
UN Women

In collaboration with ECLAC

Expert Group Meeting

Structural and policy constraints in achieving the MDGs for women and girls

Mexico City, Mexico

21-24 October 2013

Gender, peace and security and the post-2015 framework¹

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The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and subsequent resolutions² on women, peace and security was a great landmark for the women, peace and security agenda. Following resolution 1325 on October 31st, 2010, there has been a growing movement of civil society activists advocating for full implementation of these resolutions. While there has been growing advocacy for governments to take concrete actions to make UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent WPS resolutions a reality for women, the findings of a global initiative on monitoring implementation of these resolutions shows persistent challenges in implementation of the resolutions particularly with financing, coordination, the political will to go beyond political correctness, and persistent gender based violence.

Thirteen years after the MDGs were passed by the UN, an audit of how they delivered on their intended goals has been done but gave no practical suggestions on what needed to be done in order to fill the gaps. The post 2015 draft framework is an attempt to achieve what the MDGs failed to do. However CEWIGO has taken a close look at the framework and found that it has only a lukewarm appreciation of the importance of women in development. It does not appreciate that women have most of the answers the world is looking for, and fails to offer any

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

transformative shifts. Real transformation shifts need to be based on local grassroots realities that can bring about realistic social change.

This paper interrogates the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and attempts to show the different elements of the women's peace and security agenda that must be integrated in the post 2015 framework if it is to realize the desired impact. The paper outlines these elements and presents what is required to actually realize a deconstruction of transformational approaches, with clear, simple and action oriented strategies that can transform societies.

Participation

The first element that needs to be integrated in the new framework is women's effective participation. If a nation is to develop, it cannot afford to have half of its population not participating. This includes participation in peace negotiation and peace building processes, in post conflict recovery program design and implementation and participation in politics and governance. Nations must enable women to effectively participate in decision making processes at every level of governance, because evidence shows that women in decision making positions bring new perspectives to old debates, eschewing conflict and showing a willingness to tackle corruption. Women are unique negotiators focused on win –win for all. This is an inherent quality. They raise their families negotiating peace between rival siblings and between children and their father. They are not bent on winning but represent a neutral point between rivals. They want peace to live their lives and for their children to grow. On the other hand, men want to win a war, they want power, they want control. Grassroots women and survivors of conflict must be consulted when negotiating peace.

The current architecture for peace and security must be dismantled. According to this architecture, what is discussed at the round table is what contributes to peace. That mentality is a man's mentality, it is male dominated, it is male power and brings about male peace. It is a process that ignores 50% of the population. We have noted that structures of frameworks when they do engage women at all, tend to utilize only women in the mainstream government. They are in ministries, agencies and departments. There must be a process that enables the minds and thinking of women elite, practitioners, survivors, and grassroots women to converge. This thinking, women's ideas must find a place at the peace table.

Women play significant roles in bringing peace to a war torn community and country. Their peace work enables them to build peace across ethnic and gender lines, challenging communities to promote peace for development, because by nature, women want to settle down.³ The large numbers of local women's groups in conflict prone countries that become structures that reach out to the wider community on issues of peace building and reconciliation are well documented. Governments would be the wiser to engage women so they can contribute to the design and implementation of post conflict reconstruction policies and programs, because only women know how women are affected by armed conflict and how their issues can be addressed after the conflict.

³ Isis-WICCE; Making UNSCR 1325 a Reality for Women , 2011

Participation also includes women's engagement in politics and governance beyond numbers. Many countries now have quotas. In Uganda each district must send a woman representative to Parliament, and each local council must have at least 30% representation of women, so we have 34% representation in Parliament. This is working well only as far as numbers go. Our parliament remains male dominated and controlled and survives on the politics of patronage. We are talking about effective participation where women will influence policies and resource allocations that ensures that both women and men equally benefit from decision making.

