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# **Gender Equity and Peacebuilding**

## **From Rhetoric to Reality: Finding the Way**

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A DISCUSSION PAPER

**Richard Strickland**  
*and*  
**Nata Duvvury**



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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
I. Introduction .....	3
II. Converging Realities: Gender, Conflict, and Peacebuilding .....	5
III. The Changing International Context Since 1998 .....	11
1998-2000: Preface to Resolution 1325 .....	11
2000-2002: Security Council Resolution 1325 and Beyond .....	16
IV. Gender, Human Rights, and Peacebuilding .....	20
V. Key Issues for Transformative Approaches .....	23
VI. Conclusion .....	28
Annex .....	29
Bibliography .....	32



## Executive Summary

This paper is the product of a review of recent literature on issues of gender in the context of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. It was prepared as background material for an international workshop on gender equity and peacebuilding jointly convened by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Key findings and research questions are presented in relation to the effective integration of gender concerns into policies and programs that shape post-conflict societies. There has been progress in considering a gender perspective in international thinking, policy statements, and programs related to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, as evidenced by recent documentation on this topic from the United Nations. Findings reported below indicate a slow but positive shift in international opinion and understanding about the consequences of conflict on women and the importance of their participation in peacebuilding processes and post-conflict social transformation. However, gender discrimination continues through political exclusion, economic marginalization, and sexual violence during and after conflict, denying women their human rights and constraining the potential for development.

Women individually and collectively contribute to peacebuilding in many ways. Yet, their contributions are often overlooked because they take unconventional forms, occur outside formal peace processes, or are considered extensions of women's existing gender roles. Conflict and its aftermath affect women's lives and men's lives in different ways. Therefore, addressing gender norms is critical since they so strongly influence women's options for action. While the temporary loosening of gender roles that often accompanies conflict can bring opportunities for innovative efforts by women to build peace, sustainable peace also requires a more permanent transformation of social norms around violence, gender, and power.

While women represent a population that is severely and distinctly victimized by conflict, the tendency to disproportionately portray women as victims perpetuates inaccurate assumptions about their contributions to war and peace. Women are not solely passive victims; they are often powerful agents. The portrayal

of women as victims not only neglects the significant roles women have played in conflict and post-conflict, but also undermines their future potential as key participants in formal peace processes. Thus, the ability of international peacebuilding policy to incorporate a gender perspective takes on greater significance.

International policies and programs for peacebuilding have paid greater attention to gender in recent years. Gender-sensitive language has been widely adopted within the field since the mid-1990s, prompted by the identification of women and armed conflict as one of the critical areas of concern at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Prior to 2000, there was growing awareness of gender-differentiated experiences of and responses to armed conflict as it increasingly targeted civilian populations. Global concern and women's activism was galvanized especially by specific offenses, including sexual violence committed against women during conflict. Important international legal developments after Beijing included the landmark decision in 1998 to recognize rape and other sexual violence as crimes against humanity when committed within the context of war. Also, major international institutions such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank, the International Labour Office, UNIFEM, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as many bilateral donor agencies (notably those in Canada and Australia) were establishing new guidelines for responses to conflict that included attention to gender.

The year 2000 marked a turning point in international policy addressing gender in conflict and peacebuilding with the U.N. Security Council adoption of Resolution 1325 concerning women, peace, and security. The resolution incorporated aspects of gender mainstreaming, highlighted by the Windhoek Declaration and the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, and established a political framework making the pursuit of gender equality relevant to all elements of peacebuilding and reconstruction. Subsequent efforts to monitor progress toward gender mainstreaming have included two major assessments of policies, programs, and outcomes conducted within

the U.N. system (one by the Secretary-General's office, the other by UNIFEM), and several other country-level evaluations undertaken by non-governmental organizations. With some caveats, there has been progress in the form of revised policies and program designs that respond to women's specific needs during conflict and reconstruction. Many of these have incorporated a gender perspective that acknowledges and, to a lesser extent, addresses men's gender roles as well as women's. Specific areas of progress include the international legal framework; peace processes; peacekeeping operations; humanitarian operations; reconstruction and rehabilitation; and reintegration.

While gender mainstreaming seeks to eliminate gender-based discrimination in policies and programs, initial evidence indicates that many of the peacebuilding and reconstruction institutional frameworks and their implementation continue to fail to address underlying gender roles and associated power dynamics that lay the basis for institutionalized gender discrimination. Such lack of progress raises questions about the general approach to gender mainstreaming as currently conducted. Although the peacebuilding community is gradually recognizing the value of gender-sensitive approaches, there remains uncertainty about how gender can be fully incorporated into program design to address discriminatory norms and practices that continue to impede women's participation in and benefit from peacebuilding and reconstruction.

One way that discrimination is perpetuated despite gender-sensitive approaches is through the continued subordination of women's human rights resulting from the power imbalance inherent in gender relations. Human rights were fundamental to the framing of

"women and armed conflict" in the Beijing Platform for Action, and were underscored by the provisions of Resolution 1325. As the example of sexual violence in conflict settings has suggested, gender and human rights are inextricably intertwined. Consequently, a framework of peacebuilding and reconstruction must address socially entrenched gender-based discrimination. Research and interventions addressing violence against women outside the context of conflict settings offer lessons concerning the construction of gender norms and identities and how this is related to the violation of human rights. Such lessons can help expose the relationship between masculinity and violence against women. They may also help clarify whether women's human rights might best be promoted through a gender-specific focus on the rights of women as a specific group, or through a broad framework that emphasizes the rights of all people.

Efforts to introduce gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding have met with limited results because they fail to address underlying norms that define gender relations and power dynamics. Peacebuilding, despite recent progress toward being more gender-sensitive, gives inadequate attention to the construction of gender norms and the processes by which they can be transformed to ensure more equitable gender relations. Current gaps in knowledge suggest the need for further inquiry to understand the complex interplay among gender identity, power, and violence; to establish methods of monitoring and evaluation that assess and guide gender perspectives in peacebuilding initiatives; to document norms and institutional practices that influence women's economic reintegration; and to determine optimal strategies to promote the human rights of women in reconstruction and conflict prevention.



# I. Introduction

The field of study that encompasses issues of peacebuilding and the post-conflict transformation of societies to support human development is vast and growing. The study of gender, conflict, and peacebuilding, once consigned to a small specialized niche of that broader field, is growing even more rapidly, challenging researchers, program specialists, and policymakers with its volume of information and immediacy. Recent wars have increasingly affected and even targeted civilian populations, and images of the consequences of war are disseminated with greater speed and candor than ever before. These images document to the world the violence and social upheaval that affect women's lives as radically as men's. Such images, and the stories behind them, also vividly communicate how gender determines the personal experience of war and underlies strategies for peacebuilding.

This paper is the product of a review of recent literature on issues of gender in the context of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. It seeks to summarize key findings and identify remaining questions related to the effective integration of gender concerns into policies and programs that shape post-conflict societies. Using earlier work on women and post-conflict reconstruction as a frame of reference (e.g., Sørensen 1998), this review assesses the progression over the past decade in international thinking, policy statements, and development programming related to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction as seen from a gender perspective. It benefits from two recently released large-scale reports conducted for the United Nations devoted to these issues (U.N. 2002, UNIFEM 2002) and builds on them to promote further discussion on fundamental aspects of the nexus between gender and peacebuilding processes.

Findings indicate a slow but positive shift in international opinion and understanding about the consequences of conflict on women and the importance of their participation in peacebuilding processes and post-conflict social transformation. There are a growing number of policy pronouncements and program guidelines by multilateral and bilateral organizations that cite concern for women and the issue of gender in relation to humanitarian and

development activities in conflict-affected settings. This suggests the emergence of international political will in an area largely ignored in the past. However, gender discrimination continues through political exclusion, economic marginalization, and sexual violence during and after conflict, denying women their human rights and constraining the potential for development. To strengthen the political will so that international pronouncements are more than rhetorical will be the upcoming challenge if gender is to be fully integrated into peacebuilding.

This paper serves as background material for an international workshop on gender equity and peacebuilding jointly convened by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It reviews fundamental concepts, considers shifts in international policy, and suggests areas for further inquiry. Specifically, Section II reviews the meaning and application of various terms necessary to the study of peacebuilding and reconstruction from a gender perspective. It also considers the diverse experiences of women and men during and after violent conflicts and their implications for peacebuilding. Section III summarizes the evolution of international policies and programmatic approaches for peacebuilding as related to gender. This evolution has occurred in tandem with a shift in emphasis from "women" to "gender" in the context of development, and with increasing international awareness of links between human rights and development practice. The section notes the widespread adoption of gender-sensitive language within the field since the mid-1990s and the high-level shift in the international discourse, marked by the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000. It also summarizes ways in which actions have or have not followed as a result of that shift.

Section IV explores the lack of progress on gender considerations in peacebuilding efforts despite the improved international rhetoric. Findings suggest this may be related to inadequate linkage of peacebuilding initiatives to gender relations that determine social and economic outcomes. This gap calls for greater articulation and use of human rights provisions when planning peacebuilding and reconstruction programs. Section V

suggests that efforts to introduce gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding have met with limited results since they fail to address the underlying norms that define gender relations and power dynamics. New “transformative” approaches to peacebuilding are called for that would transform gender roles and create more gender-equitable relationships. Such approaches are necessary for a strategy of peace that requires a

change in masculine identities underpinning dynamics of conflict and violence. If successful, such initiatives would promote the gender equity found lacking in current approaches and contribute to future conflict prevention. Section VI briefly concludes the paper with a list of some of the knowledge gaps identified for further research.

## II. Converging Realities: Gender, Conflict, and Peacebuilding

To understand the gender aspects of conflict, peacebuilding, and reconstruction, there is need for clarity about terms. First is the concept of **gender**, which all too frequently is used as a synonym for one's biological sex or a shorthand reference to women and women's concerns. There is now abundant literature on gender as a concept and the elements inherent in gender analysis. Here, gender refers to a social and cultural construct differentiating women and men and defining the ways in which women and men interact with each other. Gender is determined by the composite of shared expectations and norms within a society concerning appropriate female and male behaviors, characteristics, and roles. Gender and gender roles are culturally specific, learned, changeable over time, and influenced by variables such as age, race, class, and ethnicity. The literature on women and peacebuilding confirms that the concept of gender refers to social relationships produced by cultural, social, economic and historical processes and the various roles played by men and women (Corrin 2000; U.N. ECA 1999).

**Power** is a fundamental component of gender. In fact, gender has been conceived as the sexual division of power, and any major shift in power is likely to include corresponding changes in gender relations (Miller 2001). Despite cultural variations, there is a consistent difference between women's and men's gender roles based in power, e.g., access to productive resources and ability to exercise decisionmaking authority. The power imbalance that defines gender relations influences women's access to and control over resources, their visibility and participation in social and political affairs, and their ability to realize their fundamental human rights. These are all factors that contribute to women's agency and empowerment (U.N. ECA 1999; Mazurana and McKay 1999; Meintjes, Pillay, and Turshen 2002).

