

In this interview, **Inés Alberdi**, UNIFEM Executive Director, speaks to IPS Editor in Chief **Miren Gutierrez** about the role of UNIFEM.

Presented by AWID on 1 September 2008, this interview is republished with permission of IPS.

## “Where Women Can’t Thrive, MDGs Are in Jeopardy”

*Inés Alberdi interviewed by Miren Gutierrez*

Inés Alberdi has worked for over 25 years on gender issues and in politics. She comes to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) from her previous position as professor of sociology at Madrid University where she has taught political sociology and sociology of gender since 1993. Prior to that, she was director for research at the Centre for Sociological Research. Her main interest has been gender-based violence.

Women’s rights and women’s empowerment groups have anticipated that the 3rd High Level Conference on Aid Effectiveness (Accra, September) and the UN Conference on Financing for Development (Doha, December) would be opportunities to advance financing for gender equality issues and progress toward a holistic (local/global) development approach.

Interviewed by IPS correspondent Am Johal (31 July 2008), **Cecilia Alemany** of the Association for Women’s Rights in Development, a Canada-based NGO, explained that the wish-list includes integration of gender dimensions not just between trade, development, foreign direct investment, debt, and international cooperation, but also governance, human rights and gender equality.

Since “political power is still very masculine” Alemany said, “policy-makers at all levels are not always integrating the gender dimension in their decisions. Internationally, it is flagrant how the current agendas on international cooperation for instance are not integrating clear development goals such as gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability. Several developed countries that are supposed to be more progressive to women’s rights are quite ignorant on how to integrate development, human rights and gender equality. So, there is a lot of technical advance in these discussions but not real results on the ground. ... [W]omen’s voices in this debate are not considered, and human rights and gender equality are seen by these policy-makers (mostly negotiating under the OECD) as “cross-cutting issues”, what in practical terms means “non-issues”.

“It is crucial to see the women’s rights movement in this context of creating more democratic, equitable, and just societies that benefit the population as a whole. And I devoted my professional life to this cause,” she says.

IPS: UNIFEM talks about the importance of incorporating gender into national poverty reduction strategies. How is this done?

Inés Alberdi: National poverty reduction strategies are particularly important entry points to ensure that women’s needs will be taken into account. It is based on these plans that governments allocate resources and donors contribute to national budgets or to specific sectors. To have a strong gender perspective incorporated at this planning stage is therefore crucial.

Gender advocates and women’s machineries must therefore be closely involved in devising national development plans. Work has focused on opening policy spaces, for example in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries. As Kyrgyzstan began formulating its new development strategy, UNIFEM worked with civil society organisations to raise the profile of gender equality measures. These encompass measures to increase women’s political participation, perform gender analysis of school curricula, reflect gender differences in pension reform, and end violence against women.

Kyrgyzstan has also pioneered a set of gender-responsive development indicators, harmonised to capture both national priorities and international commitments to gender equality, such as those in the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) and the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals).

IPS: UNIFEM is working with the private sector in Rwanda, for example, in order to create opportunities for women. Why would private companies cooperate?

IA: The question would rather be: why would companies not care to create opportunities for women? Women represent an enormous potential for the private sector to tap into. Just look at the IT (information technology) sector. In Rwanda we have worked with companies to develop ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) scholarships for girls and young women in learning institutions to enable them in a later stage in their lives to compete in the labour market or run their own businesses.

UNIFEM has very successfully pursued a similar approach with global IT company CISCO systems, initially in Jordan and now also in Morocco where we helped introduce training for women in 12 out of 43 Cisco networking academies. Today, nearly half the 900 students in the E-Quality academies are women – about 60 percent find jobs within the first three months after graduation.

**Barbara Crossette**, *The Nation's* United Nations correspondent, in "Listen to the Women: The UN Weighs its Millennium Development Goals" (14 September 2008) comments:

"UN member nations have a poor record on keeping promises to women, even as UN officials insist repeatedly that the Millennium Goals won't be met unless governments pay more attention to those who comprise half their populations. At another summit in 2005, countries agreed to create a new under secretary-general position for women's issues. Three years later there have been only more meetings and the inevitable position papers. Opposition comes from some large developing countries with most to gain from an empowered female population, from the Vatican, influential Arab states and the current US Administration.

"... Missing ... are the voices of suffering people themselves, the billion or two (depending on what cutoff point you chose) who live on sums so small that hours of whatever work can be found after a scant breakfast will determine whether there will be another meal of any kind that day. Absent most of all will be the women who go to sleep exhausted and hungry, or weep when a sick or starving child cries for something the family cannot provide. ... Joseph Chamie, a demographer and former director of the UN's population division, likes to say that women prove again and again that they are wise about their needs, if only the world would listen. Given the chance to choose smaller families and join the population debate where they live, they will "talk fertility down" of their own accord, not because anyone is forcing them to have fewer children. If poverty reduction can start within families, if children are healthier, mothers live longer, food goes farther and the environment benefits from declining population pressures, surely those coincidental consequences can't be bad for the world. They would certainly help achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

"... If the nations meeting at the UN this fall cannot do more than just repeat the mantra that the role of women is essential to development, most of the Millennium Development Goals will be dead on arrival in 2015. People out there in the developing world say so."

Globally, research has shown that companies benefit from greater corporate representation of women. In analysing the companies that make up the Fortune 500, it was found that companies with the highest representation of women in management positions delivered 35.1 percent more return on equity and 34 percent more total return to shareholders than companies with the lowest representation.

**IPS:** UNIFEM is training government officials and women's organisations on how to insert gender into budgets. What are the challenges?

**IA:** UNIFEM has worked in some 40 countries over the past eight years to build the capacity of governments and women's organisations. Gender-responsive budgeting examines how the allocation of public funds benefits women and men equally. It also analyses how women and men are taxed. This analysis must be informed by up-to-date, sex-disaggregated data. By pointing out imbalances in addressing women's needs and rights, gender responsive budgeting helps governments correct inequalities.

Initiatives are currently underway, for example, in Morocco, Senegal, Mozambique and Ecuador – and the results are impressive. Morocco now produces annual gender reports which accompany the national budgets and spell out how the allocation of public resources through the government's departments will address gender equality priorities.

Trends toward decentralisation have seen local governments emerge as key actors ... UNIFEM is responding by providing support to local gender-responsive budget initiatives to strengthen women's representation in local bodies and support their effective participation in budget processes.

Take Cochabamba, Bolivia, for example, where many men have left to seek work abroad, creating a shortage of skills traditionally performed by men. Financed by the municipal government, women now learn how to fill that gap: they learn how to be carpenters and brick layers. And while the women are at work, their children are taken care of in a sports programme catering equally to boys and girls, also paid by the local government. Both initiatives are the result of a new focus on gender-responsive budgeting in Cochabamba.

**IPS:** How could the Accra Action Agenda (AAA) ensure that the improvement of aid quality contributes to gender equality?

**IA:** Over a billion women worldwide continue to be trapped in poverty, and where women can't thrive, national development strategies and progress towards the MDGs are in jeopardy. It is very obvious that there can be no aid effectiveness without a focus on gender equality.

