



## **Ninth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting**

*"Gender Issues in Economic Crisis, Recovery and Beyond: Women as Agents of Transformation"*

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**FOR THE INFORMATION OF DELEGATES**

**STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH WORKING GROUP ON GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY**

*(Paper prepared by Dr Wijaya Jayatilaka for the Commonwealth Secretariat)*

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## 1. Introduction

A world devoid of war and violent conflicts had been envisioned by the founders of world bodies such as the modern Commonwealth and the United Nations. This vision is yet to materialise. The world is far from being a peaceful community of nations, one able to resolve conflicts by the use of non-violent means. In addition to this several countries are yet to

establish just and equitable means necessary to meet the basic needs of their people. A World Bank report, has classified 45 states in the world as fragile or conflict affected, of which 34 are among the poorest countries of the world. Poverty rates in conflict-affected countries average 54 percent, compared to 22 percent on average for low-income countries. Disparities amongst states have widened in spite of the achievements of the MDGs by many countries. Cross border and intra-state socio-political tensions are quite widespread. Indeed these are troubling trends. Thus the initiative of the Commonwealth to focus on the role of women in peace and security is a strategic approach chosen to strengthen the commitments made in the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender equality (PoA). It stems further from the notion that advancing women's human rights, participation and gender quality in fragile and conflicted affected states is imperative. This has been established in some UNSCRs including UNSCR 1325.

How many roads must a man walk down  
Before they call him a man  
How many seas must a white dove sail  
Before she sleeps in the sand  
How many times must the cannonballs fly  
Before they are forever banned

Bob Dylan

Presently only 19 out of 192 countries (less than 10 percent) have developed the necessary National Plan of Action for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Conflict affects men and women differently, while conceding that men constitute the majority of combat-related deaths, women on the other hand 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. In Bosnia, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Liberia amongst other countries, SGBV despite its prevalence has largely been ignored in peace negotiations. 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 specifically mentioned sexual violence to have occurred since 2005, Sudan (2006), Nepal (2006) and Uganda (2007 and 2008).

Through their informal and formal struggles for inclusion in international and national processes to broker peace, 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 essential for the achievement of the MDGs

This report is based on a review of relevant documents and discussions with the Gender Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat, suggests a global institutional framework which enhances the inclusion of women in the processes of peace building initiatives to ensure human security. Peace building and security are closely intertwined and must be looked at as two sides of the same coin. Complimentary strategies must be developed to bring these concerns in sync, to foster a concise way of addressing the needs of people and nation states. The need to increase women participation in peace negotiations peacekeeping has been accepted by world bodies and

endorsed in international resolutions. What is required is realistic operational modalities, developed with sensitivity and pragmatism, which ensures that countries implement these resolutions and have the platform to exchange best practices, identify gaps, challenges and deliberate how the skill base required for the successful implementation of these resolutions is put in place. The ideas presented in this report is an effort at strengthening the mandate of the Gender Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat in spearheading the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security (WGGPS) which has received the endorsement of the 54 Commonwealth Nations. The WGGPS is expected to devise and structure its work approach to improve participation of women in peace and security. The need for such an exercise itself reflects the difficulties and challenges faced by the initiative. We hope that this effort adds to the knowledge and resolve of actors in successfully facing the challenges ahead.

Against this background, this paper provides a basic conceptual framework on which the operational aspects of the group are built. It also provides specific guidelines for the proposed structures and operational processes that must be developed to take the agenda forward.

## **2. Setting the Stage : Gender Issues on the Context of Conflict, Peace and Security**

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. Subsequent to the SCR 1325 is the 1820 (2008) which demands an end to sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. It also called for UN-assisted security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) to consult with women and women led organisations, in order to develop effective mechanisms to protect women from violence, including sexual violence. It calls in addition for an end to impunity for sexual violence. Most recently in 2009 SCR 1899 reaffirmed SCR 1325 calling for measures to strengthen women's participation in all process of conflict resolution, post conflict planning, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and enhanced engagement in political and economic decision making processes.