In his examination of war and gender, Goldstein (2001) identifies three overarching concepts:

- ▶ Gender is about men as much as women, especially when it comes to war
- ▶ War is an extremely complex system in which state-level interactions depend on dynamics at lower levels of analysis, including gender

- ▶ War casts a shadow on everyday life – especially on gender roles – in profound ways

“To think into the future beyond the war system requires breaking out of psychological denial regarding the traumatic effects of war on human society. Confronting war in this way may, in turn, reshape gendered relationships” (Goldstein 2001: 403). He supports examination of the nexus of gender, war, and international relations in areas such as democratic peace, nationalism, ethnic conflict, international norms, interdependence, nongovernmental organizations, and global telecommunications, suggesting that such research might contribute to scholarship far beyond feminist circles.

In a similar vein, Enloe concludes her analysis of women and militarization by noting that decisions concerning international political processes – including those related to negotiating war reparations, performing U.N. peacekeeping duties, constructing the images of soldiers through a globalized media, or diplomatically negotiating the creation of a permanent war crimes tribunal – will have different implications for women than for men, depending on particular constructions of what it means to be “feminine.” Seeing the relevance beyond domestic political analysis, Enloe (2000: 300) writes: “Femininity as a concept and women as actors need to be made the objects of analytical curiosity when we are trying to make sense of international political processes.”

It is also important to define some of the terms and concepts associated with peace and peacebuilding. Two current terms used are “**negative peace**” and “**positive peace**” (Galtung 1996). Negative peace refers to the mere absence of violence, while positive peace represents a stable social equilibrium in which new disputes are resolved without resort to violence and war. The concept of positive peace is comparable to the holistic definition found in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies that peace “includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities...but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society” (U.N. 1993). That definition of peace was derived through women's perceptions

about their lives and gender roles as affected by conditions of war and peace.

There has been widespread adoption of the term “**peacebuilding**” since it was introduced by the United Nations Secretary-General in *An Agenda for Peace* (U.N. 1992). Peacebuilding is generally associated with the promotion of positive peace, though the precise definition remains unclear. Initially, peacebuilding was defined as a process consisting of sustained, cooperative work dealing with underlying economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian concerns toward a durable peace. However, the measures cited as components of peacebuilding often focus on the short and medium term. These include disarmament, weapons destruction, refugee repatriation, security force training, elections monitoring, and institutional reform.

Thus, there are two separate concepts of peacebuilding. One is associated with the short-term involvement of the international community and revolves around political measures and actions largely by external agents. The other relates to long-term efforts by indigenous actors promoting political and economic development and sustainable conflict resolution. By this latter definition, peacebuilding requires actions across political, economic, humanitarian, and social spheres that rely on diverse actors and the emergence of local NGOs and a civil society (Haugerudbraaten 1998).

The close relationship between **peacebuilding and development** has been described as a restructuring of conflictual relationships “to create a situation, a society or a community in which individuals are enabled to develop and use to the full their capacities for creativity, service and enjoyment. Unless development in this sense can take place, no settlement will lead to a secure and lasting peace” (Curle 1971: 174). Ball (2001) defines peacebuilding as consisting of three main, interrelated objectives: creating and strengthening democratic political institutions; encouraging sustainable, poverty-reducing development; and fostering collaborative, non-violent social relations. The political, economic, and social processes related to these objectives and the normative framework in which they are situated must be viewed through a gender lens in order for peacebuilding to recognize and include women as full and equal partners with men in post-conflict societies. At the same time, it is important to apply a gender perspective to the

peacebuilding enterprise itself and the actors and organizations engaged in it. Improving gender sensitivity in that structure will increase the chances of gender-equitable outcomes, which are potentially fundamental elements of sustainable peace in post-conflict.

The way in which gender is integral to peace, violent conflict, and development makes clear that a gendered analysis of peacebuilding – one that truly addresses the nature of power relations between women and men – is essential to preventing and mitigating new violent conflict in societies while helping them recover from current conflicts. The Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative Strategic Framework describes peacebuilding as follows:

*Peacebuilding is the effort to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict. The overarching goal of peacebuilding is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence. Ultimately, peacebuilding aims at building human security, a concept which includes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security... Peacebuilding may involve conflict prevention, conflict resolution, as well as various kinds of post-conflict activities. It focuses on the political and socio-economic context of conflict, rather than on the military or humanitarian aspects. It seeks to...institutionalize the peaceful resolution of conflicts (CIDA 2002a).*

Peaceful conflict resolution must be institutionalized to be effective. This requires a fundamental shift in cultural norms and political institutions that sanction gender discriminatory actions, whether in war or peace. There must be an institutional context supporting legal, political, security, economic, and normative frameworks consistent with sustainable peace and human security. If peacebuilding yields the institutional context, then “**reconstruction**” introduces measures that seek to operationalize that new institutional context and give life to broader peacebuilding goals. Reconstruction entails actions taken to revitalize political, economic, and social structures and institutions following conflict. It also attends to the protection of all citizens’ rights, the development of necessary human resources, and the long-term process of social integration. While peacebuilding and

reconstruction have been thought of sequentially by some writers, they are here considered to constitute simultaneous and reinforcing sets of activities with an intricate and organic relationship much as human rights principles relate to broad development goals. One cannot be done without the other. It is therefore important that all sectors of society, which are present in one way or another in all aspects of an ongoing conflict, are represented in negotiations and actions that seek to lay the foundation for peace and post-conflict reconstruction.

Having considered the definition and interaction of terms associated with gender, conflict, and peacebuilding, it is possible to begin mapping the ways in which these interactions become manifest. There are many examples of ways that women individually and collectively contribute to peacebuilding, and how women's contributions are often overlooked because they take unconventional forms, occur outside formal peace processes, and are considered extensions of women's existing gender roles. Often women themselves do not recognize their activities as part of peacebuilding efforts, because these are in areas for which women are already responsible, such as ensuring the safety of themselves and their families and accessing and providing social services (International Alert 1999). Because women lack formal political platforms, they often draw credibility and strength from a wider social base and promote their agenda at the grassroots level (International Alert 1999, Manchanda 2001). As a result, women's contributions tend to be undervalued and not readily incorporated or sought by many practitioners of peacebuilding.

Peace processes themselves have been described as including *informal activities* and *formal activities*. Informal activities include peace marches, intergroup dialogue, and the promotion of inter-cultural tolerance and understanding. Formal activities include conflict resolution, peace negotiations, reconciliation, infrastructure reconstruction, and provision of humanitarian aid. Informal activities generally involve a range of U.N. entities, regional/national/local institutions, and grassroots organizations. Formal activities are conducted by political leaders, the military, international and regional/subregional institutions, and a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations. While women's involvement in informal activities is well documented, they are seldom included in formal activities, reflecting the fact that they are usually not represented among

decisionmakers and military leaders (U.N. 2002). This should be cause for concern since issues affecting women will not be expressed if women are not consulted by fact-finding missions or involved in peace negotiations: "Political structures, economic institutions and security sectors negotiated in peace talks will not facilitate greater equality between women and men if gender dimensions are not considered in these discussions" (U.N. 2002: 53).

Armed conflict and its aftermath affect women's lives in ways that differ from the impact on men. In most conflicts, the traditional division of civilian space – private as women's space and public as men's space – collapses. Men in communities under attack tend to abandon public spaces to avoid being conscripted, attacked, or taken hostage (Bop 2002; El-Bushra 2000). In this vacuum, women increasingly become the ones to maneuver through existing institutions (from markets to government departments) and to provide for family welfare and security, including taking on roles traditionally assigned to men (Bop 2002; El-Bushra 2000; Meintjes 2002; and others). Women, being perceived as "not political," are more able to access information and pressure authorities to provide services to minimize the impacts of conflict on the civilian population (Manchanda 2001). They are also able to occupy spaces to develop community-level initiatives for peace across ethnic and national identities (Mladjenovic 2002; Manchanda 2001).

On the other hand, women as symbols of community and/or ethnic identity may become the targets of extensive sexual violence. In this case, the public space becomes similar to the private space of the home in which women often experience daily violence (Kelly 2000). Some men who are unable to "protect" their women during a conflict avenge their "thwarted masculinity" by attacking female members of the household. In violent conflict settings, the experience of generalized violence outside the home becomes fused with the incidence of violence within the home and leads to increased levels of domestic violence observed in both conflict and post-conflict settings (Pillay 2002). Recent international measures classifying gender-based crimes committed in the context of war as war crimes and crimes against humanity have begun to address such violence occurring in the public sphere, often between strangers. There has also been international concern expressed for the apparent increase in familial domestic violence in post-conflict settings. However, little attention has been given to

the way in which conflict-related circumstances influence the continuation of violence within the home, or to the many forms such violence can take. This gap suggests the need for new research to determine how positive norms constructed around issues of violence in the public sphere might be applied to similar acts of violence in the private sphere. Further inquiry is also needed to identify effective responses to domestic violence in post-conflict settings, especially given the limited options available within a weakened institutional infrastructure.

The 1999 WomenWatch on-line working group on women and armed conflict (as one of the critical areas in the run-up to the Beijing +5 review) stressed that the priorities and roles of women in peacebuilding differ from those of men, although there was no clear agreement on those differences (U.N. Commission on the Status of Women [CSW] 2000). Most participants felt that it was difficult to categorize women in any one way, whether as peace activist, victim, or warrior. Some participants felt that women's special strengths in peacebuilding include a greater capacity for empathy, having often been victims of discrimination themselves. Others suggested women have fewer vested interests in existing political systems (perhaps related to their experience of political marginalization and exclusion) and are therefore more likely to pursue peace rather than fight to sustain a given political structure. As frequent victims of conflict, women also feel the effects of conflict on their families, making them more likely to work for peace, though some suggested this may alternatively contribute to the perpetuation of hatred when atrocities have been committed.

An extensive literature explores the interconnections between the roles of women and men in conflict situations and the politics of identity and agency. Literature on Rwanda, Mozambique, Palestine, and Sri Lanka shows that women may be victims, but they are also often active participants as soldiers, informants, couriers, sympathizers, and supporters. Whether women's active roles in violent conflicts are the result of free choice, male subjugation, or personal desperation in the absence of other alternatives, the possibility of women's participation in violence raises many issues related to gender roles and identity. Individuals constantly negotiate between the primacy of gender identity and the assertion of other social identities of ethnicity, class, and religion. Thus, women in situations of ethnic or religious conflict may reinterpret

their gender oppression in ethnic or religious terms. For example, Biljana Plavsic, the former Bosnian Serb President, was indicted for her role in genocide and crimes against humanity during the Bosnian war in 1992, convinced at the time that the actions were necessary for survival and self-defense (see [www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/plaii000407e.htm](http://www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/plaii000407e.htm)). Similarly, Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, the former Rwandan minister of family and women's affairs, has been charged with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes (including incitement to rape) for her part in the atrocities of 1994 in Rwanda (Landesman 2002). In these two cases, the women's self-identification with their ethnicity was more powerful than their identities as women.

