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EDITOR'S NOTE

In the disarmament and security policy community, the word 'gender' and its various modifiers—'mainstreaming', 'perspectives', 'awareness'—frequently elicit reactions ranging from distrust to derision. Some consider that gender concerns are best left to specialized bodies dealing with women (despite that gender relates to both women *and* men), and others claim that the off-putting jargon of the gender debate demonstrates acquiescence to the pressures of political correctness. Those who see gender perspectives as an opportunity to deepen and strengthen peace and security objectives are, unfortunately, in the minority.

A gender perspective in disarmament and security affairs entails a conscious and open process of examining how women and men participate in and are affected by conflict differently. It requires ensuring that the perspectives, experiences and needs of both women and men are addressed and met through disarmament and peace-building activities and objectives. These are not abstract intellectual musings—they have real implications for the success and sustainability of peace and security.

To illustrate, consider the following two examples. In many conflicts, both men and women participate in combat. Men are most likely to be engaged in combat roles, while women are often engaged (willingly or forced) in non-combat roles and services (cooking, laundry, nursing, sex work, etc.). In these circumstances, women are unlikely to be armed and are therefore excluded from the benefits offered by a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme that determines eligibility on relinquishing a weapon. A second example is that women and men often have different knowledge about impending conflict and movement of arms. Gender-based early warning indicators (such as sex-specific refugee migrations) can offer essential information that is currently—for the most part—overlooked.

If the international community does not adopt a gender perspective as it designs and implements its activities, it is choosing to limit the effectiveness and success of its peace and security work. Security Council resolution 1325 of October 2000 has helped to focus attention on the often ignored or marginalized role of women in peace-building and security—yet there is a wide gap between diplomatic statements on the importance of gender perspectives and what happens on the ground.

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* examines how gender relates to disarmament and security issues. Contributing authors explore gender aspects of early warning, the role of gender in DDR programmes, masculine behaviour and violence, and consider specific UN efforts concerning gender mainstreaming—including the Gender Action Plan of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

With the first issue of 2004 *Disarmament Forum* will celebrate its fifth anniversary. This issue will consider some of the larger questions facing arms control and disarmament today—the crisis in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, questions over the role of the United Nations in compliance concerns, confronting terrorism in a unipolar world, the interplay between human rights and human security, and how to improve disarmament and security literacy through education.

Produced jointly by the Small Arms Survey and UNIDIR, *Destroying Surplus Weapons: An Assessment of Experiences in South Africa and Lesotho* reviews and evaluates the experiences of these two countries with the disposal of surplus weapons and the management of small arms stocks. The aim of the book is to highlight the lessons learned, and to encourage other governments to carry out similar programmes. See UNIDIR Focus on page 57 for more information about this new publication.

The Geneva Forum, a joint initiative of UNIDIR, the Quaker United Nations Office and the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies is now entering its ninth year of providing expert support to the Geneva disarmament community and is more active than ever in its three key areas of activity: raising awareness of emerging issues in arms control and disarmament, supporting ongoing negotiations, and promoting and facilitating the implementation of agreements. In addition to its seminars, the Geneva Forum has numerous other ongoing activities. For example, an updated and expanded version of the Geneva Forum's *Media Guide to Disarmament* is available on the Geneva Forum's new website <<http://www.geneva-forum.org>> , providing a detailed disarmament calendar, the names and contact details of over 200 disarmament and arms control experts worldwide, and links to further useful information. Also, the 'Geneva Process' on small arms continues to engage governments in the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms, and has been extended through the second UN biennial meeting in 2005.

Our colleague Anatole Ayissi, who has managed the project 'Confidence-Building Measures and Sustainable Peace in West Africa' since 1999, has been appointed as Political Officer of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. During his time at UNIDIR, Anatole's work has fostered the development of research and peace-building networks throughout West Africa. We look forward to continued collaboration with Anatole in his new capacity and wish him the very best.

Kerstin Vignard

SPECIAL COMMENT

In today's world, conflicts reach every corner of the globe. How do these wars affect people in the society—women and men, girls and boys, the elderly, the rich and poor, the urban and rural populations, the educated and the illiterate? Too often the international response lumps all those affected by wars into one tidy package called 'the population' and seeks to provide them with a set package of assistance—food, shelter, protection—without truly recognizing the differences among them—not only the varying needs of groups of people but also the strengths and capacities they bring to the table and can contribute to conflict resolution, peace-building and reconstruction. Gender perspectives on disarmament issues will benefit women and men, as well as help local communities, governments and the international system to promote lasting peace and security.

Gender mainstreaming provides us with one tool to ensure that the needs and experiences of women and men, girls and boys are taken into account in all activities of the Organization—including early warning, peacekeeping and building, and disarmament. ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 gives us a framework upon which to act. It states that gender mainstreaming is:

the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

If actors undertook a gender mainstreaming approach, the outcomes of the work to protect and assist 'people' would be efficient, timely and do the most good.

Historic Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted on 31 October 2000, also provides us with a mandate to incorporate gender perspectives in all areas of peace support operations, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). Its adoption marked a culmination of efforts by the United Nations through its World Conferences on Women in Mexico City (1975), in Copenhagen (1980), in Nairobi (1985), in Beijing (1995) and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing + 5, 2000) to reaffirm the linkages between peace, development and gender equality. With all of these important milestones, we have a clear call for incorporation of gender perspectives in disarmament and security—the question is what has been achieved so far?

While gender perspectives might not seem immediately obvious in disarmament issues, they exist and have significant consequences for the activities of the United Nations. For example, the language and focus of work to disarm combatants has for decades centred on taking guns away from men and helping them reintegrate into society. In recent years, with varying degrees of success, practitioners

have broadened their scope to include not only men but also women as fighters, and to a lesser degree the groups that support combatants. Women and girls who support the armed groups may not be directly engaged in combat, but rather they carry supplies, cook and wash, and provide sexual services—voluntarily or forced. DDR programmes must take these groups into consideration as well the children and families created during the conflict. Mainstreaming gender perspectives in the planning and implementation of DDR programmes will ensure that both women and men can be successfully reintegrated into their communities.

The United Nations has worked to mainstream gender throughout its disarmament, humanitarian and development programmes. One vehicle to capture the successes to date in gender mainstreaming is the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. This network provides a forum for all United Nations entities to share lessons learned as well as identify areas where more work is needed.

Therefore I am pleased to introduce this issue of *Disarmament Forum* that explores the topic of gender perspectives in disarmament—a body of work that will assist practitioners and policy-makers to better understand the gender dimensions of DDR and early warning, the relationship between masculinity and weapons, what is currently being done by a variety of actors—and, more importantly, recommendations for concrete actions in the future.

Angela E.V. King

Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
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Gender, peace and disarmament

Noeleen HEYZER

Disarmament and gender equality are global public goods whose benefits are shared by all and monopolized by no one. In the UN system, both are cross-cutting issues, for what office or department of the United Nations does not stand to gain by progress in gender equality or disarmament? When women move forward, and when disarmament moves forward, the world moves forward. Unfortunately, the same applies in reverse: setbacks in these areas impose costs for all.

Jayantha Dhanapala, former Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs
8 November 2002

Today's wars are no longer fought on the discrete battle zones of the First World War. The new battlefronts include homes and communities, in wars waged over resources, political power and in the name of religion and ethnicity.¹ And violence against women, once an unfortunate side-effect, is now a deliberate part of many of these armed conflicts. The United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in October 2000, has called attention to the fact that women and men are affected by war and armed conflict in different ways.² The debate on that resolution and its follow up have also brought into sharper focus the enormous potential contribution of women as stakeholders of peace, disarmament and conflict prevention. The result has been a greater awareness of the gender dimensions of conflict and post-conflict situations throughout the international community.

But why focus on gender at all in this context? Gender refers to the differential social roles that define women and men in a specific cultural context—and to the power relationships that perpetuate these roles. A focus on gender not only reveals information about women's experience, which otherwise can be hidden, it also sheds light on ingrained assumptions and stereotypes about men and women, the values and qualities associated with each and the ways power relationships can change. In this article I will look at women's experience of armed conflict, focusing particularly on their roles in conflict prevention and disarmament and the ways in which the United Nations is working to integrate a gender perspective into all of its conflict prevention and disarmament activities.

As Executive Director of UNIFEM I have witnessed the impact of conflict on women in many countries. I have been to Bosnia where women described abduction, rape camps and forced impregnation, and to Rwanda where women had been gang raped and purposely infected with HIV/AIDS. In the 'Valley of Widows' in Colombia, I met women who had lost their husbands and their

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land; everyone and everything important to them had been destroyed by the violence of civil war and drug lords. Stories like these have been repeated again and again, in different languages, in different surroundings: East Timor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala. Only the horror and the pain were the same.

In his recent book, *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, British journalist Chris Hedges observes, 'The violence of war is random. It does not make sense. And many of those who struggle with loss also struggle with the knowledge that the loss was futile and unnecessary.'³ The experience of violence and loss he describes is further compounded for women as they are rarely the primary architects or decision-makers in war making. To be sure, women have often embraced war as necessary for national or communal security, and some have been willing participants. But while women are sometimes

complicit in war, they are almost completely absent in the decisions to go to war—or in the appropriation of funds that make weapons and war possible. And what I have seen over and over is that women overwhelmingly regard the conflicts they have lived through as futile, unnecessary and preventable.

The women's movement has consistently criticized the equation between national security and military security, noting the failure of military violence to achieve its stated aims, and arguing that the full complexity of its costs are often overlooked.⁴ Moreover, in addition to the enormous economic implications, there are also powerful cultural and ideological processes that perpetuate militarism. The cultural and social status that accrues to male warriors, martyrs and protectors has no similar parallel for women, at least not until recently.⁵ The back-breaking work that women take on to keep societies going when men go to war is typically trivialized as 'keeping the home fires burning'. Even women combatants are rarely accorded the same treatment as their male counterparts. In post-conflict training packages and reintegration services, for example, it is generally the mothers of martyrs and the wives of fallen warriors that, through their relationship to a male hero, are given social sympathy and occasionally some economic support.

Despite the leadership they exercise at the community level, women are not prominent in the political parties that emerge when armed groups lay down their weapons, just as they are rarely represented in the leadership of existing parties, or in the security apparatus of states throughout the world.⁶ If women are not participating at the national level, there are fewer possibilities at the international level because international representatives are chosen from the national pool. Only two women have served on the Security Council since 1992, out of a total of eighty-eight ambassadors serving in that capacity. And only 5.4% of ambassadors sent to represent countries at United Nations Headquarters since 1992 have been women.⁷ From 1945, when the United Nations was established, to 2000, when Security Council resolution 1325 was passed, only four women served as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG)—in-theatre heads of mission—in peacekeeping operations. At the time of this watershed resolution, affirming the essential role that women have in peace and security matters, there were no women holding the position. Almost three years later, only one woman serves as a SRSG, and four women serve as Deputy SRSGs.⁸

Despite the lack of women represented in the global peace and security apparatuses, the United Nations has recognized the importance of addressing the gender dimension of conflict and peace-building and the need to involve women fully in this process. The theme for each of the four United Nations World Conferences on Women has been 'equality, development and peace', providing an opportunity for women activists to organize and advocate around the issues of disarmament, peace and security. The final document of the Third World Conference on Women, held in 1985 at the height of the Cold War, is particularly rich on these subjects. The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, contains a whole chapter on women and armed conflict, including the issues of landmines, military spending and the urgency of halting all nuclear test

explosions. The Beijing Declaration recognized ‘the leading role that women have played in the peace movement, work[ing] actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, and support[ing] negotiations on the conclusion, without delay, of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which contributes to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects’⁹—a role reaffirmed in 1998 by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

The method by which Member States have chosen to implement gender considerations in peace and development activities is known as ‘gender mainstreaming’, which is defined as ‘... the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.’¹⁰

The goal of gender mainstreaming is to avoid making gender an ‘add-on’ by insisting that every aspect of a given activity, such as peace or disarmament negotiations or post-conflict operations, be assessed for its gender implications. The process requires persistent effort, including regular monitoring, reporting, follow-up training, and evaluation of progress made and obstacles encountered, as well as systems for holding the operation/organization accountable for achieving its goals. All of this requires resources and, above all, political will at all levels. Despite occasional success stories, too often gender equality is considered a ‘soft issue’, with the result that attention and resources are inadequate.

