



**12TH PRE- SUMMIT CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON GENDER
MAINSTREAMING IN THE AFRICAN UNION**

FAS CONTRIBUTION

PEACE AND SECURITY: INSIGHT ON UNSCR 1325

**21-23 JUNE, 2008
SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT**

PEACE AND SECURITY

INSIGHT ON UNSRC 1325

"Women's empowerment leads to increased security for all, this simple sentence means a lot"
H.E. Mary Robinson (former President of Ireland).

Most of today's conflicts are characterised by systematic attacks to the civilian population. Women and children constitute the majority of this population – sometimes, they have an active role in conflicts, as voluntary or involuntary combatants. In spite of this, they have only a marginal if any role in peace processes. Article 2 of the SDGEA focuses on women's role in armed conflict and their contribution to conflict resolution through a direct reference to the most important document addressing the issue, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted in October 2000.

Before the adoption of such a landmark Resolution, gender equality and women's empowerment has been at the heart of most international policy statements on development cooperation for well over a decade. Among them the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) and Beijing Platform of Action in 1995. A focus on gender issues is also reflected within the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) with Goal 3 specifically promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Unfortunately, while the MDGs provide an important framework to guide development interventions, they are not specific regarding conflict issues. This lack of specificity extends to women and armed conflict and means that the MDGs do not provide stand alone guidance, goals, or specifics for effective development cooperation in this area. Importantly, however, there is no contradiction between responding to women and armed conflict and the MDGs.

Any effective approach to women and armed conflict will have gender equality and women's empowerment at its centre, thus specifically reinforcing MDG 3. However, according to DFID, progress is slowest for those goals which depend on improving the status of women and girls. Furthermore, although important progress, the indicators for measuring progress on MDG 3 are limited and overlook vital aspects of women's empowerment and gender equality. It is important that the many tools that do exist related to women and armed conflict at the international level are complementary and linked, especially with regard to monitoring and reporting and the development of gender-sensitive indicators and targets.

Additionally, while all MDGs are relevant to women and conflict, improving maternal health (goal 5), reducing child mortality (goal 4), and combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases (goal 6) have particular resonance given the way that women are disproportionately impacted in these areas because of conflict. Yet, as with other areas of concern, responding adequately to women and armed conflict requires more than simply working towards meeting MDGs using existing implementation methods and indicators for progress. Specific new measures and initiatives are required as well as further emphasis on existing commitments to mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment, in particular related to their overall security and political and economic rights. Significantly, some have noted that pervasive violence against women constitutes a major obstacle to achieving the MDGs because it denies women their most basic human rights, such as the right to health, and is a threat to social and economic development of communities and whole countries.

Related areas such as security sector reform, peacebuilding, demobilisation and reintegration, small arms and light weapons control and transitional justice, have also gained prominence within the development agenda but are not covered by the MDGs. Women are both affected by and can contribute to these processes, and this recognition of gender-differentiated impact should be reflected in efforts to achieve the MDGs.

The Resolution 1325, "expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict [...] and recognizing the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation", endeavours to address the needs of women in all stages of peace and conflict and places particular emphasis on including women in conflict prevention.

Through SCR 1325, the Security Council makes recommendations and provides a framework for action to Member States, the UN system, and other actors on a number of issues that relate to women, peace and security.

Despite the fact that SCR 1325 is not binding, its adoption and constant affirmation by the United Nations and other international and national actors, is an important sign of the recognition increasingly given by the international community to the role played by women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and reconstruction efforts.

More than six years after the adoption of SCR 1325, this has led to a new momentum at the policy-making level, especially within the UN system where a number of new documents and actions have been developed and planned towards a better implementation of the resolution. Despite the fact that there is no compliance or monitoring mechanism attached to it, and therefore it does not hold governments accountable for implementation, SCR1325 recalls other existing international law – international humanitarian law and treaty law – which have a compulsory character.

Gender mainstreaming, women's participation and protection in the context of peace and security are a question of respect of human rights, and SCR 1325 reinforces, reaffirms, and better defines what other instruments have already clearly defined as women's rights (ie. CEDAW, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights relative to the Rights of Women).

The recommendations in SCR 1325 cover four main areas of action:

1. Participation of women in peace processes;
2. Gender mainstreaming, increased participation of women, and training on gender issues within the UN system, and particularly in peacekeeping missions;
3. Protection of women and girls, respect for their rights, and recognition of their special needs;
4. Gender mainstreaming in the reporting and implementation systems of the UN relating to conflict, peace and security

States have the main responsibility for its implementation, both through contributing to the UN's efforts and through national measures. A growing number of States are in fact adopting and putting in place National Action Plan.

Unfortunately, with the exception of the annual report that the Secretary-General presents each year, no reporting mechanism is foreseen for monitoring the implementation of the Resolution.

This gap is partially filled by the linkage existing among the Resolution and other continental and international instruments: the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1979 and its Optional Protocol of 1999. In the African continent, the gap has been filled by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981 and its Protocol on Rights of Women in Africa of 2003. Since 2004, the Solemn Declaration and its reporting mechanism also addresses the wide challenge of Resolution 1325. In October 2005, AU Member states adopted an Implementation Framework of the SDGEA within which Targets, Actions and Indicators are enumerated for guiding their efforts.

Besides recognizing the importance of the document and the need to be 'on alert' about it, Civil Society Organisations have developed their own guidelines for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Declaration, thus producing their own Targets, Actions and Indicators. The two evaluating systems, although different, are not in opposition but complementary elements, providing a more comprehensive overview of the situation.

Targets:

- A group of women mediators and Special Envoys and Representatives is established for an effective and equal participation in peace processes,
- Partnership is built between the AU Peace and Security Council and Civil Society,
- The Resolution 1325 (2000) of the UN Security Council is popularized among grassroots populations,
- Public awareness raising on humanitarian laws is increased.

Actions:

- Organize training for women peace builders and peacekeeping forces,
- Develop a comparative database on gender participation in peace processes at national and regional levels,
- Organize advocacy visits to appropriate governance institutions in order to increase women's participation in peace processes,
- Share best practices and success stories of women in peace building and conflict resolution,
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Indicators:

- Number of women appointed as Special Envoys, Representatives and Rapporteurs for the AU on prevention, resolution, management of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction,
- Number of women appointed as heads of peace negotiators by 2007,
- Increased level of gender parity and participation reflected at the national and regional initiatives, dialogues and actions on peace,
- Inclusion of a Gender Unit in peacekeeping missions.

METHODOLOGY

ACCORD, FAS and SaferAfrica are the Focal Points responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Article 2 on Peace and Security of the SDGEA. Accordingly, FAS prepared the present report, submitting it to ACCORD and SaferAfrica for their contributions.

This report will focus and analyse the implementation of the landmark Resolution 1325 in different African regions, namely the Great Lakes as well as West Africa, highlighting successes of the women's peace movement in those countries.

FAS has a strong field experience from its peace initiatives in the Mano River and Great Lakes regions, thus developing a long-term and rights-based approach to conflict resolution. The expertise of ACCORD and SaferAfrica have also greatly contributed to this report.

INTRODUCTION

Though women have repeatedly proved that their inclusion is critical to holistic and sustainable peace, the traditional male-dominated structures of peace and security still make their involvement difficult. Thus, the emergence of international and regional Instruments such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and the African Union's (AU) Protocol on Women's Rights mandating women's active participation and involvement in peace and security at all levels and sectors – both formal and informal - are seen as important tools for engendering peacebuilding.