For women to effectively participate in politics they need finances to run credible campaigns, they need funds for their own confidence as politicians. They need to have the ability to feed their families, to take care of themselves without depending on men who are themselves poor so that when a woman asks for food, or children's fees the poor man gets very upset with her and a fight ensues

To reach such a level, developing nations need to enact enabling laws that promote gender equality. It must emphasize quotas in politics, affirmative action for girls' education so they can have minimum educational qualifications for positions of leadership, and capacity development for elected women representatives at every level to play their role effectively.

Protection of women from sexual and gender based violence (SGBV)

There are many issues that will prevent a woman from participating and one major one is gender based violence. A woman who is often beaten by her intimate partner will lose her confidence and self-esteem and will not participate. A woman who has been raped will bear the shame of the rapist, will become withdrawn and will not associate. A woman who suffers from vaginal fistula will not want to appear in public.

During conflict, women's bodies are targeted. In the process of protecting their families, their bodies are attacked and lose their dignity and bodily integrity. They are targeted by both rebels and government soldiers for rape and gang rape leading to multiple trauma. The many that lose their husbands lose their identity. Some of the acts of the armed rebels and soldiers are simply malicious- how else can you explain the situation where these armed gangs insert sticks, broken bottle parts and all manner of objects into women's vaginas? As a result, most women survivors suffer from low self-esteem, depression, withdrawal symptoms, in addition to the reproductive complications due to the attack on their bodies. Therefore they cannot effectively utilize available opportunities for their personal and community economic empowerment. They cannot ably take care of their families.

Think of the situation of women in Eastern DRC where militias frequently go on a raping spree. Or think of those women in Northern Uganda where families had to live in IDP camps for over 20 years. Women and girls in camps are frequently raped. Many will get pregnant from sexual violence. Sometimes women will give in to sex to camp attendants and UNCHR officials as a survival tactic to get food for the family. They get children from such incidents. After the guns fall silent the woman will take all her children home. But a woman who brings children whose fathers are not clan members is seen as a whore because rape remains a morality issue in much of Africa, and perhaps beyond. Women must also be protected during post conflict situations. In

Uganda there are a lot of women and girls on the streets because they have no home. Access to land, a home and other reproductive resources are through the husband, and once she has no husband she has no access to resources. So how do we talk of development when hundreds of such children have no where they call home? They cannot till the land because it did not belong to their fathers! How can we talk of peace for such mothers? Or think of the hundreds of women in post conflict Uganda who suffer from vaginal fistula as a result of repeated rape. Many get infected with HIV/AIDS and yet cannot access medical services.

The new framework must address sexual violence including against children especially young girls. In the Uganda law the rape of children is known as defilement. CEWIGO conducts annual in-country monitoring of UNSCR 1325 and our findings since 2010 have consistently shown each year further escalation of defilement. Rape and defilement have irreparable consequences. Girls who get raped get unwanted pregnancies, drop out of school and will never attain the education necessary to become a leader, to stand for political office or to get out of poverty.

The woman battered by GBV must have her voice heard. Who else knows her needs? Any development framework must emphasize the need for GBV related laws and policies that strengthen GBV response, protect women and punish perpetrators, training of duty bearers who provide support services to GBV victims and survivors – the police, health workers, community development officials, probation and welfare officers. It is also important to acknowledge the need for development programs that deliberately help to restore women's bodily integrity, and must stress the need for ring fenced funds at national level to enable implementation of national action plans on women peace and security.

