

Full Length Research Paper

Integrating women and gender issues in peace development

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The last couple of decades have witnessed great changes in the nature of conflict globally. Consequently, the scope of peacekeeping and development operations have widened considerably. The mandates now cover a vast variety of responsibilities, such as promoting human security, supporting power-sharing arrangements and elections, strengthening the rule of law, monitoring respect of human rights and promoting economic and social development. It has become clear that women, men, boys and girls experience violence before, during and after conflicts differently and have different vulnerabilities, insecurities and coping mechanisms. Furthermore, conflicts have an impact on gender roles and relations as people often have to take up roles they might not do in peace times. The mandates of democratic sustainability and peace development have become more and more complex around the globe. There is increasing recognition that a gendered approach to the development of peace is essential to adequately respond to the needs of women, men, boys and girls who have been affected differently by conflict. The integration of gender into issues of peace development has taken two approaches: mainstreaming gender into the mandates, policies and practices of peace development and increasing the number of women working in peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) reports that as of 2008, only 2% of military personnel in UN peacekeeping were female. This paper aims to enhance understanding of the challenges that stand in the way of realizing the goals of achieving a gender balance in peace development, and peacekeeping operations, looking at recruitment of women, the impact of women peacekeepers, training and capacity-building activities in peacekeeping operations.

Key words: Gender, gender mainstreaming, gender-based violence (GBV) and peace development.

INTRODUCTION

In the past couple of decades, the “tasks of peacekeeping” have changed drastically from relatively straightforward ones of building sustainable peace and restoring a safe environment “to more complex intra-state and inter-ethnic conflicts”. Consequently, peacekeeping mission mandates have moved beyond exclusively military operations to multidimensional missions. This implies the inclusion of new personnel with more comprehensive skills. Within this new multidimensional approach to peace development is the recognition that a gendered approach is essential to adequately respond to the needs of women, men, boys and girls who all have been affected differently by armed conflict. An aspect of the gender dimension of multi-dimensional peace operations is the

effective integration of more women in peace-support operations (PSOs). The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has issued a number of policies emphasizing the important role that women have in achieving the mandates of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations, including their potential advantage in accessing and working with vulnerable populations, particularly with female victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Many “women” continue to suffer from the physical and mental “harm caused” by the armed violence, particularly by high levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Even “when armed conflict” is officially over, women and girls continue to face various forms of violence and exploitation, including

exploitation, including gang rape, sexual slavery, forced sex in exchange for food or survival, and forced or early marriage.

Women and men experience armed conflict differently and face different challenges in the post-conflict peace building processes. Women and girls tend to be viewed as helpless victims of conflict. They are often seen as caregivers and as having high risk of sexual vulnerability. However, in many conflicts, women and girls have taken active roles as combatants, spies and cooks, while others engaged in and less peace building activities. Anderlini (2001) asserts that in spite of their active roles during conflicts and “peace development”, women and girls continue to be marginalized in peace negotiations, peacekeeping, rehabilitation and decision-making processes. “The United Nations” has adopted various legal mechanisms promoting women’s inclusion in processes affecting their peace and security. One key mechanism is the Security Council Resolution 1325 on “women, peace and security”. Unanimously adopted in 2000, Resolution 1325 was the first international legal document adopted by the Security Council to focus in details on the negative experiences that women and girls face in conflict. Resolution 1325 also highlights the positive role that women can play in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peace building, and post-conflict recovery processes. Different methods are adopted by various countries to actualize the obligations of the Resolution one of which is the development of a National Action Plan that outlines and coordinates different responsibilities, timelines, sources and outputs for all relevant actors and stakeholders. This is a useful process for increasing the coherence, visibility and accountability of national efforts to implement women, peace and security policies. The United Nations is yet to achieve a gender balance or to ensure the full participation of women in peacekeeping. The importance of gender considerations for the success of peacekeeping operations and the urgency of tackling sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by peacekeepers has been gradually accepted by the international community during the past decade. Several references have been made to women and peacekeeping in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Eventually in 2000, the issues related to mainstreaming gender into all aspects of multidimensional peace operations were mapped out thoroughly in the Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action. Soon after, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which calls for a mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all activities of UN peacekeeping missions, which includes providing gender training to all peacekeeping personnel. To achieve the gender dimension of multi-dimensional peace keeping there is need for effective integration of more women in peace-support operations (PSOs).