Since women's bodies are often seen as both symbolic and physical markers of community identity, sexual violence in conflict – particularly when purposely coupled with the risk of HIV infection – may be seen as humiliation of the entire community, leading some activists to justify a violent response by women (Guhathakurta 2001; Sideris 2002). In democratic struggles, women may put aside the gender question as a “luxury” not relevant in a situation of extreme oppression based on class or ethnicity. On the other hand, in struggles/conflicts driven by an ideology of eradicating inequality and oppression, the active participation of women is generally higher, upturning gender roles and opening the space for a post-conflict redefinition of gender relations and gender norms (Bop 2002; Manchanda 2001).

Understanding gender norms is critical in the peacebuilding process. For example, leaders within a conflict situation often resort to singling out gender-specific traits based on an assumed common essence shared by all women or all men, an example of essentialism applied to gender relations. Literature has documented the extent to which essentialist characteristics of femininity and masculinity are brought into war discourse to mobilize support (Enloe various; Cockburn 1998, 1999). In the fluid nature of current conflicts, there is often no clear demarcation between the battlefield and the home front. Thus, the consequences of essentialist ideology are even more deadly and widespread, as evidenced by incidents of systematic ethnic cleansing, rampant sexual violence, and specific targeting of women, children, and the elderly. Equally disturbing, however, is that peace activists also utilize essentialist characteristics of feminine and masculine identity. They often draw on the symbolic

### Box 1: El Salvador: The Neglect of Women's Issues at the Peace Table

Despite the participation of women in the conflict and of high-ranking female FMLN officials in the peace process, women's rights received little explicit attention during El Salvador's peace negotiations in the early 1990s. The accords succeeded in ending the war, but they failed to adequately address social and economic inequalities, including gender equality. What factors contributed to the marginalization of women's issues in the Salvadoran peace process?

While the Salvadoran peace process received accolades internationally and from leaders on both sides of the conflict, women's rights advocates criticized the process for marginalizing and discriminating against women. In her assessment of gender-based discrimination in the Salvadoran peace process, Emma Näslund (1999) identifies specific features of the peace accords that ignore or discriminate against women. She argues that credit and technical assistance programs established by the peace accords, as well as the accords' recommended measures to alleviate social costs of structural adjustment programs, do not include and attend to women's needs. Näslund and others have also faulted the Salvadoran peace process with discriminating against women during the land redistribution process, particularly during the early stages.

Luciak (2001) notes that none of the few high-ranking female FMLN commanders who participated in peace negotiations made formal, public demands that women's issues be part of the peace talks. Moser and Clark (2001) contend that one reason female ex-combatants' issues were not made explicit in the negotiations is because there were no precise and official estimates of the number of women fighting in El Salvador's civil war. Without credible evidence of women's substantial involvement, women's rights advocates had difficulty demanding more support and recognition for female ex-combatants' needs. Ideological, structural, legal, participatory, and budgetary barriers have also been cited as contributing to the discrimination against women during the peace process (Näslund 1999). For example, traditional conceptualizations of gender roles, which assume that programs targeting "household heads" and families will necessarily benefit women, contributed to the prevalence of gender-neutral terminology used throughout the peace accords. Women's needs for land tenure and credit after the war tended to be eclipsed by concerns about land scarcity and other more "urgent" economic situations.

*Sources: Luciak 2001; Moser and Clark 2001a; Näslund 1999.*

power of "Mother" and "War Widow" to mobilize support for dialogue across ethnic and nationalist division. This strategy supports an implicit polarized framework where men are equated with war and aggression, and women are equated with peace and nurturing.

Such polarization, however, denies the diversity of experiences and opinions among women or men as groups and limits the relevance of an essentialist perspective. Peace initiatives that are based on essentialist strategies may find that the symbols (e.g., of "mother" or "widow") deployed by the peace movement itself are co-opted for purposes of militarism (Manchanda 2001). The essentialist perspective fails to explain why women's peace initiatives (within or across communities) have not been more widespread in regions with long-running civil conflict such as Israel/Palestine, Sri Lanka, or Kashmir and north-east India. Nor does essentialism account for the complex interaction between gender, ethnicity, class, and/or political identities. Understanding such patterns requires further examination of successful or newly emerging peace initiatives to identify the

mechanisms and processes used to negotiate such complex interactions.

Many issues still need to be addressed to identify strategies for sustainable peace. Central among these is moving to a more nuanced understanding of the norms of violence and power. Psychology literature exploring the dynamics of violence points to the importance of the issue of multiple identities, the impact of power and its potential loss, and the interactions between these (Connell 1995; Moore, 1994). Both women and men are capable of resorting to violence in order to reassert control over their daily lives. Some have suggested that in the end, men's identity may emerge as more damaged from a period of conflict and that if during reconstruction no attention is paid to alternative positive masculinities in opposition to essentialist masculinity, the reassertion of traditional gender norms and roles is inevitable (Sideris 2002).

While the gendered experience of conflict may lay the basis for innovative efforts by women to build peace, there needs to be a fundamental questioning of social

norms on violence, gender, and power to explore transformative alternatives for sustainable peace. This should include careful examination of gender-differentiated outcomes of peace processes and the gendered (or often, gender-blind) orientation of the international peacebuilding community. Illustrative “feminist monitoring” questions posed by Enloe (2002) include the following:

- ▶ Do people who can claim to have been “combatants” in either the insurgents’ or state’s armed forces carry extra weight when they speak to officials or to the public, *and* does that differential weighting privilege certain sorts of manliness and marginalize most women, regardless of their presumed femininity?
- ▶ To what extent do those people who wield militarized power become, in everyone else’s eyes, the people to whom one must gain access if one is going to have an impact on public affairs?
- ▶ To what extent does a given officialdom or a general public assume that security (especially “national security”) refers to militarized security?
- ▶ To what extent does the new (internationally mentored) government’s budget allocate disproportionate public funds to that nascent government’s security forces?
- ▶ To what extent is the status of a local woman in the postwar setting defined by influential decision-makers chiefly in terms of their perceptions of women’s roles during the recent war?
- ▶ Which organizations active in the post-conflict society’s reconstruction are the most patriarchal? What area of authority, what resources for the remaking of the society, do these organizations control? Whose senses of inclusion and well-being do these organizations’ operations most perpetuate?

There is general consensus that the needs and experiences of women are distinct from those of men in conflict and post-conflict settings, and that these distinctions reflect gender roles and relations (Gardam and Jarvis 2001; Lindsey 2001b; Sørensen 1998; U.N. 2002; UNIFEM 2002). There is also growing evidence of ways in which the peacebuilding enterprise itself is a gendered, “masculinized” construct that mirrors the militarized masculinities characteristic of the conflicts being addressed (Cockburn and Zarkov 2002; Jacobs, Jacobson, and Marchbank 2000; Skjelsbæk and Smith 2001). The literature emphasizes that while women represent a population that is severely and distinctly victimized by conflict, the tendency to disproportionately portray women as victims perpetuates inaccurate assumptions about their contributions to war and peace. Women are not solely passive victims; they are often powerful agents. Focusing on the victimization of women while neglecting the significant roles women have played in conflict and post-conflict may undermine their future potential as key participants in formal peace processes. Given this reality, the ability of international peacebuilding policy to incorporate a gender perspective takes on greater significance.



### III. The Changing International Context Since 1998

The international context of peacebuilding policies and, to a lesser extent, programs, has evolved markedly since the mid-1990s. This evolution reflects the changing nature of conflict situations and complex emergencies, as well as the way in which nation states and international organizations continue to redefine the roles of various actors engaged in or affected by the conflict. It also coincides with two important and interacting shifts in thinking directly related to international development. The first is a growing understanding of the meaning and role of gender and gender relations in development, reflected in a widely accepted change of focus from “women in development” (WID) to “gender and development” (GAD) and the complementary notion of empowerment. This gives greater attention to the power relations between men and women in all spheres, from development projects to the workplace and home. It also recognizes that institutions themselves often inadequately represent women’s interests, obstructing progress toward gender equality (Goetz 1997; World Bank 2001).

The second important shift in thinking concerns global understanding of human rights and their practical relevance to development. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights was a turning point in the articulation of actions by state and non-state actors that contribute to the realization of all human rights. Special attention to violence against women as a violation of human rights, reinforced by debates at subsequent world conferences in Cairo (on population and development) and Beijing (on women), contributed to a better understanding of the relationship among gender, power, human rights, security, and development. (Similarly, ongoing efforts are exploring the intersection of gender, human rights, empowerment, and HIV/AIDS, which is especially cogent in conflict-affected settings.) Understanding this multifaceted relationship and defining a normative framework for the formulation of national and international policies continues to be the focus of efforts to establish a rights-based approach to development (OHCHR 2002). This bears particular relevance to the pursuit of gender equity in post-conflict settings.

Recognizing the policy context established earlier by Sørensen (1998), it is possible to distinguish two policy-relevant periods since then: one from 1998 until

October 2000, when the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1325; and the other from October 2000 to the present. In many respects, 2000 marked a major shift in the international community’s policy stance toward issues of women and gender in relation to peace and security concerns. In sync with this policy evolution, a wide array of national and international non-governmental organizations have altered their programs and procedures as they, too, grapple with the intersection of gender, human rights, and development processes in post-conflict settings. Such organizations are often on the front line of efforts to translate policy into practice and thus play an important role in bringing the new policy discourse to life. However, a full review of their presence and effect in the field constitutes a separate line of inquiry beyond the scope of this paper.

#### *1998-2000: Preface to Resolution 1325*

Modern wars have increasingly targeted civilian populations, blurring the long-held distinction between the battlefield and the home front. As the violence of modern conflict invades the private sphere and includes that as a legitimate target, the lives and well-being of civilians – to a large extent women and children – are threatened with greater insecurity. Over the course of the last century, civilians have constituted an increasing share of total casualties, rising from 10 percent during World War I to 50 percent in World War II, and currently accounting for nearly 90 percent in contemporary conflicts (Karamé 2001). In addition, current conflicts and the terror they generate rend the fabric of everyday life and the economic and social systems of care and support. Given women’s traditional responsibility in most societies as day-to-day caregivers for their families and communities, the impact of conflict has distinct consequences based on gender (Cockburn 2001b). The increasing civilian focus of war and the frequent duality of women’s roles as both victims and participants have led to a growing awareness of the gender-differentiated experiences of, and responses to conflict. At the same time, international awareness of specific offenses committed against women during conflict, including the rising incidence of sexual violence, has sharpened global concern and galvanized women’s activism to challenge violence and call for equal representation in peacebuilding and reconstruction.