Prevention of Conflict

In addition to effective women's participation and protection of women from gender based violence, another WPS element that must be integrated in the post 2015 framework is prevention of conflict. One way to fight prevent conflict is to end extreme poverty because poverty breeds conflict at family level and national level, and similarly conflict exacerbates poverty. At the same time, nations especially third world countries must increase efforts towards equitable development. The conflict in Eastern DRC has for a long time been over resources. Different governments in partnership with multinational companies have for decades exploited minerals and timber from Eastern DRC without similar effort in implementing programs that would enable the communities to develop. In Uganda one of the major causes of civil strife is inequitable development where the southern part of the country is far more developed and its Northern half. Such inequality leads to disconnect and when civil war breaks out it is the women that bear the brunt of it. Equal access to opportunities will also contribute to prevention of conflict. In the countries of the Great Lakes Region, sectarianism and discrimination based on ethnic groupings, religion, political affiliation, as well as leaders who provide opportunities for only their relatives abound. Such partisan behavior, discrimination and marginalization of sections of citizens is reason for civil discontent and conflict.

Research has also shown a close link between bad governance and conflict affected countries. While some of the governments are trying to address governance issues, others are not bothered. Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, DRC, Sierra Leone, Liberia, name them. And when citizens become

disconnect, the leaders know they would not win another an election so they engage in rigging and this often leads to election violence. If countries managed governance, there would be no reason why we cannot have free and fair elections even in African countries. Good governance contributes to peace and security. Civic education that stimulates active citizenship, and educates masses on women's rights and their right to participate, the right of girls to education, among other things, would help improve governance.

Managing post conflict recovery and development

Post-conflict protection for women and girls requires peacekeepers, police and other representatives of the security sector to receive gender and peace training so that they can develop a deeper understanding of the gender dynamics of conflict and the unique challenges faced by different genders.

The framers of the framework therefore need to be cognisant of the fact that some perpetrators are in positions of power in the government, security sector or community and include strategies that bring them to justice.

In addition, investment is needed in organizations that are at the frontlines and providing services to survivors of violence. National authorities need to ally with NGOs to develop clear and realistic response to sexual and gender-based violence and provide survivors with better health and psychosocial services as well as facilitate their access to justice. We must remember that women's security is security for everyone, not just women. When a woman is insecure, the whole family is insecure.

Thirdly, when communities have lived in IDP camps for decades, it is crucial that governments protect their land, because it is the only resource they have once conflict ends. What is happening in Northern Uganda as an example is that when families returned from IDP camps, there was no guarantee that they would be allowed on what was their land. Other individuals and private sector companies had grabbed land and started developing it. Because the land had lain idle for decades and looked attractive, even the government now wants to give away huge chunks of it to foreign investors for commercial farming. So where do women go in such cases. In many other incidences, women who lost their husbands were not allowed back on their land because their right to access to land was only through the husband.

Promoting a Gender Perspective

Gender equality must be seen as a prerequisite for social transformation, because the gender gap is holding Africa back. The new framework must integrate gender mainstreaming, gender responsive budgeting across all sectors, and women's economic empowerment as a measure to increase their peace and security. The post 2015 framework must emphasize gender responsive budgeting. GRB means that resources allocated to agriculture, water and sanitation, education, health, energy, infrastructure, security etc benefit women equally as they benefit men⁴. National budgets must work for women.

⁴ Grown, Karen et al: The Financial Requirements of Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The other area is promoting women's economic empowerment as a stand-alone goal in the new framework. It will need to recognize that women's economic empowerment greatly contributes to the effectiveness of post conflict economic activities and economic growth. It also leads to improving quality and social outcomes of economic recovery measures and policies and to sustainable development. It must acknowledge the need to integrate a gender perspective when undertaking post conflict economic activities.

Women's economic empowerment therefore must be high on the post 2015 agenda. Gender inequality continues to act as a break on economic growth. Countries in the East and Horn of Africa rank poorly when it comes to women's political participation and educational attainment, especially at Tertiary level.⁵ As recently as March 2012, a study found that annually the gender gap in labor participation and education creates losses across the African continent of between US\$159 billion and US\$255 billion⁶. Women are the world's greatest undeveloped source of labor.⁷