To ensure this, three measures are critical: First, gender equality advocates and women's ministries must be much stronger involved in decisions on development; second, gender-responsive budgeting must be applied across all sectors; and third, accountability mechanisms — such as gender-sensitive indicators in performance assessments and the collection of sex-disaggregated data — must be put in place to track progress.

UNIFEM has worked for the past two years with the European Community (EC) and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are fully incorporated in national development planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring. Country-level data gathered through the EC/UN Partnership shows that the Paris Declaration, and the principles on which it is based, have helped to open some spaces to allow gender-equality advocates, civil society and parliamentarians to actively participate in national development planning at different levels.

For these groups to have real impact, however, government and donors must go further and ensure that they are part of the entire development planning, programming, budgeting and monitoring process.

The Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness offers a pivotal opportunity for governments and donors to come together to deepen the dialogue on how they can accelerate achievements in gender equality through enhanced cooperation. It is an opportunity that is not to be missed.

IPS: This year is especially important because it culminates with the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Monterrey Consensus (MC) in Doha (Qatar). What are the main issues UNIFEM is pushing?

IA: Gender equality advocates were disappointed with the MC. As a contribution to international gender equality commitments, the Consensus was not particularly strong. The initial signs of the review of the MC implementation allow for some optimism that the Doha outcome document will be much stronger and tackle inequalities. The key report by the UN Secretary-General on the process clearly states that macroeconomic policies should take into account tax issues, business cycles, employment and the unpaid so-called 'care economy'.

The initial Doha draft outcome document presented by the co-chairs, the Ambassadors of Egypt and Norway, has positioned gender equality as one of the four new challenges and emerging issues, together with climate change, the commodity prices crisis of food and energy and the poverty eradication challenges facing middle-income countries. It also makes specific references to the importance of gender responsive public financial management, the oft neglected area, the consideration of gender issues in micro- and macro-economic policies, and the need to remove gender biases in labour and financial markets as well as in the ownership of assets and property rights.

These are important issues for UNIFEM. It is by now widely recognised that women's empowerment and gender equality

are key drivers to build food security, reduce poverty, reduce maternal mortality, safeguard the environment, and enhance the effectiveness of aid. Women are equally important agents of economic development and we need policies that not only recognise this but also actively support it.

IPS: Women make up most of the migrants from countries like the Philippines. Could you quantify women's economic power?

IA: Women constitute half of the world's migrants by now and, globally, recorded remittances are estimated to be as high as 240 billion dollars annually, so there you have an enormous economic contribution.

For women to realise their full potential we have to look at macro-economic policy frameworks – or the lack thereof – that take a gender perspective into account.

Women need also to be afforded equal access to land and natural resources, which is still far too often not the case. And public investments have to take women's needs into account. Safe public transport for example, may facilitate women's access to employment. Where these services are lacking it is more difficult for women to contribute as full economic agents.

It has been estimated that over the past decade, women's work has contributed more to global growth than has China. But don't forget: women also do more than two-thirds of the world's unpaid work – the equivalent of 11 trillion dollars or almost 50 percent of world GDP, according to a global UNDP (UN Development Programme) study from 1995. This enormous economic contribution is beyond their paid wage employment.

IPS: In places like Mozambique, you see a high level of economic participation, while women make only 35 percent of Parliament and 13 percent of the government. In Ghana, there is a similar situation. Why is political representation low?

IA: When you look at countries that have made gains in terms of increases in wom-

en's political participation, they have generally applied some kind of temporary affirmative action measures or quotas – which is an expression of political will to act on women's empowerment. What we are learning is that both economic empowerment and political participation require breaking through glass ceilings in systems that have traditionally discriminated against women. And they are mutually reinforcing; both are essential for achieving gender equality, but neither is sufficient in and by itself.

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See page 76 for information about *Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women? Gender and Accountability*, which assesses the Millennium Development Goals from a gender perspective and shows that "backing international commitments made to women with stronger accountability measures would bring us a lot closer to achieving the MDGs," as UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi says.

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From the final statement of the June 2008 consultation in New York organized by the Women's Working Group on Financing for Development: "Trade is not an end in itself – it must serve pro-people and inclusive development, the realization of human rights and the right to development for all, and the achievement of a caring economy and environmental sustainability. A gender perspective of trade is a holistic one, supportive of the broader framework of international conventions and multilateral commitment for the common good."

On 12 September 2008, the Association for Women's Rights in Development analyzed, from a women's rights perspective, the outcome of the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

# The Accra HLF3: Any Closer to Development Effectiveness?

*Kathambi Kinoti*

**Kathambi Kinoti**, a Kenyan feminist lawyer working in Nairobi, is a co-founder of the Young Women's Leadership Institute. Her essay, "When Culture Overrides the Law: Does 'Rights Talk' Always Get Results?" appeared in *Minerva* #30 (May 2006).

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(See page 56 for ARTICLE NOTES.)

The much anticipated Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF3) was held in Accra, Ghana ... from September 2 to 4, 2008. Just prior to the meeting, a Civil Society (CSO) Parallel Forum brought together hundreds of people to discuss how to [contribute to] the HLF3 and its outcome document, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). A day before the CSO Parallel Forum, over two hundred women's rights experts, activists and representatives of women's organizations met to strategize around the issues from a women's rights perspective.

## **Women Call for Development Effectiveness**

Delegates to the Accra International Women's Forum reiterated the assertion that, since most of the 1.4 billion people living in abject poverty are women and girls, gender equality and women's empowerment must be central to development. They also criticised the persistent reliance on the neo-liberal model of economics which they said 'is clearly failing to deliver the promised results of growth for all, bringing instead, discrimination, social exclusion, injustice and more inequalities.' [1] The Women's Forum made several key recommendations to enable aid to spur real, fair and people-centred development.

Some of the gender equality-specific recommendations were as follows:

- Treatment of gender equality, environmental sustainability and respect for human rights – which are cornerstones for development — as sectors with progress indicators and specific resources allocated in national budgets;
- Alignment of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD) with internationally agreed development goals on human rights, gender equality, decent work and environmental sustainability;
- Availability of special funds for women's rights organizations;
- Recognition of the importance of UN Security Council Resolution 1820 and the allocation of resources for the mobilization of communities and the protection of women's rights and their organizations;
- Integration of a strategic plan for financing gender equality and women's empowerment into the implementation monitoring system of the PD;
- Establishment of clear mechanisms for the participation of women's rights organizations, and particularly those representing women from excluded groups, as part of civil society in all national development planning processes and aid planning, programming, management, monitoring and evaluation;
- Assured substantial, predictable and multi-year core funding for women's organizations;
- Increased support to national women's machineries in terms to support and monitor governments and parliaments;
- Recognition that economic policy conditionalities have a negative impact on people and women in particular, and a removal of all economic policy conditionalities that undermine the principle of ownership (this includes conditionalities related to gender equality and so called "positive conditionalities");

- Use of existing reporting and monitoring systems for human rights compliance, such as CEDAW, the MDGs and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to measure development results within the PD framework;
- Measurement of outcomes on gender mainstreaming and gender specific action such as access to health and education, changes in women's employment and income, incidence of gender-based violence, right to reparation, right to inheritance, property, land use, and women's participation in decision-making;
- Special attention to the needs and rights of victimized women in fragile states and in communities experiencing localized conflicts and xenophobic attacks by both involving women in peace-building and channelling development assistance to address these needs and rights;
- Use of a mix of funding mechanisms to ensure progress on women's rights and empowerment.[2]

### CSOs call for Better Aid

More than 600 representatives from 325 civil society organizations in 88 countries attended the Civil Society Parallel Forum that was held prior to the HLF3. Of this number, only 80 CSO representatives could attend the official HLF3.