A full review of the international legal context and historical events in relation to women and armed conflict within the U.N. framework is beyond the scope of this paper, and has been summarized well by others (Gardam and Jarvis 2001; Mazurana and McKay 1999; Sørensen 1998; U.N. 2002). The following are key highlights. In 1998, international law for the first time recognized rape and other sexual violence as crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population. In 1999, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, allowing for individual as well as group complaints to the committee monitoring implementation of the convention and providing a broad channel for registering human rights violations experienced by women on the basis of gender. While such measures demonstrate progress in recognizing and responding to the impact of armed conflict on women, these and other international humanitarian laws rarely consider conflict's impact on women beyond sexual violence (Gardam and Jarvis 2001).

Sørensen (1998), in her review of gender roles in post-conflict peacebuilding, issued a call for more gender-specific data and gender-sensitive analyses. At that time, major international institutions such as the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) and the World Bank were just establishing new guidelines for their respective institutional responses to conflict, including the significant challenges associated with new forms of intrastate violence and complex emergencies. This policy review occurred in the wake of the Beijing conference in 1995, which identified women and armed conflict as a critical area of concern, and the 1998 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which included that area as a focus of discussion. Various U.N. meetings around the world preparing for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2000 also highlighted women and conflict for review at the regional level.

The OECD conceives of peacebuilding as a mix of immediate and long-term responses undertaken before, during, and after conflict, built upon principles of respect for human rights, participatory processes, strengthening public institutions, and strengthening systems of security and justice. The organization has urged that gender should receive prime consideration

in the context of relief and development assistance in conflict situations. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) established guidelines in 1997 articulating how aid agencies themselves play a role in providing resources, and suggesting how that might influence the development of roles for women and men and the establishment of new networks of social relations. The guidelines instruct relief and rehabilitation programming to incorporate gender analysis as standard practice, with attention to the specific needs of women (particularly those in single-headed households), and when possible, to build on and support the distinct coping and survival strategies of women and men (OECD 1997). The OECD-DAC developed related guidelines in 1998, focusing specifically on gender equality and women's empowerment in development generally (not limited to conflict situations). These guidelines speak to the increased number of armed conflicts addressed by DAC members through conflict prevention, resolution, rehabilitation, and reconstruction activities. They underscore the participation of both women and men as necessary to processes of peacebuilding and development and suggest that DAC members can reflect the objective of gender equality and women's empowerment in various ways. For example, they can support the participation of women and women's organizations in decisionmaking and conflict resolution; reinforce international standards and norms of human rights; and use participatory processes to ensure that women's experiences and needs, as well as those of men, are an integral part of reconstruction processes (OECD 1998).

The 2001 supplement to the OECD-DAC guidelines on conflict, peace, and development co-operation reflects evolution in thinking about the role of gender in international peacebuilding activities. By recognizing war itself as a gendered activity and noting the diverse roles women may play, including as bridge-builders and peacemakers, the DAC calls for greater inclusion in peacebuilding of the skills and initiatives women have demonstrated that reflect collaboration and the principle of community action across ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other divides. Donors continue to redefine their policies for conflict reduction strategies to include relevant gender perspectives and identify requirements for specific attention to women or men (OECD 2001).

A similar progression of thinking is found in recent policy statements by the Group of Eight (G8) on matters of conflict prevention. The G8 Miyazaki

Initiatives for Conflict Prevention in 2000 considered the relationship between conflict and development, recognizing the G8 mandate to extend economic and development cooperation to help create resilient societies that promote inclusion and opportunity for “all citizens” (G8HSG 2000). By 2001, the G8 recognized that women are not only victims in conflict situations but also serve as negotiators, peacemakers, and advisors whose efforts are vital to sustainable peace (G8FMM 2001). The G8 leaders have stressed the importance of women’s full and equal participation in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding; demobilization and reintegration programs that consider the specific needs of female ex-combatants and their dependents; gender sensitive training for all members of peace-related operations; inclusion of women in operational posts at all levels; and integration of a gender perspective and women’s participation in the development, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of bilateral and multilateral assistance programs.

While the World Bank’s mandate excludes it from many aspects of peacemaking, peacekeeping, disarmament, and humanitarian relief, it has defined a framework for involvement in post-conflict reconstruction (World Bank 1997, 1998). The Bank characterizes most current conflicts as “complex emergencies” that are political in nature, manifestly violent, and rapidly changing. The Bank’s assistance has had two overall objectives: to facilitate the transition from war to sustainable peace, and to support the resumption of economic and social development (Kreimer *et al.* 1998). Thus, post-conflict reconstruction requires interventions aimed at rebuilding the physical infrastructure and resuscitating economic, governance, and social institutions. Such interventions, especially those concerning institutions, must attend to the norms and power relations that influence their construction and operation. The Bank has considered the role of women in rebuilding social capital in particular, calling for attention to their potential as strong community leaders who can facilitate the rebuilding process. It has also sought to analyze the unequal power relations underlying social organizations to ensure that women are not further marginalized by relief and reconstruction interventions (e.g., in terms of women’s property rights in post-conflict reforms).

On a more operational level, several of the U.N. agencies and affiliated committees have developed gender-sensitive guidelines for conflict-related inter-

ventions, often as part of a system-wide U.N. initiative to mainstream gender throughout all operations. As far back as 1991, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) adopted guidelines on the protection of refugee women to ensure equitable protection and assistance activities. A recent assessment credits those guidelines with successes such as improved capacities for gender-sensitive refugee status determinations; more vigorous use of national laws for enforcing protection and human rights; improved registration mechanisms that allow each individual to obtain his or her own card; increased enrollment of girls in schools; direct involvement of women in food distribution; measures to organize refugee women and include them in camp management; wider availability of reproductive health services; and safe houses and counseling services for victims of trauma or violence (Women’s Commission 2002b). While the assessment indicated the need to update the guidelines and implement them more consistently, it cited significant progress in both protection and assistance activities, suggesting that other programs might be improved by understanding and incorporating such a gender-sensitive approach.

Likewise, the International Labor Office (ILO) issued gender guidelines for employment and skills training in conflict-affected countries to help mainstream gender issues in policies and programs. The guidelines emphasize the need to consider the different ways in which women and men experience conflict; the impact of conflict on gender relations and identities; the constraints and opportunities created by conflict; and the resulting implications for reintegration, reconstruction, and peacebuilding (ILO 1998). In a pathbreaking way, the ILO sought to address women not only as beneficiaries but as active agents and contributors to socioeconomic development, and to consider how the impact of conflict on men affects women and gender dynamics in the household and community. Deeper analysis and expanded application of such principles can be found in the ILO’s InFocus Programme on crisis response and reconstruction.

No discussion of issues concerning women and gender in conflict and peacebuilding since the early 1990s could avoid mention of the work supported by UNIFEM. Under the general rubric of governance, peace, and security, the agency has worked closely with local organizations working to define and advocate for women’s interests in societies affected by conflict to strengthen women’s leadership; leverage

political and financial support for women; forge partnerships among NGOs, governments, the U.N. system, and the private sector; and support pilot projects testing innovations for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. Through nearly a decade, UNIFEM has helped document the impact of armed conflict on women, improve protection and assistance for women, lobby for gender perspectives in

peace processes, and promote gender justice in post-conflict settings. Notable examples of ways in which UNIFEM and its partners have made important progress in the field include the mobilization and participation of women in post-conflict politics in East Timor (Box 2) and the inclusion of women's demands in the peace agreement negotiated for Burundi (Box 3).

## Box 2: Increasing Women's Participation in Politics: Learning from the Case of East Timor

In East Timor, women assumed active roles in their country's liberation movement and have been key actors in the transition to an independent nation. East Timorese women comprised 27% of the seats on the Constituent Assembly, which drafted the nation's new constitution in March 2002. The new constitution contains articles confirming equal rights for women and men. According to the US State Department (2002), three of the top positions in the ETPA cabinet are held by women: the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance, and the Secretary of Commission on Planning. The struggle for women's equal rights and justice for female victims of war in East Timor continues, however, and the percentage of women in government still does not correspond to their percentage of population.

What factors contributed to the progress that has been made to advance women's rights in East Timor? East Timorese women's organizations played crucial roles during and after the nation's independence movement. Upon winning independence in 1999, women's organizations in East Timor immediately began lobbying for the participation of women in nation-building and the full integration of women's issues into the new constitution. Women's groups like FOKUPERS and the East Timorese Women's Network (REDE) pushed for initiatives to advance women's rights, such as the affirmative action campaign to establish a quota of 30% women members of the Constituent Assembly (which became the National Parliament when the country became independent in May 2002). The quota was ultimately rejected, but women's representation in the Assembly ended up being very close to this target. Women's groups later formed the Timor Loro Sae's Women's Political Caucus, which presented a "Women's Charter of Rights" to the Assembly in August 2001. The Charter is comprised of ten articles outlining women's and children's human rights for inclusion in the constitution (La'o Hamutuk Bulletin 2001). In May 2002, women's lobbying led to the appointment of a gender advisor to the prime minister whose charge includes ensuring gender mainstreaming in government institutions. Her Office for the Promotion of Equality aims to empower women in government and civil service as well as women in civil society at large.

International human rights instruments have provided the necessary legal framework for the advancement of women's rights in East Timor. In June 2000, the first Congress of East Timorese Women produced a Platform for Action for Timor Loro Sae that incorporated key points from the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and other international agreements (REDE 2001). The East Timor Platform outlined targets and guidelines to achieve gender equity in governance and development.

International organizations and women's rights advocates also played a critical supporting part. For example, UNIFEM conducted a series of workshops to train East Timorese women to participate in the August 2001 elections for the Constituent Assembly. The workshops trained nearly 145 participants in democratic principles of governance, women's rights, leadership development, and the national independence movement (UNIFEM 2001). Inspired by Timorese women's organizations and their struggle for women's rights, over 125 women's organizations and activists worldwide signed a statement in May 2002 calling for an international tribunal to bring to justice those responsible for gender-based war crimes in East Timor (ETAN 2002). In general, international organizations and women's rights advocates have helped keep Timorese women's issues an international peace and development priority, and have provided significant support to Timorese women's organizations.

**Sources:** *East Timor Action Network/ETAN (2002), "Women Worldwide Call for an International Tribunal For East Timor," Press Release, May 13, 2002.* *La'o Hamutuk Bulletin (2001), "Campaign to Support Women's Rights in the Constitution," 2(5):2.* *REDE Feto Timor Lorosa'e (2001), "Women's Issues in East Timor," Briefing Paper to Donors Meeting, Canberra, June 2001, online at: [www.geocities.com/etngoforum/wn.htm](http://www.geocities.com/etngoforum/wn.htm).* *UNIFEM (2001), "Training for Women Candidates in East Timor's First Election," revised October 3, 2001, online at: [www.unifem-eseasia.org/easttimor/easttimor1.htm](http://www.unifem-eseasia.org/easttimor/easttimor1.htm).* *US State Department (2002), Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2001, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, March 4, 2002.*

UNIFEM also played a key role in supporting the global dialogue involving NGOs, academics, and policymakers that occurred in the period leading up to the historic U.N. Security Council open session on women, peace, and security held in October 2000. For example, UNIFEM helped document and publicize the fact that women's traditional underrepresentation in decisionmaking has extended to the internal hierarchy of international institutions responsible for overseeing peace processes where, until recently, none of the U.N. special representatives and envoys appointed to countries and regions of conflict were women (Naraghi-Anderlini 2000). In work bolstered by activities and analyses provided by organizations such as International Alert, ACORD, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, and others, UNIFEM and the U.N. Division for the Ad-

vancement of Women laid the groundwork for policy debates at the highest levels to prod the international system to address obvious programmatic gaps despite widespread commitment to gender mainstreaming and the continuing marginalization of women in peacebuilding and reconstruction (Naraghi-Anderlini 2000, 2001; International Alert various; ACORD various).