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has issued a number of policies emphasizing the

important role that women have in achieving the mandates of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations, including their potential advantage in accessing and working with vulnerable populations, particularly with female victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The success of such integration is largely dependent on the political will of each country, the initiatives taken by high-level leadership of the country, and the organization of mission staffing. This is because by the recruitment procedures for peacekeeping missions United Nations Member States supply the Security Council with the armed forces and necessary facilities to assist in maintaining international peace and security. The United Nations has no input in the selection of the personnel provided by troop-contributing countries (TCC) or the pre-deployment training of these personnel. While the UN can ask for staff with particular professional background and experience, it is only provided by the TCCs.

The problem

While gender mainstreaming requires the integration of gender analysis in all decision-making, planning and implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluating major concrete efforts have been undertaken in UN missions and by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) attempts to: (i) increase the number of women leading and serving in peace operations and (ii) provide gender awareness training to peacekeeping personnel. This paper focuses on these attempts and discusses the institutional and political contexts within which they have been implemented. It seeks to develop interest and advocate for increased access of peacekeeping to women, as well as to examine various factors relevant to women’s participation in peace development.

The objective

As earlier indicated, The United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) reports that in 2008, of the 77,117 personnel in UN peacekeeping, 1,640 were female, which is around 2%. This implies that the United Nations is yet to achieve a gender balance or to ensure the full participation of women in peacekeeping. This paper aims to better understand the challenges that stand in the way of realizing the goals of achieving a gender balance. In doing this, the paper will suggest key policy and implementation recommendations that could contribute to the growing discourse on gender issues especially in the very important area of peacekeeping. The findings will assist in advocating for women in peacekeeping and development validating the need for

realizing the goals of achieving gender balance in peacekeeping and development. It will provide information, support, and encouragement to those who share an interest in the advancement of women, in conflict and peace development, with the ultimate goal of fostering institutional transformation.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on a desk and literature review of relevant articles and publications as well as web-based research on issues related to female peacekeeping. The use of literature review as a method based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates, and that we learn from and build on what others have done. This method provides an in depth understanding of previous studies conducted in the area of female peacekeeping. The problem is therefore seen in its clear perspective and contributions can be made to sharpen focus and present a sequence from the genesis of the problem to various efforts made to solve it, to solution to the problem or a logical conclusion of the problem.

DISCUSSION

Females in peacekeeping

In 1999, the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action called for the UNDPKO to undertake a series of measures to advance gender balance and gender equality at all levels of peacekeeping missions. The “plan of action” emphasized the importance of the participation of women in all stages of a peace process, from negotiations to international withdrawal. It spelled out the steps to be taken to mainstream gender, including providing gender training to all peacekeeping personnel and recruiting a higher number of women in high-level, decision-making positions. An ambitious target of achieving 50/50 representation by 2015 was set. On October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1325 on “women, peace and security”. This marked the first time that the Security Council recognized that women and girls are affected by conflicts in a different way than men and boys and therefore have an essential role in participatory peace processes. Since its passage, the Resolution has served as a milestone towards better integration of women’s perspectives in peace processes. The Resolution emphasizes the importance of women’s participation at all steps of a peace process, from negotiations to the signing of a peace agreement, emphasizing the necessity for pre-deployment, gender and sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA) training for all military, police and civilian staff being deployed to missions. In many peace-keeping missions, “gender units, gender advisors, and gender focal points” have been created to ensure that gender mainstreaming programmes and mechanisms are regularly implemented and coordinated with a mission’s activities.

