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### **For the Information of Delegates**

#### **Reintegration and Development Processes in Post Conflict States: Issues and Challenges Hindering Women's Inclusion**

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## Introduction

For the past two years, the global financial crisis has captivated international attention. Among its various consequences, it has serious implications for development, having thrown into question whether the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can now be achieved. Overshadowed by the crisis have been the continuing struggles of countries affected by armed conflict to secure a stable, equitable and just peace, reconstruct their state infrastructure, and reconcile divided societies. In these countries, the interdependence of security and development is starkly evident: in addition to the direct cost in human lives, violent conflict has had devastating impact on human, and especially women's, development, with long-lasting effects on social, economic and environmental conditions. Further, when basic rights are suspended in the interest of 'national security', as they often are during periods of internal conflict, the processes and institutions of democratic governance are undermined.

According to the World Bank, 45 states are currently classified as fragile or conflict-affected, of which 34 are among the poorest countries in the world. Poverty rates in conflict-affected countries average 54 percent, compared to 22 percent on average for low-income countries. And of the 1 billion people living in conflict-affected or fragile states, some 340 million are in the ranks of the extremely poor. Due to high unemployment and deep inequality, ineffective and corrupt governance, and the failure of the state to provide essential public services, post-conflict states are often unstable and more likely to see conflict re-ignite: 40 percent of countries emerging from conflict will relapse into conflict within the first ten years.<sup>1</sup>

While the global financial crisis poses serious implications for all developing countries, the greatest risk is to fragile and conflict-affected states, which are least able to cope with external shocks and crises due to their already fractured governments and state institutions, fragile economies and high levels of poverty. This combination of acute security, development and governance challenges creates extreme vulnerability among conflict-affected states. And it is in these states that progress towards achieving the MDGs is most at risk.

Advancing women's human rights, participation and gender equality in fragile and conflict-affected states requires highly creative and dedicated women's leadership. Through their struggles for inclusion in international and national processes to broker peace and reconstruct and govern fragmented states and societies, and to reduce gender inequalities in the political, economic and social spheres, women play a critical role in advancing the goals of sustainable development. By seeking inclusive political processes, legal frameworks of equality and non-discrimination, the establishment of safe and secure environments for women and families, the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence, and women's economic empowerment through poverty alleviation, equal access to education and essential social services, women's leadership

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, 'Crisis Impact: Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries Face Greater Risks', <http://go.worldbank.org/3DUSQ99Y30>

is essential for achievement of the MDGs. This paper examines requirements and opportunities for women's leadership in promoting women's human rights and participation in peace, security and development processes in conflict-affected states.

## **I Progress since 2005 in women's representation and decision-making in conflict resolution, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction**

Conflict affects men and women differently. While men constitute the majority of combat-related deaths, women may also play key roles, often experience devastating effects through the use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a weapon of war, and carry heavy socio-economic burdens. Women, and especially poor women, often bear most of the social hardship created by conflict and its aftermath. They are more likely to lose their livelihoods, to go hungry, to suffer disease, to be displaced, cut off from their communities and social networks, and to become victims of crime, lawlessness and human rights abuses in a context where government is unable to ensure security and stability.<sup>2</sup>

Following the cessation of conflict and the negotiation of a peace settlement, a critical window of opportunity opens as the nature of the post-conflict order is being negotiated. Countries emerging from conflict are presented with the opportunity to not return to the status quo ante, but to address existing social and gender inequalities, to rebuild their states to be more inclusive and accountable and create societies that are more cohesive and equitable. However, the needs of women are often systematically ignored in the design of reconstruction policies. Women also frequently experience a 'post-conflict backlash', comprised of efforts to restrict women's choices in political, economic and social activity, and of violence against women that continues at rates higher than in the pre-conflict period.<sup>3</sup> Yet, unless women, and women's priorities, are fully integrated in reconstruction efforts, gender equality will not be advanced and sustainable development will be undermined. Essential for the integration of women's needs and perspectives into post-conflict reconstruction and development is the participation of women in peace and peacebuilding processes and women's leadership in advancing gender-sensitive approaches.