Despite these international commitments, women continue to be largely excluded from formal peace processes. A 2009 UNIFEM study found that since 1992, in 21 major peace processes 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>1</sup> No woman has been appointed as lead negotiator in any UN-sponsored peace talk, 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

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), 'Women's Participation In Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence', April 2009.

appointed mediators for the Kenyan crisis of 2008. Nevertheless, the general pattern is that women have continued to be largely excluded from peace processes despite SCR 1325, and the numbers of women involved in Track 1 processes have if anything decreased since then.<sup>2</sup> In Kosovo, more than a decade after the arrival of Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMKI) women are still excluded from the reconstruction of the country. In a similar vein gender mainstreaming in DDR programmes of former combatants fall short of SCR 1325 ideals. Female combatants either fail to participate or are marginalised from such programs through restrictive criteria which does not take into account the distinct nature of their experiences compared to those of men.

The reasons for violent conflicts and wars are complex. Hence resolving them in a sustained manner remains equally challenging calling for great commitment and innovative thinking. No two conflicts are the same. What is common are the outcomes of conflicts and

*Gender equality is central to all of our work at the UN. But for far too many people today, the issue is still seen as "women's concern." We must make sure the international community is united in the struggle for women's rights because the world will only achieve its full potential when women are empowered.*

*A critical element to that fight is stopping the epidemic of violence against women worldwide - whether in the home, the workplace or elsewhere. It goes against everything the UN stands for, and we have to end the culture of silence that serves only to protect the perpetrators.*

*Ban Ki-moon  
UN Secretary General*

wars. The suffering to people especially civilians including women, children, the elderly and disabled as well as the destruction of livelihoods and infrastructure in all instances have been extremely high. Very few regions of the world have been devoid of the devastating effects of violent confrontations, conflicts and wars. In response to the harsh realities of conflict and wars, the concerns for peace and security have become a global concern among all members of the UN as well as regional bodies. Resolutions, agreements, MoUs and efforts at strengthening relationships among nations and

communities have also received considerable attention. These efforts have expanded not only at operational / program levels and structures, but also in terms of strategy for generating new knowledge and know-how on dealing with conflicts and peace building.

### **3. Realities of Conflict Management**

In any conflict situation there are the key parties or factions to the conflict, i.e. often two groups uncompromising to access or control a resource or situation. Yet there are numerous other groups who are stakeholders. The stakeholders who are least influential in steering the conflict to a meaningful resolution and peace, are those who are most disempowered, marginalised and hence who suffer most. Giving a voice to them, creating sensitivity to their

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<sup>2</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.

needs and making them more active members engaged in the management or resolution of the conflicts / wars will ensure that they are made to be effective negotiators. Given what is at stake, if they are powerful stakeholders then much can be achieved in terms of peaceful resolution of the conflicts as well as ensuring their safety and care during times of violence. Much has been attempted. These efforts need to be strengthened and made more effective with greater commitment and resource allocation by nation states.

There are numerous challenges that need to be addressed when assisting member nations to prevent conflicts, to minimise the damage caused during conflicts, to speedily resolve conflicts and to manage post conflict restoration of livelihoods, trust and social harmony.