At the time the Resolution was adopted, it was seen as a watershed in the evolution of international women's rights in the area of peace and security. In a nutshell the Resolution constitutes three core inter-linking drives for building and sustaining peace, the "Three Ps" – prevention, protection and participation.

The recommendations of SCR 1325 span over the various phases leading to, regulating, concluding and healing conflicts. The principles set forth in resolution 1325, therefore, are to be taken into consideration when planning and implementing i) conflict prevention, ii) negotiation and mediation, iii) protection during conflict, iv) conflict resolution, v) post-conflict reconstruction, vi) governance and political participation, vii) rule of Law, and viii) security.

Gender & Negotiations

Women are hardly represented at peace table and negotiations and peace agreements often do not take into account their needs and interests. It is increasingly recognized that this might ultimately lead to a relapse into conflict, as it represents a failed opportunity to undertake sustainable reforms of institutions, legal systems, power-sharing strategies, as well as economy, infrastructures and, most importantly, human capital and social principles.

Gender & Violence

Violence, and in particular sexual and gender-based violence, is a key issue in context of peace and security. Gender-based violence is rarely considered as a threat to stability and security. However “failing to engage with the causes and consequences of sexual and gender-based violence has long-term implications for sustainable peacebuilding and development”⁸. In the context of conflict – before, during and after – addressing the issue of sexual and gender-based violence should be a priority. The consequences are not only on the physical and psychological health of women, but also on their well-being given that it can impact economical status and ability to defend their rights. In addition to this, all forms of violence leave deep scars in the fabric of communities. If a large part of the women in a country have lived the traumatic experience of sexual and gender-based violence, this is reflected into their families, communities, and States and indeed it should be considered as a threat to stability and security, as well as an impeding factor for sustainable peacebuilding and reconstruction. Human Rights Watch estimated that in Sierra Leone as many as 257,000 women and girls have been raped during the civil war⁹ with consequences protracting thus far and still to be dealt with. Furthermore, violence against women has serious implications on women’s health, in particular sexual and reproductive health as well as a heightened risk to contract infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS.

Gender & Displacement

The gender related aspects of displacement are numerous and insidious, including issues such as protection, health, livelihoods, and discrimination (what is described as women being ‘transparent’). If refugees and IDPs are in general extremely vulnerable, this is particularly true for women and girls that make for an estimated 75/80 percent¹⁰ of the total. In Liberia, at the end of 2003, there were 500,000 IDPs and 30,000 refugees in neighboring

Gender & DDR

The conflicts of the past years in West Africa have seen the active participation of women and girls as combatants. For instance, in Liberia a group of young women formed the Women’s Artillery Commandos (WAC) and fought alongside rebel groups. Among the reasons of joining armed groups there are: sexual violence – either to escape it or as a subjugating factor – the need to provide food for themselves or their families, displacement and separation from family. But women and girls were also encouraged to take part to the hostilities as combatants because, as put by a former Liberian health minister “they don’t get drunk and they take their mission very seriously”¹³.

There is, therefore, a need to structure Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes so that they take into consideration the special needs of women and girls. Special measures must be put in place to ensure that they are fully included in the DDR. Due to the practice, by both rebels groups and government forces, of not disclosing the presence on female combatants, many women and girls have been excluded by the benefits of the DDR programmes¹⁴. One problem relates to the definition of ‘combatant’ in view of the inclusion in the DDR programme: if the criterion for admission to the DDR implies that the ex-combatant must render a gun, then women are most likely to be excluded as they often share one gun among several fighters. In Liberia, for example, this was identified as a problem and consequently the inclusion in the DDR could be granted to those presenting 150 rounds of ammunition. In addition to this a new definition of combatant serves to include those who supported the fighters in various capacities, such as porters, cooks, cleaners, a sex slaves or the so called ‘bush wives’: “Women Associated with Fighting Forces” (WAFF). In the first four months of the DDR process in Liberia 12,598 women and 1,356 girls were among the total

71,000 combatants demobilized¹⁵. Gender considerations must be extended also to the planning, implementation and monitoring of the physical structures – camps – and of the procedures and practices employed in DDR programmes.

Failing to thoroughly tackle the disarmament and reintegration of former combatants might lead to seriously compromising the security and stability of ailing countries. This is still a problem in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the incomplete reinsertion in society and the unavailability of jobs leaves scores of youngsters in a dangerous limbo. Rehabilitation is a vital stage particularly for women as they face stigmatization and rejection that can deprive them of livelihoods, employment opportunities, and participation to society.

Gender & Elections

Electoral processes represent an opportunity to facilitate women's participation in decision-making, especially in post-conflict countries. In West Africa, in the course of 2007, there will be ten administrative and six presidential elections, in eleven States.

West African governments have a poor representation of women in their parliaments. When discussing the issue of SCR 1325 and political participation, it is important to take into consideration that although many countries have ministries of gender, often their portfolio does not include peace and security issues, therefore leaving gender mainstreaming in those areas the responsibility of other ministries, where often women have little career opportunities. It should be noted, however, that gender mainstreaming must be implemented in all ministries.

Gender & Peacekeeping.

The linkages between gender and peacekeeping have – as clearly set out in Security Council Resolution 1325 – multiple aspects and call on varied actors. Among the major priorities are the following points:

1. Expand role and contribution of women in field-based operations;
2. Incorporate gender perspective into all PK operations, and a gender component (gender unit or adviser) at field level, where appropriate;
3. Provide training material and guidelines on the issues relevant to res. 1325 to troops-contributing Member States that should then incorporate them in the training of personnel – civilian police and military – to be deployed in peace missions;
4. Adopt a gender perspective in negotiating and implementing peace agreements.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Since UNSCR 1325 was passed in 2000, there has been only limited progress in its implementation, with varying results. Until now, eight countries have developed National Action Plans (NAP) in order to implement UNSCR 1325:

- The Netherlands NAP
- Austria NAP
- Spain NAP
- Denmark NAP
- UK NAP
- Norway NAP
- Sweden NAP
- Switzerland NAP

Overall UNSCR 1325 is still far of being fully implemented in the African continent.

At the decisional level, though Sub-Saharan Africa has seen rapid increase in the representation of women (especially with the Rwanda case where Rwandan women now top the world rankings of women in national parliaments, with 49 per cent of representation compared to a world average of 15.1 per cent), it still lags behind many regions in the world, as Table 1 demonstrates. In DRC, during the 2006 elections, only 1,311 women run for election in the 500-seat national Assembly, out of a total of 9,531 candidates (less than 15%). In Sierra Leone, during the May 2002 elections, of the 124 seats in Parliament, only 18 were won by women and in other areas of government, at the local level for instance, 11 percent of representatives are women and only 8 percent hold administrative and management positions (UN, 2005).

Table 1: Women in National Parliaments by Region, 2003

	Region Percentage Women
Nordic countries	39.7
Americas	18.4
Asia	15.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	14.9
Arab States	6.0

Source: Drude Dahlerup (2004) “Quotas are Changing the History of Women”, in Ballington (ed.) p. 16.

With regard to the AIDS epidemic, studies demonstrated that, of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa is still the most devastated by the epidemic. No other region approaches its prevalence rates or displays such a disproportionate impact on women and girls: 77% of all HIV-positive women live in sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF/UNAIDS. 2003). In the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo, some 60% of the militia who roamed the countryside was thought to be HIV-positive, spreading infection through rape to women and girls. And virtually none of the women have access to services and care (Human Rights Watch. 2002).