### *Women's participation in peace processes*

Peace processes seek to set out the terms for bringing an end to armed conflict, and may also involve a wide variety of elements shaping the post-conflict order, including re-distributing political power, constitutional reform and developing a new system of governance, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, reforms to key state institutions, and societal reconciliation. Who participates and what is agreed at peace negotiations constitutes a framework for subsequent transition.

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Governance for the Millenium Development Goals: Core Issues and Good Practices*, UN Publication ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/99, 2006, Presented to the 7<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on Reinventing Government, Building Trust in Government, Vienna Austria, 26-29 June 2007. See Chapter 4, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Donna Pankurst, 'Gendered War and Peace' in Donna Pankurst, ed., *Gendered Peace: Women's Struggles for Post-War Justice and Reconciliation* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 3.

"It is really amazing," said one Kosovar woman ... "that the international community cared only about Kosovar women when they were being raped – and then only as some sort of exciting story. We see now that they really don't give a damn about us. What we see here are men, men, men from Europe and America and even Asia, listening to men, men, men from Kosovo. Sometimes they have to be politically correct so they include a woman on a committee or they add a paragraph to a report. But when it comes to real involvement in the planning for the future of this country, our men tell the foreign men to ignore our ideas. And they are happy to do so – under the notion of 'cultural sensitivity.' Why is it politically incorrect to ignore the concerns of Serbs or other minorities, but 'culturally sensitive' to ignore the concerns of women?"<sup>4</sup>

The principle of women's participation in peace processes is well established at the international level. In October 2000 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325, a landmark international commitment to conflict prevention, protection of women in all stages of conflict, and participation of women in all aspects of peacebuilding and reconstruction. SCR 1325 was followed by two other international instruments promoting gender mainstreaming and gender equality. SCR 1820 (2008) demanded an end to sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. It also called for UN-assisted security sector reform (SSR) and DDR to consult with women and women-led organisations in order to develop effective mechanisms to protect women from violence, including sexual violence, and called for an end to impunity for sexual violence. And most recently, SCR 1899 in October 2009 reaffirmed SCR 1325 in calling for 'further measures to improve women's participation during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post-conflict planning and peacebuilding, including by enhancing their engagement in political and economic decision-making at early stages of recovery processes, through inter alia promoting women's leadership and capacity to engage in aid management and planning, supporting women's organizations, and countering negative societal attitudes about women's capacity to participate equally'.

Despite these international commitments, women continue to be largely excluded from formal peace processes. A 2009 UNIFEM study found that in 21 major peace processes since 1992, there had been little improvement in the 'strikingly low' numbers of women involved. Women constituted less than 6 percent of delegates to the talks and only 2.4 percent of signatories to peace agreements.<sup>5</sup> No woman has been appointed a lead negotiator in UN-sponsored peace talks, although some women have been among the negotiators in talks sponsored by the AU and other organisations. South Africa's Graca Machel, for example, was one of three appointed mediators for the Kenyan crisis

<sup>4</sup> Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peacebuilding* (New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2002), p. 125. Available at: [http://www.unifem.org/materials/item\\_detail.php?ProductID=17](http://www.unifem.org/materials/item_detail.php?ProductID=17)

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), 'Women's Participation In Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence', April 2009.

of 2008. Nevertheless, the general pattern is that women have continued to be largely excluded from peace processes since SCR 1325, and the numbers of women involved in Track 1 processes have if anything decreased since then.<sup>6</sup>

Women are regularly excluded, often on the grounds that they are not military leaders, political decision-makers or negotiators. 'The belief is strong that those who take up arms must stop the conflict by sitting at the peace table. This approach might help to end violent hostilities, but it does not necessarily provide the best framework for reconstructing society.'<sup>7</sup> Women's participation in peace negotiations is necessary for the incorporation of a gender perspective in subsequent processes of peacebuilding, transitional justice and reconciliation. Exclusion of women from peace processes results in the repeated failure to address women's experiences and needs in the post-conflict period. For example, conflict-related sexual violence (sexual violence linked to an armed conflict and committed on a widespread or systematic basis by military and non-state armed groups) is a feature now of most recent and ongoing conflicts. Despite its frequency and scope, sexual violence has been largely ignored in peace negotiations, including in Bosnia, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone. According to UNIFEM, out of 300 peace agreements negotiated since 1989, only 18 agreements (covering 10 conflicts) mention sexual or gender-based violence. Four of those 18 peace agreements which have specifically mentioned sexual violence have occurred since 2005, including Sudan Darfur (2006), Nepal (2006) and Uganda (2007 and 2008).