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The gender and disarmament nexus

In 2001 the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) and the Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women produced a particularly useful set of six short yet comprehensive briefing notes on how gender perspectives are relevant to disarmament issues.¹¹ These illustrate the links between gender and landmines, small arms and light weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and the post-conflict process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating former combatants. The following discussion will look more closely at each of these issues, highlighting examples of the gender and disarmament nexus.

LANDMINES

People in some eighty countries live daily with the threat of landmines. Because women comprise the majority of the world’s farmers and gatherers of food, water and firewood, they are frequently exposed to these dangers. Thus a gender-inclusive approach to mine action would include ensuring that those conducting demining operations consult with women, who often identify areas, such as transportation routes to fields or markets, that may be ignored by military or political authorities. Similarly, because women share vital information with their families and communities, particularly about signs of danger and preventing injury, landmine awareness training may be made more effective by including women and disseminating information where women work or gather. However, in some

countries, women landmine victims are receiving less assistance than men, possibly due to the assumption that men are the primary supporters of a family and therefore require prostheses and rehabilitation before women—this despite the fact that in most post-conflict situations women have become the primary providers in the family.

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Today small arms and light weapons are the main instruments of violence in conflict. While far more men than women die at the point of a gun,¹² women have intimate knowledge of how power is mediated through the possession, threat or use of weapons, in the hands of individuals as well as states. When weapons remain in circulation, they combine with trauma, poverty and lawlessness to turn neighbourhoods and homes into war zones, heightening the lethality of crime and of domestic and political violence, both of which often escalate in the post-conflict era.

Almost every form of violence perpetrated against women in conflict zones is facilitated by the widespread presence of firearms, both legal and illicit.¹³ In most countries, it is women who bear the major burden of caring for those injured or disabled by small arms. Because they are relatively cheap, highly lethal, easy to transport and hide, and ready to use without much training, these weapons also play a role in the use of women and children in combat.

The social and cultural ways in which guns have become a marker of masculinity can be clearly identified in the advertising and entertainment industries, and in the reluctance of men to relinquish weapons as it may be symbolic of surrendering power and male identity.¹⁴ This markedly different experience of small arms could help explain the current surge of interest in research and analysis of the gender aspects of small arms and light weapons. Preliminary research results highlight the need to collect gender disaggregated data concerning the victims of small arms violence and the importance of women as strategic partners in weapons collection projects, as women have essential information about the presence of guns in their homes and communities.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The very nature of weapons of mass destruction connotes an indiscriminate impact on both men and women. Yet the reality is otherwise. In the case of nuclear weapons, for example, there are important gender differences in the health consequences of radiation, including foetal abnormalities and potential sterility.

Women have spearheaded efforts to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, and particularly nuclear weapons. Women's organizations have campaigned for cessation of nuclear testing by collecting baby teeth and testing them for levels of Strontium 90, which is dispersed and ingested through milk. They have successfully closed nuclear bases, such as Greenham Common in the United Kingdom, and engaged in similar efforts that forced governments to change policies or create nuclear-weapon-free zones at the municipal level throughout the world. However, women are almost completely marginalized in the political, scientific and military decision-making of governments that have invented or inherited these weapons. For example, only thirty-three women have headed delegations to the six review conferences of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, compared to 660 men in that role.¹⁵

DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR)

Paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security ‘encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependents.’ Each of the DDR processes involves and has implications for women, whether they participated in combat, have family members who did, or are members of a community trying to integrate former combatants. Yet women are typically overlooked in all three processes.

Three trends can be seen regarding gender in DDR processes. First, most DDR programmes are designed for male soldiers; female combatants are not recognized and therefore do not benefit from the resettlement allowances and other forms of support such as training programmes. Second, DDR programmes often do not recognize women who have performed non-combat roles and services (such as cooking or nursing) for combatants. While some women freely join armed groups, large numbers are abducted into combat and/or forced to become sexual and domestic slaves. Third, the special needs of the dependents of armed groups are not understood or adequately resourced.¹⁶

While child soldiers have received a great deal of attention in the last five years, girls who are abducted, trafficked, forced into marriage or made victims of gender-based violence receive far less assistance. Both boys and girls may be sent to the front lines of combat. While boys serve in rebel forces as soldiers and porters, girls serve as sexual slaves, cooks and servants. Nevertheless, when peace is negotiated and reconstruction assistance monies are allocated, most DDR programmes target only boys.¹⁷

An example of the lack of a gender perspective in DDR is that demobilization camps are not currently designed to meet the specific needs of female ex-combatants and women accompanying male ex-fighters, such as providing for security against sexual violence, sanitary supplies, bathing facilities, health care (including reproductive health care), childcare and psycho-social support with special attention to post-traumatic stress disorder. Awareness of the different needs of women and men at the planning stage would contribute to more effective DDR programmes. Simple tools, such as checklists, are available to help with gender-aware planning.

DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Disarmament and development are linked in obvious and not so obvious ways, from the level of resource allocation in national budgets, to community-level projects in post-conflict situations. Meeting people’s needs reduces the risk of conflict and the feelings of insecurity that foster demand for weapons of all kinds.

The United Nations and all its agencies and funds spend about US\$ 10 billion each year, around US\$ 1.70 for each of the world’s inhabitants.¹⁸ This is a very small sum compared to most government budgets and it is just a tiny fraction of the world’s military spending, which was estimated at US\$ 840 billion in 2001 and will soon reach one trillion dollars according to United Nations estimates.¹⁹ Compare this to the 1998 United Nations Development Programme estimate that US\$ 9 billion would provide water and sanitation for all, US\$ 12 billion would cover reproductive health for all women, US\$ 13 billion would offer every person on Earth basic health and nutrition, and US\$ 6 billion

Each of the DDR processes involves and has implications for women, whether they participated in combat, have family members who did, or are members of a community trying to integrate former combatants. Yet women are typically overlooked in all three processes.

would provide basic education for all. As the World Bank has pointed out, excessive levels of military spending divert scarce resources and impede good governance. The World Bank cites the potential benefits of reducing global military spending for balancing economic disparities, which are the root of many conflicts, and for improving environmental conditions. The founders of the United Nations sought to prevent this drain on the world's human and economic resources that are so desperately needed for development when it tasked the Security Council with generating a plan 'for the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources' in Article 26 of the UN Charter.

Since 2000, women's organizations have been calling on the Security Council to fulfil its Article 26 obligations. In 1997, the Women's Peace Petition, signed by 99,000 women was presented to the General Assembly.²⁰ This called for at least 5% of national military expenditures to be redirected to health, education and employment programmes over the next five years, which signatories claimed would free half a billion dollars a day to improve living standards.

Gender perspectives are essential as disarmament/development projects are designed and implemented at the community level. 'Weapons for development' programmes, in which communities turn in weapons in exchange for a development project, offer a clear illustration. An understanding of gender roles within a specific community will help to ensure that the project meets the needs of both women and men. If, for example, the community identifies that its priority is to construct a school, will both girls and boys be enrolled? A gender perspective would prompt the same sort of reflection concerning a new road, a health clinic or a well.

Disarmament and gender efforts in United Nations

Within the United Nations, a number of departments, funds and programmes are responsible for different aspects of disarmament and weapons collection, including gender issues.

UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS (DDA)

At the 2001 launch of *Gender Perspectives on Disarmament—Briefing Notes*, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, emphasized the logic of including women and a gender perspective in the UN's mission to prevent conflict and promote disarmament. His remarks reflect the need to link struggles for peace with those for gender equality:

Amid all the troubles we face today both with respect to disarmament and the advancement of gender equality, it is easy to yield to cynicism and despair. Our effort today, however, takes a completely different approach, one that looks upon hard times as a call to action—a reminder of our solemn responsibility to keep tilling the rough terrain that others have worked so hard before us, a job that can only be made easier by widening the community of tillers. This is an occasion for hope, for re-commitment to the ideals of the Charter, and for warm anticipation of the cooperation and success that lies ahead.

To create a context for such cooperation within the department, Mr. Dhanapala led his staff through a process of self-examination that identified entry points for gender issues in each branch of

DDA, leading to the articulation of a departmental Gender Action Plan.²¹ The DDA model is now being replicated in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. DDA's example has generated a process and results that demonstrate the utility of taking time and funds to gender mainstream, to reflect and create appropriate programmatic frameworks and standards of practice that relate to women and men.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

According to the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, 'Where guns, and gunmen—or women, or children—dominate, development suffers. Schools and shops close, commerce stops, and the local economy grinds to a halt. Buildings are destroyed, bridges are blown up, fields are abandoned. Private investment dries up and development organizations can't operate. Even after the shooting stops, there is no security. People cannot return to their homes or a normal life.' To address this issue UNDP has set up numerous programmes on disarmament and weapons collection, and has included gender perspectives in its reports and evaluation.

Working with UNIFEM, UNDP undertook a successful 'weapons for development' programme in Albania. Through a series of workshops and gatherings to discuss strategies to reduce the number of weapons in communities, a campaign was launched calling on women to support the idea of handing over weapons in exchange for communally shared benefits such as reliable water supply, road repairs and telecommunications improvements. While women's involvement was observed to have increased the number of weapons collected, the benefits of their involvement were even more far-reaching. Of crucial importance is the personal empowerment reported by Albanian women who attended the workshops. The following changes were remarked:

1. Increased participation in family decision-making processes because their training gave them an authoritative opinion on family and community security decisions.
2. A growth in women's awareness and knowledge of security issues, which helped them deal more effectively with local authorities, including the police. This in turn led to greater community cooperation in other areas.
3. Their training assisted some of the women in finding paid employment.
4. The beginnings of a new culture of resistance to arms proliferation were reported, with women providing a previously unappreciated capacity to support a comprehensive disarmament and peace-building process.

The durability of these changes in the volatile post-conflict era needs to be evaluated, so that lessons learned from Albania can be incorporated into future disarmament work, and ongoing initiatives can be observed and further supported.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)

In addition to the 'weapons for development' programme described above, UNIFEM has undertaken a range of activities around gender, peace and security. An independent expert assessment

of the impact of war and armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building was launched in October 2002. Entitled *Women, War and Peace*, the assessment contains a detailed chapter on prevention, including recommendations on DDR and security sector reform as well women's role in early warning activities. As a follow-up to these recommendations, the Fund has developed a programme on early warning indicators, described elsewhere in this issue.²²

UNIFEM is currently surveying the DDR activities of United Nations departments and missions to map DDR processes of the past, those currently underway and those planned for the near future. This will be followed by in-depth analysis of three case studies to determine the extent to which gender is mainstreamed throughout planning and execution of United Nations-led or supported DDR programmes in Albania, the Solomon Islands and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The outcome of this exercise will include a comprehensive account of lessons learned as well as a range of tools, including checklists, for aid agencies and practitioners to better identify and address the gender dimensions of the DDR process. Following my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May 2003, UNIFEM helped UNDP to organize and conduct a training course on the gender aspects of DDR in that country, designed as part of a regional strategy to ensure that the needs of female ex-combatants and dependents are addressed through women's participation in all stages of the DDR process.

DEPARTMENT OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (DPKO)

In 2000 DPKO stated: 'Women's presence [in peacekeeping missions] improves access and support for local women; it makes male peacekeepers more reflective and responsible; and it broadens the repertoire of skills and styles available within the mission, often with the effect of reducing conflict and confrontation. Gender mainstreaming is not just fair, it is beneficial.'²³ Two years later, speaking to the Security Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno, commented that while initially sceptical about gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping, he now recognized that he had misunderstood what the notion was about:

Gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping is about recognizing that all segments of society are affected by conflict, sometimes in different ways, and that all segments of society also have a role to play in helping to end the violence and lay the foundation for sustainable peace. Traditionally we have underestimated this point, because we wrongly assumed that conflict and peace are gender-blind. They are not. Certain crimes, whose incidents can increase in a conflict setting, are specifically targeted at women and girls. Certain efforts at reconciliation have a totally different dynamic when women are included in the peace process.

As a result, he concluded, 'the need for heightened gender perspective applies to all areas of work in a peacekeeping mission.'²⁴ The DPKO has addressed the need for gender perspectives through several operational activities. A 'gender and peacekeeping' training module has been developed for use by military personnel and civilian police. Five peacekeeping missions have staff dedicated to gender mainstreaming.²⁵ For example, in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the Office of Gender Affairs promotes gender mainstreaming, training, research and disaggregated data collection to achieve gender awareness in MONUC and the increased participation of women in peace-building and DDR processes.²⁶

OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA)

OCHA has the responsibility in its humanitarian coordinator role to promote, coordinate and facilitate gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action. This involves the undertaking of generic work, as well as coordinating specific actions. In 1999, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted a Policy Statement on the 'Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance'.²⁷ In the Policy Statement, IASC committed to: formulate specific strategies for ensuring that gender issues are brought into the mainstream of activities within the IASC areas of responsibility; develop capacity for systematic gender mainstreaming in programmes, policies, actions and training; and ensure reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming. Since then, within the context of humanitarian assistance, gender dimensions have been discussed in forums ranging from the Security Council, the General Assembly and IASC to grassroots organizations in conflict-affected regions.

