Women in Peace Operations
Part Two: Women in Peace Building and Reconciliation

Vienna, October 12th – 13th, 2017
National Defence Academy, Stiftgasse 2a, 1070 Wien, Austria

www.peacekeeper.at

In cooperation with

Directorate General for Security Policy of the Austrian Ministry of Defence

National Defence Academy
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Strengthening women’s participation in peacebuilding is high on the agenda of the United Nations, which recognizes that women are crucial partners in shoring up three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy. The UN’s Peace Building Support Office and UN Women are supporting the implementation of a seven-point Action Plan, the commitment of the United Nations to improve women’s situations in post-conflict countries.

The UNSC has passed a number of resolutions which address the roles of women in the peace and security agenda. While these legal frameworks have increased awareness of how conflict impacts on women specifically, calling for greater participation of women in transforming conflict-affected societies, the United Nations Security Council still has a long way to go in rolling out these strategies.

A high-level review of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 in 2015 provided an opportunity for policy-makers to move beyond the rhetoric of gender mainstreaming and start putting words into practice. Resolution 1325 underlines the need for gender-sensitive approaches to peace and stability in post-conflict contexts. Although the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes has gained momentum in policy discussions over the last 15 years, the number of women in decision-making positions remains relatively small.

Peacebuilding is the foundation for creating sustainable human security and equitable development in countries emerging from conflict. UNSC resolution 1325 recognises that women are disproportionately affected by conflict, and to address this, women should play a key role in achieving lasting peace after conflict.

Although national laws are important for recognising gender equality, these do not guarantee it in practice, and cannot ensure that women will receive the necessary space to be part of the peace process. Traditional and/or religious practices often carry more weight than a national constitution, even in places where the law calls for women to play a greater role in decision-making.

7-Point Action Plan: Commitments & Measures to Track Progress:

In 2010, the Secretary-General issued a 7-Point Action Plan with commitments & measures to track progress, viz.:

1. **Conflict resolution:** UN entities to take more systematic action to ensure women’s participation in and the availability of gender expertise to, the peace process – via (a) appointment of women as chief mediator/special envoy to UN-led peace processes; (b) inclusion of gender expertise at senior levels in mediation support activities; (c) investing in
strategies for the inclusion of more women in negotiation parties; (d) ensuring that mediation & negotiation teams consult with women’s Civil Society Organizations (CSOs);

2. Post-conflict planning: UN system to to more systematically institutionalize women’s participation in all post-conflict planning – via (a) undertaking a comprehensive review of existing institutional arrangements for incorporating gender issues into post-conflict planning - principles to apply to all post-conflict strategy & planning processes; (b) develop standard processes on donor conferences to ensure that a cross-section of women’s representatives from civil and political society are invited & provided access to all documentation, space on the agenda and assistance in convening preparatory meetings & developing policy papers;

3. Post-conflict financing: UN commitment to increasing financing for gender equality & women’s and girl’s empowerment in post-conflict situations – via (a) all UN-funded projects in support of peacebuilding to demonstrate how these will benefit men & women; (b) each UN entity to initiate a process, in line with its mandate & governance arrangements, for laying groundwork & investing in systems to track gender post-conflict financing and to work towards ensuring that at least 15% of UN-mandated peacebuilding funds is dedicated to projects whose principal objective is to address women’s specific needs, advance gender equality or empower women;

4. Gender-responsive civilian capacity: civilian capacity to include specialized skills to meet women’s urgent needs and expertise in rebuilding state institutions to make these more accessible to women & girls and less prone to gender-based discrimination – via UN leaders ensuring that mission & humanitarian planners revise procedures to improve the UN’s ability to address women’s and girls’ post-conflict needs;

5. Women’s representation in post-conflict governance: ensuring that technical assistance to conflict-resolution processes & countries emerging from conflict promotes women’s participation as decision-makers in public institutions through temporary special measures – via (a) building structures of inclusive governance by ensuring that technical assistance includes rigorous assessment of the potential value of such special measures, including quotas for women; (b) ensuring that gender discrimination is addressed at every stage in the political process; (c) UN technical assistance to public administration reform should ensure full consideration of measures to increase the proportion of women in state institutions at all levels;

6. Rule of law: UN’s approach, before, during & after conflict, to systematically promote women’s & girls’ rights to security & justice – via (a) peace operations initiating immediate & longer-term efforts to prevent & respond to sexual and gender-based violence; (b) implement legal support services for women & girls to end impunity & protect victims and make this a standard component of the UN’s rule of law response in the immediate post-conflict period; (c) establishing minimum standards of gender-responsiveness for Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs), reparations programmes & related bodies;