Further, often ignored during formal peace negotiations are issues relating to victims, civilian concerns and social relations. In those instances where they have taken part in formal peace processes, women have broadened the substantive scope of negotiations, often raising issues relating to the welfare of the family, including food, water, shelter, land rights, education and health. Where they are part of the formal process, women help to ensure that the security and justice needs of women are taken into account, and often act to ensure that social and economic concerns for both women and men are addressed, addressing development needs as a fundamental element of human security in the conflict-affected territory. Consequently, women who are involved in informal peace and conflict resolution processes at the community level should be brought into formal processes, not only for gender equality, but also because they bring broader and more holistic understandings of peacebuilding into the process.<sup>8</sup>

### *Women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction*

Similarly, despite the rhetorical support at the international level to gender equality and mainstreaming in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, women are under-represented and gender issues are inadequately addressed in the various types of policy interventions, such as DDR, SSR and transitional justice (TJ). Women remain far from adequately represented in most security institutions. This under-representation of

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<sup>6</sup> Report on the High Level Colloquium 'Conflict Related Sexual Violence and Peace Negotiations: Implementing Security Council Resolution 1820', 22-23 June 2009, New York, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Elisabeth Porter, 'Women, Political Decision-Making and Peace-Building', *Global Change, Peace & Security*, Vol. 15, no. 3 (2003), p. 250.

<sup>8</sup> Porter, p. 246.

women in the security sector is visible from operational level to senior management and leadership positions, as well as at top political levels responsible for policy decision-making. Women's physical safety and security issues remain marginalised from mainstream practices in security sector reform.

For example, more than 10 years after the arrival of OSCE and UNMIK in Kosovo, women continue to be excluded from the reconstruction of Kosovo. According to the director of the Kosova Women's Network, this has had 'serious consequences both for women's long-term involvement in political decision-making in Kosova, as well as the extent to which women's needs have been met in Kosova since the war.'<sup>9</sup> Most decision-making in government, the security sector and international institutions operating in Kosovo are dominated by men. Gender equality legislation exists, but lacks implementation due to lack of political will. And in practice, girls and women continue to lack equal access to education, employment and property ownership.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the practical implementation of SCR 1325's principle of gender equality in peace processes and peacebuilding has lagged: although women are active informally promoting peace, citizen empowerment, dialogue and reconciliation among groups at the grassroots level, they have often been excluded from formal peace processes, with serious effects for women's subsequent involvement in decision-making. While it is now widely recognised that girls and women face heightened risks of sexual violence during post conflict periods and that special protective measures are required, they are still not systematically involved in the definition of protection mechanisms. The continued marginalisation of gender-sensitive approaches in peacebuilding underscores the need for robust women's leadership in highlighting the discrepancies between lofty international rhetoric and reality.

Given the continuing pattern of exclusion from peace processes, women's leadership must find innovative ways to speak for women and ensure their needs are articulated. A recent example was the London Conference on Afghanistan, held on 28 January 2010, at which only one Afghan woman was invited to speak. Alarmed by the absence of women's perspectives in the proposals that were to be discussed at the conference, Afghan women civil society activists drafted a communiqué that set out women leaders' security, development and governance priorities for their country. Four women representatives then travelled to London to conduct intense advocacy with other participants and stakeholders in the lead-up to the conference, and to brief the single Afghan woman delegate to the conference. The woman delegate read a statement summarising the civil society leaders' priorities at the conference, headed by the requirement that women comprise at least 25 percent of participants in all future peace processes, including peace jirgas, as well as security policy-making forums at the national and local levels. Security was identified as the top priority for women in a country where 87 percent of women encounter domestic abuse and violence outside the

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Igballe Rogova by Tim Symonds in 'A Retrospective of Kosovo from a woman's perspective – a complete failure by OSCE and UNMIK?', November 2009. Available at: [http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/1325/Kosovo1325Retrospective\\_Nov2009.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/resources/1325/Kosovo1325Retrospective_Nov2009.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Kosova Women's Network, *Monitoring Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kosova, Second Edition* (Prishtina: KWN, 2009), p. 6.