Hence gender-sensitive assistance became a priority for OCHA, as a means to mitigate the negative effects of emergencies on men and women. In particular, OCHA is stepping up its competences and capacities to enhance the protection of women and girls in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons. Too often their security is particularly threatened by the uncontrolled use and circulation of small arms and light weapons.

OCHA also recognizes the need of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the post-conflict, reconstruction and recovery phase of an emergency, which is often delayed by the plague of small arms. This is why OCHA is promoting the change of the traditional perception of women and girls only as victims, towards a wide recognition of the role they can potentially play in pacification and reconstruction efforts, which has often proven to be crucial.

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

Because armed conflicts violate the rights of girls and boys (including the right to life, to health, to education, to an adequate standard of living, and to protection from exploitation, abuse, neglect and discrimination), UNICEF is involved in efforts to eradicate small arms and light weapons. The use of small arms and light weapons make gender biases more dangerous to women and girls, greatly increasing the threat of physical and sexual violence in refugee camps, homes and communities. At the end of 2001, UNICEF launched a pilot project to 'disarm the minds' of children and youth by raising awareness and addressing the impact of small arms. The project addresses small arms at two levels: changing the attitudes of families and communities, and also increasing attention among decision-makers in global, regional and national forums.

UNICEF is currently playing a lead role in the demobilization of child soldiers in a number of post-conflict situations. It is crucial that the needs of girls are met by demobilization programmes. For example, in Sierra Leone, although the handing in of a weapon was not required for entry into the DDR programme (a condition that often excludes girl soldiers), UNICEF and its partners found that very few girls came forward to participate. As a result, UNICEF and its partners are implementing a programme targeting the specific needs of 1,000 girls who were abducted during the conflict but did not participate in the DDR process.

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES AND NGOs

Article 71 of the United Nations Charter provides a mechanism whereby representatives of civil society can contribute to the work of the Organization. Women's organizations have been consistent advocates for the total disarmament of biological, chemical and particularly nuclear weapons, as well as landmines and small arms. They have also monitored and lobbied international meetings focused on disarmament, such as the General Assembly's three Special Sessions on Disarmament, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Mine Ban Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the First Committee of the General Assembly on Disarmament and International Security. Bringing women organizing around peace, security and disarmament to such meetings provides an opportunity for disarmament specialists, diplomats and representatives of concerned NGOs to share information and knowledge.

Since 1984, women have used the annual statement on International Women's Day in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to present gender perspectives on nuclear disarmament, weapons in space, small arms, conversion and the links between disarmament and development. Their 2003 statement speaks to the challenge of maintaining the real strides forward in understanding the gender components of disarmament, which is, of course, the need for sustained momentum:

While NGOs try to make the best use possible of the symbolic importance of International Women's Day and October 31st, none of us are satisfied with flowery congratulations for two days of the year. We would rather the Conference on Disarmament and the Security Council demonstrate an understanding of gender issues through the kind of routine consideration of women's experiences that they have promised us, rather than the surface level annual gesture which they currently assume to suffice. Gender issues are relevant every day. A gender perspective on disarmament puts the question of weapons and their relation to security into a human context without which the development of a human security paradigm is impossible. Their decisions and experiences in relation to weapons involve human beings operating in their social and political environment, and therefore have clear gender dimensions.²⁸

Conclusion

From the first resolution of the General Assembly, which called for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations has upheld disarmament as the most logical and practical step towards preventing violent conflict and has advocated building confidence between nations through the rule of law and not force.²⁹ Each Secretary-General has called for the complete disarmament of

the nuclear stockpile, now estimated at 31,000 weapons.³⁰ Secretaries-General Lie, Hammarskjold, U-Thant, Waldheim, de Cuellar, Boutros-Ghali and Annan have all consistently expressed alarm about military expenditure, and the dwindling pool of resources remaining for human development and human security—which includes environmental security, economic security, the freedom to express individual identity and to exercise collective social rights and responsibilities.

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In 2000 the first resolution of the Security Council concerning women, peace and security affirmed the need to increase women's 'role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution', and recognized the utility of their 'full participation in the peace process [which] can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.' UNIFEM played a key role in the adoption of this resolution, providing technical advice and bringing women from various conflict zones to testify before the Security Council. Resolution 1325 is a powerful mechanism for advancing the goals of international peace and security. And while the developments in the field of disarmament outlined above are positive first steps, we have only just begun to realize the potential of resolution 1325 and the contribution that gender perspectives can make towards reaching these goals.

Notes

1. Over the course of the twentieth century civilian fatalities in war climbed dramatically from 5% at the turn of the century, to 15% during the First World War, to 65% by the end of the Second World War, to more than 75% in the wars of the 1990s. See *Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict*, Security Council document S/2001/331 of 30 March 2001, available on the page <<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/2001/sgrep01.htm>>.
2. Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000, available at <http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf>.
3. Chris Hedges, 2003, *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*, New York, Anchor Books.
4. See full discussion in Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick, forthcoming, *A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction*.
5. The recent examples of Palestinian women deciding to become suicide bombers may mark a change in this regard.
6. UNIFEM's *Progress of the World's Women*, volume II (available at <http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f_page_pid=10>) tracks the progress made on the commitment to a 30% minimum of women's political participation, agreed by the world's governments in the Beijing Platform for Action.
7. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, United Nations Office, 2002, *You do the Math: Counting the Participation of Women in Leadership Roles at the United Nations since 1992*.
8. Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General, version cited updated 29 July 2003, available at <<http://www.un.org/News/ossg/srsg/table.htm>>.
9. See the complete text of the declaration at <<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/e5dplw.htm#three>>.
10. United Nations, Economic and Social Council, *Coordination of policies and activities of specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the theme: Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations System*, document E/1997/L.30 of 14 July 1997, available at <<http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/docs/1997/e1997-l30.htm>>.
11. See the *Briefing Notes* at <<http://disarmament.un.org/gender.htm>>.
12. Wendy Cukier, 2001, *Gender and Small Arms*, a paper presented to Gender Perspectives on Disarmament seminar, United Nations, New York, 14 March 2001.
13. Vanessa Farr, 2003, Gender Awareness and Research and Policy Making, *African Security Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, available at <<http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/12No1/Com4.pdf>>.
14. See contribution by H. Myrttinen on page 37.
15. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, United Nations Office, 2002, *op. cit.*
16. These trends are confirmed by two independent experts commissioned by UNIFEM to carry out an assessment of the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building; see Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2002, *Women War and Peace*, New York, UNIFEM. Also see contribution by V. Farr on page 25.
17. Mary Diaz, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, UNIFEM on-line working group on empowering the girl child, 6 December 1999.
18. See Global Policy Forum, *United Nations Financial Crisis*, available at <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/finance/>>.
19. Thalif Deen, *There's no business like war business*, United Nations Inter-Press Service, available at <<http://www.worldcitizens.org/warbusiness.html>>.
20. For the text of the Women's Petition and details about its delivery to the United Nations Secretary-General, see <<http://www.isis.aust.com/iwd/peace/petition.htm>>.
21. See contribution by A. Marcaillou on page 47.
22. UNIFEM's research on gender early warning indicators is described in the article by Felicity Hill on page 17.

23. United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Lessons Learned Unit, 2000, *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*, para. 6, available at <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/Gender%20Mainstreaming.pdf>>.
24. Statement before the 4589th meeting of the Security Council, 25 July 2002, New York, Security Council document S/PV.4589.
25. See <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/gm_facts/Dpko.pdf>.
26. For more on the activities of the Office of Gender Affairs, see <<http://www.monuc.org/gender/>>.
27. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 1999, *Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance*, available at <<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/IASCOnGender.doc>>.
28. Text of the statement is available on the page <<http://www.wilpf.int.ch/statements/sindex.htm>>.
29. The first resolution of the newly formed United Nations unanimously called for 'the elimination of national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.'
30. See Nuclear Files, available at <<http://www.nuclearfiles.org/kinuclearweapons/stockpile.htm>> and Nuclear Notebook of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, available at <<http://www.thebulletin.org/issues/nukeneotes/nukenote.html>>.

Women's contribution to conflict prevention, early warning and disarmament

Felicity Hill

The United Nations was created by a war-torn generation, convinced that conflict could be prevented. By providing a venue where political developments would be routinely monitored, debated and acted upon, the founders of the United Nations anticipated that early warning signs would be heeded to prevent conflict. When the Security Council first debated its role in the prevention of armed conflict in November 1999, Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged the international community to move 'from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.'¹ Two years later, the Secretary-General issued a comprehensive report on conflict prevention that underscored the importance of early warning and gender equality.² This article will review recent developments in the conflict prevention debate, emphasizing the role of women in early warning and UNIFEM's efforts towards mainstreaming gender into the early warning efforts of the United Nations.

Early warning has been described as 'any information from any source about escalatory developments, be they slow and gradual or quick and sudden, far enough in advance in order for a national government, or an international or regional organization to react timely and effectively, if possible still leaving them time to employ preventive diplomacy and other non-coercive and non-military preventive measures'.³ By providing time to prepare, analyse and plan a response, early warning is an essential precursor and prerequisite for effective conflict prevention. Not always about predicting a conflict or episode of violence before any such incidents have broken out, early warning information is also used to predict a resurgence or escalation of conflict and violence.

Peace and women's organizations have asserted that effective preventive strategies must consider information and early warning from and about civilians. The significance of the threat and violence inflicted on civilian women in conflict situations has underscored the need to incorporate gender analysis into early warning activities. Such steps must be based upon timely and accurate information, knowledge of facts, an understanding of developments and global trends, and the economic, social and political causes of the conflicts.

Influential authorities in the field have bemoaned information overload, and a dearth of analysis and response options, however, this perspective overlooks a rich source of information that is not being tapped. Experts interviewing women in conflict zones have identified women's experiences and perceptions as an under-utilized set of resources to prevent deadly conflict and its resurgence. Conflict-

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affected women spontaneously describe and refer to early warning indicators. The two accounts below illustrate the kinds of information women have about weapons, and the kinds of dangers and barriers they face in presenting early warning information.

In Kosovo we met Zlata who told us that when she saw arms caches growing in early 1998, she realized that armed conflict was imminent. But she had no one to tell and doubted that her concerns would be taken seriously. 'At a certain point, the boys—young men I suppose, my own nephew also—went up into the hills and got trained,' she said. 'That was the beginning. Then there were guns, first only some, which is usual, but then a lot of weapons being talked about. I didn't see them, but I heard about them. We knew all this, but still nobody was watching or listening to us in Kosovo.' Sometimes, women have nowhere to turn with their information. In Sierra Leone, a young woman named Amy told us that in her village, 'we knew roughly where and when the RUF were planning something big against the peacekeepers. My friend and I, we wanted to tell someone, but it was hard, we were watched, it would take a long time to walk in the night, and it was dangerous. It was a big pity too, because the RUF took the guns and the pride of the UN that day, but it took our hope too. We were scared again, which is exactly what they wanted.'⁴

These accounts represent the potential reservoir of experience and insight that women have about weapons accumulation and proliferation, one of the principal signs of impending conflict. Women often know about the location of arms caches, the routes used to transport them, and the social changes brought about by an influx of guns. Additionally, women have been documented as voluntarily or forcibly carrying or concealing weapons under clothing or in shopping bags as part of the smuggling operations of gunrunners. This covert militarization of traditional gender roles has increased women's familiarity with weapons, and has sometimes carved out a niche in which women have received social and cultural approval and status, some of the benefits gained from being considered brave and courageous by one's community in a war situation when these qualities have enhanced value.⁵ It is possible that the fixed gender roles in war that have traditionally associated men with guns have

blinded those searching for weapon-specific and gender-specific early warning signals to vital sources of information in this and other areas. It follows that listening to women and learning from their experiences can correct gender blind spots in early warning information collection and analysis, and can contribute towards conflict prevention.

