



**GENDER AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM AFGHANISTAN**

PARIS, 10 -11 JULY 2003

UN INTER-AGENCY NETWORK
ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

OECD/DAC NETWORK
ON GENDER EQUALITY

UNITED NATIONS DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

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Foreword

The Fifth Joint Workshop of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) was held at OECD headquarters in Paris from 10 to 11 July 2003. The theme of the Workshop was “Gender and Post-conflict Reconstruction: Lessons Learned from Afghanistan”. The aim of the Workshop was to contribute to increased effectiveness of multilateral and bilateral support to post-conflict reconstruction through the enhanced integration of gender perspectives into this work. The overall goal was to identify good practices and lessons learned from promoting gender equality in post-conflict reconstruction, drawing on experiences from Afghanistan as a key case study and wider lessons from elsewhere.

There was a strong feeling on the part of both organizing groups of the need to look more closely at the role of women in peace operations including during the post-conflict phase. This interest has been spearheaded by the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000. The findings of the Workshop will be an input to the Secretary-General’s report on implementation of that resolution to be discussed by the Council on the fourth Anniversary of the adoption of the resolution in October 2004. The findings will also be an input to the thematic discussion of the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session. The theme, women’s equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building, will be the focus of the general debate and of a panel during the Commission’s session, 1-12 March 2004.

The Workshop was attended by more than 100 participants. It was jointly chaired by the Chairs of IANWGE and GENDERNET, Ms. Angela E.V. King, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and Ms. Bea ten Tusscher, Head of the Women and Development Division, Directorate for Social and Institutional Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands, respectively. The Workshop issued a Final Communiqué summarizing its principle findings. This report contains the Communiqué in the next action and a full summary of the Workshop proceedings.

The organizers are grateful to all the participants for their contributions to the Workshop, and particularly to Ms. Habiba Sarabi, Minister of Women’s Affairs of Afghanistan, for her participation and her inspiring keynote statement. Thanks are also due to the OECD/DAC secretariat for the excellent facilities and arrangements at the Workshop venue, and to staff members from both the IANWGE and GENDERNET secretariats for the considerable amount of work done in organizing, managing, and reporting on the Workshop.

Angela E.V. King

Chair

UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and
Gender Equality

*UN Assistant Secretary-General,
Special Adviser on Gender Issues and
Advancement of Women*

Bea ten Tusscher

Chair

DAC Network on Gender Equality
Head, Women and Development Division

*Directorate for Social and Institutional
Development,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands*

Final Communiqué

“Our challenges are enormous but our determination is greater than the challenges we face” – Ms. Habiba Sarabi, Minister of Women’s Affairs, Afghanistan.

Women often bear the brunt of violent conflict but also have a vital role to play in reconstruction processes. Recent events in Afghanistan have raised renewed hopes worldwide that this would mark a new era of freedom and empowerment for Afghan women and girls. Experience is showing that accomplishing this is no easy task.

The Joint United Nations and OECD/DAC Workshop in Paris on Gender and Post-conflict Reconstruction drew on lessons from Afghanistan and elsewhere. The Workshop identified challenges and constraints as well as good practices for achieving gender equality and meeting women’s needs more effectively in humanitarian assistance and recovery; reconstruction of the political, public and security sectors; promotion of economic and social development; and human rights protection and legal reform.

The Workshop brought together Afghan women leaders, including Ms. Habiba Sarabi, the Minister of Women’s Affairs, staff of United Nations’ entities, representatives of OECD/DAC, member countries and civil society, and gender and post-conflict experts with field experience in reconstruction.

The *Bonn Agreement* (2001) paved the way for the establishment of a Ministry of Women’s Affairs as part of the new administration of Afghanistan. It called for the establishment of a broad-based, multi-ethnic, fully representative, gender-sensitive Government. It recognized, as did the landmark United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), that the participation of women and attention to their rights and status are critical to national peace and reconstruction processes.

Reconstruction programmes, based on human rights principles, can avoid perpetuating situations of inequality and discrimination and lead to the creation of more equitable and sustainable societies. A safe environment, free from violence, is a precondition for achieving this.

Key lessons learned

Drawing on experiences from Afghanistan and elsewhere, the Workshop identified the essential elements for an equitable gender-sensitive reconstruction process. These should take full account of the rights of both women and men by:

1. Ensuring sufficient attention to the urgent need for improved security – including protection and assistance for those at risk;
2. Acknowledging that building sustainable peace, based on mutual respect, cultural diversity and gender equality, requires long-term efforts and commitment to complex

social transformation; and donor pressures to focus only on results should therefore be avoided;

3. Providing co-ordinated international support that strengthens national efforts and ownership, including to national women's machineries, and ensuring coherence between technical assistance needs for capacity-building and the provision of resources;
4. Ensuring a high level of political will and commitment from all key stakeholders so that reconstruction efforts involve and benefit women as well as men;
5. Applying a gender perspective to conflict analysis and needs assessments at an early stage as the foundation for the development of sectoral plans and mission mandates and enabling full participation of women in policy formulation;
6. Empowering women in the political transformation, including by supporting them to identify their needs and interests and by providing incentives to men to support women's full participation in governance processes at all levels;
7. Developing gender-responsive approaches to policy formulation, budget allocations and monitoring, including through the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data.

The way forward

The Workshop also made proposals for strengthening international support for Afghanistan and building on this to ensure dynamic gender perspectives in future post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The international community should:

In Afghanistan

- Support the efforts of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to work with other Government ministries to incorporate gender perspectives in sectoral plans and policies, including through adequate national budget support;
- Immediately fill and adequately support the position of a senior gender adviser in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, in consultation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs;
- Help facilitate implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which is a key means of realizing women's human rights, including by strengthening reporting capacity;
- Strengthen the Afghan inter-agency gender network and ensure it is well-functioning and resourced.

...and in addition

- Actively engage men working with women in the process of change and develop their capacity to understand the value of, and actively support, women's empowerment for economic and social development;
- Acknowledge the need for cultural sensitivity and historical awareness in designing approaches and providing support to reconstruction programmes and to local efforts to increase respect for universal human rights, norms and values;
- Ensure the provision of gender-advisory capacity and gender-sensitivity training for staff in all peace missions and processes;
- Recognize the importance of reconciliation as an integral part of peace-building processes and ensure that justice is not only done but seen to be done;
- Develop a strategic and long-term perspective transcending short-term solutions and quick fixes, including support to local communities as a way to induce a sustained process of social transformation in support of gender equality.

I. Introduction

The Workshop brought together members of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) of the United Nations system and of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET). It also included invited guests from the DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation (CPDC), representatives of civil society organizations, gender and post-conflict experts, particularly those with field-based experience in post-conflict reconstruction in the UN system and a number of Afghan experts.

Afghanistan served as a case study for the Workshop given the extreme marginalization of women and the concerted involvement by bilateral and multilateral entities to support the reconstruction of the country. The Workshop also looked at other examples of reconstruction efforts, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, where innovative approaches have been adopted to advance the goal of gender equality.