Gender based violence is another major issue to be seriously addressed by the African society. Violence has a significant impact on the health and life expectancy of women. The World Bank estimates that rape and domestic abuse account for 5 percent of health years of life lost (World Bank, 2000). During conflict situations violence against women has reached epidemic proportions. In the DRC 5,000 cases of rape, corresponding to an average of 40 a day, were recorded by women associations in Uvira (East DRC) since October 2002 (UN 2003).

Only 16 nations in the world have legislation specifically referring to sexual assault, while as few as three have legislation that specifically addresses violence against women as a category of criminal activity itself (Bangladesh, Sweden , USA) (UNIFEM, 2003).

At the end of the average conflict a country’s economy will be 15% smaller than when the conflict began. A World Bank study recently characterized conflict as “development in reverse”. Given these facts and the reality that women constitute a larger portion of those in poverty, women are more likely to suffer the economic consequences of conflict than men. The necessity to ensure gender sensitivity mainstreaming within post-conflict reconstruction and economic development is clear, yet it is often missing from post-conflict reconstruction and development frameworks and/or strategies. One notable exception is the recent post conflict and reconstruction and development framework created by the African Union, which highlights women and gender as one of its six core elements.

The 2007 *Africa-EU Strategic Partnership – A Joint Africa-EU Strategy* agreed at the Lisbon EU-Africa Summit is a departure from usual donor strategies as it is claimed to be a genuinely joint strategy. The strategy makes general commitments to “gender equality” as well as more specific commitments to “women’s rights” and “gender mainstreaming.” In particular, the strategy commits “to promote women in decision-making positions and peace processes, and fight sexual and gender based violence against women”²⁴², and “the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security”²⁴³, as well as a priority action on developing an *EU – Africa Programme of Action on the Prevention of Trafficking of Human Beings*. It is too early to determine whether these commitments will be translated into actual implementation, but the commitments themselves are a positive step.

GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes region has been devastated by armed conflicts and humanitarian crises, the highest example represented by the genocide in Rwanda. To respond to them, in 2000 the UN Security Council called for a conference on peace, security, democracy, and development in the region with the aim of pushing African countries to find their own lasting solutions. From then on, a process started, involving all the leaders of the region and culminating with the adoption of the “Dar es Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy, and Development in the Great Lakes region”, signed in 2004 during the First International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR) Summit. The Declaration expresses the vision of the leaders to “transform the

Great Lakes Region into a space of sustainable peace and security for states and peoples, political and social stability, shared growth, and development and cooperation”. It is worthwhile stating that all stakeholders have been involved in the process – women, youth, and representatives from civil society and the private sector were invited to participate in the draft of the Programmes of Action and legal Protocols. Together with the Dar es Salam Declaration, they constitute now the “Pact of Security, Stability, and Development in the Great Lakes Region”, endorsed by the Heads of State and Government during their second Summit in Nairobi 14th and 15th December 2006.¹

Towards NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAP) on UNSCR 1325

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) has recently submitted a report on its first year of implementation to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (Unit for Eastern and Western Africa) which falls under the framework of implementing UN SCR 1325. It seeks to monitor the implementation of this landmark Resolution in partnership with different stakeholders and networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda.

The project will work towards the elaboration and implementation of a National Action Plan (NAP) by pushing targeted UN Member States in Africa to respect their commitment to women empowerment, gender equality and mainstreaming in peace and security policies and plans and providing adequate protection to women and girls during and after conflicts.

A NAP is a comprehensive strategy that can be a way of tying together the different policy and operational areas within a government’s diverse institutions and programs. As well as ensuring enhanced coordination around issues relating to women, peace and security, it also provides a focus to disparate efforts. NAPs can also provide objectives, benchmarks, and monitoring opportunities which are all critical to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and for fostering accountability. All areas that are in dire need of attention. Developing NAPs also assigns responsibility and ownership. The process of developing the plan means that people take the issues on board and it becomes part of their job, and provides a forum for dialogue between key stakeholders who may not otherwise have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to women, peace and security and other areas of work. In short, the benefits of having a NAP on UNSCR 1325 include increased comprehensiveness, coordination, awareness-raising, ownership, accountability, monitoring and evaluation. NAPs are a useful tool and can be an effective strategy for governments to link UNSCR 1325 to their other national peace and security priorities. NAPs can be a way of pulling out the relevant parts of UNSCR 1325 and bringing them into national processes and frameworks, making the resolution relevant to domestic and foreign policy making. Furthermore, “the creation of an action plan provides the space to analyse the situation, consult with stakeholders and initiate strategic actions that will have a better chance of success”. The sheer scope of UNSCR 1325 is a challenge for the development of NAPs, because the resolution itself does not provide guidance in prioritizing among the various thematic areas or on what types of mechanisms can assist implementation. In domesticating the resolution through the process of a NAP, it is then the task of the various government or organizational representatives to determine which aspects of the resolution are most critical and should be highlighted in the plan, as well as what implementation targets are realistic and measurable given the various constraints and entry points that might exist. National Action Plans can be developed in a number of different ways, and choices can be made in terms of process, content and timeframe. They can be standalone or integrated into other existing policy frameworks; they can be developed quickly or through a more detailed consultation process; and they can be used as a tool for generating more awareness and ownership among different government stakeholders who will play a direct or indirect role in implementation.

Based on FAS experience, a few generalities can be made about the process of developing the NAP on UNSCR 1325:

Ownership and consultation: Establishing a working group or inter-ministerial committee of relevant government actors is key to generating ownership by stakeholders at different levels. These groups provide a forum for ongoing consultation and dialogue between diverse groups of policymakers to share information, generate common goals, and discuss perspectives on what implementation of UNSCR 1325 means at the

¹ http://www.icglr.org/F_END/events.asp

national level. These working groups are important in the early development stages of the NAP, as well as serving as a mechanism for ongoing consultation and evaluation once the plan is being implemented. In addition to internal consultation mechanisms, it is vital that the government shares the process of developing the NAP with civil society organisations who may have specific expertise and insight on UNSCR 1325 and can make a valuable contribution to the process of priority-setting and establishing goals and benchmarks for implementation.

Mapping and identifying gaps: Prior to beginning the process of developing a NAP, mappings or assessments of existing actions related to UNSCR 1325 at the national level can serve a useful purpose. In addition to highlighting what is already being done, assessments can identify the ongoing gaps and areas of strategic priority related to UNSCR 1325 for a given country.

Fostering accountability: Political will and clear accountability mechanisms are two important preconditions for the successful implementation of UNSCR 1325 at any level, including the national level. The ability to deliver on commitments, and having adequate resources to do so, is a critical aspect of successful NAPs. It is important to note that having a NAP doesn't necessarily result in action; it does not mean that implementation automatically happens, and therefore the goals and actions set out in the plan are realistic within the timeframe and resource available. Accountability, responsibility, leadership, and resources are all needed.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation: Although few of the existing NAPs include details on monitoring and evaluation, in order to measure progress on implementation such processes are necessary.

In the **DRC**, during the recent elections women made up only four of 33 presidential candidates; and of 9,060 parliamentary candidates, less than 15% are women. Despite these defaults in gender parity, third parties are working to ensure the participation of women in the electoral process. Eleven of the 21 members of the plenary assembly of the Independent Electoral Commission in the DRC are women.² Additionally, continued support from FAS and UNIFEM in the DRC has helped Congolese women to further identify priority needs and create a national platform called the Cadre Permanent de Concertation des Femmes Congolaises that represents women's branches from eleven provinces and elects their own national bureau and provincial branches. The UNDP Programme in the DRC has also developed a gender programme and is working with UNIFEM to ensure that women's needs and contributions are incorporated into development projects in the country.

