's access to decision-making positions and the public sphere has been seen as an important factor in increasing the education rate among girls, the employment rate among women and women's independent decision-making on various issues. Ultimately it was hoped that increasing women's agency in and ownership of political processes would contribute towards reducing poverty on a regional scale.

To take advantage of this opportunity, UNIFEM collaborated with OSCE and gender focal points to conduct training sessions in 15 municipalities around Kosovo from 2001 to the end of 2003. The trainings were co-funded by UNIFEM and UNDP, and their main objective was to mainstream gender issues into municipal structures and practices. They aimed to increase awareness of the importance to society as a whole of equal access by women and men to decision-making, information and opportunities within their communities. Specific goals included developing participants' understanding of basic gender concepts, building the capacity needed to integrate gender issues into local administration and policy-making, and increasing participants' knowledge about work procedures within the local administration.

Participants—men and women from diverse ethnic communities — included representatives of women's groups, municipal elected officials and civil servants, and the municipal representatives of gender focal points. Municipal assembly presidents and regional administrators were invited to open the training sessions in order to raise their profile, and in most cases they stayed the entire course as participants. In many instances, the trainings provided the first opportunity for members of civil society organizations and the local administration, among them high-level decision-makers, to come together in dialogue to address women's needs.

At the end of the training participants submitted individual action plans for increasing gender parity, outlining the specific actions they planned to take, and naming those with whom they planned to collaborate, in order to address gender issues. A unique monitoring mechanism was put in place to encourage greater accountability among participants, based on these action plans. After trainings had ended in a municipality, local women were sub-contracted to attend public assembly meetings and to raise questions related to gender issues. In addition, they followed the work of elected officials, women's groups and municipal staff members, and reported on their activities around gender issues. So far, results have included the establishment of 14 gender equality committees, comprised of civil servants, municipal assembly members, municipal gender officers and civil society representatives, which continue to be supported by international institutions.

To ensure sustainability and further expand this work, UNIFEM collaborated with OSCE, UN Habitat and the Kosova Foundation for Open Society to organize a training of trainers in 2003. A group of 12 women and men were trained to become experts in delivering trainings on gender mainstreaming and gender equality issues. The Kosovo Institute for Public Administration has now contracted this group to conduct trainings for civil servants. At the time of writing they had conducted trainings for 150 civil servants from 50 institutions. UNIFEM continues to support them with technical expertise to further develop their capacity. UNIFEM is also currently training women as candidates for municipal elections.

Ensuring gender justice through the application of the law and legislative reform is also crucial to UNIFEM's work in Kosovo. UNIFEM is developing activities to strengthen women's efforts to claim their rights through the legal system and to raise awareness among legal professionals and law enforcement officials to promote gender-sensitive application of laws, procedures and policies. When the Kosovo parliament and government were established in March 2002, UNIFEM seized the opportunity to engender the nascent legislative framework being developed for Kosovo by conducting trainings on gender and legislation throughout that and the following year. Seventy lawyers (men and women) have received training on gender equality that addressed analysis of legislation from a gender perspective and international human rights law, among other topics. Several of the participants went on to form an organization called "Organization for the Study and Analysis of Gender and Legislation". UNIFEM continues to support them with technical expertise to further develop their capacity. The group has already been contracted to analyze recently passed legislation from a gender perspective and is working on a study of Kosovo legislation with respect to CEDAW.

At the request of women in Kosovo, UNIFEM also played a key facilitating role in the formulation of a National Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality in Kosovo (NAP) in 2002. The working group involved in drafting the National Action Plan comprised government officials, politicians, civil society actors and experts. It has been endorsed by the Government of Kosovo as its action plan on gender equality, and UNIFEM is currently working with the Office of the Prime Minister – Advisory Office on Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunity and Gender to identify what kinds of technical assistance and capacity building it requires in order to develop an implementation plan for the NAP. Early results of the National Action Plan include the establishment of the inter-ministerial working group on gender in 2003.