In May 2000, the articulation of the gender connections in peacebuilding and the importance of official action in policy and programming reached a critical momentum. In that month, the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations organized a seminar, "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations" in Windhoek, Namibia. At its conclusion, participants declared: "In order to ensure the effectiveness of peace support

### Box 3: Burundi Women Struggle to Make Their Hopes for Peace Heard

After years of being categorically excluded from official peace talks in Burundi, women finally got the breakthrough they had been struggling for: to add their voices to the peace process. Just a few months before the planned signing of the Arusha Peace Accord, a team of U.N. experts was invited by the Arusha peace negotiators and their chief facilitator, Nelson Mandela, to discuss integrating women and women's rights into the peace process. The U.N. experts advised the 19 political parties on gender issues and the importance of including women in peace and development processes.

This briefing led to the All-Party Burundian Women's Peace Conference, which was held parallel to the official peace talks and attended by 50 women delegates appointed by each of the 19 political parties. The goal of the conference was to discuss gender concerns in Burundi's peace process and generate a set of recommendations for conference participants to present to their male counterparts participating in the official peace talks. Participants issued a final declaration in July 2000 that announced their support of the Arusha Peace Accord and their disapproval of women's very late inclusion in the peace process. Their recommendations to integrate women's rights into Burundi's peace process included establishing legal mechanisms to eliminate gender-based discrimination and impunity for gender-based war crimes; establishing quotas to ensure at least 30% of government offices are held by women; ensuring increased protection for women and child refugees; and guaranteeing women's rights to property, land, and inheritance (UNIFEM 2000a).

The official peace negotiators included the majority of the women's proposals in the final draft of the Arusha Peace Accord, which was signed in August 2000. Negotiators did not include the proposal for a 30% quota for women's political participation, but recognized the importance of improving women's representation in government. UNIFEM Executive Director, Noeleen Heyzer, praised the Arusha accord as "one of the strongest in recognizing the centrality of women's rights" (UNIFEM 2000b). A testament to the success of the women's struggle to be included in the peace process was the election of 16 women to Burundi's Transitional Assembly in January 2002.

Women's rights advocates and peace activists alike contend that women's absence from the peace table constrains national development and social and economic recovery. "The process of rebuilding a society emerging from war requires equal contributions from women and men," says UNIFEM's Heyzer (Zoll 2000). While it is widely acknowledged that much progress has yet to be made to ensure women's equality in Burundi, the inclusion of women and their voices is a signal for hope in their nation's struggle for peace.

**Sources:** UNIFEM (2000a), "Mandela Ushers Women into Burundi Peace Process" (Press Release, June 21, 2000). UNIFEM (2000b), "Consensus Reached on Women's Centrality to a New Burundi" (Press Release, August 16, 2000). Miriam Zoll (2000), "Women Join Peace Process in Burundi" (Choices Magazine, UNDP, December 2000).

operations, the principles of gender equality must permeate the entire mission, at all levels, thus ensuring the participation of women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries in all aspects of the peace process – from peacekeeping, reconciliation and peace-building, towards a situation of political stability in which women and men play an equal part in the political and social development of their country” (U.N. 2000c). This conceptualization of peace operations linked gender roles and identities of women and men to a long-term perspective of peacebuilding and reconstruction, counter to what traditionalists in the peacebuilding community had argued in the past. The seminar also produced the “Namibia Plan of Action” that offers a blueprint for improving peace support operations at all phases by incorporating a gender perspective throughout. This, along with related discussions in a Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly for the five-year review of progress since the Beijing conference, helped set the stage for the Security Council’s consideration of women, peace, and security.

### **2000-2002: Security Council Resolution 1325 and Beyond**

Five years after the launching of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, there was still little observed progress in fulfillment of the benchmarks and commitments established with regard to women and armed conflict. Non-governmental organizations during the Beijing +5 review process noted the continuing lack of attention to peace and tolerance education, or to training in non-violent conflict resolution; the need for research and policy development on conflict prevention, gender-sensitive indicators, post-conflict programming, and women’s peacebuilding efforts; the failure to address the proliferation of small arms and landmines that harm women and children disproportionately; and the vacillation in official language concerning internally displaced persons (Naraghi-Anderlini 2001). In addition, there was continuing resistance to women’s involvement in decisionmaking related to peace, security, and conflict issues or to acknowledge their contributions to the field, whether through formal or informal channels.

Such criticisms helped sharpen the focus of issues under consideration by the U.N. Security Council in its open debate on women, peace, and security in October 2000. With women’s human rights receiving prime attention on the U.N. agenda that year, and with

heightened concern for the status of women in conflict-affected settings such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Rwanda, the Security Council session reflected an unprecedented level of political and popular interest in the issues. Through the leadership of supportive governments and the combined efforts of U.N. and NGO coalitions, the session closed with the passage of Resolution 1325 (see Annex) that sets a new threshold of action for all governments as well as the U.N. system at large:

*Resolution 1325 is a watershed political framework that makes women – and a gender perspective – relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning refugee camps and peacekeeping operations and reconstructing war-torn societies. It makes the pursuit of gender equality relevant to every single Council action, ranging from mine clearance to elections to security sector reform (UNIFEM 2002).*

The resolution, which is effectively international law, spells out four interrelated areas requiring the attention of all parties (UN, states, non-state actors, civil society) engaged in issues of peace and security: participation of women in decisionmaking and peace processes; inclusion of gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping; the protection of women; and gender mainstreaming in U.N. reporting systems and programmatic implementation (Naraghi-Anderlini 2001). Now two years after the adoption of the resolution, efforts are underway by International Alert, UNIFEM, and others to identify key issues and monitor progress against the provisions of the resolution and to develop it into an advocacy tool for addressing security issues relating to women and peacebuilding.

While it is too soon to judge the full impact of Resolution 1325, there are many indications and impressions that may demonstrate areas of initial progress, help identify gaps in the understanding or application of the principles, or suggest areas requiring further research and advocacy. Two comprehensive reports recently issued by the U.N. provide an initial review of the resolution’s effectiveness in guiding current peace operations and field-level experiences (U.N. 2002; UNIFEM 2002). Additional country-specific assessments, often referring to recommendations contained in the Beijing Platform for Action as guidelines, have been conducted by a range of NGOs and academics

similarly seeking to document any gains and expose critical gaps where additional policy attention and programmatic intervention may be required (ACORD various; Corrin 2000, 2001; Lyth 2001; Womankind Worldwide 2002).

Before reviewing gains and gaps since Resolution 1325, it is important to establish the way in which “gender mainstreaming” – the much-cited goal of efforts undertaken in association with the resolution – is defined by the U.N. and used in relation to notions of gender and gender identities outlined above. Gender mainstreaming was defined by the U.N. Economic and Social Council in 1997 as “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated” (U.N. 2002: 4). In the context of conflict and post-conflict situations, gender mainstreaming depends upon recognizing and working in response to the different experiences of women and men related to conflict and peacebuilding.

Gender mainstreaming thus relates directly to principles associated with the elimination of gender-based discrimination. However, many of the institutional frameworks and operations of peacebuilding and reconstruction fail to address underlying gender roles and associated power dynamics that lay the basis for institutionalized gender discrimination. In many cases, “gender” and “gender perspectives” have become shorthand terms for women and women-specific interventions. While gender mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-focused policies and programs, these should be seen as adjuncts, not a substitute.

There are opposing views concerning the appropriateness of timing for attempts to build equitable gender relations in post-conflict settings. Some argue that the disruption of traditions and communities by conflict may open new post-conflict opportunities for women. However, others caution that addressing gender equity in the unstable post-conflict environment is likely to be an exercise in futility. Since many peace processes have adopted a superficial orientation toward gender

and restrained their program focus to selected women-specific programs, it is difficult to say whether failure to achieve greater gender equity is a result of poor timing or a lack of resources dedicated to revealing and altering discriminatory norms and institutional practices. Further consideration of this issue will be given below.

Despite ambivalence about considering gender in post-conflict reconstruction, some sections of the peacebuilding community – most notably the major agencies of the U.N. system – have undertaken efforts to revise policies and design programs in order to respond to women’s specific needs during conflict and reconstruction, using a gender perspective that acknowledges and (occasionally) addresses men’s gender roles as well as women’s. By following the assessment contained in the Secretary-General’s report on women, peace, and security (U.N. 2002), this trend can be seen in the following areas:

- ▶ **The international legal framework:** There have been notable advances toward a legal framework responsive to the experiences of women and girls during armed conflict and its aftermath, particularly in areas of sexual violence. The inclusion of rape during conflict as a crime against humanity has already been cited above. International law has also been advanced in areas of reparations for victims of conflict and protection of refugees and internally displaced women and girls. Much of this gain has been achieved with contributions from the women’s human rights movement, traced from the adoption of CEDAW in 1979 to the international conferences on human rights and on women in the 1990s and on up to the advocacy surrounding the adoption of Resolution 1325 (Gardam and Davis 2001). However, it remains to be seen how effective the new international tribunals and other justice mechanisms will be in applying such laws and bringing those charged with crimes to justice.
- ▶ **Peace processes:** In the parlance of the U.N., peacebuilding usually includes temporary catalytic peacebuilding and facilitating mechanisms. As part of such efforts, the U.N. Department of Political Affairs (DPA) has engaged in political education of local representatives and leaders and in training human rights monitors, including women in both areas. Through various bodies

including UNIFEM, DPA, and the Division for the Advancement of Women, the U.N. has actively promoted and supported women's activities in formal and informal peace processes, helping to bring women's concerns to the peace table in some of the most recently ended conflicts. Examples include training for women in Kosovo to participate actively in economic and institutional restructuring of the province, and support for the Afghan Women's National Consultation held in Kabul in March 2002 to involve women in the long-term peace and reconstruction process.