Capitalizing on the efforts to bring together the Congolese women with the creation of the Cadre, the next challenge for FAS was to bring these women's CSOs together with national gender machineries, the sectorial ministries and the other local stakeholders, from UN agencies to the religious leaders, through a 3-year project on the implementation of National Action Plans on Resolution 1325 in the Great Lakes' region. DRC initially posed some serious challenges to the launching of the programme, mostly due to the lack of a favourable environment for the bridging of Civil Society and the Governmental powers. The Ministry of Gender was in fact reluctant to engage with the women's organization and only through the persistent action of FAS and its local partners the programme had a breakthrough on the 18 -19 February, 2008.

The Steering Committee should include the following actors:

- Government Members: 15
- Minister responsible for Gender, Family and Children
1 Representative of the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children
1 Representative of the Ministry of National Defence
1 Representative of the Ministry of the Interior
1 Representative of the Ministry of Economy and Trade
1 Representative of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
1 Representative of the Ministry of Budget
1 Representative of the Ministry of the Plan
1 Representative of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

² [www.sadcpf.org/documents/ Pre-Election%20Mission%20Statement.doc](http://www.sadcpf.org/documents/Pre-Election%20Mission%20Statement.doc)

1 Representative of the Ministry of Higher Education
1 Representative of the Ministry of Scientific Research
1 Representative of the Ministry of Public Health
1 Representative of the Ministry of Finance
1 Representative of the Ministry of Information and Communication
1 Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Parliament Members: 5
2 Representatives of the Parliament (National Assembly – Senate)
1 Representative of the Parliament’s Gender and Parity Network
1 Representative of the Steering Committee of the “Gender equality in the establishment of democratic institutions”
1 Representative of the platform of women Members of Parliament
- Civil Society members: 14
- CAFCO members: 1
Leading NGOs in Resolution 1325, gender and parity: 6
Provinces (Bandundu, Bas-Congo, Equateur, Kasai Oriental, Kasai Occidental, Province Orientale and Kivu): 6
- FAS Focal Point: 1 who will ensure the permanent secretariat of the Steering Committee
- Media members: 1

In **Burundi**, despite not having been invited to the Arusha peace talks (2001), women effectively lobbied and were recognized as permanent observers in the negotiations. As a result, 80% of their recommendations were incorporated in the Accords.³ Still, only three out of twenty-nine members of the Arusha Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee are women.⁴ This small number of women overseeing the implementation of the peace agreement illustrates the government’s failure to implement the commitment to gender parity in national peace actions enshrined in the SDGEA and severely limits the role women can play in the peace process in the country. Civil Society and International organisations continue to be active in Burundi and are working to both protect and empower women in the process of post-conflict reconstruction. The United Nations mission in Burundi (MINUB) has a gender advisor and UNIFEM and OCHA are active in addressing gender-based violence in Burundi; the Collectif des associations et ONGs féminines du Burundi (CAFOB) works to unite women of Burundi under a common agenda. In addition, the UN Peacebuilding Commission has recently established a country-specific group aiming at bringing together major institutional actors (AU, UE, UN specialized agencies), civil society and bilateral donors.⁵ Unfortunately, a deterioration of human rights and political pluralism has been recorded during the last months, including arrests and summary executions of opposition politicians and suspected members of the rebel group FNL.

With regard to the implementation of NAP on 1325, a first preparatory mission was sent to Bujumbura, Burundi from the 30th October to the 2nd November 2007. FAS Executive Director successfully launched the programme during a workshop and set the date, together with various stakeholders, for the designation of the Steering Committee.

A Steering Committee was set up to during a second mission (27th – 28th December 2007) to supervise, monitor and support the development of the National Actions Plan on 1325, in collaboration with FAS. A MoU between the two parties is in preparation.

ONUB, the United Nations Mission in Burundi, was extremely impressed by the project and has ensured the full equipment of the Steering Committee Secretariat.

³ FAS Case Study, June 2006

⁴ WomenWarPeace.org

⁵ ICG Report, “Burundi: Democracy and Peace at Risk”, Africa Report n°120, 30 November 2006

The Steering Committee was formed based on the principles of diversity and representativeness, taking into account the various stakeholders in the areas for action of R1325. The Steering Committee members come from the following institutions and organisations:

- Vice-Ministry of Human Rights and Gender
- Ministry of External Relations
- Ministry of Public Security
- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
- Vice-Ministry in charge of Planning
- Senate
- National Assembly
- Collective of Women's Associations and NGOs/Collectif des Associations et ONG Féminines (CAFOB)
- Civil Society Forum/Forum de la Société Civile (FORSC)
- Solidarity of Women Parliamentarians /Solidarité des Femmes Parlementaires (SOFEPA)
- ONUB
- African Union
- UNIFEM
- CIRGL

Finally, the country that has suffered the tragedy of the genocide, **Rwanda**, has now become a positive regional and continental example of women's active contribution in post-conflict reconstruction. Women have played a critical role in the aftermath of the genocide of 1994. When the genocide ended in 1994, women made up over 70% of the society of Rwanda. The government of Rwanda has adopted a gender policy and has signed and ratified the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. There is a ministry of Gender and Family Promotion in the government, as well as a woman chief justice of the Supreme Court, several women cabinet members, a woman head of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and a woman deputy police chief. Furthermore, women make up 48% of the national legislature, the highest percentage in the world.⁶ Women's civil society groups and non-governmental organizations in Rwanda, such as Pro-Femmes and Federation of African Women Peace Networks (FERFAP), remain active in promoting the domestication of these instruments, training women in peace building and ensuring the continued participation of women in the processes of reconstruction and reconciliation.

With regard to the 1325 National Action Plans, a first preparatory mission took place in Kigali, Rwanda, during a two-day Women Parliamentarians International Conference under the theme "Gender, Nation Building and the Role of Parliaments" on the 22-23 February 2007. On this occasion, Ms. Diop had the opportunity to meet with H.E. Gertrude Mongella and H.E. Paul Kagame and to launch the programme on NAP on the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in Rwanda.

A follow up visit was organised in Kigali from the 28th to the 30th October 2007 to which Ms. Bineta Diop and the Chair of FAS' Board, Mrs. Marie-Louise Baricako participated in. The aim was to prepare the setting of the Steering Committee. Participants included the following Rwandan major stakeholders:

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation
- Minister in the Prime Minister's Office in Charge of Gender and Family Promotion
- Minister in the President's Office
- Director of Cabinet Office of the President
- Deputy Principal Private Secretary
- Representatives of the Women Parliamentarians and of Women Senators
- Profemmes Twese Hamwe, the most important women's organization in Rwanda
- UNDP representative
- Rwanda Federation of Private Sector
- Secretary General, Rwanda F. Private sector
- Representatives of the Board of the Popular Bank for Women's Promotion

⁶ InterParliamentary Union, figures as of May 2006

A Steering Committee to supervise, monitor and support the development of the National Actions Plan on 1325, will be established before the summer, in collaboration with FAS, the governmental authorities and the local CSOs.

WEST AFRICA

In the past decades not only West Africa has witnessed some of the worst conflicts of our time, but it still has to come to terms with the legacy of the heinous crimes committed and it is struggling to find a way out of the widespread insecurity that characterizes the sub-region, unable to enter the track of sustainable development, peace and good governance. Insecurity affects differently women and men and SCR 1325 addresses the inequality that has long reigned in the area of peace and security. This inequality takes different forms: one is the participation of women, a second aspect is the special needs and rights of women and girls, and a third is their protection.

In consideration of the situation in West Africa in particular, the situation stands at a point where, due to the end of the major conflicts of the past years – Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire – the bulk of the problems lay within post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts. In general, the following points need to be highlighted.

Women's participation. Women suffer the consequences of historical marginalization and exclusion that often reach levels of open discrimination. This is reflected in the little participation in decision making at local, national and regional level women get. Furthermore women's perspectives and opinions are frequently not sought and, consequently, not included in policy making at all levels. This results in a gender-unbalanced benefit of policies and programmes. In consideration of the importance of conflict prevention – to be intended also as part of post-conflict peacebuilding focused on preventing relapse into conflict – the advancement of gender equality in West Africa is as a major concern. For instance, political participation, access to decision making, and involvement in peace processes are some of the areas where gender unbalance is pronounced. In particular, elections are long processes rather than occasional circumstances, and therefore it is necessary to intensify the work on the design, administration and participation aspects. Women need to be involved in all these three phases, something that the West African experiences proved easy to say but difficult to implement. However, in the electoral process, generally speaking, awareness is sufficient and what is needed is women's empowerment. The appointment of more women to higher decision-making posts in West Africa needs serious consideration and action. With regard to this, more self-criticism on the part of the UN system is needed; West Africa has never had a woman SRSG, in any of the peace operations that have been established. Moreover a general call for more high-level appointments to women in the sub-region was launched. In line with the considerations made on elections, more attention should be placed also on working with political parties, particularly in infusing transparency, democratic culture, principles and practice, and non violence in their internal running.

Peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping operations are key actors in the implementation of SCR 1325, especially in consideration of the reconstruction efforts they coordinate and lead. In the context of countries where peacekeeping operations are deployed, problems are at different levels. One is the scarce participation of women in civil and military components; West African countries are poor contributors of female military personnel. A second aspect is the gender-sensitive training imparted to male civil and military personnel: since peacekeeping operations are predominantly male environments then it is even more important to have trainings specifically targeted to foster men's awareness on and knowledge of gender issues. A third aspect is the respect of codes of conduct, with the need to strengthen punitive measures for those responsible of breaches. While most of the problems typically correlated to the 'peacekeeping environment' are widely acknowledged – sexual exploitation and abuse, rape and violence against women – it needs also to take into consideration less institutional matters. Among the so called unintended consequences of peacekeeping one of the examples given concerns the children born out of relationships between local women and foreign peacekeepers. These children, and their mothers, enjoy no legal protection of their rights.

Protection, special needs, and rights of women and girls. Security problems can be context specific, and in particular this implies that further consideration must be placed to the multiple aspects of the effect on and the role played by women in peace and security. In West Africa issues relevant to SCR 1325 take new shapes

and might pass unnoticed or be underestimated, even when they have reached alarming dimensions. Additional information is also needed on the underestimated phenomena of trafficking and new forms of slavery. For instance, the case of “Women Associated with Fighting Forces” (WAFF) was expanded and described in its dramatic magnitude. Another example is the case of the so-called ‘bush wives’ in Sierra Leone; such girls and women were abducted and exploited as “sex slaves” or otherwise by combatants during the protracted conflict. However, they received neither protection nor special attention during the peace and DDR processes. As a result, many of them had no option but to remain under the control of their exploiters. This points to the need to give careful consideration, in peace processes as well as post conflict-reconstruction – including transitional justice mechanisms – to the particular situation and urgent needs of women and girls, who whilst not being involved in combat, are victims of severe forms of gender-based violence. In this respect, immediate action is called for, with focus on ending their victimization, and providing care, rehabilitation and means of remedy.

In **Ivory Coast**, the conflict has severely threatened the security of women and children around the country. Despite this, the peace process in Côte d’Ivoire has not adequately included women: only one woman participated in the peace negotiations leading up to the Linas-Marcoussis agreement in 2003.⁷ Since then, mediation by the AU has moved the peace process forward, but has not resulted in the formal inclusion of women in the process. Several women’s groups are active, however, in promoting the participation of women in the democratic process. Nonetheless, the absence of mechanisms to unite them around a common agenda in order to overcome ethnic and regional lines is deplorable.

Case Study: Sexual violence in Ivory Coast

Since an armed conflict erupted in 2002 between the Ivorian government and northern-based rebel groups, girls and women in Côte d’Ivoire have been victims of brutal forms of sexual violence by armed men on both sides of the military and political divide.⁸

Sexual victimization of girls and women was often accompanied by other gross human rights violations against them, their families and their communities, as armed men on both sides of the political divide massacred, killed, tortured, assaulted, and kidnapped innocent civilians.

The armed conflict that began in 2002 triggered the worst sexual violence in Côte d’Ivoire since the acute national political crisis began in 2000. Pro-government forces, including members of the gendarmerie, police, army, and militias also carried out acts of sexual violence. The low status of women and girls in law and custom contributes to the extent to which they are vulnerable to sexual violence. The fact that sexual violence during the conflict predominantly involved men raping women reveals that conflict-related rape, like most rape, reflects a dynamic of gender inequality and subordination. This power dynamic is deeply imbedded in societal attitudes.

Government and rebel authorities appear to have directly or indirectly authorized sexual violence since the war began in 2002; the prevailing impunity for these crimes has emboldened the perpetrators at all levels. Throughout the conflict in Côte d’Ivoire, the Ivorian government and rebel authorities have made scant efforts to investigate or prosecute perpetrators of even the most heinous crimes of sexual violence. This failure has contributed to an environment of increasingly entrenched lawlessness in which impunity prevails. Several significant factors underpin this impunity. First, the destruction of courts in the rebel-held north of Côte d’Ivoire during the period of active hostilities shattered the already inadequate judicial system, undermined accountability, and often left rape survivors with nowhere to turn for redress. Second, many court and law enforcement personnel in the government-held south lack an adequate understanding of and fail to enforce laws relating to sexual violence, typically allowing perpetrators to escape justice. Third, women and girls in Côte d’Ivoire are subjected to structural discrimination by customary law, which offers inadequate protection for rape survivors. Ultimately, in Côte d’Ivoire, victims of sexual violence suffer in silence while perpetrators of crimes walk free.

Neither Ivorian nor international actors have made sufficient efforts to protect at-risk women and to provide survivors with much needed medical, psychological, or social support. Few programs have been established for women and girls who were subjected to sexual violence, even those who endured sexual slavery. Survivors often struggle alone with the severe physical and mental health consequences of the abuses they

⁷ US Institute of Peace: http://www.usip.org/library/pa/cote_divoire/cote_divoire_01242003en.html

⁸ "My hearty is cut" HRW Report, august 2007

underwent. While some local actors and international aid agencies operate programs, their efforts cannot compensate for the national authorities' failure to adopt national strategies to address survivors' various needs.

The situation can and must improve. International human rights and humanitarian law requires the Ivorian authorities to put an immediate end to impunity for perpetrators and to provide adequate services to survivors. The Ivorian Government must shoulder the greatest responsibility for ending impunity and stopping ongoing abuses and fully put in place the recommendation of Resolution 1325. They should publicly acknowledge and condemn past sexual abuses committed by their supporters, investigate alleged crimes, and punish perpetrators of sexual violence. Specialized law enforcement units should be established to deter future sexual violence, or at a minimum, more law enforcement and judicial staff just be recruited and trained to address the problem.