That same year, UNIFEM also assisted women leaders to come together to establish the Kosovo Women's Lobby. This group of women leaders in politics, civil society and the economic sphere engages in and supports constructive critical thinking as well as strategic and progressive actions on important issues of political, social and economic development in Kosovo, particularly those of interest to women. The Kosovo Women's Lobby organized the international conference "Women in Politics" to ensure that women's voices are heard both in the peace process and in response to ongoing tensions in the community.

Significant results have come of the combined efforts to promote gender equality in Kosovo's governing and legislative structures. Two of the main achievements so far have been the establishment by the UN Mission in Kosovo of a 30% quota of women's representation in parliament and municipal assemblies and the passage in June 2004 of the gender equality law.

UNIFEM's work in **Afghanistan** has taken the form of supporting gender and rights training, women's involvement in the drafting of the new constitution and laws, and women's participation in elections and governance, as well as increasing the management and training capacity of women's NGOs. Bringing women's groups together in this context has helped them to develop a collective voice, to advocate on issues of common concern and to become cognizant of their rights.

In December 2001, with support from the Government of Belgium, UNIFEM helped national and international NGOs convene a meeting in Brussels, which brought together Afghan women living in the Diaspora with women from inside the country. They discussed how women could participate in rebuilding Afghanistan after the traumatic experience of 23 years of war and oppression during the Taliban era. Following up on this effort, UNIFEM and the Ministry of Women's Affairs jointly organized the Afghan Women's Consultation in Kabul in March 2002. Participants came from eight provinces and included refugee and IDP women. The consultation addressed tensions between rural and urban women; designed mechanisms to address their different needs; and made recommendations for support to Afghan women's networks of solidarity and cooperation. These participatory and consultative processes helped to develop a women's agenda and created consensus on a broad plan for women's development, rights and security. Through the Kabul Consultation women from within Afghanistan, across all social sectors, were able to articulate their vision and develop concrete strategies for strengthening women's roles in peace-building and reconstruction.

Participatory consultations in post-conflict situations help inform UNIFEM programming strategies and plans. For example, a core aspect of UNIFEM's programme in Afghanistan has been support for women's participation in the process of constitutional reform. In July 2002 UNIFEM supported the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) to train and prepare women members of the Emergency Loya Jirga for playing their role actively and with gender sensitivity. The next year, UNIFEM supported the Constitutional Loya Jirga process (CLJ), and in particular women's roles and rights therein.

To facilitate women's involvement in reforming the constitution, UNIFEM supported key actors in both civil society and the Afghan Interim Administration to advocate for women's legal rights and for women's needs and role in the reconstruction phase to be reflected in the Constitution. Under its assistance to the Interim Administration, UNIFEM seconded a legal expert to the Ministry of Women's Affairs legal department to help the Ministry influence debates within the Constitutional Commission and Judicial Commission, which centred around incorporating CEDAW provisions into national legislation. To this end, UNIFEM also facilitated the establishment of a "Gender and Law Working Group" that brings together key individuals from the legal community, government, academia and civil society.<sup>6</sup> The Working

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<sup>6</sup> The Gender and Law Working Group, established with UNIFEM support, comprises the Office of the State Minister of Women (OSMOW), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), Supreme Court judges, legal experts, activists, women's

Group has focused on the issue of women's participation in Afghanistan's legal and constitutional reform processes, articulating and presenting women's views to the Constitutional Commission and liaising with the Judicial Commission on the revision of family law and how it could be brought in line with CEDAW, which Afghanistan recently ratified, in a culturally appropriate manner.