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Recent developments in conflict prevention and enhancing women's role in peace and security decision-making

Over the last five years, the debate about conflict prevention at the United Nations has been stimulated by a number of reports and resolutions, many of which have noted the lack of information about women,⁶ and often referring to their *potential* role. The theme of women, peace and security has also achieved prominence and coherence throughout the organization over the same period, especially since the passage of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in October 2000.⁷ In addition, global concern about the tools of violence used in modern conflict—small arms and light weapons—led to a world conference on the subject in 2001. All of these debates have referred to the need for an increase in women's participation and a decrease in military expenditure and for general and complete disarmament as a necessary precondition for conflict prevention.

In the mid-1990s, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict brought together eminent persons from a wide range of expertise, including on disarmament and weapons proliferation. Their final report, published in 1997,⁸ and the numerous papers and events that contributed toward it, created the foundation for a renewed contemporary focus on conflict prevention. The concepts of operational (immediate) and structural (root causes) prevention elaborated in this document have informed subsequent debates and it remains a key text in this field. The Commission qualified the post-Cold War optimism for a 'peace dividend', while not abandoning hope that the end of bi-polar hostilities could reduce reliance on narrow concepts of military or state security, and broadened the concept of security into its human dimensions.

The change of attitude witnessed since the publication of the Carnegie Commission report proves the cynics wrong on preventing war, as the Security Council, the General Assembly, the G8, the OECD, the European Union and the African Union have returned the notion of conflict prevention to the realm of realism. Serious debates, resolutions and small, concrete steps towards establishing mechanisms for early warning and response have demonstrated that preventing conflict is a legitimate and achievable goal. NGOs have advanced this agenda considerably through predicting conflicts, refining early warning instruments and documenting that, in fact, prevention works.⁹

In late 1999, Secretary-General Annan emphasized the need for the international community to develop a 'culture of prevention'.¹⁰ The Secretary-General lamented that rather than investing in development, governments have built up their militaries, spending human and economic resources on 'military action that could be available for poverty reduction and equitable sustainable development.' In June 2001 the Secretary-General issued a comprehensive report on conflict prevention that underscored the importance of gender equality, the costs of failing to prevent war and the need for NGOs to clarify their role in conflict prevention and their relationship to the United Nations. He also repeated the message to governments that they should discourage competitive arms accumulation and create an enabling environment for arms limitation and reduction agreements as well as the reduction of military expenditures. The report stressed the need to protect women's human rights, and called on the Security Council to include a gender perspective in its work and to integrate the protection of women's human rights in conflict prevention and peace-building.¹¹ In response, the Security Council passed resolution 1366 on conflict prevention, which reiterated its recognition of the role of women in conflict prevention and its request to the Secretary-General 'to give greater attention to gender perspectives in the implementation of peacekeeping and peace-building mandates as well as in conflict prevention efforts.' Many other regional security organizations have made similar statements about the crucial role of women in conflict prevention, and have made commitments to incorporating gender issues, including, *inter alia*, the G8,¹² the African Union,¹³ the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).¹⁴

On 31 October 2000, the Security Council adopted its first resolution on women, peace and security (resolution 1325). This resolution provides a comprehensive political framework within which women's protection and their role in peace processes can be addressed. For the first time, the Council called for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes, and reaffirmed women's role in conflict prevention. In their July 2001 statement, the G8 expanded on this role, affirming that, 'Women bring alternative perspectives to conflict prevention at the grass roots and community levels. We must encourage creative and innovative ways to better draw on the talents women bring to preventing conflict and sustaining peace. Furthermore, we should identify practical steps and strategies that we can support individually and collectively to advance the role of women in conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.'

Resolution 1325 provides a comprehensive political framework within which women's protection and their role in peace processes can be addressed.

The 2000 Brahimi Report provided a comprehensive review of United Nations peacekeeping efforts and emphasized the need for enhanced conflict prevention strategies, echoing the advocates of the women, peace and security agenda that verbal postures without political or financial support is not

Verbal postures without political or financial support is not sufficient for preventive action to work.

sufficient for preventive action to work.¹⁵ The report recommended improving information and analysis capacities within the United Nations and urged the Secretary-General to establish an Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat and

to conduct more fact-finding missions, despite the 'impediment' posed by some states that fear for the integrity of their sovereignty.¹⁶ The report also referred to the need for investment in prevention rather than military options, 'Prevention is clearly far more preferable for those who would otherwise suffer the consequences of war, and is a less costly option for the international community than military action, emergency humanitarian relief or reconstruction after a war has run its course.'

The 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, an independent panel of experts brought together by the Canadian government, responded to Secretary-General Annan's request that the international community negotiate how to protect the sensitivities of sovereign states while also preventing genocides and massacres.¹⁷ Affirming the primary responsibility of sovereign states to prevent conflict and protect their citizens, the panel proposed that the responsibility shift to the shoulders of the international community if a state cannot or will not protect its citizens, or if it is the perpetrator of 'conscience shocking situations crying out for action' such as 'large scale loss of life' or 'large scale "ethnic cleansing" ... whether carried out by ... forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape.'¹⁸ The report emphasized that crimes against women constitute 'conscience shocking' events and the need for a renewed commitment to prevention, early warning and analysis as well as effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform in post-conflict countries to prevent the resurgence of violence. This report also highlighted the need for 'constant campaigning'¹⁹ for preventive action, and has deepened the debate about how and when to intervene, emphasizing non-military actions, and reconfirming that United Nations Security Council authorization 'should in all cases be sought prior to any military intervention action being carried out.'²⁰

Early warning, information and analysis with a gender lens

The last decade has seen a proliferation of early warning indicators—lists of circumstances or events that predict food crises, imminent refugee flows, or outward signs of violent conflict such as cross-border trade disruption, sudden public displays of military-style weapons and increased crime rates or human rights violations. Too often these lists have not incorporated gender-sensitive indicators that could fine-tune the information collection and analysis work of security institutions, and reveal previously overlooked signs of instability at a grassroots level that can anticipate conflict before it spreads to formal politics. According to some experts, '... [G]ender analysis elicits different questions about the causes and effects of conflict on different sectors within society and their particular relationships and roles with each other. It also provides a better understanding of unequal social hierarchies (including gender hierarchies), inequality and oppression, which are often characteristics of societies that are prone to, or embroiled in conflict.'²¹

Examples of gender-based early warning indicators include:

- Sex-specific refugee migrations;
- Sex-specific unemployment;
- Increase in single female-headed households;

- Upsurge in acquisition, transportation, concealment and training in weapons by men, women and children;
- Propaganda emphasizing and encouraging militarized masculinity (often in defence of a violated or threatened femininity);
- Crime reports and eye-witness accounts of women about the types of weapons being used;
- Making a scapegoat of women, accusing them of political or cultural betrayal;
- Disruption of women's cross-border trade activity;
- Engagement of women in a shadow war economy;
- Resistance to women's participation in peace processes and negotiations;
- Lack of presence of women in civil society organizations; and
- Growth of fundamentalism.²²

The literature on early warning has divided indicators into two categories: root (or underlying) causes and trigger (or accelerating) indicators. When documenting root causes of war, focusing on gender analyses of power and structures will provide insights into violent societies. For instance, preliminary research suggests that countries with very low percentages of women in parliament and in the formal labour sector, or cultures that restrict women, condone violence against them or treat women as property, are more likely to resort to armed conflict to settle disputes.²³ Other data that may be relevant includes female literacy rate, average level of female education, and number of children per household—all of which influence a woman's ability to participate in structures that may prevent war by engaging in other forms of conflict resolution. Other underlying causes include monetary indicators such as military budgets and changes in those budgets. Gender budget analysis looks at the allocation and distribution of resources to determine how they impact women and men differently, and has been used by women's NGOs to demonstrate the impact of increased military spending on essential services impacting women disproportionately.²⁴

Gender is also a relevant category when examining trigger indicators—the medium-term conditions that reflect rising tension in the society. The prevalence of the following occurrences—which may only be evident to those on the ground—indicate social discord that could result in armed conflict: gender-specific human rights violations such as rape, abductions, trafficking, domestic violence, sexual harassment, abuse by security forces; killings and disappearances of women; election-related violence; lack of institutional prosecution of perpetrators; increased rates of prostitution and commercial sex work due to military presence; abrupt changes in gender roles, such as the imposition of restrictive laws, rewards for aggressive behaviour and propaganda emphasizing hyper-masculinity; a rise in the number of single female-headed households; sex-specific refugee migrations; sex-specific unemployment; sale of jewellery or other precious materials; and hoarding of goods.

While manifestations of the cultural impact of war and psychosocial trauma are less easy to document, it is certainly not invisible, and can be seen by those living in close proximity to the society. For example, it is recognized that restricting public debate on increasing political tensions is a sign of impending conflict. Politically active and visible women are silenced in gender-specific ways, threats of rape and threats of injury or death to children are common yet undocumented. Inflammatory public rhetoric very often manipulates gender roles and symbols to arouse hatred of 'the enemy'. Concrete examples in conflict countries of press materials, graffiti or social codes enforced by armed groups are relevant and useful in predicting the patterns violence may take, therefore prompting appropriate protection initiatives.

UNIFEM's response

UNIFEM's mandate is to generate and support innovative and catalytic strategies towards gender equality. Because it has long-standing relationships with women's organizing efforts in every region of the world, including conflict areas, UNIFEM is well placed to test information collection models and to provide support to other entities collecting and analysing information on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building.

Complying with a call from the General Assembly to enhance efforts undertaken in conflict areas, and responding to Security Council resolution 1325, UNIFEM has intensified its work in twenty-five conflict-affected countries through a four-pronged framework for action to:

- increase the availability of targeted information on the impact of conflict on women and their role in peace-building;
- strengthen approaches to protection and assistance for women affected by conflict;
- strengthen the contribution of women to conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict peace-building at the national, regional and international levels; and
- mainstream a gender focus in inter-governmental peace and security initiatives.

In order to establish a common pool of knowledge concerning how women are affected by conflict, UNIFEM appointed two Independent Experts, Elisabeth Rehn of Finland and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, to travel the world's war zones listening to women. Their assessment—launched on 31 October 2002, the second anniversary of the passage of resolution 1325—reviews existing knowledge and offers sixty-four recommendations on increasing women's protection and supporting their role in peace-building.

The United Nations Department of Political Affairs is the United Nations focal point for prevention, and works in close collaboration with other United Nations agencies through the Inter-Agency/Inter-Departmental Framework Team for Coordination, made up of fourteen United Nations agencies and departments. The Framework Team meets regularly to evaluate areas of risk and identifies preventive measures for countries at risk of conflict. At present there is no dedicated staff to assist this information sharing and coordination mechanism. In addition, the early warning indicator instrument used by the team is lacking gender components. The Framework Team has just invited UNIFEM to participate in the group in order to integrate gender in its efforts to coordinate the United Nations system's preventive response to potential conflict.

In pursuing a collaborative approach to mainstreaming gender into indicators for early warning by working through the Framework Team, UNIFEM's first step was to develop a set of gender-based early warning indicators for testing in field-based pilots. This required the adaptation of conflict analysis tools—including situation profiles, analysis of the causes, actors and potential scenarios of the conflict—that have been traditionally gender blind. The organization has generated lists of gender-specific characteristics of conflict, including signs forthcoming in the latent formation of conflict, as well as the stage of escalating tension. The obvious indicators relate to the feminization of poverty²⁵ and the increased economic burden placed on women during conflict, increases in forced or voluntary prostitution, and the decline in women's access to health, education, employment, credit and land.

Experience in this field has proven that the process may be as important as the results. As analysts and practitioners become familiar with the information offered by gender-based early warning indicators, not only will they learn more about the impact of armed conflict on women, and will also appreciate the critical role women can play in preventing conflict. During the field-based testing of the indicators

listed above, UNIFEM will be working closely with United Nations country teams, governments and NGOs to enhance both the security literacy of women, and the gender literacy of security institutions and decision-makers.

Decision-makers on the Security Council obtain analysis and recommendations for action from a variety of sources including their national intelligence mechanisms, and through the thematic and country-focused reports of the Secretary-General. Security Council resolution 1325 acknowledges the lack of data about the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building informing their deliberations. Resolution 1325 asks the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women. Despite this request for a more complete picture of the situation on the ground in war-torn societies, the information provided to the Council has been patchy.