The CSO statement stressed that "development aid is only one part of the equation, and has to be analysed in the broader context of its interactions with trade, debt, domestic and international resource mobilisation and the international governance system".[3]

The CSO representatives called for new targets and indicators to be set and for donors to set out detailed plans and individual targets showing how they will meet their commitments. In their statement, they said that the Accra Agenda for Action (the HLF3 outcome document) should at the very minimum make the following commitments:

- A broader definition of ownership that puts citizens, CSOs and elected officials at the centre of the aid process at all levels;
- An end to short term aid by 2010;
- A reduction of the burden of conditionality by 2010;
- An end to tied aid by 2010;
- The implementation of new standards of transparency by 2009;
- Support for independent and citizen-led monitoring and evaluation systems.

The CSO representatives expressed disappointment that drafts of the AAA had not taken their views into account. Generally, spaces for civil society participation and input into the HLF3 were limited. The Women's and Civil Society Statements were delivered during a ministerial dinner. Accredited CSO representatives had the opportunity to participate at Round Tables and attend some side events. However they were not accorded space to participate in ministerial plenaries.

### Accra's Challenges and Opportunities

Hamida Maalim Harrison, of the organization NETRIGHT, says that within the family of CSOs, women remain marginal and that gender equality and women's empowerment should have been more central to the CSO Parallel Forum deliberations and statement. Nevertheless, the AAA does reflect some steps, however limited, in the right direction. It recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as a cornerstone for development and the need to integrate them in specific areas such as mutual accountability or policy and practice for fragile states. On the other hand it fails to demand concrete work plans and indicators.

In preparation for Accra, the four-day 8th Civicus World Assembly, in Glasgow, Scotland in June 2008 brought together a global network of NGOs and foundations to focus on "participatory governance". Civil society leaders reportedly asked serious questions about the lack of gender budgeting.

Interviewed there by Joyce Mulama for IPS, **Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi**, Executive Director of the African Women's Development Fund, said: "Many guarantees have been made, including the Beijing Plan of Action. But this has not been matched with adequate finances to ensure empowerment of women at all levels." Gender-directed funds remain "insignificant and untraceable in many places".

"Civil society can only advocate and propose. It is up to the governments to implement. They will then be held accountable," Adeleye-Fayemi said.

"Unless leaders both at the international and national level ensure that money reaches women, no real development will take place," asserted **Elisa Peter**, deputy coordinator of the United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service, in another interview with IPS (21 June). "Women are at the centre of development. If goal 3 is not reached, I do not think we can achieve any other MDGs. We have to address seriously the issue of resources to build capacity of women in all sectors."

ARTICLE NOTES:

1 Women's Forum Statement: Recommendations for Action for Development Effectiveness in Accra and Beyond. August 31, 2008. <http://awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Issues-and-Analysis/Recommendations-for-Action-on-Development-Effectiveness-in-Accra-and-beyond>

2 Ibid.

3 Civil Society Statement: Civil Society Statement in Accra warns urgency for Action on Aid. September 1, 2008.

4 AWID, DAWN, IGTN, and WIDE presented a paper at the CSO Parallel Forum analyzing the impact of conditionalities on the right to development from a women's rights perspective.

5 See note 4.

The AAA promises that governments will deepen their engagement with CSOs and provide an enabling environment that maximizes CSO contributions to development. It also promises increased accountability to citizens and increased medium-term predictability of aid.

Development experts argue that conditionalities undermine the right to development. [4] The AAA does not commit to eliminating conditionalities, but commits to changing their nature by involving developing countries in setting conditionalities based on national development plans. Tied aid and conditionalities have been major points of contention with some countries such as the United States opposing efforts to do away with them. This is reflective of the political nature of the aid effectiveness agenda. According to the civil society statement,

“When donors and governments met in Paris three years ago, technical debates masked deeper political differences around the broader vision for aid. Some donors wanted to hand a lot more power, a lot more quickly to developing country governments. Other donors didn't. What was achieved was a compromise and has been criticised for its narrow technical approach.”[5]

The challenge for women's rights advocates remains how to become a more formidable force in the political spaces where decisions are made. Harrison urges women's organizations to mobilize early and demand equitable representation in any future arrangement within the Aid Effectiveness process. It is also urgent to explore alternatives to the neo-liberal economic model which only serves to perpetuate inequalities.

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This update on United Nations reform and the civil society campaign to strengthen UN “gender architecture” was published originally by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) on 8 August 2008 ([www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org)) and is being reproduced by permission of AWID in accordance with its reproduction policy.

**Rochelle Jones**, of Australia, has degrees in Psychology, Peace & Conflict Studies, International Relations, and International Development Studies and extensive experience in business, government and non-governmental organizations.

ARTICLE NOTES:

[i]Reform the UN: <http://www.reformtheun.org/index.php/issues/2063?theme=alt4>

[ii] Choike. “The UN Reform... and what about women?” [http://www.choike.org/nuevo\\_eng/informes/5439.html](http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/5439.html)

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## The Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign

*Rochelle Jones*

### United Nations reform and gender

On February 16, 2006, the UN Secretary-General created a new High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. This panel, consisting of 12 men and 3 women, was tasked with recommending changes to the UN via a “study of the UN's operational activities [that] assessed how the UN system works, its comparative advantages, and any areas of overlap between UN agencies”. The final report, submitted to Kofi Annan in November 2006, included extensive recommendations on consolidating UN operations, but it was not formally considered by the General Assembly (GA) until April 2007 when the new Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, issued his own response to the Panel's findings.[i]

Gender and women's rights issues had not been included among the Panel's responsibilities until national and international women's groups lobbied Kofi Annan and promoted questions within the institution about the effectiveness of the current gender architecture. During the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting in March 2006, for example, concerned women's groups released an Open Letter to the Secretary-General and member states, highlighting and deploring the lack of gender equality concerns in the Panel's initial mandate. This was followed by a number of regional statements and reports from women's networks all over the world, presenting proposals and recommendations on how UN reform could work for women.[ii] Due in part to the concerns of women's rights advocates globally, the mandate of the Panel was extended to include an analysis of gender equality architecture and gender mainstreaming.

## What is the GEAR campaign?

Led by the Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) and the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), "a stronger women's entity at the UN is the focus of this campaign, fully funded to meet expectations and deliver results, led by an Under-Secretary-General and supported by extensive field presence, accountable at both the global and national levels, and active in promoting gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system".[iii]

[iii] WEDO: <http://www.wedo.org/campaigns.aspx?mode=beijingbeyonddemail>

In its first submission to the Panel, WEDO and CWGL outlined the successes and failures of the current UN system in addressing gender equality, and made several proposals related to reform that would facilitate positive outcomes for women's empowerment. Signed by 116 women's organisations and networks, this was the beginning of an advocacy campaign that has continued since 2006. It has become more organised, signing up over 270 women's organisations and networks, and officially launched as the Gender Equality Architecture Reform or GEAR campaign in February 2008 during the 52nd session of the CSW.[iv]

[iv] Read the GEAR campaign's key messages and campaign statement at: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/GEAR%20Campaign%20Statement%20&%20Key%20Messages%2008%20eng.pdf>

## GEAR Campaign and milestones of the reform process

Reform of UN gender architecture was always going to be a lengthy journey. Since the creation of the Panel in early 2006 to now mid-2008, women's rights organisations have stood their ground and have been influential in such a critical reform process for the future of gender equality. But there is still some ways to go.