- First, all countries are made of diverse people often sharing different ideals and beliefs systems. The crafting of modern nation states with centralised decision making and power often modelled after traditional monarchies or similar governance structures, need to adapt and modify their governance system to take account of the diverse needs of people who believe in equality and justice. The cry for equality and equity by those who feel marginalised is being heard louder. This is especially so if their needs are not addressed meaningfully. Managing diversity in culturally pluralistic societies remains a key challenge in crafting peaceful modern states that can address the needs of all their people in a just manner. Addressing basic needs alone, without considering group and “identity” needs is no longer held sufficient or valid.
- Second, traditionally due to various historical factors not all people have equal access to resources and socio-economic opportunities. Continuation of inequality of access to resource, state services, security & protection as well as decision making is increasingly considered not acceptable. Historical perceptions of injustices and grievances are manifested in different ways. Social equity and equality are becoming universal values shared through different means. A key challenge is how best to ensure “distributive justice” in relation to especially state resources, economic opportunities, engagement with the state craftsmanship and decision making. A special feature is the deep-rooted gender injustices that make a strong bedrock for many other injustices, a universal phenomenon. A widespread occurrence of conflicts result in women and children made to suffer the brunt of violence and extremism.
- Third, a related challenge is how best to recognise as well as promote an awareness and activism of rights and responsibilities as a citizen of a modern nation state and an interconnected world i.e. global village. This is a double edged challenge. On one side is the citizen who needs to articulate her/his rights and responsibilities in an informed enlightened manner. On the other hand is the state steering the nation(s) to prosperity. The state needs to recognise the role of the citizen and create the opportunities to optimise her/his engagement to ensure a state that is responsive to the needs of all people in a just manner. A widespread internalization of respect and understanding then remains a cornerstone in development efforts, as articulated by the CW recently<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat “Civil Paths to Peace”, a report of the commonwealth commission on respect and understanding. 2007.

- Fourth, although there is convergence of global human values that have brought the global community of nations together on the United Nations platforms, there remains, considerable differences. The UNSCR 1325, 1888, 1889 provide an excellent framework for action by member states. Bilateralism, multilateralism as well as regional and issue based groupings enable countries to work on common agendas. These provide platforms for discourse and opens up possibilities of convergence across group boundaries to forge new alliances and global commitments to change.

The 54 member CW have also recognised the need to mainstream efforts of women in peace-building and conflict prevention. In order to guide this interest a shared vision and an appropriate structure and guidelines for work and realizing goals have been articulated. The Commonwealth established the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender Peace and Security (WG GPS) with the aim of strengthening effectiveness of governments in terms of peace and security. The CW has adopted the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015. The WG GPS works within this framework, focussing on gender dimensions of conflict & war. The original structure and terms of references of the working group was revised in February 2010. The key elements of the revisions are listed in the box.

#### 4. Perceived Challenges to WGGPS

The constraints of operationalizing the structure of the WG GPS resulted in the review of the terms of references and initial structure and functions of the Working Group. This renewed effort spearheaded by the Gender division of the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) needs to be strengthened and sensitivity considerations taken on board to ensure success. Key issues for consideration include the under-listed:

- (i) Domestication and implementation of agreed commitments. In spite of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and other related resolutions, only 19 out of 192 members have developed national action plans. This may reflect a weak or near absence of the necessary political will to drive commitments by member states<sup>4</sup>.

Summary of the elements of the revisions of the structure and functions of the WGGPS:

- The group need to be more representative of sectors, drawing on the required diverse skills, expertise and experience.
- Continuity of sector/personnel nominated.
- A 14 member working group inclusive of 2 international experts.
- Each country to put together a GPSN consisting of 4 high level persons.
- Country membership will have a 4 year split tenure, 2 years full membership and 2 year observers.
- Participation at meetings and activities by rotation from among the 4 members of the country GPSN
- Five key tasks have been identified related to promoting best practices, research & development, fact finding and supporting to the ComSec.

Source: Issue Paper: Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security 2010.

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<sup>4</sup> This has been highlighted by Ambassador to Bangladesh, Anwarul Chowdhury at a panel discussion on 23.04.2010 at the United Nations, New York . The panel also highlighted the sexual abuse charges against UN Peace Keeping

- (ii) Establishing and ensuring proactive engagement and professional integrity of the Gender Peace and Security Nucleus (GPSN) of the member countries.
- (iii) Developing and adopting standard guidelines for membership of the WGPS and GPSN and assumptions on availability of personnel.
- (iv) Ensuring dynamism among members and cohesion in the activities of the WGGPS and GPSN recognising the multi-sectoral nature of both groups.

