

Inter-Agency Network on
Women and Gender Equality
New York, 24 - 27 February 2003

IANWGE/2003/4
February 2003

Women, peace and security

Task Manager: OSAGI

Inter-Agency Taskforce on Women, Peace and Security: February 2003

Taskforce Manager: Angela E.V. King

Taskforce Members: DAW, DDA, DPA, DPKO, DPI, ILO, OCHA, OHCHR, OHRM, OSAGI, SRSG/CAC, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNU, WFP

Observers: IOM and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (Hague Appeal for Peace, International Alert, International Women's Tribune Centre, Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, Women's Committee on Refugee Women and Children, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom).

Study on women, peace and security

At the request of the Secretary-General, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women coordinated the preparation of the study on women, peace and security, mandated by Security Council resolution 1325, in close cooperation with the Taskforce. Taskforce members developed the outline of the study, provided materials and inputs to the consultants, and commented on several drafts. The Taskforce met several times with the consultants to the study and held a brainstorming meeting on recommendations. The Secretary-General's study on women, peace and security was published in October 2002.

Preliminary findings of the study were presented to the Security Council on 25 July 2002, together with presentations by DPKO and by UNIFEM on the independent experts' assessment.

Report to the Security Council

The Secretary-General presented his report on women, peace and security (S/2002/1154), based on the findings of the study, to the Security Council during an open debate on 28 October 2002. The report includes 21 recommendations which are primarily addressed to the Council. Recommendations for the areas of reconstruction and rehabilitation as well as for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes are addressed to Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations. In addition, the Secretary-General made a number of commitments in the report, including to establish a database of gender specialists and women's groups and networks in regions in conflict; and to set targets for the appointment of women as Special Representatives and Special Envoys. Several speakers during the debate acknowledged the important role of the Taskforce in preparing the study.

In the Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2002/32), adopted on 31 October 2002, the Security Council reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1325 and the importance of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations and post-conflict reconstruction. The Council commits itself to integrate gender perspectives into the mandates of all peacekeeping missions, and reiterates an earlier request that all reports to the Council on missions systematically address gender perspectives. With regard to its visits and missions, the Council will integrate gender perspectives into the terms of reference for such activities and calls on the Secretary-General to establish a database of gender specialists, women's groups and networks. The Council also considers the appointment of gender advisers at sufficiently senior levels at Headquarters necessary.

The study and report have been widely distributed to Member States, the UN system, and civil society. Based on feedback received so far, both documents are used for education, training and advocacy purposed by a variety of actors.

Independent Experts' Assessment

UNIFEM commissioned an assessment by two independent experts (Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf) on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building. The assessment was launched in the fall.

Developments

Some progress has been made in the area of training of peacekeepers and humanitarian staff. A Plan of Action was developed by the IASC Taskforce on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises. A DPKO directive on sexual harassment is being finalized by DPKO, OLA and the OSAGI/Focal Point for Women. It will be part of DPKO directives on disciplinary matters, which apply to military members of National Contingents, Military Observers and Civilian Police Officers.

Gender advisers were appointed in MONUC, UNMIK, UNMIBH, UNMISSET (formerly UNTAET) and UNAMSIL (through the human rights section). During the year, the Secretary-General appointed one woman as his Special Representative (UNOMIG). In addition, there are three DSRSGs (UNOMIG, MONUC, UNMEE). The list of high-level candidates, including women, has been reviewed in depth by the Advisory Group to the Secretary-General. The list is being maintained by DPKO.

Other activities

A gender specialist of DAW/OSAGI participated in the Integrated Mission Taskforce which prepared the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). The specialist was also seconded twice for several months during 2002 to work as Senior Gender Adviser with UNAMA. UNAMA established an interagency gender network to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach. The network has also established a policy working group to monitor, analyze and respond to regressive policies affecting the situation of Afghan women.

The Taskforce participated in the preparations of a public event in observance of International Women's Day 2002 at UN Headquarters under the theme "Afghan women today: realities and opportunities".

Next steps

It is anticipated that the Taskforce will continue its activities to contribute to further implementation, monitor progress and ensure follow-up to the resolution 1325.

The Taskforce is updating the system-wide Action Plan (update before the meeting) on the implementation of resolution 1325.

The Task Manager met with DPA, DPKO, DDA and OCHA to follow-up on the progress of implementation made so far and further plans for implementation of resolution 1325, the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report and the Presidential Statement.

It is proposed that the priorities and actions for implementation will also be discussed at the level of the Executive Committees (ECPS, ECHA and UNDG) in order to ensure systematic follow-up by all relevant entities both at Headquarters and at field level.

Another proposal is to develop partnerships with other inter-agency bodies such as the IASC Taskforce on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance and the IASC Taskforce on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises.