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**GENDER ARCHITECTURE IN PEACE OPERATIONS AND INTEGRATION WITH THE UN  
COUNTRY TEAM  
UN WOMEN POLICY BRIEF  
APRIL 2015**

This memo is the ninth and final submission by UN Women to the Peace Operations Review Panel.

The role of UN missions – peacekeeping and special political missions – has grown in the past two decades to encompass peacemaking, peacekeeping, as well as contributing to laying the building blocks for transition and sustainable peace. In all of these areas, there is a vital need to ensure women’s participation and gender are integrated across all areas, but equally that relationships are built with local civil society and women’s groups to ensure capacity is strengthened, access to critical information is secured, and that beneficiaries of the UN’s operations are consulted and brought on board as partners for long term sustainability and eventual handover. Continuing to strengthen capacity on critical issues of women, peace and security is therefore essential to deliver on our mandate for sustainable peace. This has been a consistent call of the Security Council’s seven resolutions on women, peace and security, from resolution 1325 in 2000 to resolution 2122 in 2013.

Security Council resolution 2122 (2013) notes that *concerted leadership, consistent information and action and support* to build women’s engagement in all levels of decision-making is needed for the full implementation of women, peace and security commitments. In line with this, the Council requests in this resolution that all reports and briefings by senior officials to the Council include information on women’s participation and protection to allow for better decision-making. Despite efforts to improve in these areas and a marked growth in attention, focus, and activities on women, peace and security by DPKO and DPA-led missions, there is still a distance to go towards meeting these requirements. Periodic reports to the Council from missions still too frequently remain largely gender blind, or report on isolated and discrete activities on capacity-building, rather than an integrated gender analysis and information on efforts to secure women’s participation more broadly.

Without enhanced capacity and better coordination on women, peace and security matters within missions, it is impossible to expect that peace operations will effectively protect women’s rights, advance gender equality, fulfill commitments towards 1325 and related women, peace and security resolutions, or further the UN’s longstanding commitment to gender mainstreaming. Moreover they will be unable to deliver to the Security Council and the Secretariat the intelligence it needs to make informed decisions with regards to the functioning of these missions.<sup>1</sup> **It is therefore essential that the gender capacity within missions and the country teams in mission settings be considerably strengthened to achieve these goals. Moreover, to achieve the full implementation of the increasingly ambitious, multi-dimensional mandates being adopted for missions by the Security Council requires the “political” and “technical” strengths of the full UN system to be brought together under a common strategic vision in country.**

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<sup>1</sup> DPA’s internal assessment “Taking stock, looking forward: Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security in the Conflict Prevention and Resolution work of the UN Department of Political Affairs (2010-2014)” makes this point clearly: “Where missions have gender expertise, the reporting to the Council on women, peace and security is consistently of a higher standard.” However, “the number of reports making recommendations on women, peace and security has increased only slowly” and there remains “a need for more contextualized analysis and information to enable the Security Council to understand progress and barriers to implement the women, peace and security agenda.”

**Nowhere is this truer than in the vital area of ensuring the full and active participation of women in the reconstruction of war-torn societies.**

In the past decade two significant changes have occurred that provide entry points for enhancing the UN's peace and security gender architecture. Gender units or at a minimum a gender adviser are more routinely in place in missions. And, owing to a process of system wide reform, UN Women was created in 2010 to serve as the gender entity for the UN system, providing support to the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment across all areas, including peace and security. Both the gender units/ experts in missions as well as UN Women, which is the system lead on women, peace and security, remain severely under-resourced and, as a result, unable fully to meet the needs for coordination and programmatic support to gender equality initiatives on the ground.

This non-paper explores carrying forward the principle of a coherent and coordinated gender architecture to strengthen the UN's efforts in conflict-affected and fragile settings, and **suggests that DPKO, DPA, and UN Women conduct time-bound strategic conversations about whether the vision spelled out by successive policy directives on mission integration has been achieved with regards to gender equality, and agree on modalities to address shortcomings and challenges.** One option, spelled out in further detail below, could be to better unite the efforts of the mission's gender units and UN Women along the lines of the successful model of integration between missions and OHCHR.