Potentials and strengths:

- (i) The recognition of the importance of gender focus in conflict and war management evident in the endorsement by CHOGM of the establishment of the WGGPS and the technical support provided by the Gender section of the Secretariat.
- (ii) Accumulated body of knowledge and expertise within the CW and global to inform and strengthen group work and performance.
- (iii) Collective commitment and interest of global actors like the UN, other international and national organizations on same issues of concern.

## **5. Objectives of the Commonwealth Working Group**

The key tasks of the Working Group, facilitated by the Gender Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat, would include:

- Involvement in fact-finding missions in order to ensure that specific needs of women in post-conflict processes are addressed;
- Aiding and strengthening the gender equality component of the Secretary-General's Good Offices Role;
- Developing guidelines for implementation of international and Commonwealth commitments related to gender, peace and security in collaboration with Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women's Affairs and other relevant Ministers;
- Recommending to the Secretary General, through the Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, to ensure the provision of adequate resources for the Working Group;

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troops, the lack of commitment of member states to implement national action plans and non-allocation of resources to these efforts.

- Providing advice to the Secretary General on increasing gender parity and appointing Special Envoys on engendering peace, conflict management and post-conflict processes; and
- Documenting good practices from Commonwealth member countries on women's empowerment and mainstreaming of gender equality in peace and security initiatives and processes.

## 6. Broad Principles for Peace and Conflict Management

The work to be undertaken by the Commonwealth Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security (WGGPS) will have immense positive impact if successfully undertaken. In this endeavour they will have to be aware of the many challenges and contexts in which they will operate. Further the manner in which each person contributes to the efforts of the collective as well as how the group structures its self and functions will be critical. Reference to guiding principles that have helped other similar endeavours to successfully steer their efforts will help develop a set of guiding principles for the working group. A review of the key working principles listed in the box will be helpful. These will be the reference points to develop a set of guiding principles for the WGGPS and a working framework or boundaries within which to operate.

### Frameworks for working:

- Commonwealth core values
- United Nations core values
- Do-No-Harm principles
- PCIA framework

### 6.1 Overarching Principles for the WGGPS and GPSN

A) **Commonwealth Core Principles** – 1971 Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles encapsulates the ethos of the Commonwealth. The following traditional Commonwealth principles need to be reflected on by all entities within the Commonwealth system and utilized as a reference and benchmark for agreeing effectiveness and operational parameters.

- Recognition of the independence and sovereignty of nations.
- Members embody a variety of cultures, traditions and institutions.
- Freedom to be members of other nation groupings.
- Diversity of members hold core common values
- Belief that international peace and order are essential for prosperity.
- Believe in the liberty of the individual in equal rights regardless of race, colour, creed, political belief, and their inalienable right to participate in framing their societies.
- Recognition that racial prejudice as a threat to development and racial prejudice as evil to be combated and eliminated.
- Oppose colonial domination and racial oppression and committed to human dignity and equality.
- Wide disparities in wealth among social segments is unhealthy and need to over come poverty and have a more equitable international society
- Free and fair flow of trade and resources.
- Promote international cooperation to remove causes of war.
- Be a role model in multinational cooperation to promote shared ideals.
- Reject coercion as an instrument of policy.

- Promote understanding among nations.

**B) UN Guiding Principles** – The first chapter of the UN Charter explains the purpose and principles of the organization.

Article 1 states that the organization is to ... “to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.” Towards achieving this goal it envisages developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace. It also commits itself to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

Article 2 lists seven principles that govern the conduct of member states. The Organization and its Members, in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, act in accordance with the following Principles.

- The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members.
- Members fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter.
- Members settle their international disputes by peaceful means in a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.
- Members refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.
- Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in action it takes in accordance with the present Charter and refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action.
- Ensure that Member states act in accordance with these Principles in order to maintain international peace and security.
- The United Nations will not intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.