home is common. Despite the formal marginalisation of women from the London Conference, the informal advocacy efforts of this group of women civil society leaders proved highly successful. The final conference communiqué's specifically voiced support for the Government of Afghanistan's commitment to implement the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan, to implement the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law, and to 'strengthen the participation of women in all Afghan governance institutions including elected and appointed bodies and the civil service.'<sup>11</sup>

## **II Key governance issues affecting women's safety, security and justice as countries grapple with the development crisis and situations of conflict**

Security sector reform (SSR) is a framework that aims to develop safety, security and justice institutions that are not only effective, but that operate in a manner that is consistent with democratic values and human rights, and are transparent and responsive to those they are mandated to serve. SSR has been acknowledged by the UN Security Council as 'critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate state authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.'<sup>12</sup>

The international donor community has recently recognised the need to specifically address gender in SSR. The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) guidelines for SSR acknowledged the opportunity SSR presents for advancing gender equality and the need for women's participation in peace negotiations and peacebuilding at all levels.<sup>13</sup> A chapter added to the *OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform* is devoted to integrating gender awareness and equality into SSR assessments and programming, noting that 'in many countries SSR policies and programming currently fail to involve both women and men in decision-making processes and do not adequately acknowledge gender dynamics in attempting to understand issues – such as sexual violence or small arms violence.'<sup>14</sup> And a *Gender and SSR Toolkit* elaborated in 2008 offers detailed practical advice and training guidance for gender mainstreaming covering distinct spheres within SSR such as police reform, justice sector reform, defence reform, penal reform, border management, national security decision-making, parliamentary oversight and civil society oversight.<sup>15</sup>

Despite this increasingly rich literature on ways to implement gender-sensitive SSR, women's security needs have often been ignored or deprioritised within SSR programmes. (Exceptions exist of course, such as the post-apartheid South African

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<sup>11</sup> The London Conference Communiqué, 'Afghan Leadership, Regional Cooperation, International Partnership', 28 January 2010, para 26.

<sup>12</sup> UN Security Council, Statement by the President of the Security Council, UN document S/PRST/2007/3, 21 February 2007.

<sup>13</sup> OECD DAC, *Security System Reform and Governance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series (Paris: OECD, 2005), p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> OECD DAC, 'Section 9: Integrating Gender Awareness and Equality', 2009 addition to *OECD Handbook on Security System Reform*, p. 1. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/39/42033010.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*, Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek, eds. (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW), 2008.

defence review, a highly inclusive process in which women's groups played a critical role in promoting the concept of human security.) Generally, the integration of a gender perspective into SSR and DDR programming has been very slow, often superficial, and mainstream SSR analyses and assessments have not addressed gender systematically or in detail. While international instruments and policy guidance on integrating gender into peacebuilding and security governance have recently proliferated, it is still too soon to determine whether these will have significant impact on the practice of security and justice reform in conflict-affected environments. It is likely, however, that experience in the SSR field will mirror that in peace negotiations, and women will continue to be missing from debate, planning and implementation of SSR.

Fundamentally, long-term peace-building programmes including SSR depend on the extent to which both women and men participate politically, feel secure in their communities in the aftermath of conflict, are protected through the rule of law, have access to gender-sensitive justice, and achieve a sustainable livelihood. This points to another continuing lacuna in the mainstream canon of SSR: the link between SSR and development. Although the link is frequently invoked, it has rarely been examined in any detail by the emergent SSR community, and the integration of development objectives at in SSR initiatives at the policy level has been almost non-existent. This becomes especially apparent when one considers the relationship between security and development for women, or more precisely, the close link for women between violence (physical as well as structural) and poverty.