The goal, rationale and expected outputs from the Workshop were as follows:

- Goal: To identify good practice and lessons learned from promoting gender equality in post-conflict reconstruction, drawing on experiences from Afghanistan as a key case study and wider lessons from elsewhere.
- Rationale: To contribute to increased effectiveness of bilateral and multilateral support to post-conflict reconstruction through enhanced integration of gender perspectives into this work.
- Outputs: A short communiqué immediately following the Workshop and a concise report containing Workshop proceedings, lessons learned and good practices.

The Workshop commenced with four expert presentations, reflecting the experiences of the UN, Afghan civil society, a bilateral donor in supporting gender equality in Afghanistan, and an overview presentation on gender and post-conflict reconstruction. The keynote statement was given by the Afghan Minister for Women's Affairs, Ms. Habiba Sarabi. The Workshop then broke up into four Working Groups, looking at: (i) humanitarian assistance and recovery; (ii) reconstruction of the political, public and security sectors; (iii) economic, social and infrastructure development; and (iv) human rights protection, promotion and legal reform. The findings of the Working Groups were reported back and discussed in plenary. The key findings are summarized in the Final Communiqué.

II. Summary of Opening Statements

A. Ms. Habiba Sarabi, Minister of Women's Affairs, Kabul

Minister Sarabi was the guest of honour at the Workshop and delivered the keynote statement. She noted that pursuing a vision of gender equality in Afghanistan “remains a daunting challenge”, faced with complex economic, social, political and cultural factors that militated against it. In the mid-1990s, Afghanistan was ranked bottom in the world against the UNDP Human Development Report's Gender-related Development Index (GDI).

The 2001 Bonn Agreement, which set the framework for democratic governance in Afghanistan, recognized women's rights, participation and status as key issues. This was followed by a Presidential Statement supporting equality between men and women, and the ratification by Afghanistan in March 2003 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Gender equality has also been recognized as a critical issue in the National Development Framework of Afghanistan.

A strong policy framework on gender has been accompanied by attempts to establish institutional mechanisms to ensure its delivery. In addition to the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Government also created the Office of the State Minister for Women and set up a Gender Advisory Group as part of the Afghan Development Forum. Efforts are also being made to strengthen Afghan NGOs working for women's equality and to build stronger working relationships between them and the Government.

Minister Sarabi noted that although the challenges were enormous, “our determination is greater than the challenges we face”. Work is about to begin on implementing an inter-ministerial action plan to mainstream gender in the Afghan statistical system. The Women's Ministry would also be striving to complete a programme to set up Women Development Centres in all provinces of Afghanistan, aimed at linking resources with women's needs at the community level. There continued to be a pressing need for more gender expertise to assist ministries in establishing gender focal points and building their capacity to deliver Afghanistan's gender policy. Continued international support remained of great importance in enabling Afghanistan to realize its vision.

B. Ms. Berglind Ásgeirsdóttir, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

The Deputy Secretary-General welcomed the Minister and participants to the Workshop. She underlined the importance of the theme of the Workshop, both in gaining a better understanding of the situation in Afghanistan and in drawing wider lessons about the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. She noted that the Afghan case is important for many reasons, including the historical lesson that the situation of women can deteriorate over time as well as improve. Fundamental change and vigilance are required to ensure that the gains that are made are protected.

Ms. Ásgeirsdóttir pointed to the shared goal among the UN system and DAC members to ensure that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in all reconstruction interventions, while preserving national ownership of the process. It was also important that events elsewhere in the world did not push the Afghanistan situation to the sidelines. She also reminded the Workshop of the commitment made in the Millennium Development Goals to promote gender equality. She noted OECD's own efforts in supporting women and girls in post-conflict situations in south eastern Europe, and the recent commitments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg to support women's empowerment and improve their status. Ms. Ásgeirsdóttir concluded by wishing the Workshop success with its deliberations and looking forward to the outcome of the discussions.

**C. Ms. Angela E.V. King,
Chair, UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality**

Ms. King welcomed participants and noted that it was the Fifth Joint Workshop between the UN/DAC gender networks. Ms. King recalled her personal experience of Afghanistan, which began in 1997 when she led the first UN Inter-Agency Gender Mission there at the request of the UN Secretary-General. Following the fall of the Taliban régime in 2001, the UN followed up by including gender expertise in its first Integrated Mission Task Force to advise the Secretary-General's Special Representative and to prepare strategies for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). This included provision for a Senior Gender Adviser in UNAMA, though this post was still to be filled. Some progress has been made, however, through the setting up by an Interim Gender Adviser of an inter-agency network for gender equality, consisting of representatives from UNAMA and gender focal points from 12 UN agencies, Government representatives and NGOs.

While the fall of the Taliban led to great optimism, women's participation in the reconstruction of Afghanistan continues to be jeopardized by the lack of security across the country. Women still face intimidation, violence, and restrictions on their movements. While the ratification of CEDAW was an important step forward, it remains to be seen how gender equality will be dealt with in the new Afghan constitution. Afghanistan is at a crucial moment in its recovery from decades of conflict and requires continuous and resolute support from the international community.

As well as looking at Afghanistan, it is also important to look at reconstruction efforts in a broader way. Sustainable and durable peace requires the participation of women and girls, as well as the integration of gender perspectives in all reconstruction processes. Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, adopted in October 2000, is an important tool in this context. The follow-up report by the Secretary-General (S/2002/1154) and its accompanying study, Women, Peace and Security¹ provide considerable information and guidance on integrating gender issues throughout all phases of peace operations.

Previous joint UN/DAC gender Workshops have been characterized by stimulating discussions on cutting-edge issues, and produced recommendations for concrete actions and initiatives. Ms. King was confident that this Workshop would be equally stimulating and help

¹ www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi

increase the effectiveness of international reconstruction efforts, so that women and men can benefit equally from the rebuilding of their societies.

**D. Ms. Bea ten Tusscher,
Chair, DAC Network on Gender Equality**

Ms. ten Tusscher joined Ms. King in welcoming participants. She emphasized the importance of the topic, noting that the meeting was about recognizing that women are not only the main victims of conflict situations but also very much part of the solution in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The aim was to analyse the Afghan experiences and to learn lessons from this, not just for the benefit of further efforts in that country but also to inform similar work elsewhere. Ms. ten Tusscher underlined the different entry points and roles and responsibilities of the different actors of the international community – bilateral and multilateral – and emphasized their complementarities. The Workshop was important in enabling aid agencies to assess respective strengths and weaknesses, and develop coherent approaches at both the global and local levels in support to post-conflict reconstruction. Participants should emerge from the Workshop with increased clarity and strengthened partnerships.

Although the Afghanistan experience had a number of unique characteristics, it also shared many features in common with situations elsewhere. Ms. ten Tusscher said that participants had much to learn from Afghanistan, and must ensure that it did not get pushed to the sidelines and that the lessons learned were built on in future work.