The combined Commonwealth principles and UN Charter sets out clearly criteria that governs how members relate to each other. The Un charter also outlines broadly how members should conduct affairs within their state boundaries. Thus when referring to engagement in conflict situations these provide a critical framework to guide conduct of member countries.

## **6.2 Engagement Principles**

A further need is to have clarifications on how to engage in conflict situations for purposes of prevention, mitigation, transformation, peace building, reconciliation, relief or

reconstruction work. The “do-no-harm” and the PCIA provide a sound framework to guide efforts.

### **A) Do-No-Harm approach**

The Do-No-Harm principles (DNH) originally presented by Mary Anderson helps agencies undertaking development interventions in conflict affected areas.

A seven step model developed by CDA and presented in the DNH Handbook<sup>5</sup> provides the details of the processes to be followed to ensure that development assistance in conflict situations are undertaken with sensitivity to the context.

Step 1: Understanding the context of conflict

Step 2: Analyse the dividers and sources of tension

Step 3: Analyse the connectors and local capacities for peace

Step 4: Analyse the assistance program

Step 5: Analyse the assistance programs impact on dividers and connectors

Step 6: Consider programming options

Step 7: Test redesigning options and redesign project

The group will seek to integrate gender perspectives in the undertaking of these seven steps.

### **B) Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) Analytical Frameworks Approach**

The PCIA framework<sup>6</sup> has identified five areas of potential peace and conflict impact assessment which need to be explored in any development intervention in conflict settings :

- Institutional capacity to manage / resolve violent conflict & promote tolerance and build peace.
- Military and human security
- Political structures and processes
- Economic structures and processes
- Social reconstruction and empowerment

## **7. Guidelines for WG GPS Operations**

Considering the above four framework for engagement, the following working guidelines may be suggested.

The WGGPS should develop and review periodically, detailed, gender explicit working

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), Cambridge, USA 2004)

<sup>6</sup> Source: “A measure of Peace: Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) of development projects in conflict zones”, Working Paper No. 1. Kenneth Bush IDRC, Canada. 1996.

guidelines on four key components of effectiveness to carry forward their responsibilities. The working group should also be supported and strengthened with appropriate training and also a professional coaching system to ensure sustained improvement and opportunity for introspection, internalization and transformation.

- i. Contextual and gender sensitivity
- ii. Conceptual knowhow and gender analytical skills
- iii. Professional leadership
- iv. Outcome / result orientation

## **7. Key guiding framework - professional frame of reference**

The guiding framework for work of the WGGPS is elaborated at two levels.

1. Guidelines for setting up gender sensitive mechanisms to facilitate change
2. Guidelines for gender responsive and inclusive operational mechanisms

In proposing the guidelines, issues dealt with in section 2.1 above are given due consideration.

### **7.1 Establishing Gender Sensitive Mechanisms to Facilitate Change (Structures)**

Member states will decide to establish various mechanisms, i.e. organizational structures to undertake and carry forward the ideals of ensuring women's participation in peace and security (UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889). The following key factors need to be considered the WGGPS when supporting member countries develop structures to ensure effective focus on women in peace and security.

- a. Ensure that the Gender Peace and Security Nuclei (GPSN) of the member countries initiate their work with the thorough understanding and appreciation of the gender dimensions to the institutional commitments made as well as the shared vision of the following:
  - International – (a) The Commonwealth and (b) the United Nations
  - National – (a) Commitments made to international obligations (b) Good global citizen codes of conduct (c) national laws and policies (d) sensitivity to local opinion and professional bodies on peace and security
- b. The GPSNs are capacitated to undertake their responsibilities with the required know-how, technical competencies and commitment.
- c. The GPSNs and associated institutional frameworks are gender responsive, conforming to at least the minimum standards of structures, and embracing the principle of 'structure follows process'. This demands that the actual aims, objectives, strategies to accomplish the identified changes are identified first before the structure is designed.