The extent to which women experience physical security directly affects their ability to engage in economic activity, to go to school, and to support their families. Women are more likely to be subjected to private or domestic violence than men, and poor women are especially vulnerable. For example, violations of women's human rights, in terms of physical violence (from conflict and within the family), discriminatory practices (such as disinheritance or stigmatisation due to HIV/AIDS), and cultural practices (such as forced marriage or polygamy) constitute the major push factors that lead an increasing number of rural women to migrate to urban areas in developing countries. Pushed by insecurity and drawn by potential economic opportunities, poor rural women tend to migrate to major urban centres and often settle in slums, where they are subject to 'rampant' physical violence both in their homes and in the wider community.<sup>16</sup>

As women's physical security is essential in order that they may contribute to peacebuilding and reconstruction, post-conflict SSR must prioritise ensuring women's safety in their public and private lives. Gender-sensitive police reform must take place on multiple levels, including: integration of protection of women's human rights and gender equality in the mandate of the police; corresponding changes in policing practice through operational protocols and procedures and the establishment of dedicated police units to address crimes against women; adequate representation of women in policing

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<sup>16</sup> Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), *Women, Slums and Urbanisation: Examining Causes and Consequences* (Geneva: COHRE, 2008), pp. 14-15. Available at: [http://www.cohre.org/store/attachments/Urbanisation\\_Report.pdf](http://www.cohre.org/store/attachments/Urbanisation_Report.pdf)

services as police officers and managers; and full integration of women in police oversight bodies, including police review boards, national human rights commissions, community-police liaison boards.<sup>17</sup> Implementing gender-sensitive police reform including effective policies to protect women's physical safety from gender-based violence is a key means of establishing an effective, accountable and responsive police service that serves the needs of all members of the community, women and men, and enables women to participate in post-conflict reconstruction.<sup>18</sup>

Similar problems with gender mainstreaming in related peacebuilding programmes such as the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. Female combatants often comprise between 10 and 30 percent of armed forces and non-state military forces and irregular armed groups. Aside from combat, they may also serve in a variety of roles as labourers, such as cooks, cleaners, porters, doctors, spies, partners and sex slaves.<sup>19</sup> Yet female combatants often fail to participate in or are marginalised from DDR programs through restrictive criteria that fail to take into account the distinct nature of female combatant experiences as opposed to those of men. Women may also decline to register in DDR programs through fears for their physical safety in demobilisation camps, or fear of the social stigma and being ostracised as former fighters. As a result, participation of former combatant girls and women in DDR programmes is much lower than their actual numbers, and a large number of women self-demobilise without assistance through appropriately targeted programmes.<sup>20</sup>

In the same manner, transitional justice mechanisms such as prosecutions or truth commissions are often set out during formal peace negotiations and established during the post-conflict phase. These frequently fail to address the experiences and needs of women. Although dealing largely with the issue of accountability, transitional justice mechanisms have been markedly silent on accountability for gender- and sexual-based violence. Again, this can be partly traced to the exclusion of women from peace negotiations and the consequent failure to integrate a gender perspective into the state building and reconciliation arrangements that are hammered out during the peace process. The failure to integrate a gender perspective in peace processes typically has resulted in situations where soldiers and combatants, some of whom have committed gender-based violence during conflict, are not held accountable but gain access to DDR programs. Meanwhile the victims of sexual and gender-based violence receive no assistance or reparations and are stigmatized in their communities.<sup>21</sup>

The prevailing understanding in the policy community and body of practice in post conflict reconstruction processes such as SSR, DDR and TJ is that gender is something extra, rather than implicit to security and justice. Yet a gendered understanding of

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<sup>17</sup> UNIFEM, 'Gender Sensitive Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies', Policy briefing paper, October 2007.

<sup>18</sup> UNIFEM, 'Gender Sensitive Police Reform', p. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> Tsjard Bouta, Georg Frerks and Ian Bannon, *Gender, Conflict and Development* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Cris Coulter, Mariam Persson, Mars Utas, 'Young Female Fighters in African Wars: Conflict and Its Consequences', Policy Dialogue No. 3, The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Ana Patel, 'Transitional Justice and DDR', *Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Dealing with fighters in the aftermath of war*, ed. Robert Muggah (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 262.

security recognises that women and men experience security and insecurity in different ways, and thus these different security needs must be taken into account in the development of security institutions, policies and approaches. Women's participation in SSR, DDR and TJ, and the demonstrated responsiveness of security sector and transitional justice institutions to the priorities of women strengthens the legitimacy of the post-conflict order and helps to ensure more democratic, inclusive and responsive governance.

