



The Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Harmonizing the High-Level Review Processes

Introduction

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, it is important to recognize that 2015 has been a critical year for the international community, as agendas across the Organization's mandate are renewed and transformed. In the development sphere, the Millennium Development Goals will expire as the international community adopts the post-2015 development agenda and works towards the implementation of the new sustainable development goals. In the humanitarian sphere, work has already begun on the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which will bring together governments, humanitarian organizations, the private sector, and people affected by humanitarian crises to propose solutions that can meet the needs of millions of people affected by conflicts and disasters. On gender, this year also marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. The passing of this resolution was historic, recognizing the differential and unique impact of armed conflict on women, and highlights the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping.

With regard to maintaining peace and security, the UN is undergoing three important high-level review processes – on Women, Peace and Security, on Peace Operations, and on the Peacebuilding Architecture. It is essential that all of these processes are harmonized and mutually reinforcing and specifically ensure that women remain central to any reforms envisaged. We must also look comprehensively at the security-development continuum to ensure that the UN's humanitarian, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding responses are optimized to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The Three Review Processes: Distinct, but Interlinked

In preparation for the 2015 High-level Review on Women, Peace and Security, the Secretary-General has commissioned a Global Study on the Implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Study presents an invaluable opportunity to take stock of progress, review trends over time, fill knowledge and data gaps, critically examine persistent and emerging challenges and capture lessons learned and good practices across regions. Despite notable progress made in the last 15 years, in particular at the normative level, the Security Council has stressed that women's perspectives will continue to be underrepresented in conflict prevention, resolution, protection and peacebuilding without a significant shift in how the resolution is implemented. The upcoming High-Level Review will assess progress at the global, regional, and national levels in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and the six additional resolutions on women, peace and security.

The Secretary-General has concurrently established a High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations to make a comprehensive assessment of the state of UN peace operations today, and the



emerging needs of the future, such that Peace Operations remain an indispensable and effective tool in promoting international peace and security. Specific measures have been taken to ensure that gender equality, as well as women, peace and security elements are highlighted throughout this important review. The terms of reference for the panel specifically prioritize gender across all areas of the panel's deliberations, and have called on the panel to ensure "positive synergy" between the Panel and the Global Study on resolution 1325. Importantly, the panel has already held dedicated consultations with women's organizations and women affected by conflict, as well as an expert level briefing on women, peace and security.

Finally, the High-Level Review on Peacebuilding Architecture is conducting a review of the peacebuilding architecture of the UN system institutionally and with regard to policy, and will develop findings and recommendations based on this work. 2015 is an opportunity "to shape the kind of Peacebuilding Commission that will be relevant, catalytic and effective, not least from the perspective of the Security Council and, of course, the interests of those States that are affected."¹ In this review, it is crucial that inclusive policies and strategies are promoted, ensuring that women participate equally in post-conflict political and development processes.

Panel Discussion: Sustainable Peace and Security

As the international community's understanding of the links between political, security, and development processes underpinning conflict have grown, it is vital that both the current security review processes and the post-2015 development agenda reflect these interlinkages and recognize the centrality and agency of women. How the international system ultimately decides to ensure that women play a key role in these efforts will have implications for our collective peace and security. We must think critically about how these high-level reviews can encourage the integration of women in development and security efforts, and how the UN's peace and security efforts can better support the foundations for long-term development.

The discussion at the sixth and final panel of the Women, Peace and Security series will examine the linkages between the various processes outlined, and demonstrate how including gender perspectives might address the challenges facing the world today – the rise in violent extremism, the increase in protracted humanitarian crises, the upsurge of non-state actors, and ever-more politically complex conflicts. The panelists will discuss key areas in the implementation of the WPS agenda, such as financing, senior leadership, political will, and capacity, and speak to these implementation challenges in relation to the findings of each Panel. Importantly, they will also discuss current peace and security trends and how women's participation can be more effectively integrated as a tool to further peace and security objectives. As we approach the October 2015 High-Level Review on Women, Peace and Security, we must encourage the harmonization of all these processes and ensure that gender equality is central to all our efforts.

¹ Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, 19 March 2014, Security Council debate on peacebuilding