- d. Ensure that the structures developed conform and personify the overarching ethos of the international and national commitments to the “women peace and security agenda”.
- e. Adopt participatory and inclusive methods when developing the mechanisms / structures locally.
- f. Recognise the diversities of Commonwealth member states in terms of the capacities of their key democratic institutions, civic engagement in governance and basic freedoms. In his context the local mechanisms that are associated with the DPSNs may also need to be different.
- g. Cognisant of factor (vi) above, the support to member countries may also be differentiated and needs identified and strategies developed accordingly.
- h. Be mindful of the Do-No-Ham principles and PCIA principles when developing the structures.
- i. Further, the actions of those in the DPSN and the WGGPS must conform to the professional standards of performance as defined by the professional bodies but also reflect a certain level of internalisation of the WPSA. This personal transformative capacity may need concerted support.

## **Risk Factors**

The WGGPS and the GPSNs as a system must map out the risks the effort will face at international, regional, national and local levels. This mapping exercise would be undertaken and revised regularly at reasonable intervals. Such a risk map could be used to develop mitigation strategies to enable systematic progress towards the realization of agreed goals.

## **Capacity Development**

Evolving appropriate structures to achieve the goals embedded in the ‘women peace and security agenda’ (WPSA), will require engagement of different actors (institutions and personnel). Effective undertaking of this endeavour will require that these are capable, versatile, effective and professional. It is necessary to develop standards, which should be benchmarked and then supported with capacity development by the WGGPS. The capacity development support must also focus on monitoring and evaluating and be results oriented.

### **7.2 Gender Responsive Operational Mechanisms (Processes)**

The mechanisms developed by member countries to implement the WPSA will be to implement the strategies, and methods agreed upon. The methods agreed should be optimum, given the constraints and risk factors as well as the resources and environment in which the local entities will work. Considering the four broad reference points considered in the preceding

section (2.1), the following key principles need to be adhered to.

- i. The processes agreed and the methods adopted to implement the WPSA must reflect the ethos of the agenda itself and the institutional / social context in which it is being developed and implemented. Thus conforming to the Do-No-Harm and the PCIA working principles.
- ii. Organizational structures operationalising the work at ground level should strive to strengthen their organizational capabilities which itself is a process that will need support to improve the procedural as well as the strategies adopted.
- iii. The structures must adopt a “learning” approach and be flexible and transformative in order to adapt and adjust to contextual challenges and external rigidities.
- iv. Strategies need to be developed to facilitate adaptation to contextual challenges supported with research, management / institutional coaching, monitoring and evaluations. Thus the key functions of the WGGPS, DPSNs and associated structures must be flexible and guided by evidence based, gender responsive change management approaches.
- v. The processes adopted must reflect a sound understanding of lessons learnt and best practices from similar efforts within the Commonwealth and elsewhere including the UN initiatives in peace building.
- vi. Although the contextual differences and required flexibility among member countries is recognised, the minimum standards of functioning must be developed that should be valid across the Commonwealth.

### **Risk factors**

The risks and challenges associated with peace building and security related work vary across countries. Particularly in countries considered to be fragile states, the challenges will be more serious. A realistic assessment of the main risk factors as well as their variability across time is needed, further periodic scenario mappings may need to be done. Considering the difficulties that may arise within the countries, some of this work may be undertaken “off shore”. Appropriate mechanisms may have to be developed in a conflict sensitive manner to support such member countries.

### **Capacity development**

Implementing the strategies, programs and activities of the WPSA, will require processes that are reliable and valid. Such processes must reflect the basic ethos of WPS Agenda. The development, refinement or abandoning processes need to be based on professional judgement that is evidence based. Thus those who are responsible for implementation of the directives or work-plans may in most instances need support to improve and update their skills. Skills profiling, skills and competency needs assessments and capacity development support may be

required as an ongoing long term process. Risk and change management in the context of peace building and security need to be developed and shared with the relevant stake holders.