**E. Mr. Michael Roeskau,
Director, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD**

Mr. Roeskau added his good wishes for a successful Workshop on behalf of the DAC secretariat, underlining how effective the Gender Equality Network has been as a member of the DAC. This Workshop was further evidence of the importance of its role and its ability to forge important links with the wider international community.

III. Summary of Panel Presentations

A. Ms. Marzia Basel, Director, Afghan Women Judges Association, Kabul

Ms. Basel provided an overview of the situation of women in Afghanistan before, during and after the fall of the Taliban. She raised the important issues of the role of civil society organizations in the reconstruction process and good practices as well as obstacles encountered during the difficult reconstruction period.

Afghans had suffered 23 years of war that has seriously compromised the cultural, economical, social and political heritage of the country and caused the death and displacement of millions of people. Women were the first victims of war-related violence. More than two million women were war widows and still faced intensified prejudice, social and economic exclusion. The Afghan women who were left to deal with physical and psychological hardships as sole heads of households constituted one of the most vulnerable social groups in the country.

Ms. Basel spoke about new windows of opportunity for Afghan women. Programmes were underway to support women to return to the workforce, particularly as teachers and journalists. Girls represented a large number of children returning to school and increasingly women were gaining access to health centres. In recent months a number of legal, political and economic reform processes had started with deep implications for promoting gender equality if women's participation were secured.

Despite the considerable progress made in the past year, substantial challenges remained to ensure full participation of women in the reconstruction of the country. Addressing institutional policies and laws at national level, encouraging women's entry into the private sector and increasing the economic capacity of women at community level to secure self-employment were but a few of the key areas for accelerated support. Security remained the largest challenge and one that would make or break progress towards a lasting peace.

B. Mr. Nigel Fisher, Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

Mr. Fisher, at the very last moment, was unable to attend the Workshop. Ms. Aster Zaoude, Senior Gender and Development Adviser from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presented a summary of his presentation. The key points she raised were:

- The Bonn Agreement laid the framework for a gender-sensitive Government in Afghanistan. The Agreement was seen as a positive start towards the advancement of women and the first official position of the international community's good intentions towards developing gender equality. In reality, however, the good intentions had not been matched by adequate achievements.

- The Ministry of Women's Affairs, established by the Bonn Agreement was the newest ministry in need of capacity-building and resources – including time – to achieve its objectives.
- The Human Rights Commission, the Constitutional Drafting Commission and the Electoral Unit all had the participation of women, and were working to meet women's expressed needs and concerns. Some think this was only tokenistic, but it was a very significant beginning.
- There were constraints to women's political participation. However, party representation was based on population size, so that the larger the voting population, the more representatives it could select, which might be a boost for women's need to be allowed to vote.

Finally, Ms. Zaoude emphasized that while a degree of success had been achieved in the mainstreaming of gender, much more support was needed. International entities must refocus their efforts and agree on a common strategy to further enhance gender development.

**C. Ms. Yumiko Tanaka,
Senior Adviser for Gender and Development,
Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA)**

Ms. Tanaka provided a visually stimulating presentation on what the international community had been doing to support women's programming in Afghanistan from 2001-2003. She highlighted the importance of supporting the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) and mentioned the problems it was facing in mainstreaming gender throughout all sectoral ministries. She noted that MOWA had not received adequate funding to carry out its work.

Ms. Tanaka went on to describe Japan's assistance to the people of Afghanistan. Support had been targeted to humanitarian, recovery and reconstruction programmes, and to peace processes and security sectors. Education and health sectors had also been given support as well as several infrastructure projects.

Japan had supported MOWA through the deployment of long and short-term experts, capacity-building and training of Governmental ministry focal points, technical co-operation and exchange through south-to-south projects and grant aid for operational project support. A programme formulation mission for further support was being planned.

The importance of donor collaboration, timely provision of technical expertise, and networking with national machinery were stressed as key lessons learned in Afghanistan. The challenges for the future included ensuring women's participation and representation in political, social and economic spheres, enhancing collaboration among donors, more information exchange and the extension of security services outside of Kabul to rural areas. Without a secure environment, women as well as men, would not be able to work together to rebuild Afghanistan.

**D. Mr. Georg Frerks,
Head of the Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, Netherlands**

Mr. Frerks presented a paper on Gender in Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. He stressed that the relevance of the theme of “gender and conflict” was accepted at the policy level, as evidenced by a number of landmark UN Security Council resolutions, conferences and donor initiatives. Yet, he maintained that significant challenges remained, such as the development of a consistent, coherent and co-ordinated approach, the need for systematic implementation in practice, mainstreaming the issue at different institutional levels and monitoring and drawing on lessons learned. On the basis of a Dutch study,² he stated that most work on gender and conflict suffered from a reductionist view of gender, focusing mainly on women and women’s roles. We needed a more encompassing gender concept including femininities and masculinities, gendered individual identities, institutions and organizations, ideology and doctrine, and symbols. Most policy approaches also ignore how processes of “gendering” work in reality and how, for example, policies or projects in everyday life get “gendered”.

Mr. Frerks identified seven multiple and multifaceted roles of women in conflict, i.e. as victims of (sexual) violence, combatants, informal peace actors, actors in formal peace politics, coping and surviving actors, household heads, workers and (in-) formally employed. In daily life, these roles were intertwined or may overlap and clearly transcend that of a female victim of violence. In fact, one should carefully discern between “victimizing” and “empowering” discourses. Apart from recognizing different types of vulnerability, it was of the essence to stress the resilience, resourcefulness and (coping) capacities of women. The differentiation and diversity among and between women was, however, large and that should be taken into account when formulating policies. Moreover, women’s roles and gender relationships were highly dynamic and change as a consequence of conflict. A historical perspective of continuity and discontinuity around conflict was important.

At the level of institutional and organizational practice, Mr. Frerks stressed the need to combine gender and conflict expertise. More explicit reference to women’s roles and perspectives helped to avoid women- or gender-blindness. Mainstreaming still remained a priority. It was helpful to formulate plans of action, targets and benchmarks, based on a long-term strategic vision. Clear organizational responsibilities and structures and commitment of top management were essential, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and dealing with non-compliance. In the 16 organizations selected for the research there was a wealth of organizational experience by way of approaches, activities, mechanisms, tools and instruments. Though there was not one “ideal” organization or approach, combined they offered a fairly comprehensive repertoire, especially if followed up by serious efforts to carryout monitoring, evaluation and impact assessments.

The study identified some important lessons:

² T. Bouta and G. Frerks (eds), *Women’s Roles in Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Literature Review and Institutional Analysis*. Report written for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Reed Elsevier Business Information BV (Doetinchem), 2002.

- Recognize and study local realities;
- Be aware of top-down, donor ‘office’ perspectives;
- Involve women professionals;
- Gender-sensitize interventions on the basis of gender analysis and equality;
- Combine gender and conflict analysis;
- Address women’s needs and interests;
- Take into account women’s specific capacities (and vulnerabilities);
- Shift from a welfare-orientation to long-term strategic perspectives;
- Do not victimize, but empower!