### **III Strategies employed by women leaders to influence decision making on policy responses to the development crisis and situations of conflict in order that women's roles and capacities are placed at the centre of these responses and that the MDGs are on track**

An immediate challenge we face is how to better integrate gender and women's perspectives into peacebuilding and reconstruction processes. It is key that women are seen not only as victims of conflict and inequality, but as active participants in building peace, security and development for both men and women. What can women leaders do to better ensure that women's perspectives are integrated into conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction processes? First, it is important to increase the number of women who are involved in security and peacebuilding decision-making forums. The number of women present in the highest levels of security decision-making structures in practically all states is very low. For example, in January 2008 there were 1022 women holding ministerial positions in 185 countries surveyed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, but only 6 of those women were ministers of defence and veterans affairs.<sup>22</sup> Women have traditionally been excluded from security affairs more than any other policy sphere, with the result that women's perspectives and priorities have remained largely absent from security planning. In order that women's security interests are taken into account in policy planning and implementation, greater participation of women is needed in critical decision-making structures.

The mere presence of women in security institutions and policy-making structures is, however, not sufficient to guarantee that women's interests and gender security will be advanced and protected. A single woman's participation may be viewed, including by the woman herself, as a token presence. And when present in extremely low numbers in security institutions and policy forums, women may feel that to maintain credibility they must not differentiate themselves from the orthodoxy and dominant perspectives by advancing women's perspectives. Rather, in the traditionally male-dominated institutions of the security sphere, a 'critical mass' of women needs to participate in order to support a diversity of women's voices and avoid tokenism.<sup>23</sup> The minimum level of women's participation needed to make a significant impact by effecting change on an organisation's decision-making culture is considered to be 30 percent. At 30 percent and above, women are present in sufficient quantity to refute accusations of

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<sup>22</sup> Megan Bastick, 'Integrating gender in post-conflict security sector reform', *SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 156.

<sup>23</sup> Fionnuala NiAolain, 'Women, Security and the Patriarchy of Internationalized Transitional Justice', University of Minnesota Law School, Legal Studies Research Paper No. 08-40, pp. 33-34. Available at [www.ssrn.org](http://www.ssrn.org)

tokenism, to represent a diversity of perspectives, and to serve as role models for other women.

Ensuring adequate representation of women at all levels in those forums where peace and security arrangements are discussed, decided and implemented is important in terms of gender equality. But in addition to ensuring adequate representation of women, there must also be the representation of women's substantive needs and interests. Women's leadership in key decision-making and implementing structures in security and justice is critical because women have different experiences, needs and priorities than men. The inclusion of women and the representation of women's needs serves democratic and responsive governance. It can also have a substantive impact on what is discussed and decided. For example, as mentioned above, in those instances where they have taken part in formal peace processes, women have broadened the substantive scope of negotiations, raising issues relating to the welfare of the family, including food, water, shelter, land rights, education and health.<sup>24</sup> This broader, more holistic approach by women leaders underscores that security and development are, in many senses, two sides of the same coin for women. It is equally clear that until women and families live in safe and secure environments, progress towards achieving the MDGs remain hobbled, if not blocked.

The concept of 'transformative leadership' is useful to guide women leaders when thinking about how to effect gender mainstreaming in the security sector, as it has been shown to be in development. The transformational leader is one who empowers her followers, and motivates them to perform beyond their expectations and work on transcendental planes and collective goals instead of focusing solely on immediate personal interests.<sup>25</sup> In the public sphere, the elected transformational leader has developed a vision of women's security and gender justice priorities in close consultation with her constituency, works transparently to implement that vision, and is accountable to her constituency for facilitating the realisation of that vision.

Transformative leadership also builds on women's relational skills, emphasising the sharing of experience and knowledge with other women and the forging of common positions and shared objectives through networks, coalitions and caucuses. Women's political influence is thus served by the development of a critical mass of women parliamentarians in parliament through effective networking across party lines and with society for lobbying, legislation and policy-making.<sup>26</sup> Women elected to national and local governance structures can share experiences and learn from each other in pursuing gender security and gender justice objectives. Developing an effective critical mass and voice depends on building coalitions and alliances across the various levels of political representation and in both the legislative and executive spheres. It is equally important to develop a parliamentary women's caucus or women's policy network on women's safety, security and justice issues in government.