Liberia is slowly beginning the process of reconstruction, after the Accra Peace Agreement, which Theresa Leigh-Sherman signed, representing civil society. Women have played a critical role in this process. At the national level, a Ministry of Gender was created in 2003 and Ruth Perry served as President of the interim government in Liberia. In November 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the first woman to be elected head of state in Africa, and women now hold key ministerial positions in the government. International organizations and NGOs have been active in promoting the effective participation of women in the post-conflict reconstruction process. The United Nations Mission in Liberia established a Gender Unit in 2003 that is very active. It provided technical expertise on how to integrate gender perspectives. Input to the Electoral Law was provided to ensure that special measures that will allow women's full and equal participation in the upcoming elections are integrated. Successful advocacy by the OGA, the Ministry of Gender and Development, and women's organizations has resulted in an electoral regulation calling for 30% representation of women in the selection of candidates. To ensure the implementation of the provision, the OGA has been involved in various meetings with relevant partners and stakeholders to work out strategies to enhance women's political leadership.

The MARWOPNET of Liberia has been internationally recognized for its contributions to peace building in the country. Founded in 2000 by women from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, it put forth an initiative to mediate the conflict and disagreement between Guinea and Liberia and dispatched a delegation to appeal to the feuding heads of states in the region believing that there would be no peace in Liberia without peace in the region. Other women's organizations, including the Liberia Women's Initiative and the Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET) have also played key roles. Prior to the November 2005 elections, these groups were active in mobilizing women in the electorate and publicizing the list of women candidates, which was critical in advancing the role of women in the political sphere in the country. These and other local women's groups in Liberia, such as the National Women's Commission of Liberia (NAWOCAL), the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) and the Liberian Female Law Enforcers Association (LIFLEA) continue their work in "peace advocacy, micro-credit, skills training, trauma healing, advocacy on sexual and gender-based violence, legal advice and representation, leadership programmes, and research and activities relating to the reintegration of female ex-combatants".⁹

Case Study: DDR and gender in Liberia

Overall, the DDR programme in Liberia was aimed at "consolidating national security through the disarmament and reintegration into society of all ex-combatants as a precondition to facilitating humanitarian assistance, restoration of civil authority, promotion of economic growth, and sustainable development."¹⁰

Yet the programme ultimately failed to meet the needs of and did not ensure women's participation proportional to their actual level of involvement, from the outset the importance of gender issues was stressed.

UN Security Council Resolution 1509 required UNMIL to develop an action plan to implement a DDR programme for all armed parties, "with particular attention to the special needs of child combatants and

⁹ http://www.peacewomen.org/news/Liberia/Jan06/AWID_Sirleaf.html

¹⁰ Amnesty International 31 March 2008

women, in line with the recommendations of Resolution 1325. It underlined the importance of a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peace building, and recalled the need to address violence against women and girls as a tool of warfare.

However, a lack of political will to ensure a gender based approach became apparent. There was a failure to take into account lessons that had been learned in previous DDR programmes, and a failure to involve Liberians including women and former combatant groups in the planning and implementation of the DDR programme. Moreover, at the government level, the newly established Ministry of Gender lacked resources and expertise, while the NCDDRR, considered to be the lead government agency on the process, perceived themselves as lacking influence in what they called “a completely donor driven process”. UNMIL’s gender expert had just arrived in 2004 and UNIFEM’s capacity was limited when the process began. The perception of many women’s groups was their attempt to be involved in the process was not fully considered. Several women, including representatives from Women in Peacebuilding Programme (WIPNET), highlighted to Amnesty International how women’s attempts to be involved in the early stages and to be consulted throughout the DDR were rejected, stating that “*the policy in Liberia on female combatants was linked with that of child combatants and little mention was made of women’s unique needs and contributions in the programme. The women who tried to get involved in the planning of the DDR process were told to go home and take care of the children*”. Overall she felt the greatest challenge was dealing with a leadership largely made up of men who believed that women should not be involved in DDRR.

According to the DDR plan, to participate in the process and programmes individuals had to present a serviceable weapon or 150 rounds of ammunition. Women and children associated with the fighting forces could present themselves without weapons or ammunition”. The screening process carried out by UNMIL involved asking those that turned up at the cantonment site such questions as their roles in the conflict and testing their knowledge about weapons. UNMIL often relied on information among others from action commanders which had a record of providing false information. Another major challenge for those associated with the fighting forces that wanted to access disarmament and demobilization sites was difficult access that women had to some of the permanent disarmament sites.

As a result, records indicated that up to 40,000 individuals who did not meet the criteria went through the DDR process. Others, primarily women and girls, missed out on the process entirely due to misinformation and poor communication.

Like Liberia, **Sierra Leone** has only recently begun the process of reconstruction after nearly a decade of civil war. Although only two women were included in the peace talks in Lomé in 1999, women in Sierra Leone are making progress and beginning to gain more representation in government at the local and national levels and are involved in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Currently, just over 14% of the seats in the national parliament are held by women.¹¹ In preparation for 2007 elections, Christina Thorpe was sworn in as the country’s first female elections commissioner in May 2005.¹²

Despite these gains, the effects of the war on women of Sierra Leone have not been adequately addressed in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. According to the one of the latest report of the Secretary General to the Security Council, Sierra Leone has been making steady progress towards maintaining international standards on human rights. More specifically, there has been a consistent trend towards respect for women’s rights. There has also been increased awareness among women themselves about their rights; and according to the report, women are now claiming their rights more than ever. However, the existence of poverty, illiteracy, discriminatory laws and other forms of gender based discrimination and practices still need to be addressed in order to further improve the prevailing condition of women. In particular, the economic empowerment of rural women is a key challenge towards improving women’s situation country-wide. The Government of Sierra Leone is taking steps towards addressing some of these challenges: an example is the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission, where Ms Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff, member of FAS’ board, serves as one of the five Commissioners.¹³ In addition, with the assistance of UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, Women’s and Children’s Affairs “launched the Inter Ministerial Committee to boost the

¹¹ InterParliamentary Union, figures as of May 2006: <http://www.ipu.org>

¹² <http://www.themercury.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=284&fArticleId=2524367>

¹³ http://standardtimespress.net/cgi-bin/artman/publish/article_285.shtml

implementation of the anti-human trafficking legislation.”¹⁴ Civil society organizations, including MARWOPNET and Search for Common Ground have also been active in promoting the participation of women in the post-conflict reconstruction process, even using the power of the media.

Case Study: Sierra Leone and SGBV

The social costs of SGBV in Sierra Leone are largely under-estimated and ignored and it is surrounded by a culture of silence and impunity.

The range and complexity of the underlying causes and the many consequences it has on all spheres of women’s (and men’s) lives make it a difficult issue to address. SGBV not only manifests itself as physical violence such as sexual abuse of women and children, but also includes forms of structural violence such as discriminatory laws and practices, and can affect both women and men, girls and boys. It tends to be mediated by factors such as age, religion, class and disability, and violent conflict in particular exacerbates SGBV.

The national context for addressing SGBV provides some opportunities for progress as well as a number of challenges. Three new ‘gender bills’ were signed into law in 2007 by the outgoing government, and these cover important rights for women related to customary marriages, property inheritance and sexual violence. However, wide dissemination and sensitization will be necessary to ensure that the general population is aware of these new bills and that the police, justice sector and community leaders are aware of their new responsibilities in relation to these issues.

Following the conflict in Sierra Leone, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established and provided an opportunity for women to participate and testify about the sexual and gender-based violence they experienced.