Finally, Mr. Frerks made a plea for modesty, stating that contemporary conflicts were complex and messy affairs, often resulting from States’ abuses and mismanagement. A simple return to the situation-ex-ante was mostly impossible and undesirable, and solutions required multiple societal transformations. Simplistic notions of “reconstruction” or a new “Marshall Plan” underestimated the complex, long-term, embedded and political nature of peace-building. Distinguishing between deductive and inductive approaches, he warned against supply-driven, linear “tool-box” approaches that focused insufficiently on local needs and perspectives. They resulted in fragmentation and a mismatch with local priorities and capacities. In this sense he observed a lot of parallels between the discourses on conflict and gender.

IV. Reports of Working Groups

A. Group 1: Humanitarian assistance and recovery

Facilitator : Prudence Woodford-Berger, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stockholm
Presenter : Carol Mann, FemAid, Paris
Rapporteurs: Kerstin Vignard and Carol Mann

The Working Group discussed the efficiency and relevance of humanitarian assistance applied to war-zones where women and children are the principal recipients of aid. What emerged was the paramount importance of establishing coherent and consistent standards in understanding local, social and cultural norms in bringing about any sustainable change for women. Although examples were chiefly drawn from Afghanistan, experiences in Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda and Zaïre were also described.

Conclusions: ultimately, a question of politics

The Working Groups' conclusions included the:

- Importance of recognizing the political implications and limitations imposed by donor countries on humanitarian aid.
- Awareness that political motives and agendas can, sadly, affect the long-term sustainability of projects and programmes, and can also undermine trust, effectiveness and our credibility.
- Acknowledgement that humanitarian assistance cannot substitute for political action; as we have seen in Rwanda, and elsewhere. However well-meaning, it cannot be seen as a replacement for efficient politics.

Recommendations

1. Research in the field

Aim: To establish valid sociological and anthropological criteria in order to better identify the recipients of humanitarian assistance.

- It is essential to recognize the variety of women's and men's historical and cultural identities and stakes and to ensure that these are reflected in responses to conflict.
- Apart from achieving a historical and cultural understanding from our own perspective, it is equally important to take into account how the targeted population views and understands itself, within its own hierarchies and values. It is essential to concretize human rights by linking them to local understanding of human value, self-worth and dignity. A blunt approach can and does increasingly lead to local resistance to Western norms of progress and possible mass rejection of aid directed towards women and girls, particularly in the sectors of health and education.

- Gender should be used as a vector for understanding conflict, but the complexity of the issues involved should be addressed to avoid reductionist analyses and solutions: many conflicts have much in common, but each reflects a particular situation which deserves closer inspection.
- Time needs to be devoted, with the help of specialists, to defining those criteria which are general and applicable to a vast majority of women and those which are specific to each particular situation. A certain number of recurring indentificatory indexes need to be established for each conflict area, with the awareness that the information collected may not be transferable to another conflict zone. These include: age/age-linked social category, position in family, origin (including tribal and religious), marital and social (or caste) status.
- Information on specific context needs to be collected and considered. Rural or urban backgrounds, nomad or sedentary habitat, varying levels of education and adherence to traditions all need to be taken into account, especially in the setting up of workable health programmes for women.
- Widows need to be recognized as a distinct category with specific vulnerabilities.
- It is critical to differentiate between refugees, returnees and native women who may all have separate needs and aspirations that often compete with each other.
- Organizations planning aid should be aware of the history of women's rights in the country where they are intervening: solutions have to be tailored to meet different women's expectations (especially in the field of contraception, abortion, HIV/AIDS prevention etc.) that do not necessarily apply as widely to countries that have never had such facilities before. Thus, the term "Muslim women" is not acceptable as an umbrella notion to cover the needs of, Afghan, Algerian, Azerbaijani, Bosnian and Iraqi women in the same way.

2. *Work in the field*

Aim: To apply deeper knowledge about the social and cultural backgrounds in order to effect efficient, sustainable aid and bring about change in gender perspectives.

- The tools for understanding a problem also provide the key to finding an efficient solution.
- Choosing local agents and collaborators require rigorous planning to avoid waste through corruption, such as the colossal losses within Afghanistan and Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. This means taking into consideration how local interfaces are truly perceived by the population one is seeking to help, especially if these agents are returnees.

- The return to normalcy, which is the aim of humanitarian assistance, does not automatically entail the re-establishment of the previous status quo, especially if this entails the return of warlords and the traditional forms of patriarchal domination where women's rights and dignity are denied and crushed.
- For solutions to conflicts to be sustainable, there must be a striving towards grassroots ownership. Traditionally-respected groups such as older women and widows can be brought into these processes.
- Sustainable transition from relief to development requires better and more consistent co-ordination, co-operation, and planning across a range of disciplines and actors (agencies, NGOs, national Governments, local groups and Governments).
- Participatory approaches should be applied wherever possible and at every level: ensuring that women policy-planners are present at every stage of reconstruction projects, involving men in health and education projects.
- It is important to acknowledge and accommodate the rhythm of local processes and change, however slow.
- Whilst it is essential to acknowledge the suffering of women, it appears equally important to value and recognize women's experience as civilian fighters on the home front, peace-brokers and negotiators. With this recognition, women can be empowered to contribute to sustainable transition, recovery and peace-building.

3. Aid workers and planners

Aim: To bring about a self-critical, reflexive way of working.

- It is essential to constantly question, challenge and be reflexive about our own assumptions, (preconceived) notions, and perspectives. This includes recognizing the complexity of our own values, interests, motives and the limitations of organizational structures, mandates and practices.

B. Group 2: Reconstruction of the political, public and security sectors

Facilitator: Aster Zaoude, UNDP, New York
 Presenters: Nicola Johnston, International Alert, UK
 Malcolm Ehrenpreis, World Bank, Washington, D.C.
 Rapporteur: Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Commonwealth Secretariat, London

Conclusions: general

The Working Group's conclusions included both those of a general nature and on security, constitutional and election issues.