The first major milestone of the reform process was the release of *Delivering As One: Report of the Secretary General's High Level Panel*[v]. This report was released in November 2006, and reflected significant input from women's rights advocates. Women's organisations from around the world worked together to ensure the Panel made strong recommendations about strengthening the gender architecture of the UN.

[v] "Delivering as One" can be downloaded at: <http://www.un.org/events/panel/resources/pdfs/HLP-SWC-Final-Report.pdf>

As mentioned earlier, CWGL and WEDO made their first submission to the Panel in July 2006 that discussed the failings of the current system and proposed a reformed gender architecture that would be responsive to gender equality and women's empowerment. The key message of this submission was that the new gender equality entity "must be a strong, women-specific entity mandated to work across the whole UN system – one that has the capacity to lead, monitor and to act as a driving force, or catalyst, for the advancement of gender equality and women's rights, at both the global and country level. This system-wide women-specific entity must perform three critical functions. It must have policy-setting responsibilities on substantive issues of gender equality and women's rights. It must have the capacity to monitor, with the authority to ensure accountability, on gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system. Finally, it must have a field presence to conduct and shape UN operational activities to ensure that gender equality and women's rights programming are carried out effectively."[vi]

[vi] Gender Equality Architecture and UN Reforms. July 17, 2006. <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/Gender%20Equality%20Architecture%20and%20UN%20Reforms%20July%202006.pdf>

CWGL and WEDO sent a Fact Sheet to Panel members at the end of August 2006 to re-emphasise their key message before the Panel finalised their recommendations to the Secretary-General. This advocacy was rewarded with the final report making important recommendations on gender and reflecting many of the concerns of women's rights movements.

Testament to the efforts of women's movements worldwide, in its report, the Panel "recommends creation of a new high-level Under Secretary General position on gender who would serve as the head of an entity that would consolidate three already established departments of the UN: UNIFEM, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI). The new

entity would focus on both policy/global levels and would also strengthen focus on gender equality at the operational/country levels.”[vii]

The second major milestone of the reform process is yet to pass — the GA endorsing and taking action on the recommendations of the Panel. Soon after the Panel’s final report was released at the end of 2006, the GEAR campaign was quick to initiate a sign on statement calling for rapid endorsement and implementation of the Panel’s recommendations related to the gender architecture of the UN. The GA, however, has not made any decisions to date relating to the gender architecture. It was initially hoped that the inter-governmental process would conclude by the end of the 61st Session, but recommendations from the Panel have not garnered support from member states.

... [H]owever, a number of steps have been taken since then to move forward on the issue. In response to a request for more information by the President of the GA, a Concept Note on strengthening the gender architecture was released by the Deputy Secretary-General in August 2007, based on a consultation process with an Inter-Agency Gender Taskforce. There was consensus amongst Taskforce members that the “existing architecture for women’s empowerment and gender equality is fragmented and underfunded and, therefore, inadequate to address effectively General Assembly mandates on gender and women’s issues.”[viii]

The 62nd Session (Sept–Dec 2007) of the GA relaunched discussions on reform, but gender was not discussed until May 2008 consultations. There has been some significant back and forth between the GA and the Secretary-General, with a further note on gender released in June 2008[ix], and a final Concept Note proposing institutional options for gender architecture ... (July 23, 2008)[x]. Parallel to the work taking place within the GA, the GEAR Campaign submitted a statement to the 52nd Session of the CSW. At the conclusion of the Session in March 2008, it was clear that support for a new and improved UN gender architecture was overwhelming: “In their national statements, over 40 countries spoke to the need to strengthen the United Nations’ institutional mechanisms on gender equality and called for a consolidated women’s entity led by an Under Secretary-General and with extensive country presence.”[xi]

### Next steps?

All Member States have acknowledged the importance of gender equality and the need for implementing gender-related policies, but they disagree on implementing the specific actions recommended by the Panel. The three institutional options proposed by the Secretary-General entail consolidation of UNIFEM, OSAGI, DAW and INSTRAW, and are: a single autonomous fund/programme; a department of the Secretariat; or a composite entity.[xii].

Now that the Concept Note from the Secretary-General outlining institutional options for the gender architecture has been released, it is expected that the GA will consider these options and eventually make a decision. How long this will take is unknown, but the GEAR Campaign will continue its advocacy in order to garner the best result for women.

[vii] See the CWGL’s website: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/gea.html#News>

[viii] The first Concept Note from the DSG to the GA is available at: <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/SDOC1599.pdf>

[ix] Secretary-General’s Concept Note on Current UN System Support to Member States on Gender Equality

[x] Secretary-General’s Concept Note on Institutional Options to Strengthen UN Work on Gender Equality

[xi] The Statement of the 52nd Session of the CSW Linkage Caucus: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/CSW%2008%20Linkage%20Statement.pdf>

[xii] The major differences between these options are in the areas of governance and funding – as outlined in the Concept Note (see Note x)

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Toward the end of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly, under the agenda item, “Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit”, the General Assembly adopted (10 September 2008) a Resolution placing on the agenda for the 63rd Session five sub-issues of System-wide Coherence, including Gender Equality & the Empowerment of Women.

The Resolution “requests the Secretary-General to provide a further, detailed modalities paper in respect to the options set out in the Deputy Secretary-General’s paper ... focusing in particular on the ‘Composite Entity’ option [and funding of it] with a view to facilitating substantive action by the Assembly within the 63rd session”.

WFM-IGP reported (ReformtheUN.org): “NGOs campaigning for ‘gender equality architecture reform’ (GEAR) described the decision as ‘moving the process forward’ and a ‘happy issue’ to the Session, because it put the issue ... on the 63rd GA’s official agenda.”

# Gender Training for Peacekeepers: Preliminary Overview of United Nations Peace Support Operations

*Minna Lyytikäinen*

In order to examine the impact and long-term effectiveness of gender training for peacekeepers in UN missions, UN-INSTRAW developed this Peace and Security Working Paper 4 (2007), analyzing the strategies and methodologies used to deliver gender training and the training tools and materials currently available, as well as new opportunities for research and policy-making.

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## 1. Introduction

The last twenty years have seen great changes in the nature of conflict and peacekeeping operations globally. United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations functioned for decades within the Cold War model of monitoring cease fires and patrolling borders after inter-state wars. Since the early 1990s, however, conflicts have increasingly taken place within states and, as a result, the scope of peacekeeping operations has widened considerably beyond exclusively military tasks. The mandates of UN peacekeeping operations now cover a vast variety of responsibilities,<sup>1</sup> such as promoting human security,<sup>2</sup> assisting demobilization of former fighters, supporting power-sharing arrangements and elections, strengthening the rule of law, training local police forces, monitoring respect for human rights, and promoting economic and social development.