The TRC report, published in 2004, includes extensive background on the status of women and girls in all aspects of social, economic and political life as well as a number of specific recommendations pertaining to women’s rights. However, like most of the recommendations of the TRC, these have yet to be implemented. The completion of the 1st and 2nd-5th reports on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in May 2007 provides useful benchmarks for monitoring the government’s progress towards reducing GBV. Other policy mechanisms such as the PRSP and the Peacebuilding Commission’s Cooperation Framework also provide an opportunity to address SGBV. However the government is lacking a comprehensive national action plan on tackling SGBV and as a result, many of the prevention and response mechanisms are ad hoc and under-funded, and fail to link SGBV into broader economic, political and security strategies.

During and after the war, women’s organizations in Sierra Leone have responded to the disruption of social services and community-based structures by developing networks and alternative coping strategies to deal with problems such as food scarcity, sexual violence, and shortfalls in health and education provision.

This demonstrates the innovative responses that women develop at the community-level. However, women’s organisations often have very limited resources and capacity for sustaining the implementation of these projects in the long-term, making donor support critical to their ongoing activities.

The international community also supports a number of important initiatives for women and gender equality in Sierra Leone. Many of the SGBV-related programmes supported and implemented by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) stemmed out of the emergency responses that were launched towards the end of the war.

The international community is now moving towards focusing on long-term development, and there is need to continue supporting economic, political and social initiatives that target women.

There is currently a degree of momentum for addressing SGBV more comprehensively, as UNSCR 1325 is gaining profile and the consequences of failing to deal with gender inequalities are being increasingly recognised.

¹⁴ <http://www.peacewomen.org/news/SierraLeone/news.html>

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Peace processes can be seen as starting points for rebuilding the social fabric of society. As every building exercise, the first stage is the most important, as it sets the basis upon which everything will depend, mainly future stability of the social construction. A social fabric cannot be stable if it refuses to include half of its constituency; i.e., women. It is not a matter of numerical inclusion, but rather of women's effective and active participation in each and every stage of the process, from peace talks to their implementation. Several past examples of male-dominated peace processes, that were blind to women's needs and expectations, resulted in failure societies where women's exclusion is the symptom of a general closure towards civil society.

However, the signing of peace agreements sets in motion a long-term process aimed to establish and consolidate political and social order. Among the main challenges women face, there is the implementation of the agenda they have developed - the question is often strictly linked with the unity of the women's movement. Once the urgency of the war passes, they often begin to divide along party or ethnic lines, thus losing their strategic strength

In **Burundi**, despite women playing an important role during the Arusha Accords in 2000 and the incorporation of their recommendations in the Final Accord, their participation in the Arusha Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee is only three out of 29. During the recent ceasefire agreement with the FNL rebel group, the eight-member delegation includes only one woman. A positive trend is noted as the Constitution calls for 30% of Parliamentary seats for women and in 2003 the National Policy on Gender was adopted. Of the 1000 women around the world nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize, ten were from Burundi.

In **Ivory Coast**, only one woman participated in the Linas-Marcoussis peace agreement in 2003, the situation has not improved. Although the Constitution is not discriminatory in law, the security situation and the traditional patriarchal power's structure render their participation and mobilization more difficult. Nevertheless, the recent Security Council Resolution 1721 "encourages the Prime Minister to seek, as appropriate, the active involvement of civil society in moving the peace process forward". It also urges all relevant actors "to take into account the rights and resources of women and of gender considerations as set out in resolution 1325 (2000) as cross-cutting issues in the implementation of the peace process including through the consultation with local and international women's groups".¹⁵

In the **DRC**, the Sun City talks testify a positive example of women's mobilization. After a training session held in Nairobi on negotiation procedures and the subsequent formation of the Congolese Women's Caucus, they succeeded in including women at the negotiation table not as delegates, but as experts¹⁶. The major achievement was the adoption of the principle of gender parity in the Constitution of the transitional government (Art. 14), but there is still much to be done. During the recent elections, women made up only four of 33 presidential candidates; and of 9,060 parliamentary candidates, less than 15% are women.

In **Liberia**, women's tireless efforts, rewarded in 2005 with the election of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, have recently resulted in an electoral regulation requiring 30% representation of women in selection of candidates: in order to obtain it, women's organisations worked in partnership with the Office of Gender Advisor and the Ministry of Gender and Development.¹⁷ Moreover, OGA is engaged in training potential women candidates on public speaking, advocacy and resource mobilization; in supporting women elected in Parliament and training political parties on how to accede to the electoral regulation to prevent women from being marginalized from decision-making position in party selections.¹⁸ Moreover, international

¹⁵ UN SCR 1721 (2006)

¹⁶ Women Partners for Peace in Africa (WOPPA), in partnership with FAS and UNIFEM, brought together a coalition of women in Nairobi prior to the talk to train them. The continued support of FAS and UNIFEM has brought to the creation of a national platform called Cadre de Concertation des Femmes Congolaises, representing women branches from 11 provinces.

¹⁷ www.unmil.org/content.asp?ccat=gender

¹⁸ <http://www.unmil.org/content.asp?ccat=gender>

organisations and NGOs have been active in promoting the effective participation of women in the post-conflict reconstruction process in Liberia. The MARWOPNET of Liberia has been internationally recognized for its contributions to Peacebuilding in the country.

Other women's organisations, including the Liberia Women's Initiative and the Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET) have also played key roles in training and mobilization of women in Liberia. Prior to the November 2005 elections, these groups were active in mobilizing women in the electorate and publicizing the list of women candidates, which was critical in advancing the role of women in the political sphere in the country.

These associations continue their efforts in "peace advocacy, micro-credit, skills training, trauma healing, advocacy on sexual and gender-based violence, legal advice and representation, leadership programmes, and research and activities relating to the reintegration of female ex-combatants".¹⁹

The legacy of the genocide has had a strong impact on **Rwandan** women. They have now a central role not only because they are 54% of the adult population, but also because they are recognised as leading force in the reconstruction process.

Several innovative mechanisms have been created in order to enable their participation in leadership structures: the 2003 Constitution, for example, requires 30% quotas for women's representation in political decision making posts and set aside 30% of seats in the Lower House for women emerging from a women-only voting system.

Therefore, its National Assembly has the highest percentage of women in the world.²⁰ Nevertheless, the most important result they achieved is the overcome of the ethnic lines that were at the heart of the genocide: the Forum of Parliamentarian Women is the first cross-party in Parliament. After the genocide, women's NGOs tried to fill the vacuum, providing the population with a range of services to the population under a multi-ethnic umbrella organisation Pro-Femme/Twese Hamwe, established in 1992. Now, it coordinates more than 40 women's NGOs.

They have organized consultations with the local population, their grassroots members, advised the government on issues of women in democracy, and promoted reconciliation through the Action Campaign for Peace initiative that requires all member NGOs to have a peace platform and programmes to promote peace and reconciliation.

They set up a process for civil society's participation in the ratification of the new constitution, through a consultation process at with its NGOs members and women at the grassroots level.

Although only 2 women participated in the Lomé Peace negotiation in 1999, the following peace accord explicitly recognize their sufferences and recommends a full inclusion of women in the peacebuilding process "to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of **Sierra Leone**".²¹ They are currently beginning to gain more representation in government, both at local and national levels. An example is the appointment of Christina Thorpe in the Electoral Commission, in sight of 2007 elections.