- Understanding and commitment to gender mainstreaming has increased significantly within the international bodies supporting peace building and post-conflict reconstruction, e.g. gender-awareness programmes, checklists for peace support operations, action plans with gender objectives. We have moved beyond discussing why gender mainstreaming is important. However, women are still persistently excluded from formal conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction processes, and their unique needs and concerns fail to be addressed. A systematic approach is required which includes enforcement mechanisms and monitoring/evaluation procedures.
- Context matters. All conflicts are not the same, nor should the same strategies be used for conflicts at different stages. It is critical to undertake cultural analysis, conflict analysis and gender analysis that is specific to the context, as a basis for action.
- Peace should not mean a return to the status quo. The post-conflict transition phase is one in which change is possible, but it is also when traditional patriarchal elites seek to regroup themselves, e.g. in Algeria and Eritrea, women were combatants in the liberation movements/wars, but after independence were relegated to traditional gender roles. “Representation” in post-conflict situations is often focused on ethnic, religious and political diversity, but not on gender equality.
- In situations of conflict, extreme (violent) forms of masculinity are often seen. It is important to build partnerships and alliances with men. Men/boys should be included in the gender analysis and gender interventions from the outset. What roles have women/girls and men/boys played in the conflict? What are the gender impacts of the conflict on women/girls and men/boys in the political, security, legal, economic, social, spheres, etc.?
- It is critical to address trauma for the peace process to gel. It is a key to conflict transformation.
- Building local ownership is a key principle in post-conflict reconstruction, starting with the premise that people are capable of rebuilding their own societies, and taking into account existing local capacities. However, do not immediately assume that systems and capacities in place before the conflict still exist. There is need for a critical interface between representatives of the local population and the international agencies.

Conclusions: security, constitutional and election issues

- Security should be addressed from a gender-aware human security perspective. But it also needs to be borne in mind that in conflict situations, women can and do take action even when they fear for their lives, e.g. under the Taliban in Afghanistan and during the genocide in Rwanda.

- Peacekeeping forces tend to be very patriarchal, e.g. in Kosovo. Peacekeeping operations often do not make women feel more secure, e.g. there may be an increase in rape and the threat of rape, an increase in prostitution due to the presence of peacekeepers, an increase in HIV/AIDS spread by peacekeepers. We also need to be very critical, including self-critical, about the patriarchal approaches taken by peacekeeping forces from our own countries.
- Security for women is a big issue in post-conflict elections. In Afghanistan, women are unable to associate or travel due to lack of security; women cannot be interviewed because of the threat or perceived threat to their security.
- The constitution in a post-conflict situation should be targeted for gender-aware intervention. In Afghanistan, the consultation process was highly questionable, a very small number of women were included in the provincial consultations, and there are currently serious doubts about the gender provisions in the draft constitution.

Recommendations

1. Need for a clear mandate

- Build political will at the highest levels to ensure gender-aware post-conflict reconstruction.
- Ensure the use of gender-aware mechanisms for peacekeeping operations including: Code of Conduct for peacekeepers, mandates containing gender-explicit directives for peacekeeping operations, procedures for the International Criminal Court, gender-awareness training for peacekeepers, increased involvement of women peacekeepers. It is critical to back these policies and mechanisms with human and financial allocations; monitor implementation to ensure accountability, and ensure that training is undertaken by all peacekeepers and is an ongoing process.
- Use existing international instruments such as CEDAW as far as possible to provide a framework for engendering the post-conflict reconstruction process. This is not easy in situations with a diversity of religious interpretations, but CEDAW can offer a bridge.
- Set quotas for women's equal participation from the outset, e.g. in Timor-Leste the Village Development Councils were mandated to elect equal numbers of women and men.
- Put in place a clear road map for engendering the political process, including the administrative arrangements, consultative process and elections.

2. *Gender mainstreaming*

- Prioritize gender mainstreaming at the earliest phase of the post-conflict reconstruction process, e.g. organize national consultation for women and men in partnership for post-conflict reconstruction (including political and security dimensions), ensure that gender advisers with clearly defined terms of reference are included in assessment missions.
- Focus on both aspects of gender mainstreaming: the political and the technical. Without political will, it is impossible to integrate gender into the post-conflict reconstruction process despite having the technical capacity.
- Ensure that good gender analysis of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction is undertaken from the very outset.
- Facilitate gender mainstreaming at all stages of the post-conflict reconstruction process, in all sectors, in all tools, as part of capacity-building.
- Ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all political and security aspects of post-conflict reconstruction: political (e.g. democratic institutions, good governance, civil society and the media, empowering women for advocacy and leadership); security (e.g. disarmament and demobilization including women and child soldiers, security sector reform).
- Facilitate gender mainstreaming through the Women's Ministry and all other ministries; through all UN, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs and other agencies; through gender-aware women and men in positions of power and influence.

3. *Capacity-building*

- Prioritize gender-aware capacity-building at both the top (to ensure political will and to influence those in positions of power) and bottom (empowering women, men and young people at the community, civil society, local government and other levels).
- Ensure that gender-training is included in the capacity-building strategy in not just the Women's Ministry but also every other ministry and agency.
- Build women's capacity for advocacy, leadership, representing their community interests, contesting elections, sitting on governing bodies, etc. Conflict politicizes women, but they need training and support to become political actors.
- Prioritize gender-aware peace and citizenship education in post-conflict situations to (re)build a culture of peace, e.g. the peace and conflict studies programme set up at the University of Sierra Leone for all undergraduates.

- Do not fall into the temptation of empowering élites due to resistance or the difficulty of building capacity from the bottom up. New local structures, e.g. village councils, can be legitimized through providing resources, training, public awareness campaigns, etc.

4. *Donor co-ordination and complementarity*

- Donor agencies should prioritize long-term approaches rather than demand immediate results and quick fixes.
- It is particularly important that agencies develop a common strategy and work together in post-conflict situations.
- Prioritize an early inter-agency meeting of gender advisers in post-conflict situations, and regular meetings/communications thereafter, to facilitate co-ordination and complementarity of efforts and strategies.

5. *Unanswered questions*

- Has there been an election in a post-conflict situation that has not included an international peacekeeping presence, armed or unarmed, which has succeeded? Is this a realistic expectation?

C. Group 3: Economic, social and infrastructure development

Facilitator: Sissel Ekaas, FAO, Rome
 Presenters: Malcolm Ehrenpreis, PREM/World Bank, Washington, D.C.
 Samantha Reynolds, UN-Habitat, Kabul
 Rapporteur: Ylva Sörman-Nath, Sida, Stockholm

Aim: To examine the gender aspects of economic, social and infrastructure development in post-conflict situations, including creating economic opportunities, improving access to and control over land, and improving health, education and social protection.

Recommendations

The Working Group recommended that all international and national actors:

- Integrate a gender dimension in conflict analyses and sectoral needs assessment for reconstruction.
- Build the case for winning-over men – partnerships with men at all levels is critical.
- Capacity-building/mainstreaming is needed in all technical ministries and within international development co-operation agencies.

- Mechanisms are needed for harvesting good practice in community empowerment and development for policy formulation.
- Reconstruction should be seen as means to reconciliation, not as an end in itself.
- The legal status of rural women household heads needs to be explored.
- Donor co-ordination should be strengthened.
- Monitoring and adjustments based on learning are essential before interventions are replicated.

Lessons learned

- Social, economic and infrastructure reconstruction is most effective when it is community driven and owned and politically/nationally anchored.
- There are no quick fixes. A long-term process of social transformation is required, building trust and solidarity through participation, inclusion and empowerment.
- A two-pronged approach works best: meeting immediate, basic and practical needs through economic empowerment, and addressing strategic issues through political empowerment.
- Change must come from within. International partners should act as facilitators. This is particularly important with respect to promoting gender equality through the use of “carrots and sticks”.
- Need for international partners to work together and in synergy, rather than each being a “jack of all trades”.