Gender units oversee the coordination of gender activities inside and outside of the mission, as well as the partnerships that the “gender units” forms with local actors such as civil society organizations, women’s associations, ministries of the host countries, as well as international NGOs and other UN agencies. Where it is possible to liaise with all of these different actors effectively, the inclusiveness of these programmes is well-acknowledged. However, this is only possible with an adequate allocation of funds and resources, and mostly with the formal engagement of the whole staff making up the mission. Gender units have also initiated and supported the inclusion of a gender perspective into programmes such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) initiatives; police or security sector reforms, including organizing gender trainings and devising gender-sensitive policies; disseminating information materials on Resolution 1325; responding to sexual exploitation and abuse; and justice and human rights. All of these activities can be performed only if all the components of a peacekeeping mission, including the military, the police and the civilian side, collaborate in a cross-cutting manner.

Gender mainstreaming in peace support operations

Gender mainstreaming in peace support operations is essential for the success of the operation because it helps among other things to respond to different security needs within society, improve operational effectiveness, create a representative mission, strengthen civil components of the mission and strengthen democratic oversight. Etchart (2005) asserts that gender mainstreaming is not solely about advocating for women’s rights, but about critically analyzing all the challenges and opportunities for reform and reconstruction with respect to existing gender roles and inequalities. Gender mainstreaming, as defined by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is 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 women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. INSTRAW (2008) observes that gender-blind peace agreements have only partially secured peace in war-torn societies and programming based on these agreements cannot be considered inclusive. The risk in not having a gender perspective is that the mission will overlook important issues of inclusive security that will jeopardize agreements and threaten the fragile peace. Applied at the mission level, gender mainstreaming is one tool for understanding complex situations, reaching a broader consensus, inspiring new solutions and solving conflicts by incorporating new

Table 1. Female recruitment and inclusion in peace support.

Year	Male	Female	Total	%
1957 to 1979	6,245	5	6,250	0.8
1957 to 1989	19,980	20	20,000	0.1
2006	84,320	1,235	65,555	1.88
2007	70,639	1,034	71,673	1.44
2008	75,323	1,734	77,057	2.25

Source: Hudson (2009).

Table 2. Troops contributing countries in 2009.

Country	Pakistan	Bangladesh	India	Nigeria	Nepal	Rwanda	Ghana
No. of troops	10,989	9,424	8,640	6,001	3,924	3,635	3,283

Source: Hudson (2009).

approaches and viewpoints. Hicks (2001) identifies three “I”s as potential obstacles in the gender mainstreaming process: ‘Inertia, implementation and institutionalization’.

The inertia of institutions and consolidated procedures is often difficult to change. This influences the way in which policies are drafted and implemented. To effectively realize its full potential, gender mainstreaming should address the roots of the organizational structures, and make changes based on an equitable distribution of resources. This however, is a process that takes some time to develop. INSTRAW (2008) indicates that there are three factors that determine the level of implementation of policy directives regarding a gender balance inside the peacekeeping missions namely:

- i) The political will of senior management,
- ii) The availability of funds and,
- iii) The availability of human resources.

Gender mainstreaming promotes a holistic and broad approach to addressing the tasks and challenges faced by a peace support operation in a post-conflict environment. Identifying ways to address gender-based violence is often a part of peace support operation mission mandates since these issues form part of protecting the human rights of populations and for establishing sustainable peace and security in a given country. Promoting gender issues can contribute to the reform of existing discriminatory policies that have negative gendered effects. By following and implementing gender-sensitive policies and procedures, a peacekeeping operation can provide a good example to national and local institutions.

Female recruitment in peace support operations

Female recruitment and inclusion in peace support

operations has slowly improved over the years.

Table 1 presents the distribution of female recruitment and inclusion in peace support. This indicates while females are increasingly being involved in peacekeeping operations. Hudson (2009) affirms that the seven missions with the lowest female participation rate were established before 1980. In contrast, the twelve missions with the highest participation rate of women were established after 1990. By 1993, 11 out of the 19 UN peacekeeping missions had significant civilian components, and women constituted one-third of the international UN civilian staff. While this indicates progress in the participation of uniformed women in peacekeeping operations, there are still major obstacles to the full integration of women, especially at the senior management level. Between 1948 when the first PSO was established and 2008, only seven women have been appointed as Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) and one as Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (DSRSG). Recruitment procedures for peacekeeping missions call on UN Member States to supply the UN Security Council with the armed forces and necessary facilities to assist in maintaining international peace and security.

The United Nations has no responsibility in the selection of the personnel that troop-contributing countries (TCC) put at its disposal and have no voice in the pre-deployment training of these personnel, though selection tests are held prior to the deployment of troops (Table 2). The UN can ask for staff that has a certain professional background and experience. Nevertheless, responsibility to provide qualified and well-trained personnel lies primarily in the hands of the TCCs. Table 1 presents the troop contributions of different countries in 2009. This comprises the overall number of police, military observers and troops. Challenges also occur for the recruitment of civilian posts. According to a DPKO 2006 report, the current ‘Galaxy’ system that the UN uses

to advertise and disseminate civilian posts receives an average of 600 résumés for each opening. This makes comprehensive screening difficult. Additionally, the report found that Member States continue to recommend men for vacancies, and cultural and institutional impediments persist despite mandates for a gender balance. This coupled with a lack of accountability for the recruitment and hiring of women at the senior management level creates resistance among staff to discuss the issue. On the other hand, when positions are reserved for women, some male colleagues become resentful. The danger with posts reserved for women is that they can appear as tokens and face additional scrutiny that men may not encounter. Efforts by national armies to increase female recruitment are dependent on each nation's recruitment policy.

Resistance to women's inclusion by Member States is the product of a traditionally male-dominated environment in security forces. Requests should continue to reflect the need for qualified and suitable female staff and should act as an incentive for Troop Contributing Countries TCCs to promote gender equality in their armed forces.

Incentives and disincentives for female peacekeepers

In order to design appropriate recruitment policies that resonate with many women, it is important to understand why women might be motivated to join PSOs. Martin (2008) in a survey conducted by UNITAR adduced reasons why women tend to join missions. First cited is career as the top reason for joining a mission. Second, economic benefit was cited. Third is an altruistic, value-driven goal of bringing peace to a war-torn society was also a common motivating factor especially by African women peacekeepers that experienced conflict or upheaval in their own countries before joining missions. Fourth is the need to share experiences and meet colleagues from other countries. The opportunity to work and live in a demanding, international environment was cited fifth both as an incentive and as a challenge. Lastly, women peacekeepers are sometimes selected by their national armies because they possess particular skills needed at the mission level. Specifically, these peacekeepers tend to have had a sound record of military experience in their country of origin, speak local languages, or had performed particularly well at governmental or diplomatic levels. Since many missions are non-family duty stations, familial and personal relationships can suffer. Consequently, female staff often feel isolated when they are on missions.

Most of the women in peacekeeping operations are unmarried, divorced or have no children. In most peacekeeping operations, there is not a safe environment to raise children or have a family life. Women affirm that they are able to manage family relations either because they have very strong support from their family or

because they are single or divorced. Reports and experiences of sexual harassment, gender discrimination and biases towards candidates with a humanitarian background also limit the number of women in TCC militaries. This is complicated by the long-standing inability of the UN to reach outside its current staff when advertising vacancies. The restricted circulation of vacancy announcements and the post requirements present substantial challenges to the recruitment of women.

Females in mission leadership

Positions of high authority in peacekeeping missions are not easily accessible for women. Women often refrain from applying for high-rank military posts. Since many armies have only recently admitted women in their ranks, and military experience is a key requirement to have access to high-rank UN positions, it is a challenge for women to obtain positions of leadership. In the rare event that a woman is chosen to work in the military, she often is assigned to safer, less visible or less "serious" roles rather than decision-making or front line positions. A few missions have made progress in this area, but much more has to be done, especially in the senior levels of the military and police. The United Nations reports (2008) notes that senior female officers often provide a positive working environment and have excellent understanding of the mission. They are cited as having an open attitude towards the different needs of women peacekeepers and can serve as an inspiration for women both within and outside the mission. The report however adds negative comments regarding women's leadership, such as revenge towards male colleagues, who are seen as having made the path difficult for senior women. The UNDPKO (2006) notes that in surveys by the Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) and the Missions for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), there is agreement that women (in both leadership and regular posts) had to make personal sacrifices to achieve their professional goals.