The Government is trying to establish the National Human Rights Commission. In addition, with the assistance of UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender, Women's and Children's Affairs "launched the Inter Ministerial Committee to boost the implementation of the anti-human trafficking legislation."²² The Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (NEWMAP) in Sierra Leone is making significant strides to improve the welfare and status of women in the country: they are also currently collaborating with the Mano River Peace Network (MARWOPNET) that involves Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.²³

¹⁹ http://www.peacewomen.org/news/Liberia/Jan06/AWID_Sirleaf.html

²⁰ InterParliamentary Union, figures as of October 2006.

²¹ http://womenwarpeace.org/sierra_leone/sierra_leone.htm

²² Ibid

²³ <http://www.peacewomen.org/news/SierraLeone/July05/NEWMAP.html>

EVALUATION OF TARGETS ACTION

- ✓ *The Resolution 1325 (2000) of the UN Security Council is popularized among grassroots populations*

Several efforts have been put in place for popularize Resolution 1325 (2000). In states where the UN Peacekeeping mission has a Gender Unit, popularization is strongly carried out by them. Otherwise, CSOs have a great role.

As popularization means sometimes facilitate the comprehension of the document, translation in local languages is essential. Up to now, Resolution 1325 has been translated into the following African languages: Fongbe (Benin), Amharic (Ethiopia), Hausa, Ibo, Ijaw, Tiv and Yoruba (Nigeria), Ciluba, Kikongo, Kiswahili, Lingala (DRC), Wolof, Diola (Senegal), Shona (Zimbabwe), Ndebele (South Africa and Zimbabwe) , Kirundi and Kinyarwanda (Rwanda, Burundi), Swahili, Somali.

- ✓ *Resolution 1325 is operational, i.e. National Action Plans are developed and implemented in the different countries*

Unfortunately, only 6 NAP have been developed so far and none of them is form the African continent.

Yet promising steps forward are being taken, especially in the Great Lakes where, with the support of FAS and UN agencies such as UNDP and UNIFEM, long-term programmes targeting the implementation of NAP on UNSRC 1325 are well established.

- ✓ *Organize advocacy visits to appropriate governance institutions in order to increase women's participation in peace processes*

In an effort to enhance the role of women from the DRC in the process of peace in their nation, in general, and to support their effective participation in the inter-Congolese Dialogue, in particular, a delegation composed of eminent African women members of the AWCPD as well as members of FAS, participated in a mission of peace and solidarity to the DRC in December 2001. Led by Ms Ruth Sando Perry with the African Women's Development Committee for Peace and Development (AWCPD) and supported by UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and UNESCO, the mission gave visibility to the grassroots initiatives of Congolese women, helping them to draft their agenda in preparation for the elections.

FINAL REMARK

A holistic approach needs to be considered when approaching the problematic of gender mainstreaming and gender participation in peacebuilding. The followings are key inter-connected aspects to be considered during all times of the reflection on the implementation of UNSRC 1325:

- **Preventing and resolving conflict.** Approximately 40 % of countries emerging from conflict revert to war within five years, therefore repeating a cycle of violence, all of it affecting women. The key roles women can, and do, play in conflict prevention and resolution are usually overlooked in relevant activities, despite it being noted in international commitments such as UNSCR resolutions.
- **Security issues.** Certain sections of the international community have moved in policy from a focus on national security to a more people-centred or 'human security' approach. Including viewing sexual and gender- based violence and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), and people centred approaches to security sector reform. This can be key entry point for looking at and addressing the different needs of women and men. However, it does not necessarily mean that gender-specific security concerns will be taken into account in every instance
- **Access to justice.** Existing forms of justice often discriminate against women particularly in issues such as access to property and economic rights. Legislation to protect women from sexual and domestic violence is also often inadequate and poorly enforced. Ensuring women are actors in processes of justice reform or transitional justice process is needed to ensure that they are given equal rights within the judicial system. Women need the opportunity to voice their own experiences of violence and their needs for justice.

Transitional justice could include special courts, truth and reconciliation commissions and other community-based approaches.

- **Governance and civil society.** Transparent, democratic and effective governance structures provide for human security of women and men. Gender equality and women's empowerment should be at the heart of good governance, yet this is not happening systematically. Good governance also involves equal representation and access by both to political processes. Women are significantly under-represented in decision-making positions, particularly in conflict countries. Donors should support alliance-building amongst women from different backgrounds to improve this situation and to serve as a platform for further activities.

- **Health and education.** Women's health concerns in conflict-affected areas are large in scope and linked with other concerns, particularly protection and their ability to be economically productive. Women are particularly vulnerable given their reproductive and maternal health needs and exposure to gender-based violence. Also, since health services are not free the feminisation of poverty compounds female health issues. Few health programmes for sexual violence are suited to deal with psychological trauma that is often widespread in conflict environments. Women's access to education opportunities which is often limited in many societies is usually further restricted in conflict situations.

- **Economic development and livelihoods.** At the end of the average conflict a country's economy will be 15% smaller. Given this and the reality that women constitute a larger portion of those in poverty, they are more likely to suffer economically than men. Moreover, the domestic responsibilities of women and their burden of caring for children, elderly and injured increases during conflict. Improving economic livelihoods of women and men is a key factor in addressing a range of issues including sexual and gender based violence and genuinely empowering women. Within this context four issues are identified that are particularly salient to the protection of women in conflict situations, the prevention of violent conflict and the participation of women in conflict resolution, reconstruction and peace-building and on which it is felt that the EU and its members states could improve their action:

- **Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV)** is one of the most persistent issues directly related to women and conflict. The use of rape and other forms of sexual violence are increasingly recognised as weapons of war. Yet SGBV is more than just an issue of health and protection. Responding to SGBV requires a comprehensive approach that extends beyond health to issues of security, livelihoods, justice and governance.

- **Women's empowerment and improved accountability.** Ensuring on the ground implementation of (international) commitments on gender equality and women, peace and security requires strong, committed and knowledgeable local activists and organisations.

- **Developing National Action Plans for UNSCR 1325.** NAPs are seen as innovative attempts and comprehensive strategies to promote follow-through of international commitments to women and conflict.

- **Regional approaches to women and armed conflict.** Many conflicts have a distinct regional dynamics. By focusing on the regional level and in partnership with regional organisations, civil society networks and promoting cross country learning the EU can potentially design a very effective approach to women and conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON 1325

As stated in the recent "Needs Assessment Report on the National Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, Peace and Security in Africa"(February 2008) for the African Union, we strongly support the following recommendations:

- The conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of NAP on 1325 should be a joint effort between civil society and government
- The responsibility of leading the implementation of action plans should not be left to ministries of gender and women's affairs. Responsibility for different aspects of the plan should be distributed to key government departments such as defense, foreign affairs and internal affairs
- UN agencies working at national levels should be given roles to play in the implementation of the plans
- Clear indicators should be designed to gauge if the plans are making impact
- The main arms of the government – Judiciary, legislature and executive should be involved in the implementation process
- The national strategy should involve local government's structures. There is a tendency to focus on central governments. Local authorities play a critical role at rural and community levels and should be brought in the process
- Training should be at the core of any NAP being educative as well as influencing policy and practice. Training should incorporate indigenous tools to avoid perception that peace building and conflict resolution principles are externally driven
- Community groups should be used to roll out implementation of the action plans
- Action plans should be monitoring tool used to maintain and sustain peace
- There should be steps to ensure that NAP incorporate regional peace building policies and practices
- It is important that NAP call for a joint implementation of the African Women's' Protocol
- Plans should assess the availability of institutional grounds to ensure the development legislative, policy and strategic frameworks that support women participation
- The plan should have a periodic review schedule that will feedback from all actors