This strategic conversation would aim at maximizing efficacy, productivity, and impact while respecting complementary mandates. Properly designed, piloted and implemented, greater integration could have the potential to:

- Increase the total resources (human and financial) concentrated on implementing women, peace and security dimensions of peace mandates;
- Maximise the synergy between 'political' and 'technical' capacities within the UN family in mission-settings;
- Enhance the political and technical backstopping to gender capacities in missions;
- Further horizontal coordination between the UNCT and missions;
- Ensure a common strategic vision guides mandate implementation in a key and sensitive domain of activity.

### **Summary of the 2012 gender architecture review:**

In the Secretary-General's report on the independent review of UN civilian capacities initiated in 2010, UN Women was called to "undertake by mid-2012 a rapid and cost-effective **review of the way gender expertise is structured and deployed in post-conflict situations**, with recommendations for increasing its effectiveness."<sup>2</sup> The main recommendations of this study<sup>3</sup> with regards to missions are reflected in DPKO's gender strategy (2014-2017).

The study reviewed the gender expertise and capacity of peacekeeping and special political missions, UN Women, other agencies with significant gender expertise (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) and rosters. It laid out **20 recommendations**, including:

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<sup>2</sup> A/67/312-S/2012/645

<sup>3</sup> The study, commissioned with UN Women, was finalized in September 2012 in consultation with an inter-agency task team composed of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, DPKO, DPA, OHCHR and the Civilian Capacity Review. The study findings are based on extensive documentation review, 40 interviews with stakeholders at UN headquarters and in the field, data analysis and case studies that highlight good practice.

- Senior Gender Advisors in missions should report directly to the SRSG.
- Sectoral gender experts should be embedded in all relevant sections or units of the missions, to ensure that gender expertise is mainstreamed throughout the mission.<sup>4</sup>
- The job descriptions and profiles required for Senior Gender Advisers (P5) and Gender Affairs Officers (P3 and P4) need to be updated to reflect the new mandates on women, peace and security and emerging issues in peacekeeping settings.<sup>5</sup>
- The gender capacity in special political missions needs to increase significantly, and be supported by the establishment of a full and strengthened gender unit at headquarters of the Department of Political Affairs.
- When a peacekeeping mission and/or special political mission starts to envisage a drawdown and eventual withdrawal from the country, the gender unit and operational planning unit need to prepare a plan to hand over relevant gender-related work to the UNCT and UN Women while retaining sufficient capacity to mainstream gender within the mission.
- Senior UN leaders and managers need to be held accountable for their results related to gender and women, peace and security, including through the use of the DPKO/DFS Gender Checklist for Senior Managers during performance reviews and appraisals.

Embedding combined sectoral and gender expertise in each of the thematic areas or sectors of the mission was successfully implemented in Timor Leste (UNMIT) in 2006 and has been highlighted as a good practice<sup>6</sup>. Since the 2012 report, some missions (e.g. MINUSTAH, UNOCI) have begun distributing to other units the gender expertise and embedding the senior gender advisors within the office of the SRSG, and sector-specific gender affairs officers within each of the substantive sections of the mission.

### Remaining challenges:

However, the key challenge of our gender architecture in field missions remains: **small teams (sometimes just one adviser/ focal point) to implement complex, multidimensional mandates, and without the programmatic resources to do so**. The problems of lack of capacity, lack of resources, limited impact, and weak coordination have continued, as has the challenge of isolation and limited technical backstopping for these experts.

For example, the Department of Political Affairs manages 35 field missions, encompassing the monitoring bodies or panels of experts of sanctions committees, special envoys, and special political missions and peacebuilding support officers. There are now 11 such missions deployed around the world, including some

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<sup>4</sup> Nina Lahoud has recently conducted a thorough review of budgeted gender posts in nine DPKO-led multidimensional peacekeeping operations for the DPKO's Office of Operations and recommends the inclusion of qualified "hybrid sectoral/gender" officers in particular sectoral thematic areas of the mission which require technical gender knowledge and expertise in those areas, as well as in strategic assessment teams and technical assessment teams for both prospective and existing missions. "For example, a Political Affairs Officer with expertise in women's engagement in mediation, negotiation, and other political processes; a Gender Justice Officer in a mission's Judicial Support Section; a DDR Officer with expertise on issues relating to the special needs of women who formerly served as combatants or support staff for male combatants; an Electoral Officer with expertise on preferential statutory and other measures to involve more women in electoral processes" and so on. This is detailed extensively in her note to ASG Mulet on April 10<sup>th</sup> on "Possible Model for Increased Integration of Gender Dimensions in DPKO-led Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations".