In order to ensure that ongoing, detailed and up-to-date information on the impact of conflict on women and their activities in peace-building is available, UNIFEM is developing a web portal on women, war and peace. The portal will be launched on 31 October 2003,²⁶ the third anniversary of the passage of Security Council resolution 1325, and will provide gender profiles of countries in conflict, as well as thematic resources on issues such as displacement, violence, health, HIV/AIDS, justice, reconstruction, prevention, small arms and human security. Rather than providing ad hoc information prior to a Security Council mission or to a United Nations department writing a report, through this mechanism UNIFEM will be facilitating ongoing and routine inclusion of information by and about women enduring war.

The importance of gender to conflict prevention and early warning has been recognized. However, concrete measures to improve the flow of early warning information from and about women have not yet been put in place. If preventive visits and fact-finding missions to areas of potential conflict were to routinely include gender expertise and consultations with women's organizations, systematic and useable information could be collected and analysed. Only then could 'gender perspectives' be turned into concrete early warning indicators, and we could build on the foundation of Security Council resolution 1325.

Notes

1. United Nations Press Release, SC/6759, 29 November 1999.
2. *Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Conflict Prevention*, United Nations document A/55/985-S/2001/574 of 7 June 2001, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/prev_dip/fst_prev_dip.htm>.
3. Max Van Der Stoel, High Commissioner On National Minorities, Key-Note Speech to the Seminar on Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy, Warsaw, 19–21 January 1994, available at <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/periodicals/bulle2-2.pdf>>.
4. Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2002, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building*, UNIFEM, available at <http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f_page_pid=149>.
5. This utilization of women's traditional roles and appearance as a disguise for the purposes of furthering war efforts has been discussed elsewhere in detail. See Vanessa A. Farr and Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and International Concerns*, Brief no. 24, Bonn, BICC, available at <<http://www.bicc.de/weapons/brief24/content.html>>; and Anatole Ayissi and Robin Poulton (eds), 2000, *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, Geneva, UNIDIR.
6. Security Council resolution 1325 opens its operative paragraphs 'Noting the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls'.
7. Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000, available at <http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf>.

UNIFEM will be working closely with United Nations country teams, governments and NGOs to enhance both the security literacy of women, and the gender literacy of security institutions and decision-makers.

8. For the Commission's full report, see <<http://www.ccpdc.org/>>.
9. The European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation is an open network of some 150 key European NGOs involved in the prevention and/or resolution of violent conflicts in the international arena. Its mission is to facilitate the exchange of information and experience among participating organizations, which includes women's organizations, <<http://www.euconflict.org/>>. Founded in 1991, the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) is one of many African NGOs focused on conflict prevention and has devoted considerable energies to exploring gender and women's role in prevention and peace-building in Africa, <<http://www.accord.org.za/web.nsf>>. In 1999 a large coalition of international and national groups launched the Global Action Plan to Prevent War. The Plan is a blueprint for a war-prevention regime to be established in four phases over three to four decades, <<http://www.globalactionpw.org/>>. A collection of fifty prevention success stories recently published by the Oxford Research Group reveals the detailed analysis of strategies for prevention, conflict management and resolution that is now readily available from the NGO community, including women's organizations. See Dylan Mathews, 2001, *War Prevention Works: 50 Stories of People Resolving Conflict*, Oxford Research Group, available at <<http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/wpwhome.html>>.
10. United Nations Press Release, *ibid*.
11. Report of the Secretary-General, *ibid*.
12. Conclusion of the meeting of the G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, *Strengthening the Role of Women in Conflict Prevention*, Attachment 2, G8 Roma Initiatives on Conflict Prevention, 18–19 July 2001, Rome, Italy, available at <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/g7/foreign/fm091901_con_att2.html>.
13. The 1993 Declaration of the Assembly of African Heads of State established the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The objective of the Mechanism, overseen by a sixteen member Central Organ, is the anticipation and prevention of situations of potential conflict from developing into full-blown conflicts. The Organization of African Unity (now called the African Union) has begun to take practical steps to include African women and utilize their skills in resolving conflicts in Africa. For example, in 1997 the African Union dispatched an African Women's Solidarity Mission to Burundi with the goal of encouraging the participation of women in the peace-building process. In 1998, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union created an advisory body called the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development to foster the full participation of women in continental efforts to manage conflicts, although the Committee is criticized for being weak and not integrated into the Mechanism.
14. IGAD Member States have established a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism and held a workshop titled 'Engendering the Early Warning and Response Mechanism for IGAD Member States' on 25–26 November 2002 in Addis Ababa, which was attended by thirty-four participants from seven IGAD Member States.
15. United Nations, *Comprehensive Review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects* (The Brahimi Report), document no. A/55/305 – S/2000/809 of 21 August 2000, para. 32, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/prev_dip/fst_prev_dip.htm>.
16. *Ibid.*, para. 33.
17. *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, December 2001, ICISS, Ottawa, Canada, available at <<http://www.dfaid-maeci.gc.ca/iciss-ciise/menu-en.asp>>.
18. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
19. *Ibid.*, para. 8.18, p. 72.
20. *Ibid.*, p xii.
21. Anne J. Tickner, 1999, Why Women Can't Run the World: International Politics According to Francis Fukuyama, *International Studies Review*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 3–13 as cited in Susanne Schmeidl with Eugenia Piza-Lopez, 2002, *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action*, Swiss Peace Foundation and International Alert, available at <<http://www.international-alert.org/women/Ewgender.pdf>>.
22. Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *op. cit.*
23. Mary Caprioli, 2000, Gendered Conflict, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 51–68 as cited in Susanne Schmeidl with Eugenia Piza-Lopez, *op. cit.*
24. See the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's Women's Budget Project, available at <<http://www.wlfp.org/women/budget.htm>>.
25. The majority of the 1.5 billion people living on one dollar a day or less are women. In addition, the gap between women and men caught in the cycle of poverty has continued to widen in the past decade, a phenomenon commonly referred to as 'the feminization of poverty'. Worldwide, women earn on average slightly more than 50% of what men earn.
26. See <<http://www.womenwarandpeace.org>>.

The importance of a gender perspective to successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes

Vanessa FARR

In many of today's wars, fighters are no longer exclusively adult men. Faced with a dramatically changing demography of fighters in contemporary conflicts, a number of recent open United Nations Security Council meetings on country situations and thematically focused debates, as well as internal UN processes and documents, have identified the need for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes to pay attention to differences among those presenting themselves for DDR.¹ As a result, in addition to men, child soldiers (both boys and girls) are being better catered for. Yet despite a general call for 'gender mainstreaming' in all UN-run operations including DDR processes, women's perspectives, experiences and needs are under-represented in current programmes.² The difficulty is how to move forward from discussions about gender inclusion to a measurable reality in which women are playing visible and powerful roles. In practical terms, what should the inclusion of women in DDR processes look like?

This paper is intended as a means of moving this important conversation forward. In it, I shall review recent DDR processes, drawing both from conversations with DDR field practitioners and planners working within various UN agencies, and from academic accounts of DDR. My focus falls largely on processes that have taken place in Africa, and the recommendations I make are intended to be immediately useful to those involved in the current Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program for the Great Lakes region, which represents the most ambitious and comprehensive DDR planning ever envisaged.³

UN commitment to women's involvement in DDR

Although DDR was not specifically mentioned, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 set the stage for women's needs in conflict and post-conflict zones to be better addressed. The Beijing Platform of Action set the following Strategic Objectives:

- To increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels;
- To protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation;
- To promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations;

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- To promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace;
- To provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.⁴

Several years of campaigning and awareness-raising followed the Platform of Action, including the production and distribution of research about how women and girls experience warfare. The Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action on 'Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective In Multidimensional Peace Support Operations' was produced in May 2000, and the culmination of the activism on the issue of women and girls in wartime is Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000.⁵ The entire focus of this document is on women caught up in war, and for the first time an explicit recommendation was made that all actors in negotiations to end armed conflict should not only recognize the 'special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction,'

but involve them explicitly in DDR processes. The suggestion is made that 'all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration [should] consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and ... take into account the needs of their dependants' as an urgent means to make the impact of DDR broader, more comprehensive and more forward-looking as a peace-building platform.

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Women's importance for successful DDR is also upheld in the recommendations of the 2002 United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, prepared by a Group of Governmental Experts appointed by the Secretary-General. They observe that:

The successful implementation of peace agreements, including their disarmament and demobilization provisions, requires targeting disarmament and non-proliferation education and training to the specific needs of diverse target groups. Military and security forces as well as leaders at both the local and national levels must be sensitized to these issues. Other measures must meet the special education and training needs of [civilian] women and children, groups that are disproportionately affected by armed conflict.⁶

Why do DDR processes need to be broadened?

Although DDR processes remain primarily military operations, in some war zones a decreasing percentage of those they attend to fit the traditional profile of a soldier, i.e. a male over the age of 18. In several situations, 50% or more of combatants are children (male and female) under the age of 18.⁷ Active efforts have been made to address the special needs of the young, with agencies such as UNICEF, in tandem with organs such as the Office of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, playing a pioneering role.⁸ Special attention is being paid to the needs of girls, although assessments of recent DDR programmes indicate there is still a lot of room for improvement.⁹

In recognition of the multiple roles, as combatants, mothers, wives, caregivers and so on, that women play in conflict situations, the need to include them—particularly in order to enlist their support for the reintegration of ex-fighters—has been identified as a priority. However, there is a tendency in recent agreements—which is also reflected in planning in the field—to focus on civilian women, who are frequently seen as the most useful targets of disarmament and other peace-building education,

while overlooking women who have been active participants, whether coerced or willing, in armed groups. There are many reasons for this situation to have arisen, but significant among them is the fact that women have traditionally been perceived as peaceful and caring, largely because of their status as mothers, and women who do not fit this stereotype are a 'problem' that is difficult to address.¹⁰

Despite continuing ambivalence about how to meet the needs of anomalous women, DDR planners are growing to understand that including women in peace-building work is not only essential to successful and lasting transformation, but also a means to promote women's fuller involvement in other aspects of a post-conflict society. It is increasingly understood that women need and deserve inclusion in DDR processes, it is recognized that women have a great deal to contribute to the planning and execution of weapons collection and reintegration programmes if they are properly educated and trained, and it is acknowledged that such initiatives do not work unless the participation of women is accepted and their knowledge drawn from.

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Women as primary educators of their families and communities need to participate in decision-making on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and other disarmament and non-proliferation education and training efforts. ... Women have an essential role in helping to create the conditions for the cessation of violent conflict, in such activities as monitoring the peace, dealing with trauma among the victims and perpetrators of violence, collecting and destroying weapons and rebuilding societies.¹¹

The aims of DDR processes

To get a clearer sense of what, in practical terms, the inclusion of women in DDR processes should look like, it is useful to know what DDR actually aims to do. Because of its important role in peace-building, plans for DDR are usually formulated as soon as the peace negotiations begin. These processes have been conceived as a package of logical, sequential steps forming 'a continuum that is itself a part of the entire peace process'.¹² Their aim is, through a process that is symbolic as well as practical, to offer fighters a new identity that is compatible with peaceful development and sustainable growth.

Unsurprisingly, however, the neatness of this formulation does not correspond with the realities of bringing peace, let alone post-conflict reconstruction, to contemporary war zones. Since many of the world's current conflicts are being waged not over ideas, but over resources, the intention of warlords is neither to liberate nor to represent the people over whose bodies and lands they rampage. As has been all too vividly illustrated in recent and ongoing African wars, such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, violent conflict erupts less over ideals than for the purposes of profit and exploitation. The peace processes set in motion to resolve these crises are derailed by considerations of profit, and leaders and warlords pay scant heed to either international humanitarian law or local ethics. Unparalleled harm is inflicted on civilians, including through abducting them into active combat and combat support roles.

The presence of large numbers of women and children in contemporary fighting forces means that new DDR processes cannot proceed according to formulas that were used even as recently as ten years ago. The increasing complexity of the situation facing DDR planners does not, however, diminish the fact that 'DDR is an emergency process', and the extreme volatility of the security situation facing

While the disarmament phase may still be seen as a first step in the process of turning combatants back into civilians, the prevalence of portable weapons has made it imperative that this phase be recognized as a symbolic prelude to a much longer and broader series of initiatives designed to convince a post-conflict society to disarm.