Understanding of the gendered aspects of conflict and violence has also increased in recent decades. The global women's movement was instrumental during the 1980s and 90s in demonstrating the prevalence of gender-based violence all over the world, in war and during peace, and put it firmly on the international policy agenda. Experiences documented in recent conflicts, such as those in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone have highlighted the vulnerability of women, men, boys and girls to sexual and gender-based violence. It has become clear that women, men, boys and girls experience violence before, during and after armed conflicts differently and have different vulnerabilities, insecurities and coping mechanisms. Furthermore, armed conflict has an impact on gender roles and relations as women, for example, may have to take up roles they might not do in peace time — as soldiers, as breadwinners or as prostitutes. A gendered understanding of violence and security should not simply highlight women's victimization: women are also agents in conflict and peace, both as perpetrators of violence and as peace-makers, and both men and women are victims of gender-based violence.

## ARTICLE NOTES:

1 For peacekeeping operations under Chapter VI and VII of the UN Charter

2 By human security, we refer to "protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. ... It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity". Human security thus broadens our concept of security from the security of states and borders to

[continued]

When peace support operations arrive at situations of complex internal strife, they may have several unintended consequences, particularly if the gendered nature of insecurities and of violence is not clearly understood and taken into account in policy and practice. In recent years, moreover, the UN has come under fierce criticism over allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeeping personnel. Although the organization has a clear policy of zero tolerance,<sup>3</sup> a culture of impunity within certain peacekeeping operations has allowed abuses to take place.<sup>4</sup> Any sexual relations between peacekeepers and local civilians are based on inherently unequal power relations. The fact that abusive sexual relations may have become relatively accepted by women and men in the host society after years of conflict makes tackling the issue even more of a challenge. It is clear, however, that a "peace" that neglects the interests of a large part of the community, or that supports, reconstructs, and in some cases strengthens the inequities in the power structure, relegating women to roles of subordination and inferiority, cannot truly be a peace worth having – and is unlikely to be sustainable".<sup>5</sup>

The importance of gender considerations for the success of peacekeeping operations, and the urgency of tackling SEA by peacekeepers, has been gradually accepted by the international community during the past decade.<sup>8</sup> Three references were made to

women and peacekeeping in the 1995 *Beijing Platform for Action*<sup>9</sup>. Eventually in 2000, the issues related to mainstreaming gender into all aspects of multidimensional peace operations were mapped out thoroughly in the *Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action*.<sup>10</sup> Soon after, the Security Council adopted the Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security,<sup>11</sup> which calls for mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all activities of UN peacekeeping missions, which includes providing gender training to all peacekeeping personnel (see Box 1).

### Box 1: International Mandates for Gender Training in Peace Operations

*The Namibia Plan of Action* (2000) calls for gender issues to be “mainstreamed throughout all regional and national training curricula and courses for peace support operations, particularly those sponsored directly by the Training Unit of DPKO”.<sup>6</sup>

*Security Council Resolution 1325* on Women, Peace and Security (2000) requested that all peacekeeping personnel – military, police and civilian – receive training on the “protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures”.<sup>7</sup>

While gender mainstreaming requires the integration of gender analysis in all decision-making, planning and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation (See Box 2), three concrete efforts have been undertaken in UN missions and by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO): (1) the appointment of specialist gender advisors to a number of missions, (2) attempts to increase the number of women leading and serving in peace operations and (3) the provision of gender-awareness training to peacekeeping personnel.<sup>12</sup> This paper focuses on the latter and discusses the institutional and political contexts within which gender training has been implemented in UN missions and troop-contributing countries and presents a preliminary overview of gender training opportunities for peacekeepers globally. Finally, it raises potential questions for further research and policy discussion. The paper is based on a desk-review of relevant literature, web based research on the curricula of peacekeeping training centres as well as the responses to questionnaires sent to all UN peacekeeping missions and a number of national and regional training centres. The paper also draws on the information collected during a three-week virtual discussion on gender training in the security sector, hosted by UN-INSTRAW.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Gender training for peacekeepers – current practice & institutional arrangements

The training of military, police and civilian peacekeepers on gender issues is intended to improve their capacity to fulfill the mandate of the mission through

- building “a common understanding of the values they are to uphold when working for the United Nations, [such as] the principles of equality between women and men and non-discrimination based on sex”;<sup>14</sup>
- helping peacekeepers understand the social context in which peacekeeping operations are carried out and the ways in which relationships between men and women and gender roles and responsibilities are transformed by violent conflict;<sup>15</sup> and
- making peacekeepers aware of the positive or negative impacts that their actions can have on the host country and develop basic skills of gender analysis.<sup>16</sup>

[The] United Nations stresses that gender training “is [...] not a luxury, but a requirement for improving the effective discharge of the mission’s mandate and reducing both harmful forms of behaviour by peacekeeping personnel and unintended negative effects of mission policies and programmes”.<sup>17</sup>

Peacekeeping troops should receive gender-awareness training both during their pre-deployment training programme in the troop-contributing country and once they arrive in mission. The arrangements for both types of training are reviewed in the following sections, after which the tools, curricula and reach of gender training are discussed in more detail.

ARTICLE NOTES continued:

the lives of people inside and across those borders. Commission of Human Security, *Human Security Now* (New York: United Nations Commission on Human Security, 2003): 4.

3 United Nations Secretariat, “Secretary General’s Bulletin: Special measures from protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)” (New York: United Nations, 9 October 2003); United Nations General Assembly, “A comprehensive review of a strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (A/RES/59/300)” (New York: United Nations, 30 June 2005).

4 United Nations General Assembly, “A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (A/59/710)” (New York: United Nations, 24 March 2005); Karishma Rajoo, “Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: Power Tools in Peacekeeping Missions” *Conflict Trends* 4 (2004); Sarah Martin, *Must Boys Be Boys? Ending Sexual Violence and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Missions* (Washington: Refugees International).

5 Angela Mackay, “Training the uniforms: gender and peacekeeping operations”, *Development in Practice* 13.2 (2003): 221.

6 United Nations, “Windhoek Declaration, The Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations” (Nairobi: UN, 31 May 2000a).

## Box 2: Definitions

**Gender** refers to “social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender defines power relations in society and determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context.”<sup>18</sup>

**Gender-based Violence (GBV)** refers to violence targeting women or men, girls or boys on the basis of their gender or sexual orientation. It includes, but is not limited to, sexual violence, which is often used as an instrument of terror and torture in armed conflict situations.<sup>19</sup>

**Gender mainstreaming** is “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated.”<sup>20</sup>

**Gender training** is “a capacity-building activity that aims to increase awareness, knowledge and practical skills on gender issues by sharing information, experiences and techniques as well as by promoting reflection and debate. The goal of gender training is to enable participants to understand the different roles and needs of both women and men in society, to challenge gender-biased and discriminatory behaviours, structures and socially-constructed inequalities, and to apply this new knowledge to their day-to-day work.”<sup>21</sup>

**Sexual exploitation** is “any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.”<sup>22</sup>

**Sexual abuse** refers to “actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions”.<sup>23</sup>

7 United Nations, “UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325)” (New York: UN, 31 October 2000b).

8 Elisabeth Rehn & Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, “Women, War and Peace, An Independent Experts’ Assessment of the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-building” (New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2002).