<sup>5</sup> This would include expertise on gender and additional expertise on ceasefire agreements and mediation processes, needs assessments (including technical assessment missions, post-conflict needs assessments, and humanitarian rapid needs assessments), peacekeeping operations, rule of law, sexual and gender-based violence, statebuilding, peacebuilding, elections, economic recovery, security sector reform, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

<sup>6</sup> There is an important difference between the UNMIT model and the proposals in the 2012 report on gender architecture: both in UNMIT's model and the proposal recently formulated for DPKO's Office of Operations, the hybrid gender/sectoral officers "would report directly to the Chief/Head of the respective office/division/section/unit in the sectoral/thematic area concerned" and would be recruited with both gender expertise and the respective sectoral expertise in mind. The 2012 proposal focuses on distributing or embedding existing gender affairs officers (from the Gender Unit) onto the different units or sections.

of significant size, such as UNAMI in Iraq, UNAMA in Afghanistan, UNSOM in Somalia, and UNSMIL in Libya. The total estimated cost for these missions is over 600 million dollars. Civilian staff takes the largest share of the budget; which goes to cover **approximately 3,600 civilian staff** as well as guard units, civilian police, consultants for specific duties, private security contractors, official travel, transportation, communications, medical assistance, facilities, and infrastructure. The largest shares of civilian staff are in UNAMI (900), and UNAMA (1690), followed by UNSMIL (384) and UNSOM (238). However, according to DPA's internal assessment, and even though DPA has increased the number and seniority of staff positions to address its mandate on women, peace and security over the last five years, only 6 out of 12 missions in 2014 had a dedicated gender adviser at P5 level. At headquarters, the DPA Gender Team has just one gender adviser at P4 level from the regular budget, in addition to one part-time gender adviser at P3 level and one part-time consultant on gender and peacebuilding, both from extra-budgetary resources. DPA's assessment notes that "the prevalent complaint among DPA staff is that gender responsibilities are under-ranked, under-staffed, and under-resourced, and often relegated to the most junior staff."<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, in DPKO-managed missions, there are a number of staff in gender advisory units deployed in peacekeeping missions all over the world, including senior gender advisers in all nine multi-dimensional missions and lower level staff, such as national officers and UNVs.<sup>8</sup> Further details of these positions are compiled in DPKO's recent review of gender expertise in its missions and possible models for increased integration of gender dimensions in DPKO-led multidimensional peacekeeping operations. In the 2014-2015 budgets for these nine missions, there are, among the approved posts for gender units/officers, the following, there are 8 P5s, 4 P4s, 10 P3s, and two P2s, alongside UNVs and national posts. The overall peacekeeping budget is in excess of \$8b, of which approximately \$2b is spent on civilian staffing which totals approximately 19 thousand individuals (international staff, national staff, and UN volunteers). **The gender affairs unit is typically the smallest or one of the smallest of all substantive units in each mission**, perhaps with the exception of the HIV/AIDS section. Other thematic areas of the mission mandate, from human rights to protection of civilians, rule of law, security sector reform, disarmament, electoral support, and child protection have bigger units or sections. For example, if we compare the gender affairs units in the last organization chart of some of the largest missions with the human rights units of those missions, we find that human rights units are, on average, four to eight times larger, and the discrepancy is sometimes wider.

**More resources need to be directed towards gender staffing needs in missions and country teams if we are to ensure women's participation and long-term equality and stability in conflict-affected contexts. But innovative solutions also need to be offered to allow us to make the best use of limited resources given expanding numbers of missions globally, new threats and challenges and shrinking budgets. Bringing peace operations and UN Women closer together through integration would allow for effective technical backstopping of gender units, horizontal integration between UNCT (where UN Women sits and will continue to sit to address long term development issues) and missions, as well as rationalize the effective use of assessed contributions to maximize resources for most impact. Conversely, the results of stronger integration, as evidenced in better coordination, more joint planning and programming, and higher impact, can be expected to drive up donor support for gender**

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<sup>7</sup> According to the SG's report on women, peace and security in 2014, out of the 12 special political missions (including regional offices), managed by DPA, 7 had gender advisors at P5 level, and 4 had gender advisors at either P3 or P2 level. Furthermore, DPA's internal assessment recommends, and UN Women agrees, that the gender advisor at HQ should be placed in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General. While the DPA assessment suggests a minimum P5 level, UN Women would recommend that the position be D1 in order to have the access and influence necessary.