The military has always been seen as a male-dominated environment with emphasis on the importance of stereotypical "male patriarchal" attributes of toughness, discipline, loyalty and combat-readiness. Other challenges that have been cited include misogynistic attitudes having to do with the envy, dislike and even hate of male colleagues for their female counterparts, the difficult relationships with other women at the same level, and the need for a woman to have a "protector" or a "mentor" to access these high-level positions.

Mission specific recruitment policies and practices

According to the United Nations, Department of

Peacekeeping Operations UN DKPO (2006) the largest peacekeeping operation, the Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), shows no clear mandate on female recruitment. Out of the over 18,000 personnel serving in MONUC, the percentage of women among international staff, military and civilians, is about from 30 to 19 and 14 to 15% of female national staff. The UNDKPO (2006) observes that South Africa contributes the highest number of female peacekeepers to the mission (101 women), followed by Uruguay (84). Countries that participate in the mission with troops but that have not included a single woman in their personnel contributions include Pakistan, Bangladesh and Morocco, which form part of the largest troop contributing countries. The UNDPKO adds that in MONUC police force, women make up 26 of the 300 police officers (about 9%) and 32 out of 750 members of Formed Police Units (about 4%). A number of countries contribute a small number of "female police officers", including Sweden, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Cameroon. In each of these troop contributions, female representatives account for 6 to 8% of total staff. At the civilian level, women are still extremely under-represented in higher management positions in MONUC. The highest position held by a woman is the lowest of the UN Senior Management positions. Women are the least represented in the transport, fuel, engineering and aviation sectors, with a female presence ranging from 4 to 9%. Other areas with relatively small numbers of women (between 10 and 20%) are the security sector and field administration offices, the electoral division, the Geographic Information System (GIS) unit, and property management among others.

Women's participation is between 20 and 49% in the human rights, conduct and discipline, legal affairs, medical, finance, and political affairs sectors. Women make up more than 50% of staff members in human resources, field liaison offices and procurement. The Rule of Law and Gender Unit is made up of between 50 and 60% of women staff. At the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) mission, there has been a 15% increase of women recruited since 2006. However, women have not held senior management positions and have mainly occupied mid-level management positions. Makapela (2008) observes that South Africa has recently adopted a National Action Plan aimed at encouraging and increasing the number of South African female peacekeepers in peace support operations as well as in the national defence sector. The Plan is part of South Africa's commitment to support gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions. Because of the work of its "gender focal point", United Nations Missions for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has been active in recruiting women. Despite this, women mostly occupy mid-level management positions. In addition, the mission has increased the number of women UN Military Observers (MILOBs) and civilians. However, there is a

higher rate of turnover of female civilian staff members than male staff. Some attribute this to the mission having a women-hostile environment. UNMIK has kept more or less the same percentage of women throughout its years of operation.

DKPO (2006) opines that the presence of women in the mission is considered more like a "politically correct measure" than a method of increasing the effectiveness of the peacekeeping mandate. On the other hand, women seem to be restrained by the fact that their family background affects their work life either by being too self-confident or too male-dependant.

Impact of women peacekeepers

Minna (2008) reports that in January 2007, 125-strong all-women police contingent of peacekeepers from India was deployed to Liberia. Minna (2008) affirms that the women peacekeepers were quite efficient and brought a different and refreshing perspective and attitude to their work. Traditionally, contingents have always been composed of men and only a few women served with their male colleagues. The changes in peacekeeping mandates and activities make it necessary to review the habits of sending men-only contingents. Further, such changes necessitate reflection on the role of women soldiers in restoring peace and security in war-torn societies. Mixed teams are operationally more effective and are important because women often have easier access to female members of civil society. In some circumstances, female soldiers may have a comparative advantage of interacting with the local population on matters such as sexual exploitation, abuse and violence, among other issues. Also, women can help at security checkpoints, where they may be better positioned to speak with and search local women. Again, all societies are made up of both women and men. Consequently, mixed teams can better reflect the reality outside. They can serve as examples for the host society on how men and women can work together on even the most difficult tasks. However, mixed teams must be balanced. Mixed should not mean 95% male and 5% female, as it often does. Additionally, in mixed teams, females may be relegated to support staff roles, such as cooking, cleaning and secretarial tasks. Females in such roles are officially called peacekeepers and are included in mission statistics, but in reality are completely marginalized from the most visible and main mandated peacekeeping activities.