D. Group 4: Human rights protection, promotion and legal reform

Facilitator: Gerti Perlaki, Austrian Development Co-operation
 Presenters: Marzia Basel, Afghan Women Judges’ Association
 Maarit Kohonen, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
 Rapporteur: Maha Muna, UNIFEM

Aim: To identify good practices and lessons learned in promoting women’s human rights in the course of transition, recovery and reconstruction in Afghanistan and other recent post-conflict contexts.

Conclusions

- Clearly, respect for human rights and systematic legal reform are essential for a stable, just peace. While there are a number of positive processes identified in the

course of the Workshop, and some initial results that indicate progress in promoting women's human rights and gender equality, significant constraints and obstacles must still be overcome.

- Women have secured some solid, initial gains in participation in public life. Two hundred women participated in the Emergency Loya Jirga convened in 2002. Women hold three important posts in the Afghan Transitional Administration. Women are represented in government commissions: two out of nine members of the Constitutional Drafting Commission are women; two women participate in the Judicial Reform Commission, and five out of seven members of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission are women. This level of representation is expected to result in further gains for women through legal and institutional reform. For example, the Constitutional and Judicial Commissions must ensure that the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by the Government of Afghanistan in March 2003 is the basis of the reform of the national legal framework.
- Security remains a priority concern for women. Due to prevailing insecurity, women and girls are unable to gain access to education, healthcare or to fully participate in public life. Young girls fall victim to illegal early marriage and kidnapping. Prisons incarcerate women for breaking taboos and tradition. The Human Rights Commission is investigating cases of abuse against women. However, more can be done. Gender equality must be recognized at the centre of the human rights framework, in order to end both impunity for past crimes as well as current violations against women.
- Any recovery and reconstruction programmes, such as Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration must guard against unintended negative consequences for women, as was the case in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste where violence was transferred from the battlefield into the home. However, disarmament will not be complete until families feel safe and rule of law prevails throughout the country.
- Promoting gender equality is a difficult political struggle. Human rights norms and standards are universal, and it is important that cultural sensitivity guide how best to secure women's human rights. However it is equally essential that the international community continue to support the development of capacity to address, monitor and remedy abuse of women's human rights.

Recommendations

1. Security

- The international community must continue to play a vital role in restoring security in the broadest sense. This entails both a commitment to end impunity, both for past

crimes as well as crimes committed during the current transition period, including domestic violence.

- It is critical that national reform guards against entrenching a lack of accountability and promoting impunity, for example, including neglecting to screen candidates for security sector posts.
- International political support and pressure to advocate a domestic women's agenda for change is critical at this time. The Bonn Agreement of 2001 provided a framework for reform, gave rise to a new national machinery, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, that is mandated to promote women's human rights and the mainstreaming of gender concerns in Afghan government policy and programmes. International support has promoted capacity-building and strategic planning in this ministry. Gender mainstreaming has been supported through the establishment of gender focal points and strengthened collaboration with line ministries (particularly Health and Education). Continued support is vital to ensure that these gains can be sustained.
- The international community must not abrogate its responsibility to support national mechanisms that have been put into place to ensure human rights promotion and monitoring. This includes continued support for monitoring and reform of institutions including prisons, as well as support for a national dialogue on reconciliation.

2. Sustainable recovery and reconstruction

- An emphasis on training and education that overlooks the need for reconstruction of infrastructure can be counterproductive. In Afghanistan as in other post-conflict countries, it is critical to ensure that investment is made in rehabilitating institutions and ensuring operational support.
- Support to women's human rights also entails ensuring access to assistance for victims of violence and abuse.
- Sustainable reconstruction must build on Afghanistan's responsibilities and obligations under international treaties, and on the public commitments that Afghanistan's political leaders have made to gender equality and the promotion of women's human rights.
- In 2002, a woman was elected Vice-Chair of the Loya Jirga, despite vocal opposition to women's involvement and threats against those who participated. Also in 2002, when another woman, Massouda Jalal, ran for President, she received the second largest number of votes. In 2004, Afghan women must fully participate in free and fair elections for a representative national Government. Experiences in East Timor demonstrate that a strong and well-supported national women's movement can

promote the election of women representatives in national Government, even in an atmosphere that opposed a quota mechanism for promoting women's representation.

- Donors must neither avoid a focus on short-term results during long-term processes of change and reform, nor neglect the immediate need for promoting enhanced protection.

3. *Gender and human rights*

- It is critical to ensure that there is *both* dedicated capacity to support gender mainstreaming as well as broad-based integration of gendered approaches. The Ministry of Women's Affairs' *Organigram and Terms of Reference* (April 2003) incorporates a section on women's legal protection that includes training and research, technical assistance and policy analysis regarding gender-sensitive implementation of international treaties and national laws.
- Broad-based consultation on constitutional reform, as originally anticipated, has not taken place. This fuels apprehension that women's human rights may not be adequately protected in the draft constitution.
- Support for gender equality and women's human rights can be realized through support for emergent and strengthened local women's organizations, national staff and local women leaders. With capacity-building and skills training, they can ensure reach and access to the most marginal groups and the most remote constituencies, in a culturally appropriate manner.
- It is critical to maintain the momentum of gains made in promoting women's human rights. This includes monitoring landmark declarations, including the Brussels Proclamation (Afghan Women's Summit for Democracy, 4-5 December 2001) and its plan of action. Follow-up to the current ratification of CEDAW is essential. Only by remaining vigilant and forward-looking, will the women of Afghanistan, and the international community that has supported them thus far, fully realize the potential of the Bonn Agreement to offer a framework for a long-term national strategy for the advancement of women.

The recommendations of the four Working Groups were discussed and endorsed, as amended, in plenary on 1 July 2003.

Annex I

Agenda

Goal:

To identify good practices and lessons learned from promoting gender equality in post-conflict reconstruction, drawing on experiences from Afghanistan as a key case study and wider lessons from elsewhere.

Rationale:

Contribute to increased effectiveness of bilateral and multilateral support to post-conflict reconstruction through enhanced integration of gender perspectives into this work.

Outputs:

A short communiqué immediately following the Workshop and a concise report containing proceedings of the Joint Workshop, lessons learned and good practices.