9 United Nations, “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/CONF.177/20 (1995) & A/CONF.177/20/Add.1)” (New York: UN, 15 September 1995).

10 United Nations 2000a.

11 United Nations 2000b.

12 Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf 2002.

13 Tönisson Kleppe, Toiko, “Gender training and capacity building for the

## 2.1 Pre-deployment training

The primary responsibility to train peacekeepers is on the Member States before troops depart on mission,<sup>24</sup> and thus the extent to which peacekeeping personnel receive pre-deployment gender training depends largely on different troop-contributing countries’ policies and priorities.

The UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), on the other hand, has developed training materials for the use of Member States and it also offers advice and supplementary training events, such as training of trainers, on request to national and regional training centres.<sup>25</sup>

The DPKO Training and Evaluation Service (TES) has developed generic training packages available online to all member states for the pre-deployment training of military and civilian police personnel.

Training materials for the pre-deployment training of *civilian* personnel have not been developed to date,<sup>26</sup> but our preliminary overview of peacekeeping training centres<sup>27</sup> shows that a number of centres

## Box 3: Major troop-contributing countries

Troops	Country
1. Pakistan	10173
2. Bangladesh	9675
3. India	9471
4. Jordan	3626
5. Nepal	3564
6. Ghana	2907
7. Uruguay	2583
8. Italy	2539
9. Nigeria	2465
10. France	1975

The top 10 countries make up 59% of all UN military and police troops.

Source: UN DPKO, March 2007

that provide pre-deployment training for civilian peacekeepers have included gender training in their programmes.

As peacekeeping training is primarily a responsibility of troop-contributing countries, the levels of training between troops from different countries [are] likely to vary. It is noteworthy that the countries with most capacity to train peacekeepers, both in traditional duties of cease-fire monitoring and in the new challenges of multidimensional peace operations, are generally countries that send relatively few troops. The bulk of UN peacekeeping personnel come from developing countries (see Box 3) with limited resources and capacity to train their troops.<sup>28</sup> A Refugees International study<sup>29</sup> in West Africa, for example, found that on the whole troops had received very little pre-deployment training on non-technical issues, such as preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. Similarly, our overview revealed that most opportunities for gender training are in countries of the North, rather than in those countries of the South where the majority of troops originate. Notable exceptions include the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in South Africa, Centro Argentino de Entranamiento Conjunto para Operaciones de Paz (CAECOPAZ) and Centro Conjunto para Operaciones de Paz de Chile (CECOPAC), which all provide gender training to military, civilian police and civilian peacekeeping personnel. Overall, there is a dearth of representative data on the extent to which gender issues are included in pre-deployment training and the percentage of personnel that it reaches.

## 2.2 In-mission training

Peacekeeping personnel receive induction trainings as they arrive at peacekeeping missions, with military and civilian police often trained separately from civilian staff. The extent to which gender training is included in the induction varies from one mission to another but tends to be stronger in missions that have gender advisers on their staff.<sup>30</sup> The induction sessions on gender awareness are short, ranging from thirty minutes to two hours. They are generally conducted by the gender adviser or other gender unit staff, or, in missions without a gender unit, the gender focal point may take up the responsibility of delivering the induction in addition to his or her daily responsibilities. Due to time limitations or language barriers, not all incoming personnel can be briefed by gender unit staff. In such situations, in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) for example, contingents are trained by officers who have been trained by the gender unit.

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) conducted a training programme on the *Special Needs of Women and Children in and after Armed Conflict* which provided gender training for civilian personnel on request in eight UN peacekeeping missions and one peacekeeping training centre between 2001 and 2006. The first phase of the project was completed by the end of 2006 and operations are suspended until the funding situation permits them to resume, but training materials as well as reports of in-mission trainings conducted by the project are still available on their website.<sup>31</sup>

## 2.3 Training tools and materials

Gender training materials aimed at peacekeeping personnel have been developed over the last seven years. The *Gender and Peacekeeping Online Training Course*,<sup>32</sup> prepared by UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) in 2000, laid the ground work for gender training for peacekeepers and can still be accessed online<sup>33</sup> by any interested individuals. The website contains a thorough and conceptually solid three-day training programme, and can be used as a reference document by gender trainers or other individuals working in peacekeeping operations. The tool has been critiqued for being pitched at a rather academic level that is too sophisticated for its intended audience, i.e.

security sector: A discussion on good practices”, Gender Peace and Security Working Paper 3 (Santo Domingo: UN-INSTRAW, 2007).

14 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: UN DPKO, 2004) 45.

15 Ibid.; Mackay 2003.

16 Ibid.

17 UN DPKO 2004: 45.

18 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, “DPKO Policy Directive: Gender Equality in UN Peacekeeping Operations” (New York: UN DPKO, November 2006a).

19 Spees, Pam, *Gender Justice and Accountability in Peace Support Operations: Closing the Gaps* (London: International Alert, 2004).

20 Agreed Conclusions, ECOSOC Coordination Segment on Gender Mainstreaming 1997.

21 UN-INSTRAW Gender Glossary.

22 United Nations, “Secretary General’s Bulletin: Special measures from protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)” (New York: United Nations, 9 October 2003).

23 United Nations 2003.

24 UN DPKO 2004.

25 Mackay 2003; UN DPKO 2004.

26 United Nations, *Gender Resource Pack for Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: UN, 2004).

27 See Annex 1 [at UN-INSTRAW website] for further details.

28 This need has been addressed by setting regional peacekeeping training centres in Africa, for example, but the gap in resources is still great. See for example Nicky Hitchcock, “Building Capacity for

African Peacekeeping: A Profile of Prominent Peacekeeping Centres in Africa” *Conflict Trends* 3 (2002).

29 Martin 2005.

30 UN DPKO 2004; See Annex 2 for details on gender training in UN missions.

31 See [www.unitar.org/wcc/](http://www.unitar.org/wcc/) for more details on the training programme on *Special Needs of Women and Children in and after Armed Conflict*.

32 [www.genderandpeacekeeping.org/](http://www.genderandpeacekeeping.org/)

33 [www.genderandpeacekeeping.org/](http://www.genderandpeacekeeping.org/)

34 Angela Mackay, Virtual Discussion on gender training for security sector personnel hosted by UN-INSTRAW in April 2007.

35 Mackay 2003; Linda Etchart, “Progress in Gender Mainstreaming in Peace Support Operations”, *Gender Mainstreaming in Conflict Transformation*, eds. Rawwida Baksh, Linda Etchart, Elsie Onubogu and Tina Johnson (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005).

36 Mackay 2003

37 United Nations 2004

38 United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO), *Gender and Peacekeeping Operations In-Mission Training* (New York: UN DPKO, 2001).

39 <http://www.unitarpoci.org/>

40 <http://elap.unitarpoci.org/>

41 [www.unitarpoci.org](http://www.unitarpoci.org/)

42 UN DPKO 2004.

43 Angela Mackay, Virtual Discussion on gender training for security sector personnel hosted by UN-INSTRAW in April 2007.