Female peacekeepers bring different perspectives and attitudes to their work and the integration of females within male-dominated units is most successful when females do not try to compete with their male counterparts in terms of strength and toughness, but instead work to compliment these skills. When it comes

to the relationships with the host community, the presence of females can have other positive effects in that it improves the balance and the overall relations within and outside the mission. Inside the mission, the female presence can sometimes act as a brake against possible violations of the code of conduct. DKPO (2006) reports that where the presence of females in peacekeeping operations was higher, such as in the missions in Guatemala and South Africa, the missions were completed with enormous success and the mandates were completely fulfilled. While this can be attributed to multiple factors, the presence of females in these missions should be taken into account. There has also been speculation about the link between the presence of females in missions and the decrease of prostitution and cases of sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA). The presence of females facilitate communication, information sharing, and problem solving as for instance when a raped person will feel more confident with a woman rather than a man. There seems to be a relationship between the traditionalism of a society and the level of tolerance for females in security forces, particularly in national armies.

Helland and Kristensen (2005) affirm that in the mission to the Western Sahara (MINURSO), a traditional Muslim country, 10.2% of the troops were females - the highest of any UN peacekeeping mission in 1993. Contrary to expectations, there was no evidence that the presence of females in the military had a detrimental effect on the outcome of the mission. Helland and Kristensen (2005) adds for instance that the Norwegian authorities excluded female officers from their group of observers to the mission in Pakistan (UNMOGIP) on the assumption that females would not be welcome. It later transpired that their decision was uninformed and would have benefited from consultation with colleagues in the host country.

Training and capacity-building activities

Gender training is an excellent way of preparing peacekeepers to be deployed in peace support operations (PSOs). There are two main types of training given to peacekeeping troops: pre-deployment training and induction training. Pre-deployment gender training aims to educate troops on the basic values of the United Nations when dealing with men and women of the host population. Mackay (2003) suggests that pre-deployment gender training should be "broad and generic, incorporating a wealth of different examples, but should also cover specific information about culture and gender in the country where the mission will be deployed. Training should inform peacekeepers about the social context where they will operate in order to help reduce unintended effects of their behaviours on the local population. Pre-deployment training is the responsibility of the troop-contributing countries. Unfortunately not all

Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) apply the same policies and priorities in the training and the levels of training can be substantially different from one country to another. Many of the top TCCs are developing countries, where there might be few resources for providing troops with adequate training and resources especially with respect to gender issues. Upon their arrival at mission headquarters, military and civilian personnel receive induction training. Unfortunately, because of the short length of training, it is not always possible to train personnel on gender issues. An additional problem can be language barriers. In these cases, the Gender Advisor trains a contingent's top officer who in turn is responsible for training the contingent. Since gender is such a central issue in conflict and post-conflict areas, it is very important that adequate training on gender issues is provided to peacekeeping troops. There is the need to repeat training on a regular basis or to expand training so that it runs for more than 1 h.

Challenges to the effective implementation of gender training programmes include the lack of funding, understaffing and the lack of political will. Additionally, the continuous rotation of staff members and the complexity of the subject matter also impact training programmes. The regular repetition of trainings, or "refreshers," could help to address these issues at the mission level, though such repetition requires funding and staffing resources.