7. Economic recovery: UN system to ensure that women’s equal involvement as participants & beneficiaries in local development, employment-creation, frontline service delivery and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes in post-conflict situations – via (a) requiring the direct involvement of women & women CSOs in setting priorities, identifying beneficiaries & monitoring implementation of local development & infrastructure programmes which are based on a participatory/community-development approach; (b) post-conflict employment programmes to specifically target women as a
beneficiary group, using a range-of-parity principle, women workers receiving daily payments directly, and addressing barriers to equitable participation; (c) promotion of women as “frontline” service-delivery agents, eg. in health, agriculture, education & management of natural resources; (d) ensuring women’s equal participation in all stages of DDR, from negotiation of peace agreements & establishment of national institutions to the design and implementation of programmes.

In his report to the Security Council in October 2016 on women and peace and security, the Secretary-General made the following important points:

--the women & peace & security agenda was a critical, yet under-utilized tool for preventing conflict and for shaping more effective responses to today’s complex crises;
-- stakeholders were called upon to build and act on evidence, lessons and good practices gathered over the past 15 years to ensure women’s meaningful participation, in particular in formal peace processes.
-- the importance of protecting and promoting the rights and leadership of women in peacekeeping and humanitarian settings;
-- repeated the need to address conflict-related sexual violence as part of a continuum of violence that is closely intertwined with broader attacks on gender equality and women’s human rights;
-- the protection of women in situations of displacement;
-- promotion of gender equality in humanitarian action; and
-- women’s access to justice, in which significant advancements in criminal accountability for conflict-related sexual and gender-based crimes had taken place recently.

In his concluding observations and recommendations, the Secretary-General emphasized:

-- bringing women’s participation and leadership to the core of peace and security efforts and continued to call upon all stakeholders to remove obstacles and incentivize the effective participation of women in peace and security, as well as to carefully track and report on progress in this field and that more must be done by the UN to accelerate progress in achieving gender balance in staffing;
-- protecting the human rights of women and girls during and after conflict, where human rights violations against women and girls had continued unabated, including with some armed actors and terrorist organizations attacking women’s human rights as part of their political agenda; asking all actors to recommit to complying with obligations under international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law, to respect and promote the full range of women’s human rights, to punish all violators, including non-State actors or those within its own troops, and to protect those who defend the human rights of women and girls; women must play key roles in the design and implementation of protection and prevention strategies, as well as in the international community’s determined efforts to root out sexual exploitation and abuse from the Organization;
-- ensuring gender-responsive planning and accountability for results, including through the Security Council’s new Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, and the 11 new national action plans adopted in 2016;
-- strengthening gender architecture and technical expertise, where the UN must accelerate efforts; the high-level review, as well as the reviews of peacebuilding architecture and peace operations, recommended new measures, whose full implementation would require additional commitment to effecting partnerships;

-- financing the women and peace and security agenda, where increased financial resources were necessary to meet commitments to the women and peace and security agenda; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places gender equality at the centre of sustainable development and highlights the connections between sustainable development and peaceful and inclusive societies, with the need for global leadership to prevent and end conflict a core responsibility outlined in the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Humanity; insistence on redoubling efforts to prevent conflict and that gender equality be at the heart of every endeavour to establish a more peaceful world; and

-- prioritizing gender equality and women’s empowerment in peace and security settings as a continued effort in the long term.

Women and Reconciliation:
(cf. Point 6 of the 7-Point Action Plan above)

There is no universal roadmap for reconciliation, no short cut or simple prescription for healing the wounds and divisions of a society in the aftermath of sustained violence; creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge, but an essential one to address in the process of building a lasting peace. Examining the painful past, acknowledging it and understanding it, and above all transcending it together, is the best way to guarantee that it does not – and cannot – happen again. Truth is at the heart of reconciliation -- the need to find out the truth about the horrors of the past, the better to ensure that they never happen again. And that is the central significance of reconciliation, without which affected societies have no sense of safety, no trust, no confidence in the future. The aim of reconciliation is ‘to build a shared future from a divided past’. There is no alternative way to lasting peace.

Women can play an important role in reconciliation, but the international community and the regional & national leaderships need to show more determination in bringing women into all aspects of political, economic and social development so that women can play their rightful role in reconciliation as well as in the UN’s peace and development and security agenda.