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Disarmament

Because of the breadth and severity of their impact, and the danger they pose when peace is fragile, a reduction in the number of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that circulate during and after a conflict is a vital accompaniment to peace-building and reconstruction efforts. Although research on this subject is in its infancy, there is clear evidence of gender differences in attitudes to SALW, which means that DDR processes must be designed to take gender into account.¹⁴ Men have traditionally been associated with the use, ownership and promotion of small arms, which is unsurprising as they are overwhelmingly the owners and users of guns (as well as the primary victims of gun violence). Weapons that remain in circulation become the tools by which ‘interpersonal violence replaces violence between warring factions, turning neighbourhoods into war zones’.¹⁵ The security implications for women, while they may not be comparable to those faced directly by men, are also enormous. When guns flow freely in community settings, and are not removed after armed conflict ends, women run the risk not only of facing lethal domestic violence, but become more vulnerable while managing their daily workload. Women are also burdened with caring for those who have been injured or disabled by gunfire.

Evidence from the field shows that women own and use small arms in far smaller numbers than do men, and that they generally have attitudes to weapons that differ radically from those of men.¹⁶ According to practitioners of DDR, this difference should be carefully nurtured and exploited both as DDR processes begin, and afterwards as Weapons for Development (WfD) and other disarmament initiatives continue:

In sensitization campaigns, disarmament should be separated from military DDR and women should be the priority target audience because they know the negative side of guns, unlike male users who tend to focus on the upside of gun ownership. So when community disarmament and rebuilding strategies are planned women are better targets. The modalities of execution are still hard so we have to keep increasing our leverage [within communities]: it should be a general policy recommendation that post-DDR disarmament is aimed at women.¹⁷

Involving women

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DDR planners means that they are often forced to provide a ‘quick and dirty’ intervention whose focus cannot be wider than the speedy restoration of security.¹⁸ In such circumstances, disarmament is likely to be ad hoc, with large numbers of weapons remaining in circulation while distrustful communities wait to see whether some kind of security is indeed being put into place. So, while the disarmament phase may still be seen as a first step in the process of turning combatants back into civilians, the prevalence of portable weapons has made it

imperative that this phase be recognized as a symbolic prelude to a much longer and broader series of initiatives designed to convince a post-conflict society to disarm.

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practical support should be directed at women. Recently, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) developed a pilot project aimed at increasing women's role in the 'Weapons for Development Programme' (1998–2002) in the Albanian districts of Gramsch, Elbasan and Diber.

In a concrete example of how gender mainstreaming can impact on peace-building processes, women's support for the project contributed to its success, since their involvement increased the number of weapons collected. Women in the pilot project reported an increase in their knowledge of disarmament and therefore their capacity to assist the authorities in accessing and collecting weapons, and commented that they understand disarmament from a more comprehensive perspective, not just as a means to reduce criminality, but also as a means for communities to make political, social and economic progress. They also felt that their participation in family decision-making processes had been improved because their preparation gave them a more authoritative opinion on family and community security decisions. Some women commented that they could now deal more effectively with local authorities, including police, which may contribute to greater community cooperation in other areas. Finally, the beginning of a new culture of resistance to arms proliferation was reported, with women providing a previously unappreciated capacity to support a comprehensive disarmament and peace-building process.¹⁸

While we do not yet have enough examples on which to base policy recommendations, early experiences indicate that assisting women to become experts in areas that are not traditionally associated with women's peace-building can help improve their social and political position. Disarmament education may allow women to become more assertive and involved in family decision-making processes. It also assists them in dealing with the authorities and helps them to gain more access to paid work, a transition from the private to the public sphere which adds value to efforts to promote women's political participation.

Recent failures

While Albania is a good start, offering some insights into the potential breadth of impact of disarmament education, some of its aims were only partially achieved. Because the Albanian project did not take place within a broader DDR process, but was a weapons collection programme in its own right, it is also difficult to judge whether it can be replicated in war-torn societies.

One question that arises from the project is whether an exclusive focus on civilian women as assets in peace-building is as empowering as it sounds. It may, in fact, stem from a stereotypical image of women as nurturers, innocents and victims in situations of armed conflict. The assumption might be made that women have an innate understanding of and ability to do disarmament work without needing to be trained; and stemming from this, there is a danger that the work of disarmament will be added to women's already heavy burden without much thought for how they will cope.

For women to become full partners in disarmament initiatives, it is necessary to recognize the differences among them. Like men, women occupy multiple spaces and identities in wartime as in peacetime, and not all women are innately peaceful or opposed to the use of armed force to achieve their social or political goals. Disarmament that focuses only on utilizing civilians marginalizes another group of women—those who fought in armed combat and voluntarily or forcibly supported combatants as nurses, cooks or sex-workers. This is a group that may have very different attitudes to the possession and use of weapons; and precisely because it does not

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fit social stereotypes of what makes a ‘good woman’, attracts the greatest social opprobrium in the reintegration and reconstruction period. This group of women is most likely to slip through the cracks of DDR processes and become either social outcasts who barely survive on the margins of society, or an increased security threat in the months and years to come.¹⁹

The difficulties experienced by women associated with fighting forces are generally exacerbated, not alleviated, by DDR initiatives as they are now implemented.

recently completed and currently underway suggest that there remains a significant gap between broad policy commitment to the inclusion of gender perspectives and specific actions on the ground.

At base, the ongoing exclusion of women from leadership positions in arenas of political influence detracts from the benefits that DDR is intended to bring. The problem is threefold:

- Despite public commitments within the UN and other international organizations to promote women into positions of power, ‘there aren’t many women at the leadership level in international organizations dealing with DDR’;²⁰
- Women, especially in receiving communities, are involved in reintegration, ‘but disarmament and demobilization are still run by men because they’re seen as military problems—and there are no women in leadership positions in the military’;²¹ and
- Although the need for DDR is usually recognized from the very beginning of a peace-making process, women in the country under reconstruction are rarely ready or able to insist on their inclusion in leadership, decision-making and other forms of public influence at that stage.²²

A host of recent agreements, resolutions and reports have agreed on the necessity of including women in formal peace negotiations and the peace-building processes they set in place. Yet all the same, even recent peace agreements, such as the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra Agreements of 2003 (Côte d’Ivoire), or the Lomé Accord of 1999 (Sierra Leone), have failed to include significant numbers of women in negotiations or to encourage their participation in the planning and execution of ‘military’ processes such as DDR. In the Côte d’Ivoire talks, one woman was present. In Sierra Leone, no women were present at the first peace talks in 1996 which led to the abortive Abidjan Peace Accord. By the time of the Lomé Peace Accord three years later, two women representatives had been included. Despite some language that aimed at recognizing women’s specific needs, the accord was, in the end, very narrow in scope and stereotypical in its understanding of women’s experience of armed violence. It appears to make no space for women who were not only victims but also combatants, who in some estimations constituted about 12% of all fighters.²³

More importantly, the attempt at inclusive language did not manifest itself in concrete action: in the end, no women formed part of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace under which the National Commission on DDR (NCDDR) fell. So, while the Sierra Leone DDR process was initially regarded as the most successful to date, from a gender perspective it was not substantially different from anything that had gone before. It is clear that women’s absence, from the planning through to the implementation stages of the process, had a critical impact on the extent to which women’s (and girls’) particular needs could be anticipated and catered for. Ultimately, having failed to plan for them in the Lomé Accord, the government’s own assessment of the process ‘acknowledged that there is a problem in terms of DDR and women soldiers in Sierra Leone.’ Gender programming, it was observed, ‘has been largely absent in the NCDDR’s work, and not enough attention has been paid to the challenges faced by women ex-combatants’.²⁴

The challenges ahead

As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, another DDR process is unfolding in Africa right now, the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) for the Great Lakes region.²⁵ Early reports on these processes indicate that they are already falling short of achieving the goals of gender mainstreaming.²⁶

In Angola, in a programme jointly run by the Government of Angola and the World Bank, one area of difficulty is manifest in the way assistance packages are being delivered to ex-combatants within the framework of the World Bank's policy of instituting a short-term payment scheme during the reinsertion phase. The World Bank articulates this approach as one that provides 'a transitional safety net [for combatants] to cover their families' basic material needs'.²⁷ However,

assistance [given] to 100,000 UNITA and 33,000 government soldiers ... excludes 'wives' and abducted girls from guaranteed direct assistance. The proposed assistance package, which includes a generous supply kit, US\$100 and, most importantly, six months of literacy, vocational training opportunities and access to micro-credit and employment, is targeted to male ex-combatants.²⁸

In this formulation, women in the company of male combatants are seen only as dependents, regardless of whether they bore arms or engaged in violence. If they were, in fact, fighters, they appear to be unable to claim DDR assistance. Moreover, the structure of the proposed assistance package runs counter to a recommendation made in research commissioned by the World Bank itself, which suggests that such an approach will not facilitate the well-being of an ex-combatant's dependants:

So far, the majority of [demobilization and reintegration processes] have treated families as secondary beneficiaries. This means that it is up to the soldier to share benefits with the household, even though the soldier might misuse these benefits. Giving some benefits directly to families might solve this problem. This option however might be more expensive and difficult to implement because family members must be identified and registered. Another suggestion is to conduct an intra-household analysis to evaluate how benefits might be shared and also carry out an assessment of the male ex-combatant's acceptance in the case of benefits given directly to families. A strong sensitization campaign targeting ex-combatants and communities could trigger community pressure on the recipient of benefits to use them fairly and wisely.²⁹

Angolan women are already experiencing the effects of World Bank thinking on reinsertion: a UNITA social affairs officer commented, 'We have found that women have been extremely vulnerable following the peace agreement. And from talking to our women supporters in the camps we find that they feel betrayed. The government assistance to soldiers has been, broadly, quite insufficient. It is as if women have been completely forgotten.'³⁰

Cumulative evidence from the field has proven that women and families tend to benefit very little from payment schemes such as the one in place in Angola, since recently demobilized men will not necessarily feel obliged to use their pay in the best interest of their dependants. Women and children suffer not only the short-term consequences when men spend their money recklessly, in the form of continued hunger or drug and alcohol-induced abuse, but also the longer-term impact, such as the danger that a man might become infected with HIV in the heady days after receiving his demobilization pay.

Such a payment scheme may also have the effect of trapping women who have been forcibly married to soldiers but wish to start their lives anew. Allowing them to access resources only through a male partner will discourage some women from exercising their right to leave, and exacerbate the vulnerability of those who have the courage to do so.³¹

Women have played very small roles in regional initiatives in Africa, such as the Nairobi Declaration on SALW signed in March 2000.³² They have been similarly marginalized in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), constituting only 10% of the 300 official delegates. By leaving them out of the process, DDR planners in the Great Lakes region are behaving as if there were no women fighters or leaders for them to consult. However, in the protracted period of peace negotiations since the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in July 1999, UNIFEM has played a significant role in promoting women's participation and making space for women's capacities and needs to be recognized. With UNIFEM support, Congolese women issued a declaration and plan of action in February 2002 in which they demanded that the ICD mention the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in the preamble of the new constitution, that women gain access to land and positions of political and economic leadership, and that women and children, both within armed forces and affected by them, be prioritized in reconstruction programmes. Despite not being part of the formal negotiating teams, forty women made a special Women's Day presentation during the Sun City Talks in March 2002.

For the MDRP to avoid the same lack of vision, planning and execution that has excluded women in the past, the inadequacy of DDR processes to date must be clearly acknowledged and carefully analysed. As the United Nations and the World Bank have both expressed their commitment to leading a multi-country, multi-donor initiative that is as inclusive as possible, opportunities exist to revisit and re-envision the roles women could play in DDR processes.

The way forward

Security Council resolution 1325 is the best tool with which to achieve the full participation of women in the MDRP since it sets out a lucid and practical agenda for this process. Resolution 1325 begins with the recognition that women's visibility, both in national and regional instruments and in bi- and multilateral organizations, is crucial. It goes on to call for gender awareness in all aspects of peacekeeping initiatives, especially DDR, urges women's informed and active participation in disarmament exercises, and insists on the right of women to carry out their post-conflict reconstruction activities in an environment free from threat, especially of sexualized violence.

Practically speaking, resolution 1325 allows the following insights to be acted on.

Experience shows that women associated with combat groups, especially irregular forces, are reluctant to identify themselves as DDR processes begin and thus miss the opportunity to benefit from them. Agencies specializing in refugees and internally displaced persons have learned that women are far more likely to speak to women, especially when intimate healthcare issues must be discussed.

If women do not feel safe or welcomed in a DDR process, they are likely to 'self-demobilize'—in other words, to disappear from view without taking advantage of any of the opportunities of demobilization, such as job re-training, healthcare and the like.

healthcare and the like. Their capacity for self-reintegration is likely to be very limited, resulting in homelessness, isolation and exclusion from any form of safe paid work. To avoid this situation, training

must be put in place for women fieldworkers whose role will be to interview women in order to identify combatants and other participants who fit the guidelines for inclusion in DDR processes.