- ▶ **Peacekeeping operations:** As a broad area covering diverse activities such as human rights monitoring, police functions, creation of state administrative structures, conduct of elections, repatriation of refugees, and delivery of humanitarian aid, peacekeeping operations can have a variety of gender-related impacts and offer a number of points of entry for including gender as a concern. Among other things, progress in this area has included the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations' (DPKO) integration of gender perspectives into training modules for states contributing troops and police and the development of an in-mission training package on gender and peacekeeping geared to civilians as well as the military and police. The latter seeks to inform peacekeepers of how the relationships between men and women and their gender roles and responsibilities are changed by the experience of conflict; to develop their skills to recognize the different needs, capacities, and expectations of women and men in the host population; and heighten their personal awareness of the gender implications of their actions. Similarly, the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom recently launched a gender training initiative, notable for its coverage of the issues and ease of accessibility, for military and civilian personnel to help integrate a gender perspective in peace support operations.

Additionally, gender units established in two large multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and East Timor in 1999 have led to the installation of gender advisers in 2002 to support national efforts of self-government, while gender advisers and specialists have also been assigned to four other peacekeeping operations, setting a promising trend that merits long-term monitoring

to determine the ultimate impact. The DPKO has also established codes of conduct for peacekeeping personnel in interactions with the local population to address concerns about exploitation, abuse, or harassment.

Despite such gains, there are continued reports of inadequate resources for such initiatives (including gender units, advisers, and their operating costs) and ongoing problems concerning gender imbalance in peacekeeping personnel. Given the breadth of activities encompassed by peacekeeping operations, a careful review of activities and policies might suggest key areas for further research and monitoring. Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping, with examples of best practices and lessons learned, will be included in the DPKO's forthcoming *Handbook on Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations* and may suggest starting points for such evaluative research.

- ▶ **Humanitarian operations:** Humanitarian operations target vulnerable groups, and these operations have been among the first to consider women's needs and access to resources. While many humanitarian activities and services are gender-sensitive, such interventions may in reality be unwittingly reinforcing or exacerbating existing patterns of gender discrimination. Until sex-disaggregated data is available and applied more broadly to peacekeeping operations, the needs addressed through humanitarian interventions will continue to bear gender-differentiated patterns.
- ▶ **Reconstruction and rehabilitation:** A latent gender bias underlies many reconstruction initiatives since men often enjoy greater participation in public life and better access to economic resources and education than women before, during, and after conflict. Successfully recognizing and addressing this bias, and basing reconstruction on principles of human rights and non-discrimination, can help avoid perpetuating inequality and discrimination and lead to a sustainable peace that includes the participation of women and girls. In recent years, U.N. activities in Afghanistan have demonstrated the importance of gender perspectives and attention to women's needs during conflict and reconstruction, whether through policies related to general provision of international assistance or specific interventions related to health and education services. Likewise, the ILO has



sought to refine gender guidelines for employment and training programs, while the FAO is working to determine data needs for promoting gender-responsive programs and engaging women as partners in food security promotion. Despite such steps, reconstruction efforts which simply target women and their needs, while constructive in the short-term, may not adequately address underlying societal norms biased against women or adequately incorporate women's rights in new policies and institutions. Women-specific programs tend to remain under-resourced and marginalized, subordinating women's economic needs and priorities to those of men. Particularly in areas of governance and economic reconstruction, more research is required to address underlying gender issues.

- ▶ **Reintegration:** Reintegration is commonly associated with disarmament and demobilization (the three being known commonly as “DDR”). However, of the three, only reintegration has received much attention in relation to gender concerns (Farr 2002 and de Watteville 2002 being notable exceptions). Many social reintegration activities such as family reunification, health counseling, job referral, and vocational training are important for, and even targeted to, women. However, gender aspects of such programs remain ill-defined. On the other hand, many economic reintegration programs such as integrated programs for ex-combatants, land reform initiatives, and public works programs have blatantly excluded women and girls. Where training initiatives have included women and men, their relevance to individuals' experiences of the conflict or consideration of gender-differentiated access to assets and markets is often limited. Also, reintegration and resettlement programs often fail to address customary practices that erode women's right to land and other property. Despite greater awareness of ways in which women's lives are profoundly affected by reintegration activities, there has been little progress in understanding or altering the norms and institutional practices influencing women's economic reintegration since Sørensen (1998) exposed the lack of involvement of women in state-level decisionmaking about economic rehabilitation strategies. This is an area for further research.

This above synopsis from the Secretary-General's report (U.N. 2002) suggests that notable shifts in policies and programs have occurred in recent years to give greater attention to women's needs and concerns. In some respects, peacebuilding activities in more recent conflicts have benefited from lessons of earlier missions, whether concerning women's inclusion in electoral politics or participation in reconciliation forums. However, the report issued simultaneously by UNIFEM (2002) as another follow-up to Resolution 1325 exposes the grave inequalities and human rights violations that women continue to experience during war and post-conflict reconstruction despite documented gains. Resolution 1325 itself has been criticized as a document of limited practical application when designing field-level interventions and one that perpetuates the conflation of “women” and “gender,” despite its focus on gender mainstreaming in the context of peacebuilding. Additionally, there have continued to be notable failures in recent years to include gender concerns in various policy initiatives and reviews, as was the case with the “Brahimi Report” (the report of the high-level panel on United Nations peace operations) just months before the adoption of Resolution 1325.

The lack of progress in the struggle to secure gender equity and to ensure women's equal enjoyment of the benefits of peace suggests a need to question the general approach to gender mainstreaming as it is currently being conducted. While international will to address gender-based inequities in conflict and post-conflict settings is high, it has yet to be translated successfully into action. In part this is due to an uneven appreciation of the issues (including gender itself) or disagreement on priorities at national and sub-national levels of implementation. However, at a more fundamental level, although the peacebuilding community is gradually recognizing the value of gender-sensitive approaches, there remains uncertainty about how to fully incorporate gender into program design to address discriminatory practices that continue to impede women's participation in and benefit from peacebuilding and reconstruction. A new model is required to lead the field of peacebuilding in new directions so that gender roles and power relations become central components of peace processes and, ultimately, of conflict prevention.

## IV. Gender, Human Rights, and Peacebuilding

*The primary challenge in the mission is to overcome the view that gender and human rights are “soft” issues that take resources away from the “core” functions of the mission’s mandate, such as establishing a judiciary or a power authority.*

—Sherrill Whittington  
Chief, Gender Affairs Unit, UNTAET  
(Challenges Project 2002)

Much of the preceding discussion has addressed the phenomenon of gender-based discrimination, which is often heightened during periods of conflict. The erosion or collapse of legal and political institutions during conflict and their fragility during reconstruction undermine efforts to protect and promote human rights and the development of human capabilities and freedoms. The power imbalance characteristic of gender relations generates a particularly pernicious effect for women by subordinating their concerns to the reconstruction priorities established by decisionmaking systems dominated by men and male-determined issues. This subordination can occur even when principles of gender equality are ostensibly included in peacebuilding measures, as suggested by the case of Guatemala (Box 4).

Human rights were fundamental to the way in which “women and armed conflict” was framed in the Beijing Platform for Action. The emphasis on reaffirming and promoting the human rights of women and girls in all phases of conflict and post-conflict has been underscored in Resolution 1325 (paragraph 9), which refers to the Geneva Conventions, CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other human rights documents. Peacebuilding and reconstruction processes still fail to adequately address fundamental gender norms and the relations between women and men, and this, in turn, undermines human rights outcomes. Gender and human rights are intertwined and should together inform the design of alternative gender-equitable peacebuilding strategies and programs. The sexual violence that occurs repeatedly in conflict settings is a stark example of the connection between human rights and gender. It is essential to consider how a human rights framework might be employed in peacebuilding and reconstruction to understand and correct gender-based discrimi-

nation and suggest programmatic measures consistent with gender frameworks.

In relation to earlier discussion on issues of gender identity, power, and violence, a rights-based approach to development can provide the means to contest notions of unequal worth, demand that citizenship be extended to women on the basis of equality, and enhance women’s agency. While all international human rights treaties are relevant to national reconstruction, CEDAW is unique in that it transcends the traditional divide between civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights to represent a comprehensive rights framework addressing both the causes and the effects of gender inequality (Huq 2000). CEDAW recognizes the rights of women in public and private spheres, endorses the importance of both equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes, and lays out the means for identifying corrective measures based on both sex and gender differences. The interpretation and application of CEDAW and other human rights treaties rests upon national political awareness of their principles and obligations and the local formulation of claims by citizens groups, activists, social organizations, and others. To the extent that a human rights framework and its provision of state accountability vests power in the individual, it represents an important means of changing gender discriminatory social and cultural norms, which is fundamental to gender mainstreaming initiatives.

A rights-based approach to development is compatible with the goals of peacebuilding and reconstruction since both must consider the full range of sectors and issues associated with development, including civil, cultural, economic, political, and social dimensions. A human rights approach also furthers the goals of gender equity by introducing a means of accountability and supporting strategies for empowerment that give all people, including women, the power and access needed to exercise agency and influence their own destinies. Central elements of a rights framework that relate directly to peacebuilding objectives as well as greater gender equity are participation by all relevant stakeholders, transparency in national development processes, and adherence to principles of non-discrimination. In relation to issues discussed earlier, this would argue for women’s inclusion in formal as well

#### **Box 4: Guatemalan Peace Accords: Challenges to Implementing Provisions for Gender Equity**

In comparison to peace accords in El Salvador and Nicaragua, Guatemala's peace accords, signed in 1996, contain more provisions for women's rights during post-conflict reconstruction, reflecting strategies employed by women's rights activists in reaction to lessons learned from the other countries' experiences. Based on research on gender and democracy movements in Central America, Luciak (2001) argues that high-ranking female URNG officials who galvanized broad-based support from women's rights groups were also key to getting women's rights incorporated into Guatemala's peace accords. In addition, the prominent role of indigenous groups – and indigenous women's rights groups – during Guatemala's peace talks brought significant attention to the rights of women.

Despite the fact that goals for greater gender equity are integrated into Guatemala's peace accords, these provisions have not been fully implemented. According to an assessment of Guatemala five years after the peace accords were signed, the accords succeeded in ending armed conflict, but many provisions for social and economic reform – including reforms for women's rights – have not been fully implemented (Salvesen 2002). In general, the peace accords have been criticized as being overly ambitious: they address both peace and development issues and are set within an impossible four-year time frame (Salvesen 2002). Many of the provisions in the accords that address women's rights during reconstruction – such as recognizing women's undervalued economic and social contributions and fostering the participation of women in development – articulate an extensive, progressive rethinking of women's roles in society. According to Luis Pásara (2001), former legal advisor to the U.N. mission in Guatemala, “the accords were more of an intellectual product than a political compromise emerging from armed conflict.”

Another contributing impediment to realizing the accords' goals is that the left-wing guerrilla movement (URNG) that proposed many of the provisions lacked support from the broader Guatemalan society needed to negotiate more enforceable and specific provisions during peace talks (Luciak 2001). Also, the fact that the peace accords did not make URNG's demobilization dependent on the Guatemalan government's compliance with the accords meant that URNG had no leverage (after demobilization) to pressure the government to implement the provisions (Salvesen 2002).