<sup>8</sup> There are a further 32 approved posts for women protection advisers in these missions (20 of them currently recruited and deployed). However these posts serve very different functions from gender staffing as they are responsible exclusively for documentation and reporting on sexual violence by armed actors, in line with the Monitoring and Reporting Arrangement (MARA) overseen by the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict. They are not responsible for gender analysis, women's participation, or the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the work of the missions.

**equality, and help justify devoting a greater share of assessed budgets, whether for missions, the country team, or both, to gender equality and women’s empowerment.**

**UN Women** has an office in a majority of the countries with peacekeeping or special political missions, but these offices are often small, typically with ten people or less. When missions draw down or withdraw, the gender-related activities or outputs of the mission –including the ones being implemented by units other than the gender affairs unit- are either discontinued or handed over to the government or the UN country team, but typically without a corresponding increase in their size or capacity to absorb it.

Meanwhile, insufficient integration between UN Women and the gender units in these missions typically results in fragmentation of the UN’s work on gender equality in peacekeeping settings, institutional tension, confusion and disputes about roles and overlapping mandates, missed opportunities for coordinated, impactful action on gender equality, and continued low prioritization of gender equality within missions. The existing capacity and human resources devoted to gender equality in these missions continues to be far smaller than what would be required to be able to implement the mandates that they are given, and UN Women struggles to adequately support these missions in an integrated manner while they are there, and inherits an impossible task when they leave.

Missions have the force of a Security Council mandate, high-level leadership, strategic vision, political expertise, logistical heft and predictable resources that bring about country-wide reach and influence, and valuable technical expertise on inclusive governance and electoral participation, inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding, protection of civilians, human rights, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, and many of the areas that provide entry points to advance our mandate on gender equality and the empowerment and protection of women. However, and in spite of their low number, gender focal points are often given no extra resources to implement their added obligations, and gender advisers are increasingly called upon to build the capacity of government actors or women’s organizations, an area where UN Women’s support could make an important difference if adequately resourced. As noted in DPA’s internal assessment, many of their interlocutors noted the need for UN Women to be “strengthened with additional field presence.”

Before UN Women was created, there were calls for better integration between UNIFEM’s field offices and the gender units of peacekeeping missions that were beginning to be established, and these included suggestions of a memorandum of understanding with DPKO, or the formulation of joint strategies between the two entities. These however were never agreed on or implemented. The establishment of UN Women as one of the most important achievement of years of negotiations on system-wide coherence has revived the need and urgency to consider other options for better integration between mission’s gender units and UN Women. UN Women, with its mandate on system-wide coordination on women, peace and security, its voice, and its programmatic expertise, can support and empower gender advocates within missions that have many competing obligations. UN Women’s programmatic resources can help support mandate implementation. Its continuous interaction with women’s civil society organizations can bring a vital constituent closer to mission actors and help with outreach. Its unique role as a hybrid entity –both part of the UN Secretariat and part of agencies, funds, and programmes- with a mandate that encompasses both a normative and coordination function, as well as policy and programming function, bring with it the possibility of better linking the peace and security agenda with other areas of the UN’s work. And its technical expertise on women, peace and security and position as a global advocate should be seen as an asset for supporting mission actors.