Further experience shows that training in economically profitable skills must be undertaken as soon as encampment begins. Once the process of reinsertion begins, women are overwhelmed with the burdens of housework, agricultural labour, fetching water, child and elder care, and have inadequate access to transportation.

Women are seen as a resource in the reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers because they are usually their primary caregivers. However, they need to be trained to understand and cope with traumatized children if their full potential is to be realized and their workload to be kept at manageable levels.

Men and women ex-combatants have shown themselves to manage money in radically different ways. Cumulative wisdom from the field holds that men are likelier to go on spending sprees than to use their money for familial support. Sustainable reintegration cannot happen unless male ex-combatants are recognized as members of a larger community, which often means being part of a family unit rather than being seen as individuals. For communal benefit to ensue, women must have fair access to the reinsertion package granted to ex-combatants. To ensure this women—especially the spouse or other female family members of an ex-combatant—should be brought in to witness the signing of an agreement on how his money will be paid. By this means, it is hoped, the resources will actually get passed on to the family, and from there move into the broader community. In contrast with men, DDR field workers have learned that money must be given to women combatants away from their male family members. This empowers them economically and may help protect them from exploitation by male intimates.

To best support the civilian community and the ex-combatant alike, individual reintegration packages (including training, resettlement, healthcare, etc.) should be designed to supplement community projects that are aimed at both women and men. If this is not carefully handled, field experience shows that differences between ex-fighters and civilians may deepen instead of lessen over the years, a situation which should be countered as much as possible. Although DDR as a necessity targets the individual, all members of a community should receive recognition for their cooperation in taking in an ex-combatant. The timing of such an intervention is important: field experience also shows that the project cannot already be in place when the ex-combatant gets there or it may not actually target him or her. Essentially, then, while the focus of the programme should remain on supporting the ex-combatant, the receiving community's capacity to reintegrate him/her should also be facilitated without, it is hoped, adding too much unsupported labour to women and men's already heavy workloads.

In African countries, a woman can stop a man from taking his gun outside the house if she is economically empowered to feed him and their children. Field experience shows that women also know the risk of having a weapon at home and this helps them convince men to give it up.³³ This is why women have been especially identified as helpers in processes aimed at collecting SALW. In one interview, DDR experts said 'In the follow-up to initial disarmament, women are an asset. They are in charge of households and they know where the weapons are. They need to be empowered ... so they can disarm men.'³⁴

This viewpoint reiterates what we have learned from Albania—that women can only be supportive of peace-building processes if they are trained and educated to do this work.

Training in economically profitable skills must be undertaken as soon as encampment begins. Once the process of reinsertion begins, women are overwhelmed with the burdens of housework, agricultural labour, fetching water, child and elder care, and have inadequate access to transportation.

Conclusion

Social transformation after war requires more than the disbanding of militarized structures: it also means harnessing women's capacity as peace-builders through training them as agents of disarmament and supporters of reintegration. If we take seriously the capacity of women, and focus on the best means to build and use that capacity, we will not only be facilitating the smooth flow of DDR processes. We shall also develop the means to support women's access to social, cultural and political representation, change attitudes to land access, increase awareness of levels of violence against women in a post-conflict society, and set in place the means for women and men who reject violence to create new, more socially equitable and responsive institutions.

Notes

1. In DDR processes, disarmament is particularly focused on the removal and destruction of small arms and light weapons.
2. Gender mainstreaming is one of the Millennium Development Goals of the UN. 'A gender perspective is ... mainstreamed to achieve gender equality and improve the relevance and effectiveness of development agendas as a whole, for the benefit of all women and men' <<http://www.unesco.org/women/UGMIFV8.pdf>>. In conflict zones, it means the meaningful and visible inclusion of women and a commitment to understanding how men (and sometimes women) conceive of and exploit images of masculinity that condone violence. For more on gender mainstreaming in the UN system, see <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/main.htm>>.
3. The nine countries involved in or affected by one or more of the central African conflicts are included (Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe), and an estimated group of 353,000 regular and irregular fighters will be demobilized. See World Bank, 2002, *Greater Great Lakes Regional Strategy for Demobilization and Reintegration*, Washington, DC, The World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/ao/post_conflict.htm>.
4. For the complete text of the Beijing Declaration, see <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>>.
5. See <www.reliefweb.int/library/GHARkit/FilesFeb2001/windhoek_declaration.htm> and <http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf>.
6. United Nations, 2002, *United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education*, New York, United Nations, paragraph 32, General Assembly document A/57/124 of 30 August, <<http://ods-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/456/87/PDF/N0245687.pdf>>.
7. Aid workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 'estimate that half of those fighting in Ituri are underage', <<http://www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ao=15808>>, accessed 19 June 2003.
8. For information on work done outside the UN system, see the website of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, <<http://www.child-soldiers.org>>.
9. See Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana, 2000, *Girls in Militaries, Paramilitaries, and Armed Opposition Groups*, <<http://www.waraffectedchildren.gc.ca/girls-en.asp>>; Carolyn Nordstrom, 1999, *Visible Wars and Invisible Girls*, Shadow Industries, and the Politics of Not-Knowing, *International Journal of Feminist Politics*, vol. 1, no. 1.
10. Discussions about whether women are 'innately peaceful' are not new. For an overview of this issue, see Vanessa Farr, 2002, *Gendering Demilitarization as a Peacebuilding Tool*, BICC Paper 20, Bonn, Bonn International Center for Conversion, <<http://www.bicc.de/general/paper20/content.html>>; Joshua S. Goldstein, 2001, *War and Gender*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
11. United Nations, 2002, *op. cit.*, paragraphs 22 and 36.
12. United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2000, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in a Peacekeeping Environment: Principles and Guidelines*, New York, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Lessons Learned Unit, <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/DD&R.pdf>>.
13. Interview with Irma Specht, ILO, Geneva, 3 June 2003. This interview will hereafter be referred to as Specht.
14. For more detailed discussions of this point, see Vanessa Farr, 2003, Men, women and guns: Understanding how gender ideologies support small arms and light weapons proliferation, in *BICC Conversion Survey 2003: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization and Demobilization*, Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, pp. 120–33; Vanessa Farr and Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and*

- International Concerns*, BICC Brief 24, Bonn, Bonn International Center for Conversion, <<http://www.bicc.de/publications/briefs/brief24/content.html>>; Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2002, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Expert's Assessment*, New York, UNIFEM, <<http://www.unifem.org>>.
15. Ryszard Komenda, 2003, presentation at the UN-OSCE Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects in South Eastern Europe, 11–12 March, Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia.
 16. See the Women's Portal of IANSA, <<http://www.iansa.org>>.
 17. Interview with Maximo Halty, Prosper Bani and Mikiko Sawanishi of the UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), Geneva, 3 June 2003.
 18. Interviews were conducted by Vanessa Farr, Flora Macula and Bjarney Friðriksdóttir, with a wide spectrum of people involved in the weapons collection programme in Albania, 9–14 September 2003.
 19. The increased participation of women suicide bombers in Palestine and Chechnya, to name two recent examples, attests to women's capacity to embrace violence when they feel themselves to be in an intolerable and apparently un-negotiable situation. I am grateful to Dyan Mazurana and Kristopher Carlson for sharing with me an early draft of a paper on the experiences and roles of women and girls in the Sierra Leonean DDR process, in which they observe that young ex-combatants, especially mothers, are sometimes aggressive and vociferous in claiming DDR benefits in the aftermath, and in some instances, pose a security risk.
 20. Interview, BCPR group. The BCPR group argues that this situation arises because DDR processes are frequently dangerous. In their view, while it is desirable to include women in DDR teams, it cannot be enforced as rule: each process needs to be judged individually to assess the level of threat to the field team and women should not be sent into situations in which they are more vulnerable than men. Where women will be an asset, however (and several examples were given of when this has been the case), their contributions to DDR processes have proven invaluable.
 21. Specht interview.
 22. Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, 2000, *Women at the Peace Table: Making a Difference*, New York, UNIFEM, <<http://www.unifem.undp.org/resources/peacebook.html>>.
 23. Article XXVIII, for instance, states: 'Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone.' See <<http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html>>.
 24. Jeremy Ginifer, 2003, Prioritising Reintegration, in Mark Malan et al., *Sierra Leone—Building the Road to Recovery*, Monograph 80, Pretoria, Institute of Security Studies, <<http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/monographs/No80/content.html>>.
 25. This is a multi-country, multi-agency and multi-donor project, drawing from the strengths of the World Bank, the United Nations, international donors and local governments.
 26. See, for example, Veronika Martin, 2003, Angola: Women's Access to Demobilization and Reintegration Program Funding Essential, *Refugees International Bulletin*, 7 March, <<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/cgi-bin/ri/bulletin?bc=00499>>.
 27. World Bank, 2002, *op. cit.*
 28. Martin, 2003, *op. cit.*
 29. Nathalie de Watteville, 2003, Demobilization and Reintegration Programs: Addressing Gender Issues, *Findings*, no. 227, World Bank, June, <<http://www.worldbank.org/afr/findings/english/find227.pdf>>. In Angola, the World Bank bears the major responsibility for reintegration, while the Angolan government has control over disarmament and demobilization. As the main funder of the exercise, the World Bank should be expected to have considerable influence over how the government goes about its programme, yet it does not appear to have insisted on the implementation of its own findings.
 30. UNITA social affairs officer Carlos Morgado, as quoted in Angola: UNITA wives fear exclusion from govt aid, *IRINews*, 10 March 2003, see <<http://www.irinnews.org/homepage.asp>>.
 31. Martin, 2003, *op. cit.*
 32. For a more substantial discussion of the gender failings of this initiative, see Vanessa Farr, 2002, A Gendered Analysis of International Agreements on Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation, in Farr and Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–24.
 33. Interview, BCRP group.
 34. Interview, BCRP group.

Disarming masculinities

Henri MYRTTINEN

Conventional wisdom has it that men enjoy a ‘special relationship’ with weapons, a view which seems to be corroborated by empirical evidence. The relationship between ‘masculine’ men and weapons is such a prevailing cliché that one finds it everywhere, from advertising to left-wing revolutionary posters, fascist imagery to the novels of Hemingway, war memorials to homoerotic art, from the porn industry to feminist critiques of male militarism. Weapons systems are designed mostly by men, marketed mostly for men and used mostly by men—and in many parts of the world, they are the primary source of death for men. Boys are given guns and swords to play with or they make them for themselves. Adolescent male warriors and middle-aged male hunters pose for cameras brandishing their weapons. Michael Ignatieff describes entering ‘zones of toxic testosterone’ in the Bosnian war.¹ War memorials depict muscular men clutching their guns or hurling grenades with flexed, oversized pectoral muscles bulging out of the opened shirts of their uniforms.

If one considers gender, in this case masculinity, to be socially constructed, and one additionally wants to further the cause of disarmament, it becomes evident that this bond between men and weapons and how this is linked with violent notions of masculinity need to be investigated and analysed further in order to be able to develop sustainable disarmament policies. The importance of analysing violent masculinity gains even more significance if one accepts the notion of conflicts increasingly being ones of ‘identity’, in which the gendered ethnic identities that are constructed and mobilized tend to be highly militarized.²

In this article, I will analyse some of the ways in which enactments of masculinities and the wielding of weapons go together, the sexualized imagery used in conjunction with weapons, and the models of masculinity that lie behind these concepts. I will argue that the public display, the threat of or actual use of weapons is an intrinsic part of violent, militarized models of masculinity. The specific ‘message’ conveyed by the display and use of weapons is dependent on the social and cultural environment.

I will argue that weapons are part of one notion of masculinity, a militarized view that equates ‘manliness’ with the ‘sanctioned use of aggression, force and violence’.³ Weapons are used as status symbols but also as tools to achieve economic and social gains, wielding power over unarmed males and females. This can often be linked to a crisis of masculinity, when there is a ‘fear of loss of male power and privilege’⁴ through social transformations, leading to a backlash in which ‘traditional’ gender roles are reinforced. The construct of the male warrior/protector relies on the suppression of others—

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Weapons and their public display seek to underline the ‘manly’ prowess of the bearer, but tragically often also undermine it—men are not only disproportionately the perpetrators of violence, but also often its victims.