The defeat of the 1999 referendum that would have allowed the legal reforms necessary to fully implement the peace accords also greatly compromised their implementation. Some attribute the failure of the referendum to the fact that it came so late and failed to capitalize on political momentum and international will to support new legislation immediately following the signing of the peace accords three years prior (Salvesen 2002).

The Guatemalan peace accords represent an important advancement for Guatemalan women's rights, in theory. Only with long-term political commitment and support will the provisions for gender equity translate into tangible improvements in women's lives.

*Sources: Luciak 2001; Pásara 2001; Salvesen 2002.*

as informal peace activities, and for greater recognition of women's rights in both the public and private spheres during peace negotiations and reconstruction. There is no single formula for success in applying a rights-based approach. The diversity of settings and experiences is best accommodated by local initiatives to identify and define specific human rights issues, policies, and programs (e.g., recommendations for peace negotiations generated by women's groups in Burundi, as documented on the UNIFEM web site).

Extensive work on preventing violence against women in domestic situations outside the context of conflict settings has furthered the understanding and application of human rights principles to issues associated

with gender norms and identities. In situations of domestic violence, men may direct violent behavior against women in an effort to establish or maintain household power dynamics. In such a situation, the woman is the “other.” However, in conflict settings, the external enemy becomes the “other” and the woman's identity may become part of a composite household “self.” Thus, new space for women's participation in non-traditional roles may open in both the public and private spheres, leading to new forms of empowerment and women's agency. However, the literature is full of cases in which women have experienced a regression to former gender-differentiated roles and expectations once the conflict is over and they once again become the “other” within the household.

In this situation, a human rights framework can be used to articulate patterns of gender discrimination, negate the destructive justification for distinguishing “self” and “other,” and thereby identify and seek to address social and cultural norms that lead to violations of women’s rights.

In a similar manner, work examining the relationship between masculinity and violence and the means to change masculinities (defined as the various forms of masculine identity in which many dynamics of violence take shape) can illustrate the importance of human rights in tending to gender norms. A strategy for peace may need to include a strategy of change in masculinities, “contesting the hegemony of masculinities which emphasise violence, confrontation and domination, replacing them with patterns of masculinity more open to negotiation, cooperation and equality” (Connell 2001). To achieve this, a gender-informed strategy for peace must operate in a variety of action arenas including individual development, personal life, community life, cultural institutions, workplaces, and markets (labor, capital, commodity), and be embedded in a new paradigm of “democratic” gender relations: “Democratic gender relations are those that move towards equality, nonviolence, and mutual respect between people of different genders, sexualities, ethnicities, and generations” (Connell 2001). Such a strategy, which applies to the structure and personnel of peacebuilding operations as much as the post-conflict milieu itself, would be entirely consistent with a framework for peacebuilding and reconstruction that operated from principles of fundamental human rights.

Given the kinds of human rights concerns that relate to gender roles in peacebuilding and reconstruction, it is important to consider which sections of the international treaties and conventions might be the most salient. This could well be the topic of a separate comprehensive research initiative beyond the scope of this paper, but an initial consideration of factors shaping women’s lives in conflict and post-conflict raises issues of economic and social rights, political participation, and gender-based violence. Relevant international instruments include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and CEDAW. Within those

documents, attention should be directed to those provisions which address issues of employment, political participation, access to resources (including rights to property), health, and education and training, as well as the overarching provision for non-discrimination contained in all the treaties. Particular attention might also be given to CEDAW’s articles addressing the rights of rural women, since they often suffer some of the most direct consequences of conflict and face significant challenges in the recovery period associated with reintegration, housing, and access to land. Property and land rights might be especially important given widespread discrimination (*de jure* or *de facto*) affecting women’s access to and inheritance of land and housing (Meintjes, Pillay, and Turshen 2002). Specific rights-based strategies and relevant outcome targets and indicators for poverty reduction overall have been suggested recently by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR 2002). While not articulated with a specific gender focus, these guidelines may suggest ways to assess issues of gender equity in reconstruction on a number of human rights including adequate food, health, education, decent work, housing, personal security, equal access to justice, and political participation.

An important question is the relative emphasis to be given to the rights of women as a specific group, as opposed to a general framework that emphasizes the rights of all people. Some country evidence suggests that when women’s rights are singled out in the conflict-related agenda (e.g., El Salvador), there are less enduring gains for women or for gender equity. On the other hand, when a broad human rights framework is pursued with women’s equal rights guaranteed as part of the national commitment to non-discrimination (e.g., Mozambique) (Sørensen 1998), gains are more long-term. Similarly, case studies have suggested that attending to rights-based concerns as seeds for post-conflict transformation must occur prior to reconstruction, when women are still moving into and operating within new power relations (Meintjes, Pillay, and Turshen 2002). Otherwise, post-conflict pressures to resume the status quo may lead to reconstruction plans becoming fixed by earlier prevailing gender norms, and the opportunity for societal transformation incorporating human rights to promote gender equity is lost. This broad area merits considerable further research.

## V. Key Issues for Transformative Approaches

A cursory review of the literature and practice of peacebuilding may give the impression that gender is today a greater concern in policies and programs than it was just a few years ago. The terms “gender,” “gender equality,” “gender perspectives,” and “gender frameworks” pepper international documents and discussions concerning peace operations and post-conflict programs in ways like never before. This can be judged as a good sign, to the extent that the field is absorbing the knowledge and insight proffered by academic research and analyses examining gender and the ways in which gender relations shape social, economic, and political processes at the heart of peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery.

However, the academic literature makes clear that identifying and transforming widely held norms underlying gender identities and the relations between women and men is a necessary precondition for altering the characteristic power imbalance that leads to discriminatory attitudes and practices that disadvantage women and deny their human rights. As a first step toward gender equity in post-conflict societies, peacebuilding and reconstruction initiatives should therefore avoid reinforcing damaging gender and sexual stereotypes.

Traditionally, those involved in defining and conducting peacebuilding have operated from a stance of gender neutrality, considering specific interventions to be time-bound and aimed at discrete outcomes such as the cessation of hostilities or the opening of communication channels. Programs that are gender neutral may succeed at that, yet they fail to recognize the gender-specific needs of individuals, undercutting their own effectiveness. For example, many components of security sector reform addressing police, military, and judicial institutions had until recent years been conducted without regard to gender-based concerns, contributing to a post-conflict context where issues of women’s security and human rights were often not part of the security sector agenda despite evidence of greater gender-based insecurity (e.g., increased incidence of domestic violence) in many settings. The damaging effect of the gender neutrality of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (known as the “Dayton Accords”)

provides a cautionary tale for the framers of future peace agreements (Rees 2002).

With growing awareness of war’s consequences for women in recent years, many programs have sought gender-sensitive approaches that respond to the differential needs and constraints of individuals based on their gender and sexuality. Such programs have targeted women in conflict and post-conflict settings to respond to specific needs, including health and reproductive health problems (often related to gender-based violence during the conflict), psycho-social trauma, and lack of assets to ensure secure livelihoods. Many of the policies and programs currently espoused by the United Nations and other organizations engaged in peacebuilding activities are said to be developed according to a gender-sensitive framework. The rising incidence of gender-based violence against women during war and in post-conflict settings has been one very visible factor contributing to the call for gender sensitive perspectives and gender mainstreaming throughout the international peacebuilding community. International rhetoric concerning peacebuilding now makes more frequent reference to concerns specific to women and the importance of gender sensitive frameworks for designing humanitarian interventions and peacebuilding initiatives, though the emphasis too often seems to remain on women and fails to focus adequately on men’s position in the gender equation.

The continuing evidence of gender discrimination found in conflict and post-conflict settings, and occasionally even within the structure of peace operations themselves despite the increased attention to gender, suggests that peacebuilding and reconstruction activities and the actors that conduct them have yet to grasp the nettle of the problem. Gender-sensitive approaches often fail to address the larger contextual issues behind women’s marginalization in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, which in turn can exacerbate women’s marginalization in economic, social, and political processes and undermine their well-being and quality of life. While the peacebuilding community may show greater recognition of and appreciation for the new open spaces (social, economic, political) in conflict and post-conflict settings that accommodate new roles and

opportunities for women, those open spaces often close as the dust of conflict settles. This suggests that peacebuilding, despite being arguably more gender sensitive, gives inadequate attention to the construction of gender norms and the processes by which they can be transformed to ensure more equitable gender relations. The issue of quotas for women's participation (e.g., in political institutions or in specific peace operations activities) is a case in point. While adopting a quota may contribute to greater representation by women and lend greater visibility to an invisible problem, it does not guarantee a shift in perception about women's skills and performance in such settings nor any substantive change in the division of power and responsibilities across the institution concerned. Similarly, resuscitating a system for the administration of justice without addressing the gender-differentiated needs for justice and reconciliation will leave many issues unresolved and reinforce underlying discriminatory norms and practices.

The gap between the international commitment to gender balance and mainstreaming and observed outcomes can be related to the three "I's of inertia, implementation, and institutionalization (Stiehm 2001). Achieving gender equality first requires overcoming the *inertia* that characterizes most institutions. Within the U.N. system, if not throughout the wider peacebuilding community, current policies and guidelines recognize the profound effects multidimensional peacekeeping missions have on women, and so they grant official support for gender mainstreaming and women's participation in peacekeeping. In this sense, the U.N. system and many of its partner organizations are overcoming institutional inertia. On the other hand, *implementation* in terms of devoting energy and resources to put policies in place (and to turn political will into action) is proving to be a much slower process. In part, this reflects the fact that the international commitment to gender balance and mainstreaming in peacebuilding is relatively new and still in search of practical measures for implementation. Stiehm (2001) identified the Windhoek workshop on mainstreaming a gender perspective in multidimensional peace support operations in 2000 as a good first step toward defining the relevant issues and practical implementation plans. Finally, once policies have been implemented, they must be *institutionalized* and become routine. This relates to the alteration of norms discussed above, including those that shape and define institutional policies and prac-

tices. Experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina has made clear that well-intentioned resolutions and policies must be accompanied by training for peacekeeping personnel (military and civilian), implementation in the field, and rigorous evaluation of effectiveness if the principles and practices defined by those policies are to be institutionalized (Rees 2002). As Stiehm concludes, for the most part institutionalization lies further in the future.

The current challenge is determining how to institutionalize the current understanding of gender relations and power dynamics in ways that contribute to a normative framework promoting gender equity in peacebuilding and progress toward conflict prevention. Gender-sensitive approaches, which Sørensen (1998) called for at the conclusion of her review, have been defined and implemented with increasing frequency through various sections of the peacebuilding community and are clearly enshrined in Resolution 1325. Humanitarian interventions involving food, shelter, and personal security, justice programs addressing gender-based crimes, and income-generating initiatives represent just a few of the ways that women's concerns have been addressed in recent peacebuilding and reconstruction activities. However, such gender-sensitive approaches have often failed to address the underlying context that determines women's experiences and opportunities for empowerment in conflict and post-conflict transitions. They may also risk marginalizing women into "special programs" outside of "standard" programs and mainstream government ministries. While special programs might be an important interim strategy to safeguard women's rights to participate and to access resources where mainstream programs and agencies exclude women, it is important that such strategies be accompanied by a gender mainstreaming strategy "to transform 'mainstream' institutions so that men and women, girls and boys, have equal/complementary access to resources, ability to control resources and the right to participate" (Women's Commission 2001b: 29).