Despite huge investment in the agricultural sector in recent decades, production and productivity levels remain low below potential. Women make up 70% of the agricultural workforce in Sub Saharan Africa yet have access to far fewer productive inputs like credit, seeds, fertilizer and technology. In Kenya, while women form 75% of the agricultural workforce, they own only 1% of the agricultural land, and have access to 1% of available credit.⁸ In Uganda alone, equalizing access to inputs in 2006 would have increased output by 22% and doubled Uganda's GDP that year⁹. The UN FAO states that by equalizing access to inputs for women farmers, production would increase by 20-30%, creating gains of at least 2.4-4%. Another study found that since 1995, gender equality in employment created a quarter of European GDP growth, and that "today, women in the developing world are less poised to have a similar impact if they can be properly educated, equipped and empowered."¹⁰ So promoting women's economic empowerment is not simply the right thing but is the smart thing to do.

When women are economically empowered, studies show that their social status and negotiating power in the home increases. This capacity reduces domestic violence, it reduces sexual violence including marital rape and exposing women to HIV and AIDS. It also creates a better environment for them to engage in political leadership and to address issues of violence against women we talked about earlier in the paper.

New governments recovering from conflict are pushing for commercialized agriculture. Men are throwing widows and orphans out on the streets from their land because they want to sell it to the so called investors. The framework must site all resolutions that call for protection of women and girls. Why can't women have property? This issue needs to be addressed as a right in. In conflict settings women must access land to feed their families. Governments must be held to account on this. How does a woman with children without land survive? Property issue must cease to be

⁵ World Economic Forum 2012

⁶ Source: CSAE 2012

⁷ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012.

⁸ UNIFEM 2006

⁹ UNDP: Uganda Development Report 2012

¹⁰ The Economist Intelligence Unit 2011

project based; or where a government will conceptualize a project for one region and not another. Quote issue of a cow in Burundi. But when CARE consulted them they said they wanted a revolving fund. Look at the central role of a woman in the family. Address body, mind and spirit. Help women understand how to use the resources around them. Protect their bodily integrity

We need to remember that economic empowerment can only happen in healthy bodies, strengthened minds, vibrant spirits and effective decision making of individuals. CEWIGO's experience has shown that holistic wellbeing of an individual is the stepping stone to economic empowerment. We have seen women rise up from the ashes of war and IDP camps, wake up their entrepreneurial spirit, engage in petty trading as market women, and be able to provide for their families. If such women had more support they would be fully fledged business women to be reckoned with.

We need governments and organisations to prioritize and fund programmes and projects that foster women's economic empowerment. These include initiatives that equip women with the skills and resources to run businesses and be employed. Interventions should also challenge negative conservative, patriarchal attitudes that prevent women from controlling, owning and access productive resources like land and credit, and facilitate saving on an equal basis with men or from working outside the home by educating traditional, religious and community leaders.

Ladies and gentlemen, in post conflict reconstruction, women have demonstrated that they are good at utilizing available resources to improve livelihoods of their families. Women have proven to be good managers of borrowed funds in post conflict reconstruction. However, in order for women to play this role effectively, their rights to property, especially land, safety from violence must be guaranteed. Lack of development and Poverty breeds conflict. Women are trapped in abusive relationships because they have no-where else to go, they cannot support themselves they cannot support their children if they leave an abusive man. Women need to have the ability to feed their children, to take their daughters to schools.

Access to Information: Another element that would promote women peace and security is **access to information**. Most women in less developed countries continue to miss out of key reproductive health information and access to markets despite the new era of communication technology. If women and girls are to reap from the development process, they should be able to access and use information to enable them make better choices in life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it will be important for the post 2015 framework to integrate all the 4 Ps of the UNSCR 1325- Participation, Protection, Prevention and Post conflict recovery, in addition to women's economic empowerment and women's access to information. The framework must aim, among other things, to position women at the lead in the political and economic transformation of the world, by drawing on new knowledge, best practices and strategic partnerships. But the focus must be on testing and evaluating new business models that effectively respond to women's needs within local contexts.