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<sup>24</sup> Porter.

<sup>25</sup> Bass, 1985.

<sup>26</sup> 'Women Parliamentarians Making a Difference in Politics: Worldwide experiences and practices', p. 6.

For advocates of gender-sensitive governance a priority is increasing women's participation in the electoral process as both informed voters and candidates. Developing women's participation in decision-making in formal political arenas entails working with women's wings of political parties and potential female candidates to strengthen their internal party standing and bringing women together across different political affiliations to strategise about how to best represent women's agendas and promote gender equality.

Women leaders who engage with security and justice sector reform need to build their technical expertise on security sector institutions and oversight mechanisms. This will also enhance their abilities to monitor the implementation of gender-sensitive policies in SSR and related peacebuilding processes, and enhance their capacities to assess whether security, safety and justice budgets are gender responsive. The political impact of women parliamentarians can be enhanced in this way by their links with civil society – including the women's movement but also academics, institutes and non-governmental organisations that possess specialised expertise on security and justice issues. Research on policy issues very useful as a political tool. Capacity building of women leaders in government and civil society is needed to effectively conduct gender audits and gender-responsive budgeting of reconstruction programs. By building coalitions and common platforms or networks to avoid fragmentation, they can provide a common resource and go-to source for policy-makers and international stakeholders (donors, UN agencies, etc).

Capacity building needs to go on at all levels of governance, for example, developing the capacity of local governance and community structures, including local government officials, courts, police, local women's organizations and survivors of violence to respond effectively to and prevent the occurrence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Further, an often overlooked element of developing women's transformative leadership entails developing media literacy and crafting a media strategy through contacts with journalists and the new media (Internet websites and blogs) to highlight priorities, platforms and actions on gender-sensitive security and justice approaches. The media performs a critical role in informing local publics as well as international actors about gender equality and mainstreaming issues in the security and justice domains. More needs to be done to work with women leaders in working effectively with the media to highlight important policy issues, foster public debate, and hold security actors and decision-makers accountable.

In short, it is necessary to create space for women and women's voices in post conflict reconstruction processes, and to ensure that women's experiences and perspectives are present at key decision-making forums shaping the post-conflict order, including not only health and education and land reform, which are traditional concerns relating to women's development, but just as vitally constitutional reform, DDR, SSR and TJ. Enlisting the active support of members of the international community –

donors, international organisations, international NGOs and civil society organisations, and the international media – can help to create such space for women’s participation.

#### **IV Recommendations**

Despite the problems outlined above in the integration of women’s priorities and needs in post-conflict peacebuilding, there are grounds for guarded optimism. Over the past five years, partly as a result of skilful advocacy efforts by networks of women’s NGOs, we have witnessed more sophisticated initiatives to include women in peace and reconstruction processes. There are now a plethora of declarations and principles supporting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding processes that have been articulated by international and regional organizations. A growing array of practical guides and tools and mechanisms to involve more women and gender-sensitive approaches in peacebuilding have also appeared recently. However as noted, there is a danger that the international commitments and policy guidance will be ignored in the mainstream practice of post conflict reconstruction. Making post-conflict reconstruction more responsive to women’s security and development now requires concerted efforts at the political level by women leaders, informed and supported by networks of women leaders in civil society.

Urgently needed now are gender-sensitive assessments, on the basis of which concrete plans and programmes for gender-sensitive peacebuilding and reconstruction can be crafted. This must include the allocation of adequate resources, and the development of women’s skills to implement and support such programs. Underlying these approaches is a fundamental shift in perceiving women as active participants in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes, and as experts and practitioners in the governance, delivery and oversight of gender-sensitive security and development.

Finally, as a basis for expanding women’s leadership in promoting gender equality, further conceptual thinking and empirical evidence is needed to better understand the links between development and women’s security in conflict-affected environments. How should development initiatives incorporate a gender-sensitive approach in post-conflict environments? How does conflict affect women in each dimension represented by the MDGs? How can the impact of conflict on the MDGs be mitigated? And how do each of the MDGs relate to post-conflict policy domains of SSR, DDR and transitional justice?