Reconciliation is an over-arching process which includes the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, healing and so on. At its simplest, it means finding a way to live alongside former enemies - not necessarily to love them, or forgive them, or forget the past in any way, but to coexist with them, to develop the degree of cooperation necessary to share society with each other, so that all have better lives together than they have had separately. While politics is a process to deal with the issues that have divided communities in the past, reconciliation is a parallel process which redesigns that relationship.
Gender aspects and perspectives: These require an understanding of how violent conflict involves and affects different social groups beyond the most immediate impact, such as torture and displacement. A gender perspective illustrates some of the “small conflicts” that lie beneath the main conflict and which need to be addressed in order to create a sustainable peace and a democratic society. For example, women have experienced sexual abuse in the form of mass rape, forced marriages and prostitution, with social stigmatization and marginalization as a consequence. For such women reconciliation involves offences against them being recognized and punished, illegitimate children being recognized as legitimate with full rights, and resources being allocated to deal with the physical and psychological consequences. For war widows, reconciliation would include compensation and to address existing inheritance laws and practices that dispossess them or hinder them in fulfilling their new obligations as family providers.

A gender perspective also entails looking at how men are affected. In the context of reconciliation it is necessary to recognize that armed conflict encourages a “warrior identity” while at the same time doing damage to the male self-perception as provider and protector of a family. The frustration and anger this may give rise to can be a serious threat to a reconciliation process. Establishing trustful and respectful relations between men and women, and between particularly targeted groups of men and women, is essential for fashioning a democratic society. Such relations require full recognition of how a particular conflict has involved and affected men and women in different ways.

Gender is an indispensable dimension of reconciliation at the official and institutional levels. Most experience across the globe demonstrates that women (and often also other politically-marginalized groups) have limited access to peace negotiation processes and little or no representation in government and other decision-making bodies. This lack of involvement in political processes seriously reduces their possibilities to voice their concerns and interests and ensure that these are recognized as political concerns at a crucial point, which may again result in a certain alienation from the nation and the state.

Note: A truth commission or truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) is a commission tasked with discovering and revealing past wrongdoings by official or non-State entities, in the hope of resolving conflict. Approximately 55 TRCs have been established since the end of World War Two, some of which are still in existence.

President: GEN Günther GREINDL (ret)
Academic Directors: Thomas ACHLEITNER, AAP; COL Georg EBNER, NDA

Blue Helmet Forum Austria 2016

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Programme

Thursday, October 12th

08:00 - 09:00 Registration

09:00 - 09:15 Opening Remarks
Günther GREINDL, GEN (ret), President of the Association of Austrian Peacekeepers (AAP)
Erich CSITKOVITS, LTG, Commander of the National Defence Academy (NDA)

Daniela SCHEIBLHOFER, MoD Austria

09:45 – 10:45 Introductory Presentation
Ameerah HAQ, former UN Under Secretary General

10:45 - 11:15 Coffee break and official conference foto

11:15 - 12:30 Session I: Presentations
Chair: Andrea LEITGEB, BG, Director General Medical School, Austrian Army

Introductory remarks by the chair

Bineta DIOP, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the AU

Mara MARINAKI, Ambassador, EU/EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Questions and Answers

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch, hosted by the Association of Austrian Peacekeepers
13:30 - 15:30  Session II: Presentations
Chair: Nasra HASSAN

Introductory remarks by the chair

Nana FOSU RANDALL, President Voice of African Mothers

Viviane TASSI-BELA, International Consultant UN Agencies & Int. Organisations, Gender & Women, Peace and Security Expert

Kristin LUND, MG, Force Commander UNFICYP

Questions and Answers

16:00 - 22:00  Social Programme:
Guided visit to the art museum ALBERTINA followed by
Dinner hosted by MOD Austria
Friday, October 13\textsuperscript{th}

9:00 - 10:30  
**Session III: Practical Experience**  
Chair: Günther GREINDL, GEN (ret), President of the Association of Austrian Peacekeepers (AAP)  
Introductory remarks by the chair  

**Pavel MACKO, LTG, DCOS of Slovak Armed Forces (requested)**  
**Lilly SUCHARIPA, Vice-President UN-Women Austria**

10:30 - 11:00  
Coffee break

11:00 - 12:30  
**Session IV: Way ahead, lessons learned**  
Chair: Günther GREINDL, GEN (ret), President of the Association of Austrian Peacekeepers (AAP)  
Expert Discussion

12:30 - 12:45  
Concluding statement by the chair  
Award of certificates by Günther GREINDL, GEN (ret)

12:45 - 13:30  
Lunch hosted by AAP at Officers Club (optional)