44 Mackay 2003: 220.

all levels of personnel deployed to peacekeeping missions. Further development and updating of the course have been hampered by the fact that it does not have a single institutional home.<sup>34</sup>

DPKO drew on and developed this existing material as they introduced Gender and Peacekeeping as one of their Standardized Generic Training Modules (SGTM) for military and civilian police peacekeeping personnel in co-operation with Member States’ militaries.<sup>35</sup> At present, these standardized modules include *Gender and Peacekeeping Operations* (SGTM 5c) and the more recent *Gender Equality in Peacekeeping* (SGTM 17), which have both been designed to be more accessible to a broad range of audiences among police and military personnel than the rather academic *Gender and Peacekeeping Online Training Course*.<sup>36</sup> The training modules are available to Member States for pre-deployment training of military and civilian police personnel. It is noteworthy that DPKO has not developed training modules specifically for civilian personnel to date.<sup>37</sup> DPKO has also developed a training module on gender and peacekeeping, specifically for use during in-mission training.<sup>38</sup>

The UNITAR Programme of Correspondence Instruction in Peacekeeping Operations (POCI) provides a correspondence course on *Gender Perspectives in UN Peacekeeping Missions*,<sup>39</sup> available to any interested individuals and specifically aimed at UN personnel deployed to peacekeeping missions. Their E-Learning for African Peacekeepers (ELAP)<sup>40</sup> initiative allows military, police and gendarmerie peacekeeping personnel who are citizens of African nations to take all UNITAR POCI distance-learning courses free of charge. To-date most graduates of the course on Gender Perspectives are from African countries and have taken the course under the auspices of ELAP.<sup>41</sup>

In developing its gender training modules, DPKO strives to take advantage of local resources by cooperating with local women’s organizations as well as UN entities with specialist knowledge on gender issues, such as UNIFEM.<sup>42</sup> This was the approach taken in the development and piloting of the Gender and Peacekeeping In-Mission package. When local representatives were included as part of a resource group during the training in the UN missions in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) “the results were fantastic because the ‘peacekept’ were able to provide context and translate ‘gender’ in that society for the peacekeepers”.<sup>43</sup>

The training materials discussed here ... provide a great deal of input for gender trainers to use in pre-deployment and in-mission training and their use also allows trainers to conform to standards, definitions and prioritizations set by DPKO. The responses to our questionnaire sent to peacekeeping training centres and mission gender advisors suggest that trainers make a lot of use of these standardized materials but also often adapt them to some extent to fit the needs and context of the peacekeeping mission or the troop-contributing country in question. In fact, Mackay argues that “[f]or pre-deployment training the material should be broad and generic, incorporating a wealth of different examples. For in-mission training, it will be important to contextualise and offer local examples whose relevance the peacekeeper will immediately be able to test.”<sup>44</sup>

## 2.4 Curriculum and methods

Gender training for peacekeepers may take many forms and contents, as trainers often use parts of the standard modules developed by the DPKO and tailor them to the needs of the mission, of the training participants or according to the country’s own policies and priorities regarding gender and peacekeeping.

Topics that are often dealt with in gender training for peacekeepers include:<sup>45</sup>

- **The concept of gender:** although gender training for peacekeepers is generally very practice-oriented, some conceptual clarifications are needed to explain the

concept of gender, the ways in which it differs from the concept of sex and varies from one culture to another. Discussing **cultural differences** in gender roles can highlight the ways in which gender norms are socially constructed and prepare peacekeepers to understand different gender norms in the new culture.

- Many trainers introduce **Security Council Resolution 1325** on Women, Peace and Security, which is considered a useful entry point to the topic and supports a rights- and mandate-based approach to gender training.

- The standardized modules developed by DPKO devote considerable time to the **gender aspects of armed conflict**, including the differing roles, responsibilities, insecurities and vulnerabilities of men, women, boys and girls as well as the impact that violent conflict can have on gender relations.

- **Human rights:** the 17th Standardized Training Module approaches gender equality questions with a rights-based approach, which means that rather than appearing to impose their form of morality on the training participants, the trainer can draw on internationally accepted human rights norms as a basis for discussing issues related to gender equality in peacekeeping.<sup>46</sup>

- Some trainings also deal with the issue of **gender equality in the workplace** and attempt to raise the awareness of the participants about policies and procedures regarding gender-based discrimination and/or sexual harassment in UN missions.

Although troops are often trained separately on issues relating to Code of Conduct of UN personnel, which covers the organisation's position on and definition of **sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)**, the latter is sometimes also covered in gender training modules. There is some disagreement among practitioners on whether SEA issues should be included in gender training modules, as, according to some, SEA should be seen as a code of conduct issue and might otherwise take up valuable time allocated to gender training. Proponents argue, however, that SEA and the culture of immunity that many perpetrators enjoy in peacekeeping missions is closely linked to existing gender stereotypes and unequal gender relations as well as experiences of sexual and gender-based violence during conflict.<sup>47</sup> Even in cases where gender training is a separate activity from SEA training, discussing gender roles and inequalities can be a good entry point to addressing SEA.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, it is noteworthy that although gender-awareness is raised in specific training modules dedicated to gender equality in peacekeeping operations, gender is clearly a cross-cutting issue in all peacekeeping activities, and thus should be discussed throughout the training programme for peacekeepers.<sup>49</sup> Mainstreaming gender issues into the regular training agenda is a good way to get around the problem of lack of time allocated to gender training<sup>50</sup> and may increase the acceptance of gender as an integral consideration in all aspects of peacekeeping operations. In our overview of gender training for peacekeepers, we came across a handful of training centres that have already made attempts to mainstream gender into all of their courses, such as the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR), the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF) in Germany, or the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) in Sweden.

In terms of training methods, most gender training materials call for a mixture of presentation/lecture, debate, case studies and operational exercises. Some complement the training with audio-visual materials, and Dahrendorf recommends that the UN Public Information Office could support mission gender units in developing audio-visual materials, such as mission-specific training videos, "that illustrate the impact and context of sexual exploitation and abuse"<sup>51</sup>. In the Virtual Discussion on Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel moderated by UN-INSTRAW,<sup>52</sup> a number of gender trainers underlined the fact that gender training should be interactive, include discussion and debate, and deal with issues of practical relevance to the participants' work.<sup>53</sup> Interactive methods may sometimes, however, be difficult to implement in hierarchical contexts. Mackay's experience of piloting her training tool in East Timor was, for example, that "[w]orking as self-starting groups exploring problems together was not a

*We know what it takes for a strategy to succeed. It takes awareness-raising. It takes effective security measures, including training for national military and police forces. It takes close monitoring of human rights. And it requires prosecuting all perpetrators to the full extent of the law.*

~**Secretary General Ban Ki-moon**,  
UNSC session on Women, Peace  
and Security, 19 June 2008

45 The examples are drawn from the United Nations standardized training modules, information gathered from individual training centres and mission gender advisors, as well as a Virtual Discussion on Gender Training for the Security Sector, documented in Tönisson Kleppe 2007.

46 See also Mackay 2003; Tönisson Kleppe 2007.

47 Tönisson Kleppe 2007.

48 Ibid.

49 As urged in the Windhoek Declaration (United Nations 2000a), for example.

50 Tönisson Kleppe 2007.

51 Nicola Dahrendorf, "Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Lessons Learnt Study. Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in MONUC" (New York: UN DPKO Best Practices Unit, 2006) 16.