Conclusion

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition at the international level of the importance of including females at all levels of conflict management and post-conflict recovery. One important aspect of this is increasing the participation of females in peacekeeping missions. There are a number of benefits for this type of participation. Female involvement in peacekeeping missions can trigger positive changes for women in the countries where they serve and where women are often kept at the margins of society by providing positive examples of women's leadership. The participation of females can also have a positive effect on the environment of the mission as well. The presence of females in both military and civilian positions can help to deter the misconduct or unprofessional behaviour of all-male contingents. In addition, a mixed mission has the advantage of reflecting the composition of the host society in a more representative way, where men and women live together and where they find ways to treat each other with mutual respect and trust. While the integration of females in civilian components of peacekeeping missions is increasing, the same cannot be said for the participation of females in military contingents. Female involvement in military peacekeeping remains small. The low number of female military peacekeepers is a reflection of the low number of

females in the armed forces of the contributing countries.

The responsibility for ensuring that peacekeeping troops are adequately trained and prepared to engage in peacekeeping operations lies primarily with the troop-contributing countries. Because peace support operations (PSOs) are composed of contingents from different countries and cultures, ensuring the same level of preparedness and pre-deployment training is difficult. One major obstacle to effective gender mainstreaming is the lack of resources especially in terms of staffing and access to funds. Lack of funding, understaffing and an overwhelming number of other tasks hinder the implementation of gender-specific policies. Other challenges in implementing Resolution 1325 at the local level include difficulties liaising with local women's associations, whose work can be too fragmented for collaboration or for inclusion in peace building activities. Different cultures and different attitudes towards the role of women in society must be taken into consideration when sending troops abroad for peacekeeping purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends as of necessity the installation of effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes on progress, achievements, and challenges to female participation in peacekeeping as they arise. To boost the still relatively low level of female participation in peacekeeping, which is a reflection of the low number of women in the armed forces, troop contributing countries must take measures to bring about institutional changes, including recruitment policies, to improve the incentive for female peacekeepers to join the mission. Again, there should be an extension of the dialogue established between civil society, and the international community since this can help increase the effectiveness and visibility of the efforts made towards the ultimate goal of gender equality and sustainable peace and security. In addition, differences in cultures and attitudes towards the role of women in society must be taken into consideration when sending troops abroad for peacekeeping purposes. Next, owing to the importance of gender training, all such training must include a strong gender component, including information on sexual abuse and exploitation and the relevant UN rules and regulations around these issues. Though the mainstreaming of a gender perspective is promoted by the Gender Units, it is necessary that all of the mission's components integrate a gender perspective into their work. There must be focus on implementing the Windhoek Declaration by ensuring that the recruitment and selection processes take gender balance into account. While gender training is a key strategy in efforts to mainstream gender perspectives into United Nations peacekeeping operations it is very dependent on the leadership of the mission and their commitment to the cause and the existence of a specialized gender unit. Hence mission leaders must

show deep commitment to gender training without which the full institutionalization of gender training may not be possible.

All missions must have functional Gender units that invest greatly in providing briefings and training to new staff on an ongoing basis. TCCs have to provide mandatory pre-deployment gender training for all personnel, including military, civilian police, or civilian staff. Improving the regularity and standardization of education and capacity-building activities across TCCs would be an important step in this area. The UN and troop-contributing countries must ensure that there is no impunity for perpetrators of GBV or sexual exploitation abuse. This is detrimental to the effectiveness of missions, particularly in its relation with the local community and reports of abuse can deter women from joining peacekeeping missions at the country level. Peacekeepers who suffer from or witness any kind of abuse need clear, straight forward and quick reporting procedures. Finally, the United Nations DPKO should review the codes of conduct of each mission to ensure that they context-specific.

Abbreviations: **DPKO**, Department of Peacekeeping Operations; **DDR**, Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; **ECOSOC**, Economic and Social Council; **GIS**, Geographic Information System; **MONUC**, Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo; **MINURSO**, Missions for the Referendum in Western Sahara; **PSO**, Peace Support Operations; **SEA**, Sexual Abuse and Exploitation; **SGBV**, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence; **SRSRG**, Special Representatives of the Secretary General; **UNDPKO**, The United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations; **TCC**, Troop-Contributing Countries; **MILOB**, UN Military Observers; **MINURSO**, United Nations Missions for the Referendum in Western Sahara; **UNFICYP**, United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus; **UNMOGIP**, United Nations Observer Group in India and Pakistan.

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