Thus, the new call can be made for transformative approaches that build upon gender-sensitive approaches to fundamentally alter the balance of power in gender relations as societies rebuild following conflict. Such approaches seek to transform gender roles and create more gender-equitable relationships. They build upon what Cockburn refers to as a sensitivity to "difference" to demonstrate "how women and

men may be positioned differently, have different experiences, different needs, different strengths and skills, and how in different cultures these differences have different expressions.” This sensitivity to difference – this gender consciousness – also helps expose how gender relations “shape institutions like the family, the military, the state; how they intersect with relations of class and ethnicity; to see how power, oppression and exploitation work in and through them... It also invites us to act for transformative change” (Cockburn 1999: 19-20). This must be recognized within the institutional structures of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations as much as in the political, economic, and cultural institutions of societies undertaking reconstruction.

Transformative approaches are necessary for a strategy of peace that includes a strategy of change in masculinities as they relate to the dynamics of conflict and violence. As noted earlier, this would help replace masculinities emphasizing violence, confrontation, and domination with patterns of masculinity more open to negotiation, cooperation, and equality (Connell 2001). In this sense, sustainable peacebuilding can be seen as a comprehensive process of social reconstruction entailing the transformation of social relationships, values, identities, ideologies, and institutions. To understand the dynamics of peacebuilding as a social process, Cock (2001) has suggested assessing interventions such as:

- ▶ The creation of alternative social identities, including demilitarized conceptions of citizenship
- ▶ The construction of new gender relations that challenge the connection between militarism and masculinity
- ▶ The operation of various institutions at the regional, national, and local levels (both state and civil society) that allow people to process their demands and conflicts in peaceful ways, and to promote reconciliation, cooperation, tolerance, security, respect for human rights, and social cohesion
- ▶ A shift in the various social meanings attached to small arms
- ▶ Attempts to promote alternative values and ideologies through “peace education” by the church, trade unions, educational institutions, and other formal and informal associations

- ▶ Empowering civil society to participate in debates on defense and security

For peacebuilding operations to sustain such transformation of gender and social relations, it is imperative that peacebuilders themselves and the organizations they represent understand the role of gender, identity, and power and transform their own operations accordingly. This represents an area of intense current concern for which tentative measures are now being taken by various entities in the peacebuilding community. Assessing the effects of such measures remains an important area of investigation. While data are limited and circumstances may vary from setting to setting, some instructive impressions are beginning to emerge, as observed by Mazurana (2002: 43):

*[P]eacekeeping operations with more civilians and less militaries, and those with strong human rights monitoring mandates, have tended to have more women personnel (35-37 per cent) and also to have been the most successful... By “success” is meant here the ability of the operation to meet its mandate, contribute to peaceful resolutions of external disputes, promote rights education, provide assistance in enabling civil society to develop, and empower the local community in ways that help them reconstruct their lives and society.*

While the sex ratio and gender training of peacekeeping teams are only parts of the bigger picture, it appears that operations which give greater weight to gender in their own make-up and procedures can increase the chances for successful transformative change during reconstruction, as suggested by the early example of the peacekeeping mission in Namibia in 1989-90 (Olsson 2001) and current events now unfolding in East Timor.

This also suggests the fundamental importance attached to strategies which ensure women’s equal representation and participation in structures of governance and policymaking in countries emerging from conflict. While increased numbers of women in office do not themselves translate into gender equitable public policy, it is possible to use related indicators (e.g., proportion of men and women going to the polls, elected to public bodies, or appointed to public office) to envision and assess strategies supporting a country’s political revitalization in relation to women’s

right to full and equal participation in the conduct of public affairs. Such changes in national and sub-national leadership structures have been the aim of programs in human rights education and political skills building in East Timor, Afghanistan, Rwanda, and elsewhere, and represent one important component of a transformative approach to gender-sensitive peacebuilding.

In some respects, the distinction between gender-sensitive approaches and transformative approaches might be visualized as the difference between the vertical and horizontal dimensions. The policy shift, affirmed through Resolution 1325, that has occurred to a significant extent throughout the official bodies of the international peacebuilding community might be seen as a successful exercise in building conceptual and programmatic tools up and down the organizational bureaucracy. It represents a consistent message agreed at and transmitted from the highest levels to actors located on each plane of peacebuilding activity who are responsible for interpreting the message and acting upon it, i.e., to be gender sensitive in their assessment of problems presented and in designing programs and interventions in response. This policy shift has not always been matched by a shift in actions responsive to gender realities on the ground, and this inaction can be related to institutional norms operating among the peacebuilding actors themselves or within the communities where they are working. At this level, transformative approaches as suggested above are required to allow the vertical policy directive to take root and prosper on the horizontal plane of the community or the implementing agency. The policy must come to life at that level, and it can only do so when gender norms and the dynamics of gender relations are consistent with the language of gender equality framed in the policy.

Far from being gender-blind, those engaged in peacekeeping and peacebuilding must recognize that “all segments of society are affected by conflict, sometimes in different ways, and that all segments of society also have a role to play in helping to end the violence and lay the foundations for sustainable peace” (Guéhenno 2002). This is the essence of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping when done right. Gender mainstreaming has transformative

potential because it requires changes in organizational cultures and ways of thinking and shifts in the goals, structures, and resource allocations of international agencies, governments, and non-governmental organizations: “Mainstreaming requires changes at different levels within these institutions in agenda setting, policymaking, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Instruments for the mainstreaming effort include new staffing and budgeting practices, training programmes, policy procedures, and guidelines” (Kardam 1997: 1-2). Gender training programs for peacekeeping personnel (e.g., the DFID/DFAIT online gender peacekeeping training course) and the insertion of gender advisors in peacekeeping operations (e.g., East Timor) are areas in which recent positive steps have been taken.

Gender is a fundamental element of conflict and of peace. Gender analysis can play an important role in furthering the understanding of successful peacebuilding. Through the transformations it illuminates, it may contribute to knowledge and skills required for the prevention of future violent conflicts. For such reasons, gender and gender equity cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to the peacebuilding enterprise. Enloe disputes the “worrying presumption that ‘gender’ is intellectually bland” and maintains that “to take seriously the full implications of gender entails shining bright lights into the cultures, the structures, and the silences of peacekeeping.” She challenges us all to “pull away gender’s reassuring public mask of comfortable blandness and reveal it for what it should be: a conceptual tool to make us see things at work that we would rather not see” (Enloe 2001: 112-113).

Violations of women’s human rights underscore the structure of unequal relations at the root of conflict and suggest the need to understand peace as being connected to the broader issue of unequal relationships between women and men in all spheres of life. It is important to press beyond gender-sensitive approaches to consider ways in which gender roles are transformed and more gender-equitable relationships are created, not only to help resolve conflict but also to prevent conflict and violence. The interface of peace and gender relations is central to the holistic conceptualization of peace incorporating aspects of economic and social justice, equality, and human



rights as cited at the outset of this paper. Along these lines, Manchanda (2001: 28) writes:

*Understanding women and peace is to understand the experience of militarization and political violence for women in terms of physical, economic and cultural violence.*

*Disempowered in peace time, in the time of conflict, a time of decision by arms, women are even more disadvantaged and less able to assert their rights and the rights of their children to entitlements. War magnifies the already existing gender inequalities of peace time. Peace politics is of central concern to all in unequal power relations. Peace is not envisaged as a return to the status quo. A just peace involves the reworking of the gender status quo.*

## VI. Conclusion

Current literature on peacebuilding and reconstruction demonstrates increasing recognition of the ways in which experiences of war, peacebuilding, and reconstruction differ for women and men. While this recognition may appear more rhetorical than real and varies in depth by agency or setting, this significant change in the general discourse influences expectations, redefines the margins of acceptable action, and creates new opportunities for defining interests and incentive structures promoting further change. By influencing perceptions and norms, this new policy discourse and the international will that it represents may make a real difference in the long-term for the integration of gender in peacebuilding processes.

This paper and related discussions have helped identify some of the current gaps in knowledge about gender and power dynamics in the context of peacebuilding and reconstruction that impede new practices that might otherwise follow international will. These are in line with and build upon the findings of the two U.N. reports recently issued in response to Resolution 1325 (U.N. 2002; UNIFEM 2002). Promising areas for further inquiry include:

- ▶ Better understanding the construction, manipulation, and transformation of gender identities as they relate to violence and peace
- ▶ Determining the normative framework governing perceptions of gender-based violence in public and private spheres and relevant options for redress
- ▶ Documenting the enabling factors required by sustainable women's peace initiatives
- ▶ Identifying the structures and mechanisms needed to encourage and enhance women's political participation in post-conflict societies
- ▶ Defining and measuring relevant gender-sensitive indicators for post-conflict programs and services, including more accurate accounting of their costs from a gender perspective
- ▶ Monitoring diverse peacekeeping activities from a gender perspective, with the forthcoming DPKO operations handbook serving as a point of departure
- ▶ Assessing reconstruction and rehabilitation programs grounded in gender (rather than serving women's specific needs as a target group), drawing on comparative, multi-disciplinary studies of events and policies from the inception of peace processes through the period of transition
- ▶ Documenting norms and institutional practices that influence women's economic reintegration and exploring options for increasing women's involvement in state-level economic decisionmaking (e.g., gender analysis of peacekeeping operations and national budgeting processes)
- ▶ Exploring the potential of human rights instruments, combined with gender analysis, to shape the content and implementation of peacebuilding and reconstruction programs (e.g., responses to issues involving property and land)
- ▶ Determining lessons from country-based reconstruction experiences concerning the relative emphasis given to the rights of women as a group vs. a general framework emphasizing the rights of all citizens

Such gaps in knowledge can be addressed through new research including program evaluations, policy analyses, and site-specific case studies that can contribute directly to efforts of in-country activists working to define and sustain equitable peacekeeping initiatives. Findings from such research could be applied to articulating improved policies and helping program designers to think outside the box on gender mainstreaming and support the kind of transformative change in conflict and post-conflict settings that would recognize and benefit from the full potential of all citizens.

# Annex

## United Nations Security Council S/RES/1325 (2000)

**Distr.: General - 31 October 2000**

### Resolution 1325 (2000)

**Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000**

*The Security Council,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and *recalling also* the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

*Recalling also* the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

*Bearing in mind* the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

*Reaffirming also* the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

*Emphasizing* the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

*Recognizing also* the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

*Recognizing* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

*Noting* the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;
2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decisionmaking levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;
4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;
5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials 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, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;
7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;
8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:
  - (a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;
  - (b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;
  - (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;
9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;
12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;
13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;
14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;
15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;
16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;
17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;
18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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