Capacity development needs must be ascertained through a valid needs assessment methodology. This should be done for personnel and institutions and suitable support provided by the WGGPS.

## 8. Work-Plan for the WGGPS

A basic framework for developing a more detailed work-plan for the CGG 5 year work plan is presented here. The detailed plan should be broken to (a) stages of work: short and long term and (b) scope and scale of work, country, region and global levels.

The work-plan should develop guidelines for processes, standards, goals, targets, identify persons / institutions responsible and resources required. Further it should detail out the methods for monitoring and evaluation as well as any capacity development support interventions.

The plan should reflect the efforts at the Pan-Commonwealth level as well as the member country level.

Time frame	Operational Level & structures	Areas of work	Some key issues to focus on
Short term (1-2 years)	WGGPS WGGPS GPSNs	Visioning and develop a shared understanding of the purpose and goals. Developing and agreeing on guidelines for processes and structures Capacity development needs identification and follow up plans and resource mobilisation. Identification of network partnership with like minded actors at different levels and developing operational relationships through formal and informal MoUs. Develop and establish initial monitoring and evaluation systems with sound understanding of the respective theories of change, Initiate developing mechanisms to document best practices and lesson learnt.	Conflict sensitivity. Flexibility. Commitments. Alternative actors and processes. Network with similar efforts. Develop “friends” of the process.
Medium term (3-5 years)	WGGPS WGGPS GPSNs	Assess outcomes of the short term plans implemented and make necessary adjustments. Develop strategies for mainstreaming efforts. Establish/strengthen relationships with institutions that will use the knowledge base generated through the WPSA. Document best practices and lesson learnt.	Build on strengths. Choose the relevant. Be strategic. Visibility, image building and promotion of

		Mainstream into institutional approaches to knowledge management and sharing in education and training and policy processes. Develop criteria for up-scaling or sun-setting and feasibility assessments.	WPSA agenda. "Trust & invest in the people" Key people vs. more people.
Long term (> 5 years)	WGGPS WGGPS GPSNs	Follow up on up-scaling, sun-setting and mainstreaming efforts.	Focus on results and global trends. Innovation. Hooks.

**9. Conclusions and Next Steps**

Much has been accomplished by member states of the Commonwealth and the United Nations to bring about gender justice and to focus on the terrible suffering brought about on women due to conflict and war. The adoption of several resolutions by the UN security council and member states sets the broad framework for women’s direct involvement in structures ad processes related to peace and human security.

The initiatives of the Commonwealth Women’s Ministers to ensure that the commonwealth member states provide an added strength to make effect the symbolic agreements made with their commitments to improve the participation of women in peace and security efforts must be taken forward. The proposed mechanism and processes presented to the 9<sup>th</sup> Hon Women Ministers meeting is an attempt to set in motion a robust mechanism to achieve the agreed goals for the Commonwealth of nations to achieve their commitments and be an exemplary community of best practitioners.

The suggestions made herein need to be improved and approved of the Hon. Ministers gathered in Barbados. The proposed mechanisms, with the support of the member countries can succeed to ensure that women’s concerns are addressed effectively to strengthen peace and ensure security. It is essential that women are directly engaged in these vital process that will ensure a peaceful and just world order.

The proposed action program which will be operational at the Commonwealth Secretariat level as well at the member country levels. The secretariat will continue to provide the assistance as well as coordinate technical support to help member countries to engage women in peace and security matters in respective countries.

The short, medium and long term strategies provide a broad framework that member governments can make improvement to and initiate the work without delay. Resource allocation, co-opting relevant and effective persons to the proposed body and having a system to strengthen the capacities of proposes and existing structures is necessary.

The decision making processes need to draw on the existing rich body of knowledge in conflict transformation, peace building, human security and gender.

The draft action plan proposed in Annex A could be used as a basis to reflect and develop a system that is compatible with state concerns as well as the broader universal human values.

The Commonwealth Secretariat will continue to support this process in a more concerted and sustainable manner.