



Swiss contribution to UNSC RES 68/33 “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control”

Executive Summary

The Swiss foreign policy in the domain of peace and security endorses an approach that is gender-responsive and that considers the different needs of women and men in an adequate and appropriate manner. The gender perspective is thus well embedded in Swiss endeavours of disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control, which fall under the peace and security policy.

Switzerland has developed a National Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In a whole of government approach, all relevant actors of the Swiss Confederation have committed, under this action plan, to concrete measures, which are regularly monitored and reviewed. An example includes the standardized pre-deployment training on UNSC RES 1325 Swiss peacekeepers undergo prior to their deployment to KFOR.

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs pays also attention to the gender sensitivity of project partners and the gender balance in the organisation structures of strategic partners. DCAF for instance committed to a systematic gender mainstreaming of all its programmes and projects, taking into account UNSC RES 1325.

Further, the Swiss Mine Action and SALW Strategies include gender sensitivity and the implementation of UN SC RES 1325 as guiding principles. But also in other fora, such as the framework of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, or in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Switzerland acts as a strong promoter of gender inclusive approaches and gender specific considerations, allowing also input by civil society representatives.

At the multilateral level, Switzerland is committed to include gender references in all relevant frameworks. In this respect, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR) have developed a new app for smart phones and tablets which facilitates the search for common language and already existing documents related to gender, peace and security. The database not only includes documents negotiated and adopted in recent decades within the UN system but also regional instruments. In future, the database will be regularly updated with newly adopted UN documents.

The Swiss foreign policy in the domain of peace and security endorses an approach that is gender-responsive and that considers the different needs of women and men in an adequate and appropriate manner. The equality of gender is an important cornerstone in the pursuit of sustainable, resilient and lasting promotion of peace. In this context, the protection of women in conflicts and post-conflict situations, the reinforcement of their human rights and the encouragement of their participation in peace and other political processes are paramount. To achieve these goals, Switzerland involves all relevant stakeholders, including leaders from politics and society, as well as men and boys.

Generally, Switzerland strives to include gender-responsive approaches to all its peace and security policy endeavours as well as in operational programmes, thereby sensitizing its partners to be equally attentive in their projects. The gender perspective is thus well embedded in Swiss endeavours of disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control, which fall under the peace and security policy. The Swiss Expert Pool for Civilian Peacebuilding for instance, provides international and regional organisation but also local authorities and institutions with civilian experts working in the field on various issues on peace promotion. Currently almost hundred experts are deployed. The overall gender balance of Swiss experts is equally divided.

Swiss delegates regularly address gender issues in statements at the multilateral level, be it in the framework of the UN or other relevant regimes of disarmament efforts. For the post-2015 MDG process for instance, Switzerland has formulated a gender specific target as one of its thematic priorities.

Switzerland has developed a National Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. In a whole of government approach, all relevant actors of the Swiss Confederation have committed, under this action plan, to concrete measures, which are regularly monitored and reviewed. This includes gender-responsive budgeting for Swiss supported programmes and projects in the domain of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control as well as measures to increase the number of women in disarmament affairs.

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs pays attention to the gender sensitivity of project partners and the gender balance in the organisation structures of strategic partners. These conditions apply to arms control projects which receive Swiss funding. For instance, the Center on Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) has developed a solid expertise in gender and SSR over the years. It has a specialised Gender Unit with practical expertise and training capacity. Switzerland finances DCAF with a yearly core contribution of nearly CHF 11 million and substantial project funding. The respective framework agreement 2012-15 and the annual agreements state that in its implementation of the tasks, DCAF shall ensure the systematic gender mainstreaming of all its programmes and projects, taking into account UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related UN resolutions. Gender mainstreaming is to be integrated in project planning and reporting. Where appropriate, the treatment of minorities needs to be taken into account.

Within the context of its partnership with NATO, Switzerland supports NATO's implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions. NATO's policy aims at mainstreaming 1325 in its operations and programmes. Switzerland contributed to the review of the practical implications of UNSCR 1325 for the conduct of NATO-led operations and missions, such as KFOR in Kosovo, in which Switzerland

participates since 1999. Swiss peacekeepers undergo a standardized pre-deployment training on UNSCR 1325.

In its Mine Action Strategy (2012 – 2015), Switzerland embedded the gender sensitivity and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in its policy and operational activity as one of six guiding principles. Furthermore, Switzerland is one of the main sponsors of the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP), a non-governmental organisation which raises awareness on the importance of taking into considerations the different needs, priorities, capabilities and knowledge of women, girls, boys and men affected by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

Switzerland is of the view that the humanitarian consequences of indiscriminate weapons need also to be addressed in a view to protect the civilian population living in areas under the control of armed groups. Therefore, Switzerland contributes to the activities of the non-governmental organisation “Geneva Call”, which has developed unilateral declarations of intent¹ for armed groups to ban anti-personnel mines, for the protection of children from the effects of armed conflict and for the prohibition of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict and towards the elimination of gender discrimination.

Another vital domain of Swiss endeavours with regard to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is the Swiss strategy on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The misuse and illicit trade of SALW affects men and women alike, yet often in different forms. Switzerland does acknowledge this fact and therefore promotes the mainstreaming of gender issues in its small arms policy and operational activities, in line with UN SCR 1325 on women, peace and security.

It has been known for a long time that small arms and light weapons (SALW) play an important role as drivers of violence against women and gender based violence both in conflict and non-conflict settings as well as situations of urban violence and violence in private households. Some relevant SALW instruments, such as the *Firearms Protocol* and the *Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* include references to gender aspects of the use and (illicit) trade of SALW. Switzerland is committed to defend the inclusion of gender references in such frameworks.

It is especially because of this policy background, that Switzerland is pleased to see the gender aspect being anchored in the text of the legally binding arms trade treaty. It is of outmost importance that *the risk of conventional arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender based violence or serious act of violence against women and children* is assessed during licensing procedures and arms exports.

Switzerland is one of the main promoters of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. In this framework, Switzerland acts as a strong promoter of gender inclusive approaches. In both ministerial review conferences of the Geneva Declaration, gender-specific questions were addressed throughout the thematic field of armed violence. Although men between

¹ It has to be noted that such armed groups are not given any political or legal recognition through their commitment to a declaration of intend, nor is their status changed in any way.

15 and 29 bear the highest risk of falling victim to armed violence, measured against the amount of weapons in their possession, women and children fall disproportionately often victim to armed violence. Hence, Switzerland supports gender-responsive armed violence prevention and reduction initiatives. Such as an education project within Guatemalan schools that highlights the negative effects of violence against women.

In the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Switzerland continues to promote inclusive discussion fora, allowing for input by civil society representatives, and in particular gender-specific considerations. In this regard, Switzerland continues to be a promoter of reframing the traditional, at times “technostrategic” nuclear discourse on that dominated discussions over many years and emphasizes the human security dimension as a complement to the “hard security dimension”. In particular, Switzerland continues to actively participate in the debate about risks of any use of nuclear weapons, emphasising both the probabilities and the (catastrophic) consequences.

To make the texts and content of international agreements, UN resolutions and other documents relating to women's human rights more easily accessible, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR) have developed a new app for smart phones and tablets. In order to facilitate the search for common language and already existing documents related to gender, peace and security. The database not only includes documents negotiated and adopted in recent decades within the UN system but also regional instruments. In future, the database will be regularly updated with newly adopted UN documents.