UNIFEM worked to ensure that the CLJ process incorporated gender equality and recognized women's rights, particularly through support to women delegates to the CLJ. UNIFEM staff participated as official monitors of provincial elections of women delegates to the CLJ, and supported NGOs in raising awareness among Afghan women about the process. UNIFEM supported the Afghan Women's Lawyers Association to train 160 potential Loya Jirga candidates across the country. To build on this foundation, UNIFEM partnered closely with UNAMA, UNDP and NGOs to develop and implement a curriculum to train women delegates to the CLJ once they had been selected. At UNAMA's request, UNIFEM also seconded three of its staff members to the Constitutional Commission to support the women delegates. Later, during a workshop convened by the Ministry of Women's Affairs with UNIFEM support, over 100 women delegates met with key decision-makers to discuss how the Constitution and elections could be used to implement women's rights. UNIFEM also dispatched an expert in Shari'a law and women's rights from the Arab region to provide on-the-spot guidance on interpretations of women's rights consistent with Islamic principles in the lead up to and during the CLJ.

Once a draft Constitution had been formulated, the Gender and Law Working Group reviewed it and submitted recommendations to the President, the Constitutional Commission and the media, as well as to women delegates to the CLJ. With UNIFEM technical support, the women delegates worked together and were able to gather the required 150 signatures to amend Article 83, which stipulates that at least two women per province be elected to the Lower House. The efforts of these alliances and of the ongoing advocacy by UNIFEM and its national and international partners ultimately bore fruit: in December 2003, the Constitutional Loya Jirga in Afghanistan included equality between men and women in the new Constitution, and contained a strong precedent for the use of quotas to support women's representation at all decision-making levels.

UNIFEM worked with its national partners, UNAMA and UNDP, to ensure that the lessons learned from the CLJ process were used to inform the national elections, which took place on 9 October 2004. As well, UNIFEM is a member of the Elections Taskforce set up by the Advisory Group on Gender, which is chaired by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Through the taskforce, UNIFEM has monitored women's involvement in all aspects of the electoral process and developed concrete interventions to increase women's participation in the electoral process.

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NGOs, UNAMA, and UNIFEM. The mandate of the Working Group is to monitor the constitutional and legal reform processes to ensure that the constitution and legislation that emerge promote and protect gender equality and women's rights.

In contrast to Afghanistan, where constitutional and electoral reform have so far been the primary mechanisms for achieving gender justice, in **Somalia** the focus has been on legislative reform. UNIFEM's efforts to mainstream gender in civil protection programmes for Somalia revealed the complexities imbued in culture, religion, multi-legal regimes, patriarchy, legal illiteracy and poor judicial and law enforcement infrastructure. UNIFEM conducted a comprehensive assessment on women's needs and rights in relation to the formal justice system, traditional and Shari'a-based dispute resolution systems in Somalia, with over 300 women respondents who provided information on how the lack of harmony between the Shari'a and secular and customary laws reinforces the low status of women and leads to non-enforcement of rulings which should benefit women. In the process, Somali women have gained legal awareness and recognition of the need to lobby for women service providers in the judiciary and law enforcement agencies. The findings and recommendations of the study were discussed in a dissemination workshop, organized by UNIFEM in Hargeisa, Somaliland from 24 to 25 May 2003, and a meeting in Puntland from 26 to 27 May 2003. The dissemination workshop included over 30 representatives from local ministries, UN agencies, international NGOs and local partners.

UNIFEM's focus in Somalia has been to increase women's access to justice through action-oriented research and capacity building. The project has enabled women's organizations and law enforcement agencies to identify the needs of women in the legal systems. It has also facilitated dialogue between men and women at community level leading to a discourse about the gaps between existing legal structures, processes and CEDAW. A momentum has been developed among individual women, women's organizations, human rights activists and law enforcement agencies for advocating for women's human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations.

As part of the project, UNIFEM has built the capacity of its partners to train over 120 women in gender justice concepts, gender analysis skills, petition writing and lobbying for gender sensitive training of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies. A Gender and Human Rights training manual in Somali, and various advocacy brochures and petitions have been produced, which will be used to continue advocacy for women's rights in the context of CEDAW. A training video was also produced, which will be used in the judiciary training to highlight the challenges that women face in accessing their legal rights.