52 In collaboration with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

53 Tönisson Kleppe 2007.

developed skill in most cases. Participants would generally defer to the senior person present and were reluctant to voice an opinion.”<sup>54</sup>

## 2.5 Target audience and reach

Gender training for peacekeepers is aimed at military, civilian police and civilian personnel deployed to UN missions. While many national defence academies mainly offer training to military and police personnel, a number of training centres — such as the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF) in Germany; the African Centre for constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) in South Africa, or the Folke Bernadotte Academy in Sweden — offering training to civilian personnel have incorporated gender-awareness training into their curricula. As mentioned above, DPKO’s work on gender training has mainly focused on modules for military and civilian police personnel, although training has also been provided to civilian personnel in the past through UNITAR’s *Specific Needs of Women and Children during and after Armed Conflict* training programme.

The extent to which gender training reaches peacekeeping personnel and what impact it has on peacekeeping operations and interaction between UN personnel and local population is clearly an issue in need of further research. [P]reliminary [studies] ... already suggest that there are considerable gaps in the reach of gender training in a number of key troop-contributing countries. Similarly, not all UN peacekeeping missions have sufficient resources to train all incoming troops on gender issues. These capacity gaps are most pronounced in missions without gender units. It is also not always clear whether in-mission training reaches all troops due to language difficulties.<sup>55</sup> Often only the commanding officers speak the “mission language”, while most troops only speak their native tongue.<sup>56</sup>

## 3. Challenges in gender training for peacekeepers and opportunities for future research, policy and practice

The issue with gender training

*is the emotional rather than the intellectual challenge it presents. From the outset, it is at some level a politicised discussion. It strikes at the centre of everyone’s being, male or female, because it is about beliefs, values, practices, expectations, and attitudes that identify every one of us. Long-held assumptions are likely to be challenged, issues of power & control confronted, and a demand made to look at the world from a different perspective.*<sup>57</sup>

The political nature of gender training raises challenges ... at the institutional level as well as in the classroom. One of the greatest challenges at the institutional level is the lack of resources and political will allotted to gender training and the resultant gaps in institutional capacity. As discussed above, the capacity to train peacekeeping troops in general, and with regard to gender in particular, is distributed very unevenly in geographic terms and the strongest training capacities tend not to coincide with the countries that contribute the most troops to UN missions, such as those in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, the uneven coverage of pre-deployment gender training is also related to differing status that gender issues have in each troop-contributing country’s peacekeeping agenda. For, “no matter what training material is produced, the issue of sovereignty prevents the UN from making it enforceable. UN personnel can suggest, request, persuade – but not enforce or insist on the delivery of training.”<sup>58</sup>

In-mission gender training is also very dependent on the leadership of the mission and their commitment to the cause as well as the existence of a specialised gender unit. Too often, the training of and awareness-raising among senior management is overlooked; it is assumed that they already know and understand.<sup>59</sup> “Without their commitment,

54 Mackay 2003: 220.

55 Martin 2005.

56 Martin 2005.

57 Mackay 2003: 220.

58 Mackay, 2003: 220

59 Ibid.

[however,] the 'simple soldier' lacks support and reinforcement for any positive steps taken in the gender arena."<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the full institutionalization of gender training in contexts of high staff turnover, such as peacekeeping missions, can only be possible with the full support of senior management.<sup>61</sup>

In all missions, gender advisors and gender focal points have to tackle the huge task of briefing all incoming staff, often with little notice, and working to institutionalize gender training: "The high levels of staff turnover and the ongoing rotation of uniformed personnel result in the need for gender units to invest greatly in providing briefings and training to new staff on an ongoing basis."<sup>62</sup> Dahrendorf<sup>63</sup> suggests that training of in-mission trainers on gender issues and SEA would improve the reach of gender training and allow for the integration of gender issues to the wider induction training programme.

The fact that not all peacekeeping missions have a gender unit, moreover, is an obstacle to the goal of providing gender training to all incoming troops in each mission. In missions without gender units, assigned gender focal points have to deal with this task in addition to their "day jobs" and sometimes do not have the required capacity to undertake gender training for incoming staff. In some cases, however, such as in the UN missions in Cyprus and Georgia, the Gender Focal Point has taken the initiative to give short induction presentations to all staff on mission-specific gender issues, such as human trafficking. Without institutionalized (and properly funded) gender units in each mission, however, such training remains dependent on the enthusiasm and capacity of individual staff members.

The political nature of gender training also results in a number of challenges for gender trainers in terms of training curriculum and methods. As the UN underlines,

*By distinguishing between sex (a biological term) and gender (a social and cultural construct), gender training challenges traditional ways of thinking and uncovers common assumptions about women and men. Some personnel may find that discussing how culturally defined roles and responsibilities for women and men differ among regions and communities can be unsettling or even confrontational.*<sup>64</sup>

These challenges include the question of how to introduce the concept of gender and how to teach gender analysis in a non-confrontational as well as a practice-oriented way. One goal of gender training is to highlight, and to some extent challenge, prevailing gender relations and norms, and not just discuss women as a homogeneous "vulnerable group". This may involve problematizing dominant constructions of masculinity, which the military and police often draw on, and trainers have to find innovative ways to avoid causing a sense of accusation and encourage participants to consider new ways of seeing the world.<sup>65</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

This brief background paper aims to have provided an introduction to gender training for peacekeepers and discussed the institutional arrangements and political challenges for its implementation. It suggests that while important advances have been made during the past years in institutionalising gender training for all peacekeeping personnel by troop-contributing countries, peacekeeping missions and the UN DPKO, there are still important gaps in the reach of gender training, as its implementation varies considerably from one country or mission to another.

A number of issues for further research arise from the discussion. First, assessing the reach and degree of implementation of gender training is clearly a topic that requires further investigation so that the greatest capacity gaps and the most pressing political resistance can be identified. Second, the impact of gender training on the behaviour and attitude of peacekeeping personnel and their impact on the ground is an under-researched area, and such evaluation would be crucial for identifying the best training tools and methods as well as for advocating for further resources. Third, while this paper has provided a preliminary overview of gender training for UN peacekeeping personnel, it would be important to extend the analysis to other peace operations (such as those led by the OSCE,<sup>66</sup> the Economic Community of West African States, or the African Union) as well as to the work of humanitarian personnel not covered by UN codes of conduct.

60 Ibid. 221; see also Tönisson Kleppe 2007.

61 With the aim of increasing the outreach of gender training for senior mission leaders, the UN DPKO has initiated a Training-of-Trainers programme, which gives gender trainers the readiness to conduct gender training sessions for senior mission leaders.

62 United Nations, 2006b; see also Martin, 2005; Higate, Paul, "Gender and Peacekeeping. Case Studies: The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone", Institute for Security Studies Monograph No. 91 (Pretoria).

63 Dahrendorf 2006.

64 United Nations 2004: 46.

65 For a detailed account on best practices for gender training within the security sector, see Tönisson Kleppe, Toiko, "Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel – Good and Bad Practices", *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (UN-INSTRAW, DCAF, OSCE ODIHR).

66 ... Although primarily covering gender training for UN peacekeepers, we came across ... training centres that provide gender training for other entities, such as the OSCE. Further study of gender training in a broader sample of peacekeeping missions could help us understand better the institutional and political factors that have an impact on the quality and reach of gender training as well as document further experiences and best practices.