PLENARY SESSION	10 JULY 2003	15:00 – 18:00
15:00 – 15:45	Official opening Ms. Berglind Ásgeirsdóttir, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD	
	Welcome and introduction to the Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ms. Angela E.V. King, Chair, Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality▪ Ms. Bea ten Tusscher, Chair, DAC Network on Gender Equality▪ Mr. Michael Roeskau, Director, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD	
15:45 – 17:00	Panel presentations <u>Moderator:</u> Ms. Patti O'Neill, Specialist Adviser, Gender and International Development, New Zealand Agency for International Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ms. Marzia Basel, Director, Afghan Women Judges Association, Kabul▪ Ms. Yumiko Tanaka, Senior Adviser for Gender and Development, Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), Tokyo▪ Mr. Georg Frerks, Head of the Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, Netherlands	
17:00 – 18:00	Q&A and general discussion	
BUFFET/DINNER CHATEAU DE LA MUETTE	10 JULY 2003	09:30 – 13:00
Keynote speaker: Ms. Habiba Sarabi, Minister of Women's Affairs, Afghanistan		
WORKING GROUP SESSIONS	11 JULY 2003	09:30 – 13:00

Group 1: Humanitarian assistance and recovery: including crisis management, emergency aid, assistance to refugees and IDPs; demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes.

Presenter: Ms. Carol Mann, FemAid, Paris

Facilitator: Ms. Prudence Woodford-Berger, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Stockholm

Rapporteur: Ms. Kate Burns, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, New York

Group 2: Reconstruction of the political, public and security sectors: including institution building, governance, security sector reform, women's political representation, civil society development, and national machineries for the advancement of women.

Presenters: Ms. Nicola Johnston, International Alert, London

Ms. Fatiha Serour, UN/Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), New York

Facilitator: Ms. Aster Zaoude, UNDP, New York

Rapporteur: Ms. Diana Rivington, CIDA, Hull

Group 3: Economic, social and infrastructure development: including economic opportunities, access to and control over assets/land; health, education, social protection.

Presenters: Mr. Malcom Ehrenpreis, PREM/World Bank, Washington

Ms. Samantha Reynolds, UN-Habitat, Kabul

Facilitator: Ms. Sissel Ekaas, FAO, Rome

Rapporteur: Ms. Ylva Sörman-Nath, Sida, Stockholm

Group 4: Human rights protection, promotion and legal reform: including constitutional and legal reform, independent judiciary, and women's rights

Presenters: Ms. Maarit Kohonen, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, New York

Ms. Marzia Basel, Afghan Women Judges Association, Kabul

Facilitator: Ms. Gerti Perlaki, Austrian Development Co-operation, Vienna

Rapporteur: Ms. Maha Muna, UNIFEM, New York

REPORT BACK	11 JULY 2003	14:30 – 16:30
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14:30 – 15:30 Reports from rapporteurs of Working Groups

15:30 – 16:30 General discussion of key lessons learned and ways forward
Commentary and wrap-up: Mr. Georg Frerks

16:30 – 16:45 Coffee

CLOSING SESSION	11 JULY 2003	16:30 – 17:00
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16:45 – 17:00 Adoption of draft communiqué
Closing remarks by Ms. Angela E.V. King and Ms. Bea ten Tusscher

Annex II

Introductory Remarks

by

Ms. Angela E. V. King, Assistant Secretary-General,
Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women,
Chair, Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality

Madam Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Asgeirsdottir
Honourable Minister, Mr. Roeskau
Members of the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality and of
the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality,
Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here to welcome you to the fifth joint Workshop of both our Networks. I look forward to a constructive and stimulating debate that will help us increase the effectiveness of our support to post-conflict reconstruction processes through the enhanced integration of gender perspectives in our work.

First, I would like to give special thanks to Ms. Berglind Asgeirsdottir, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD, and her staff for their hospitality in hosting this meeting. I would also like to extend my appreciation for their excellent work to Bea ten Tusscher, Chair of the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality, and her bureau, particularly Phil Evans and to its Secretariat. Thanks also to those who have travelled from far away to be here today, especially Minister Sarabi and other Afghan colleagues and our agency colleagues from Afghanistan. Our deep regret that at the last minute our colleague, Mr. Nigel Fisher, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, could not be with us.

Network: I would like to say a few words about the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The Network consists of approximately 60 members representing offices and departments of the United Nations (UN) Secretariat, including regional commissions and UN agencies, funds and programmes, and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

The Network's predecessor bodies started in 1975 for the First World Conference on Women in Mexico. Now and especially since the Beijing Conference, the Network supports gender mainstreaming through the exchange of experience and good practice at the annual and now biennial meetings and through a system of task forces. Through the Network, gender issues are being brought regularly to the attention of the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Co-ordination, which is chaired by the Secretary-General and its high-level committees.

Afghanistan: The focus of our Workshop is gender perspectives in post-conflict Afghanistan and lessons learned. The UN and its family of organizations have had a long interest and presence in Afghanistan. The Security Council has considered the situation in Afghanistan over the years, and more intensely since the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban in 1996 and their fall in 2001. The General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Commissions on

the Status of Women and Human Rights have also scrutinized the question of Afghan women on a continuing basis.

My first personal contact with women in Afghanistan was in 1997, when the Secretary-General asked me to lead an Inter-Agency Gender Mission to Afghanistan. The assistance community at the time, and in the years to follow, faced the challenge of taking a principled approach on the equal participation of women and men as beneficiaries, in assistance programmes in a situation of severe political obstacles and resistance.

Throughout the 20th century, women's status and women's rights have been part of an ongoing struggle between modern and traditional forces, which also played out in tensions between and among rural and urban populations and between ethnic groups. These tensions continue to affect the approach of the UN system and donors in promoting gender equality as a goal of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts.

After the fall of the Taliban, the UN system reacted through a fast moving series of actions. Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi was appointed as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The United Nations and the German Government hosted peace talks in Bonn, which established an interim administration as a first step toward a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative Government and pointed to the establishment of the First Ministry of Women's Affairs. At UN headquarters, the first Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF) was established to advise the Special Representative, and co-ordinate and prepare strategies for the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The IMTF included a gender specialist from the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). Gender was integrated into the Mission as one of several cross-cutting themes in both the political and the relief, recovery and reconstruction pillars. However, with the exception of an interim period last year, the post of Senior Gender Adviser has not yet been filled.

Last year, UNAMA and the interim gender adviser set up an Inter-Agency Network for Gender Equality as one mechanism for effective co-ordination and monitoring. The Network comprises UNAMA and gender focal points from 12 agencies, as well as Government representatives and NGOs. UNAMA and the international assistance community worked closely with the Transitional Administration in the planning and implementation of the National Development Framework and the Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghanistan (TAPA), covering the period January 2003 to March 2004. This Programme made an effort to mainstream gender into all sectors and recognized the need for targeted interventions for women and girls.

The period immediately after the fall of the Taliban led to great optimism and hope. Within weeks, Afghan women had moved from years of complete exclusion to participation in the new Government. They were able to return to work; the beginning of the new school year was marked by girls going to school for the first time in their lives. However, women's participation in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, despite two ministerial positions in the Loya Jirga and modest representation on the various Commissions continues to be jeopardized by the lack of security across the country. Intimidation and violence by regional and local commanders against women continue unabated. Restrictions on women's freedom of movement still continue to limit women's access to employment and education. In some regions, local leaders have been

reported as actively pressuring women not to work, including for international organizations. And, of course, inadequate resources remains a problem particularly for the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Another key concern is the drafting of the new Constitution. While the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the Transitional Administration in March this year was a great step forward, the drafting and consultation process will be an indication of the degree to which there is true respect and progress for women's rights in Afghanistan.