UNIFEM's work to consolidate the peace in post-conflict situations also focuses on grassroots efforts to promote tolerance and peace, which can effectively complement more formal processes such as constitutional and legislative reform. In **Timor-Leste**, UNIFEM supported a programme implemented by the International Catholic Migration Centre to train 16 community facilitators, half of them women, on gender education for tolerance and peace. The facilitators have held more than 30 community workshops on tolerance building for peace and gender justice. Based on the workshops, networks and groups have been formed to support and sustain community-based activities to provide a safer and more tolerant environment, particularly in communities with refugees returned from West Timor. Their work provided the

basis for the recently published report, “Women as Agents of Tolerance and Peace-Building”. The project is focusing its work in the District of Liquica, a community that suffered extensive violence both under the Indonesian occupation and in connection with the 1999 Referendum. A special focus of this project links activities to the work of the Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the District. The project is also exploring ways to work with and support the Serious Crimes Court.

UNIFEM’s support to women’s organizing at the grassroots has used network-building to increase women’s economic as well as political empowerment. Women trained as *tais*, or ceremonial cloth weavers, received very low wages for many hours of work. UNIFEM is supporting them to collaborate at a regional level in order to adopt a more strategic and market-oriented approach to cottage industries, which are expected to be a significant source of export earnings.

And UNIFEM also focuses on translating the instruments of nation building in Timor-Leste – such as the Constitution, the Parliament, the Courts and specific items of legislation – into concrete terms that are relevant at the community level, assisting communities to access and make use of these national instruments from a rights-based and gender perspective. This work has had an impact. UNIFEM and the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor trained 145 women during a series of political skills workshops aimed at assisting them to make informed decisions about running as electoral candidates. Twenty-six of the women who participated in the workshops registered as candidates and one was successful in winning a seat in the Constitutional Assembly.

These and other issues pertaining to women’s efforts to achieve gender justice were raised by participants at the conference on gender justice in post-conflict situations co-organized by UNIFEM and the International Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC) from 15 – 17 September 2004 in New York City (with the theme *Peace Needs Women and Women Need Justice*). The conference brought together women in key legal and judicial positions from over 12 conflict-affected areas across the globe – an important group of national stakeholders – as well as representatives of Member States, regional organizations, NGOs, academic institutions, foundations and relevant UN bodies (including peace operations) to facilitate a broad-based exchange of views on how best to proceed with implementation of the UNIFEM-commissioned Independent Experts’ recommendations on justice within the context of UNIFEM’s programmes. Leading women, many at the ministerial level, from Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Liberia, Namibia, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Haiti, Burundi and Rwanda discussed, from first-hand experience, why gender justice is so crucial to establishing the rule of law and consolidating peace in their countries/regions. The conference provided a platform for these critical national women stakeholders, who have seen and felt the painful effects of war but also managed to assume key legal and judicial roles, to share their views on (1) the most critical gender justice concerns and requirements in their countries/regions and the implementation action needed; (2) best practices that have emerged in the gender justice area in their countries/regions; and (3)

the assistance most needed from potential international/bilateral partners (e.g., Member States, regional organizations, NGOs, academic institutions) to support such implementation action. By bringing together key groups of international players to engage in this dialogue, the conference aimed to forge more coordinated and effective assistance by multilateral and bilateral partners to such national stakeholders in the conflict-affected countries/regions concerned so that they may develop and implement their own strategies and approaches for making institutional and legal reforms to achieve gender justice. One of the outcomes of the conference was the launching of the "Partners for Gender Justice Initiative" to foster integrated and complementary partnerships of support to respond to the requirements and recommendations articulated by the national women stakeholders present. The report on the conference conclusions and recommendations will be conveyed by the UNIFEM and ILAC Executive Directors to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council so that they may be taken into account during the Council's open debate on the fourth anniversary of resolution 1325 in October 2004.



# Conclusion

## *Mobilizing for Security and Justice: Urgent Challenges*

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**IN OCTOBER 2004**, the Secretary General will report on progress that has been made over the past four years in implementing Security Council resolution 1325. In March 2005, member states will review implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, which outlines specific recommendations on promoting women's role in peace-building. Member states also committed themselves to a core set of norms and values, basic to the Millennium Declaration's vision of "freedom from want and freedom from fear", that underpin their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. Progress towards the implementation of these goals will be reviewed in 2005. The world can be neither secure nor peaceful until these commitments are taken seriously. The world is in need of bold leadership, made strong by vision, sustained by ethics and the moral courage to uphold international principles, based on the rule of law, and the understanding that human development and global security require the commitment of all governments and all people.

Because the roots of conflict and injustice are multidimensional, involving economic, social, and political forces, conflict and justice must be addressed not just within the agendas of peace and security, and legal reforms, but within a holistic framework that integrates human security, human development, and human rights. So far, however, crisis prevention and conflict resolution agendas have not sufficiently dealt with the conflict-development-rights nexus. The gender discrimination and violence against women that is accepted in times of peace deepens in times of war. At the same time, development strategies and poverty eradication policies have tended to neglect issues related to conflict. Yet the prevention of conflict is essential for poverty reduction and the prevention of human suffering caused by violent conflict. Conversely, if conflict is to be avoided, the conditions of injustice that fuel political mobilization and social violence must be seriously addressed. Progress towards each and every one of these goals can be destroyed by war and violence.

The opportunity now exists to make women and gender perspectives central to peace and reconstruction processes. The UN system as a whole can leverage the political, financial and technical support needed for these efforts to have an impact on peace efforts nationally, regionally and internationally. Making resolution 1325 work means ensuring women's representation in peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-building. That would be a first step in recognizing the unique and critical contributions that women can make to sustainable peace.

# Acronyms

BMS	Biennial Meeting of States (on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons)
CASA	Coordinating Action on Small Arms
CLJ	Constitutional Loya Jirga
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPI	Department of Public Information
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHA	Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
FERFAP	Federation of African Women's Peace Networks
HAWKNet	Horn of Africa Women Knowledge Network
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
ICT / IT	Information and Communications Technology / Information Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
ISIS-WICCE	Isis – Women's International Cross-cultural Exchange
LCC	Legal and Constitutional Commission
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NAP	National Action Plan (on Improvement of Women's Status in the Republic of Armenia and Enhancement of their Role in the Society)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMISTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WOPPA	Women as Partners for Peace in Africa
WOUNET	Women of Uganda Network

# Index

15, 29, 33, 36–39	Afghanistan
22	Arab States
9, 23–24	Armenia
9, 23–24	Azerbaijan
7	Bosnia and Herzegovina
8–9, 20–21, 39	Burundi
13, 29, 32	Central America
11	Central Asia
8–9, 11, 13, 16, 22–23, 27–28	Colombia
15	Côte d’Ivoire
7–8, 11, 13, 15, 19–20, 39	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
16	Ecuador
13–14, 32	El Salvador
8–9, 23	Fiji
7	former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
9–10, 23–25	Georgia
15, 18	Ghana
13	Great Lakes Region
5, 13, 32	Guatemala
7	Guinea
14, 31, 39	Haiti
16, 29–31, 39	Iraq
7	Israel
9, 16	Kenya
7, 33–35, 39	Kosovo
7, 12, 15–16, 18–19, 31, 39	Liberia
22–23	Melanesia
4, 5, 39	Namibia
13, 32	Nicaragua
7, 15–16	occupied Palestinian territory
27–28	Peru
7, 13, 26–27, 29, 32, 39	Rwanda
5, 7, 16–17, 27–28, 39	Sierra Leone
11	Solomon Islands
5, 7, 9, 15–16, 19–20, 33, 38	Somalia
20, 21, 28, 39	South Africa
15–16	South America
8–10, 22–25	Southern Caucasus
9, 15, 31	Sudan
7, 33, 38–39	Timor-Leste
8–9	Uganda
15	West Africa