

**EU joint reply to the UNODA request related to
the UNGA Resolution 67/48 on
"Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control"**

Executive Summary

As stated by EU High Representative for Common, Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, it is harder to achieve lasting peace and security in any country or any region, when only half of the population is represented at a negotiating table or in talks on post-conflict reconstruction. The EU considers that the participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is crucial. The role of women in these areas can be enhanced by promoting gender consciousness and by integrating women in the process.

Following UNSCR 1325, the EU has adopted measures that aim to make Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions gender conscious. EU Member States individually and the EU itself have taken action to promote awareness of gender in the field of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, as well as calling attention to the special situation of women in conflict by appointing gender advisors for conflict management missions, by cooperating with the UN on a number of related international initiatives – specifically with UN Women – and by facilitating the role of women in conflict mediation.

Introduction

As the civilian population has increasingly become the main victim in contemporary armed conflict, women and girls have been particularly affected. Most civilian victims of armed conflicts are statistically female, while women are also for the most part excluded from leadership roles both in processes of conflict decision-making and/or peace-making. It is, therefore, important to adapt disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control, mediation and peace-building efforts to include gender considerations.

Gender perspective in national action plans

On 8 December 2008 the Council of the European Union adopted the 'EU Comprehensive Approach on UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security'¹. As a parallel key policy development, the Council adopted on the same day the operational paper 'Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of European Security and Defence Policy'³; document which aims to make ESDP missions gender conscious in the operational doctrine by such measures as facilitating the integration of women or by working closely with women's rights NGOs in the field. EU Member States have adopted individual NAPs.

Disarmament, De-mobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

The EU considers that a gender perspective should be included in the aid modalities of donors to DDR activities. The 'EU Concept for support to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration'², which complements the EU strategic policy towards Security Sector Reform, underlined the increased understanding that the DDR process as such should focus on the ex-combatants, which needs to include not only those carrying a weapon, but also non-fighters associated with armed groups, including women and girls.

Gender advisors or focal points in crisis management missions

The 15 presently active EU Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations around the world have now a gender and/or human rights advisors as part of their teams. The standard modules for gender pre-deployment training for all civilian and military personnel in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations have been now developed and are under finalization.

All EU crisis management missions and operations include Human Rights and Gender expertise. It is foreseen is to increase the availability and access to gender training, i.e. through the development of EU standard elements for a training curriculum. As an example for best practices in operationalizing gender-mainstreaming, all ESDP missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, since EUFOR RD Congo have had a Gender Advisor. This position has contributed to local women empowerment through micro-projects, registration of women combatants, good contact practices with local communities, gender sensitive training for local police or special judicial protection for women.

Gender and mine action

Women, girls, boys and men may be affected in different ways by mines and ERW. On the basis of their different roles and responsibilities, they may also have different priorities for survey and clearance of mine-affected areas. The EU therefore calls on all actors engaged in mine action to ensure that all human beings benefit on an equal basis from mine action activities.

EU-UN cooperation on gender issues

EU continues to work closely with UN Women and support initiatives to ensure greater participation of women in peace-building and post-conflict planning and to meaningfully engage in, influence and mobilize for dialogues on security and peace issues nationally and regionally. In April 2012 EU and UN Women signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This is a strategic partnership aiming to work better together on gender and justice, women's leadership and political participation; women's access to economic empowerment; combating sexual and gender based violence; humanitarian aid; women, peace and security, women's empowerment in global issues.

For the first time since 2009 human rights and gender aspects were properly integrated in the EU – UN Steering Committee on Crisis Management process. There is a clear understanding on the need to further exchange experiences, best practices and lessons learned in specific areas, identify joint UN-EU training opportunities, further collaboration with respect to training modules in this area. Human rights and gender issues will be properly integrated in the implementation of the EU Plan of Action to enhance EU CSDP support to UN Peacekeeping

Women in mediation processes

In relation to women's under-representation in mediation processes and peace negotiations, an important dimension of the 1325/1820 agenda, the EU has a clear commitment to promote the representation of women and the availability of adequate resources for dedicated mediation gender expertise from an early stage of the mediation process onwards. The EU supports a gender expert position on the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts⁴ who will be deployed to the field on a rapid-response basis, will provide specialized analysis and advice on gender and process issues to United Nations and other mediation teams across the globe as needed.

¹ 15671/1/08 REV 1

² 15782/3/08 REV 3, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/hr/news272.pdf

³ Approved by the European Commission on 14 December 2006 and by the Council of the European Union on 11 December 2006

⁴ A body comprised of one-year assignments working as on-call advisers to peace envoys around the world.