#### **The human rights integration model:**

The area of **human rights** offers a compelling and proven **model of integration within missions**. In the last decade, the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** and peace operations began

experimenting operationally with integrated divisions, beginning in Burundi, and following with DRC. Building on the operational success evinced in both of those, these pilot collaborations grew to become, by today, the standard operating procedure, enshrined in a series of policy agreements and memorandums of understanding with DPKO/DPA/DFS to outline its relationship with these entities and the integration of human rights components within these missions. The human rights components, fully integrated into the missions, have access to the assessed budget for peacekeeping operations and has enabled human rights (and OHCHR) to have a strong presence in peace operations and maximize the impact of the human rights mandate. Although the human rights components are part of the mission budget, OHCHR is involved in the strategic assessment, planning, design, benchmark creation, deployment, implementation and evaluation of peace operations and political missions, and makes it much easier for the sustainability of human rights programmes after their departure. For example, during the liquidation phased of field missions and operations, in those instances where OHCHR remains in the country after the mission has left, DPKO, DPA and DFS give OHCHR preferential treatment for the hand-over or transfer of assets and logistical facilities. Furthermore, the head of the human rights component, whose recruitment is supported by OHCHR, acts both as the human rights adviser to the head of the mission and is the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the peace operation or political mission area, and OHCHR collaborates with DPKO/DPA/DFS in the recruitment and staffing of these units. OHCHR supports the human rights components with technical advice, training, documentation, guidance, and methodological tools, as well as funding for specific projects.

The mission/HCHR model should be studied closely to benefit from the current evaluation and compilation of lessons learned by this model of integration, whose findings will be available in the next weeks. This would include giving full consideration to potential downsides. For example, without an appropriate firewall between UN Women's role as a member of the country team, on one hand, and backstopping the mission, on the other hand, there could be tension between the political decisions made at the mission level that affect the work on gender equality, and UN Women programming, which has obligations to the donors that fund it. Some member states are very wary of greater overlap between mission functions and the country team's functions.

### **Suggested Recommendation:**

The peace operations panel should recommend UN Women and DPKO and DPA to enter into discussions about integration, which could lead to piloting this model in a number of selected mission environments (for example, two special political missions and two peacekeeping missions over the next two years) and carefully monitoring the successes and challenges that result. Based on that there could then be a process similar to that which culminated in the SG's Policy Committee decisions and memorandums of understanding that defined the relationship between OHCHR and the human rights components of missions.

Some of the elements of stronger integration could include:

- UN Women's hybrid status as both a Secretariat entity as well as part of the UN's Agencies, Funds, and Programmes will be leveraged to ensure greater coordination in country. In countries with peace operations, UN Women would continue to sit in the UN Country Team to ensure stronger horizontal linkages across mission and country team on gender equality, and prepare the foundation for eventual drawdown and handover to the country team and, more importantly, local actors.
- UN Women could backstop mission's gender units in a similar model as the integration of OHCHR. This would include: support to identification and selection of staff to fill vacancies, provision of training, technical expertise (programming best practice, technical knowledge), surge capacity and rapid deployments. Recruitment would continue to be undertaken by the mission itself however and staff would be on the same contracts as the rest of the mission, with final selection, recruitment and accountability resting ultimately with the SRSB.

- The establishment of joint rosters for both political and peacekeeping missions could be co-managed by UN Women and the gender teams of DPKO and DPA.
- Improved coordination between the gender expertise available in country teams (UN Women and other entities) and the mission could be helped by elevating the profile and effectiveness of gender theme groups (e.g. regularity of meetings, increased level of participation and visibility, presence of the SRSG or DSRG).
- Currently, UN Women receives only 0.2 percent of assessed contributions. Increased access to the assessed budget could help UN Women provide more regular technical backstopping to gender units in missions, for example by supporting P5 regional advisors on peace and security in 4 of UN Women's regional offices, and peace and security specialists in 4 of the countries with the largest missions. This capacity would be complemented by UN Women's existing capacity. In headquarters, UN Women's Peace and Security team has 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 4 P4s, 4 P3s, and P2 apart from full-time consultants and support staff. The team has expertise on gender and security sector reform, elections, transitional justice, sexual and gender-based violence, mediation, peacebuilding, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, training, statistics and monitoring, and national implementation on women, peace and security. UN Women also has specialists in several of our country offices, as well as the capacity of our overall field presence, which includes an office headed by a P5 or D1 country director in a majority of the countries with a peace operation.
- The basic gender architecture in missions should include a senior staff in SRSG or DSRSG office and technical gender/sectoral experts in all substantive units, and the senior gender advisor could have a primary reporting line to the SRSG in mission and only a secondary (dotted line) reporting line to UN Women's Executive Director.
- This integration model could be applied to all future missions and be incorporated into current missions on a case-by-case basis to be decided between UN Women and DPKO/DPA/DFS.

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