Given Afghanistan's past, the approach to integrating gender perspectives in the reconstruction of Afghanistan has had to balance the principle of women's right to full participation in their society and the fear of conservative backlash. Afghanistan is at a crucial moment in its recovery from decades of conflict. Progress for women and girls in Afghanistan will require continuous and resolute support by the UN system as a whole, the bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs on a long-term basis.

Women, Peace and Security: While the situation in Afghanistan still leaves much room for concern and deserves our continued attention, we should also look at reconstruction efforts in a broader context. Sustainable and durable peace requires the participation of women and girls, as well as the integration of gender perspectives in all reconstruction processes. Reconstruction efforts that are based on human rights principles, including non-discrimination, can avoid perpetuating situations of inequality and discrimination and lead to the creation of more equitable and sustainable societies.

An important tool in this context is Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security adopted on 31 October 2000. This broke new ground on mandating women's involvement in all aspects of peace operations from early warning and prevention of conflict to post-conflict reconstruction and nation building. The Secretary-General's study "*Women, Peace and Security*" prepared in close collaboration with the Network's Task Force on Women, Peace and Security and his report to the Security Council of October 2002 provide considerable information on the impact of conflict on women and girls and good practices, lessons learned and recommendations on gender issues throughout all phases of peace operations. I am confident that our Workshop will contribute to the implementation of this resolution. I am also confident as we look ahead that it will contribute to the discussion by the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2004 and to the ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the critical areas – women and armed conflict – in the Beijing Platform for Action and of the outcome document of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (Beijing +5) scheduled for the 2005 session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

A Full Agenda: Our four past joint Workshops in Geneva in 1997 on Gender Mainstreaming, in Rome in 1998 on a Rights-Based Approach to Gender Equality, in Bangkok in 1999 on Women's Empowerment in the Context of Human Security, and in Vienna on Governance, Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality were all characterized by stimulating discussions on cutting-edge issues and by brief, but cogently worded communiqués. Whilst our background papers, websites and other material, are replete with detailed activities which many

of our Governments and organizations, in partnership with the Transitional Government and civil society are carrying out on the ground in Afghanistan, we are here not so much to describe these, but to highlight lessons learned from where we have scored high and where we have not made even a passing grade. In this way, we can improve our collective performance in Afghanistan and also ensure that the international community responds more effectively in other troubled situations such as Cote d'Ivoire, Iraq, and Liberia. They led to recommendations for concrete actions and initiatives to promote the issues. I feel sure that our deliberations here in Paris will be as equally stimulating of other Workshops and will increase the effectiveness of international reconstruction efforts so that women and men can benefit equally from what our respective Governments and organizations can offer to the rebuilding of their societies.

We have a full agenda before us for the rest of today and tomorrow. Your active participation in the Workshops is critical. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to strengthen the co-operation between our Networks for practical outcomes. I wish us all a very successful Workshop.

Introductory remarks
by
Ms. Bea ten Tusscher,
Head of Women and Development Division,
Directorate for Social and Institutional Development,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands,
Chair, DAC Network on Gender Equality

Objective of the Workshop

Welcome to the bilateral/multilateral dialogue that takes place every two years between the OECD/DAC and the UN on key topics for development co-operation. This year the Joint Biennial Workshop of the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) and the UN Inter-agency Network on Gender Equality (IANGWE) is on "Gender and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Lessons Learned from Afghanistan".

The meeting is about recognizing that women are not only the main victims of conflict situations but also very much part of the solution in post-conflict reconstruction efforts; that they are equal partners with men in these efforts. The Workshop will look at experience of Afghanistan and the good practice and lessons learned that can be applied to other reconstruction processes elsewhere. Afghanistan will be used as a key case study, but the experiences of other countries and regions will also guide the discussions. The lessons from Afghanistan and other countries will enlighten the discussions that are taking place within the OECD and in other fora, for example on Iraq and other countries in conflict from Solomon Islands to Sierra Leone.

Thanks to all participants, many of who have come from a great distance. I would particularly like to acknowledge Ms. Habiba Sarabi, Minister of Women's Affairs from Afghanistan; Ms. Angela King, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women,

Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), UN. Also I would acknowledge and thank the presence of Ms. Berglind Arsgeidottir, the Deputy Secretary General (and Monica Fong) of the OECD, and members of the Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation Network;

The process

There are two plenary sessions with four panellists: Ms. Marzia Basel, Director of the Afghan Women Judges Association; Ms. Yumiko Tanaka, Senior Adviser for Gender and Development, JICA, Japan; and Professor Georg Frerks, Head of the Conflict Research Unit, Clingendael Institute, The Netherlands. Each panellist will speak from his/her perspective; Afghan perspective; multilateral perspective; bilateral perspective; academic cum field experience perspective.

In addition, four Working Groups will each focus on key themes for gender and post-conflict reconstruction:

- Humanitarian assistance and recovery
- Reconstruction of the political, public and security sectors
- Reconstruction of the economic and social sectors, including infrastructure
- Human rights protection and legal reform

A short communiqué will be circulated by the end of the meeting. A full report will also be prepared and widely circulated.

Bilateral points of view

Bilateral co-operation has complementary entry points to multilateral work. Bilateral donors often have the advantage of not only long-term established development co-operation but also of other relations such as political relations, trade, security and cultural relations. These relations can be at different layers of society, such as Governments, civil society, women's organizations, political and trade unions.

Although we may have different roles, responsibilities and interests, it is important that we use this meeting to assess our respective strengths and develop coherent approaches to conflict situations. Addressing conflict has now become a critical element of the mainstream development agenda. In many parts of the world poverty and conflict are becoming more and more intertwined, especially in the poorest countries. This has a significant impact on long term development strategies. Development professionals must equip themselves to meet this challenge. We hope to emerge from this meeting with increased clarity and strengthened partnerships, mutual learning and shared perspectives.

It is also important that we strengthen our partnerships to ensure that women who have already paid the price of conflict don't also pay the price for peace. Those complementary relationships need to operate at the global as well as the local country level. As UN Member

States, bilateral donors have a key role to play in shaping the global agenda and empowering and supporting the UN to play its vital role.

I hope we can deepen this analysis in our two-day Workshop, joining our different experiences.

Conclusions

I want just to conclude by underlining that reconstruction activities are indispensable to long term development and structural change, and that is why it is so important to integrate gender equality from the outset.

Let us not forget that if we forget about women in our reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts we forget about 50 per cent of the human resources of a society. As we all know women in reconstruction efforts contribute greatly to development effectiveness and that after all is what we are all interested in.

I wish us a fruitful exchange.

Annex III

List of Participants

Co-Chairs

Ms. Angela E.V. KING

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