This contribution is intended to open up discussion. As I consider gender roles to be highly dependent on the cultural and social environment in which men and women act, I will start by delineating which socio-cultural environment I shall examine. Unfortunately, by necessity rather than by choice, the limited scope of this study will lead me to concentrate heavily on ‘western’ (i.e. North American, European and Australian) perceptions of masculinity, though I will endeavour, where possible, to broaden this scope.

Toys for the boys

Men’s bond with weapons seems to be forged at an early stage of childhood. Boys mimic the behaviour of armed male role models, be they knights, soldiers, warriors, police, thieves or cowboys, role-playing which almost inevitably requires the presence of toy weapons. These might be simple sticks, cardboard swords or perhaps more advanced weapons such as the replica handguns produced by the toy industry. Boys and young male adolescents may play with toy soldiers, build small-scale models of bombers and aircraft carriers or fight digitalized battles in video games. Weapons—almost always in the hands of males—figure prominently in literature, movies and video games aimed towards a mainly adolescent male audience.

Young males in pro-gun societies might be given real (if low-powered) weapons such as air rifles by their parents or they might buy an illegal handgun on the streets—a step which can be seen as a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood, conjuring up, consciously or not, images of a purported golden past of hunter/warrior males. In societies enveloped in conflict, be it in a war fought with child soldiers or in societies such as the United States, Brazil, South Africa or Yemen that are saturated with guns and violence, this passage often happens at an earlier stage than in more peaceful societies.⁵

In countries with conscription armies, weapons training in the national armed forces can be seen as a legally prescribed rite of passage, usually at the age of 18. The armed forces have traditionally been seen as ‘the school of the nation’, where boys become men and earn the full rights of citizenship.⁶ Although most armed forces of industrialized nations nowadays admit women into their ranks, combat training and operations (i.e. the use of weapons systems) tends to remain a male domain. Even in Israel, with its tradition of almost full female conscription, combat soldiers are referred to as ‘our best boys’ and female soldiers are mainly relegated to ‘feminine’ duties such as nursing or administrative work.⁷

Recent studies on the prevalence of small arms in conflict, post-conflict or otherwise violent societies point towards how small arms are, on the one hand, viewed as male status symbols and, on the other hand, as tools for gaining economic and social status. The display of his weapon in public becomes a way in which the man displays his masculinity and defines his role in society.⁸ The ‘message’ conveyed by the bearer of the weapon depends on the culture in question—as does the type of weapon preferred for this display of masculinity. The 2002 *Small Arms Survey* describes how AK-47 Kalashnikovs are part of the ‘Kalashnikov Culture’,⁹ for example, in Central Asia and Somalia. An ‘automatic rifle that symbolizes rebellion in much of the world and masculine responses to social chaos elsewhere ... in these regions it simply would look odd for a man to be seen carrying anything other than a Kalashnikov.’¹⁰

including competing concepts of masculinity. Weapons and their public display seek to underline the ‘manly’ prowess of the bearer, but tragically often also undermine it—men are not only disproportionately the perpetrators of violence, but also often its victims.

Western intervention forces, be they ‘peacekeepers’ or ‘peacemakers’, and the way they are at times displayed in the western media, can be seen as exhibiting similar patterns of militarized masculinity. They are portrayed as western protector-warriors in the streets of Kabul or Pristina, a ‘robust’, manly but benevolent force, sporting designer shades and displaying their weapons while always ready to assist the poor and helpless women and children they encounter. The subtext of this display of weapons is both meant to be seen as symbols and tools of western technological and military superiority, visible warnings to all would-be rogue challengers. Given the delicate nature of peacekeeping operations, overt displays of militarized masculinity may, however, backfire, alienating the local population.¹¹

The tragic irony of the concept of the armed male as a defender of the weak and helpless is that often women and children are far more likely to be killed by the male protector of the family and his weapon than by an outside intruder.¹² The male himself is no less at risk, as worldwide men are most likely to be killed by other males or the weapon may be used by the male against himself to commit suicide. In some countries, the ‘gender gap’ in this respect is immense: in El Salvador, 94% of firearm-related homicide victims were male, in a study of 234 random homicides in Honduras—75% of which were firearm-related—98% of the perpetrators and of the 92% victims were males.¹³ Males are—by a substantial margin—more likely to use a weapon to commit suicide than females.¹⁴

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Weapons as sexual fetishes

The connection between men and weapons often takes on highly sexualized characteristics. The notion of a sword, a gun or a nuclear missile being a phallic symbol or a penile extension has become something of a cliché. This has happened to a point where it no longer can be seen as a subversive critique of male obsession with weapons. Instead, the connection has been co-opted by mass culture—selling ‘manly’ products such as razors or high-powered cars by means of using weapons in adverts to ‘manly men’—and by the arms industry, which sells ‘manly weapons’ to ‘manly men’. The phallic image of weapons—and the corresponding notion of violent masculinity—is reinforced by the entertainment industry through movies and video games.¹⁵

Two groundbreaking feminist analyses of male militarism during the Cold War investigated the sexualized discourse of the nuclear standoff: Helen Caldicott’s *Missile Envy*¹⁶ and Carol Cohn’s ‘Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals’.¹⁷ While Caldicott saw the Cold War arms race as being fuelled by a kind of penile envy, Cohn set out to investigate the sexualized vocabulary of the nuclear standoff without falling into the reductionistic trap of simply equating of missiles with symbolic penises. Cohn describes a language suffused with sexual, mostly phallic, imagery, clouding the lethal nature of the weapons in question. The imagery also creates a sexualized intimacy between the developers and handlers of the weapons systems and the weapon, one that finds its physical manifestation, for example, in a quasi-ritualistic patting of the bomb, missile or bomber. A further interesting metaphor Cohn discovers is that of creating and giving birth to a new world through the destructive power of the nuclear weapon. Here, however, the sexualized metaphors become slightly confused: a phallic missile ‘delivers’ the ‘babies’ (the warheads), and it is these babies that give birth to the new world.

Guns as violent phallic symbols are used, for example, in chants of the US Marine Corps (‘This is my rifle [holding up gun]/ this is my gun [pointing at penis]/ one’s for killing/ the other’s for fun’) or in

pro-gun bumper stickers available in South Africa ('Gun Free South Africa—Suck my Glock'). Condoms issued to soldiers in the Second World War and in later conflicts were often used to cover the muzzle of their rifle to protect them from dust and sand.¹⁸

The phallus is, however, not the only sexualized metaphor employed when seeking to visualize the relationship between men and weapons. Soldiers are also taught to feminize the tools of war: to view their guns as 'brides', as female beings who they are expected to care for. Tanks, naval vessels and aircraft are given female names and adorned with paintings of pin-up girls. The weapon or weapons system thus becomes a female lover, bride or mother of the male soldier. A striking description of the latter is Randall Jarrell's Second World War poem 'The Death of a Ball-Turret Gunner',¹⁹ in which the dead gunner is washed out of the 'womb' of the bomber like a dead foetus.

As with the male phallic metaphors, the use of female metaphors is highly sexualized but it is also somewhat ambiguous—the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima was 'male' (*Little Boy*) and 'delivered' by a 'female' bomber, the *Enola Gay*. In a more recent example, however, the new American MOAB (Massive Ordnance Air Burst) bomb unveiled early in 2003 was nicknamed 'The Mother of All Bombs'. The French nuclear test sites in the South Pacific were all given female names.²⁰ Thus, weapons and weapon systems can be seen as reinforcing traditional notions of gender roles on a symbolic level: the male soldiers takes care of his gun-bride, the tank- or bomber-mother nurtures and protects the young male soldiers. On the other hand, this can also be seen as a symbolic concession to the fact that traditional gender roles are transformed through combat. Women do take part in combat or combat-related activities, including killing, and not only on a symbolic level as 'female' guns and warships. Furthermore, as the example of the French nuclear testing sites shows, the metaphors can unintentionally symbolize violence against women in conflict. As it tends to be men who are using the weapons systems, the sexual metaphors also underline male control over their own bodies (male sexual analogies) and those of women (female sexual analogies).

The violent strand of masculinity, however, not only sees weapons as phallic extensions, as female sex objects or fetishes of male prowess, but also sees the body itself as a weapon. This may, for example, happen in the context of violent spectator sports,²¹ sexualized violence or through suicide attacks. All three are male-dominated domains—females participating in violent sports are viewed as anomalies, males top statistics concerning perpetrators of rape, and the recent appearance of female suicide bombers has taken security forces and the public by surprise. In all three cases the use of the body as a weapon seeks to strengthen the social position of the male, by gaining 'respect' in the ring or on the playing field, gaining 'martyr' status or sexual satisfaction and—above all—power by directly and violently subjugating others.

War as a symbolic sexual act

If one accepts the symbolic sexual quality of weapons, then the use of weapons consequently becomes a symbolic sexual act. Joanne Bourke's *An Intimate History of Killing* studies in great depth the importance given in past military training in the United States and the United Kingdom to the use of bayonets, which was seen as an integral part of building the fighting spirit of the all-male troops.²² The use of the bayonet was described in explicitly sexual terms and those flinching from its use are described as 'effete' or 'feminine'. Given the near-pathological fear of the military establishment of homosexuality, an interesting aspect of these metaphors is that the act of penetration, a symbolic rape, is expected to take place in an all-male environment.

Caldicott's 'missile envy' analysis of the Cold War needs to be revisited and revised when looking at the arms races of today. On a global scale, the military power of the United States is no longer

contested as during the Cold War. Today, no aspiring challenger can or will, at least in the medium term, seek to build a similar arsenal of weapons. Seen from a sexualized point of view, the possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) may be seen as the ‘great equalizer’ or ‘great compensator’, a way of getting back at the global, omnipotent ‘alpha-male’—but only to a limited extent, as no state, much less a non-state actor, is able to match the American nuclear arsenal. The missile race between India and Pakistan is perhaps the one that is closest to the Cold War ‘missile envy’ scenario.

Most conflicts today are ‘low-intensity’ and asymmetric, but may be equally sexualized. In ‘lower intensity’ conflicts the dynamics are somewhat different, as small arms, the weapon of choice, are relatively readily available. In these conflicts, other dynamics (such as the connections one has to a—often ‘hyper-masculine’²³—warlord, may be more important in defining the pecking order than the possession of a weapon. Terrorism can also be seen through the lens of sexualized metaphors. The 11 September 2001 attacks themselves have been described—voluntarily or involuntarily—in explicitly or implicitly sexualized terms. For example, the Twin Towers have been described as symbolizing the dual phalli of American military and economic power, the attacks as being ‘re-masculizing’ acts following the ‘emasculating’ experience of having American troops—amongst them female soldiers—guarding the holiest sites of Islam.²⁴ On the other hand, the attackers were displayed in the American public and media as being ‘cowardly’ and ‘unmanly’ and the subsequent war in Afghanistan as ‘re-masculizing’ for the United States, whose dominance had been symbolically challenged.²⁵

With respect to sexualized violence, against both women and men, in which weapons play a role, the weapon loses its *symbolic* phallic quality and is either used to force sexual acts upon the victim and/or is used as a surrogate phallus for penetrating orifices. Well-documented, horrific cases of this can, for example, be found in the reports by Human Rights Watch on sexualized violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone.²⁶

Weapons and violent masculinity

As we have seen so far, weapons are seen as sex symbols, as fetishes and tools for reinforcing one’s masculinity. This view is bolstered by the mass media, which uses an increasing amount of its (pre-) conflict coverage to present the ‘sexy’ weapons systems that will be employed in the conflict. For example, CNN and Fox News devoted a sizable amount of their airtime to presenting the American arsenal in the run-up to the Iraq War.²⁷

Weapons are the embodiment of violent, often militarized models of masculinity, which, in turn, have broader socio-political ramifications. In these notions of masculinity, the weapon or weapon system is often seen as ‘a fetish object of cult heroism’, as Robert Dean describes the way in which—white, upper class, male—fighter pilots of the First and Second World Wars or torpedo boat captains were deified in the United States.²⁸ Joanne Bourke describes similar ‘warrior myths’ surrounding American, Australian, British and New Zealand pilots and snipers in both World Wars as well as the Viet Nam War.²⁹ In these particular cases, the notions of warrior masculinity in question can be traced to imperial British concepts of masculinity,³⁰ which stress white, Anglo-Saxon, Christian, male superiority and acted as the ideological backdrop for the expanding British Empire. These concepts, Dean argues, were partially taken over by the American political elite in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Weapons are the embodiment of violent, often militarized models of masculinity, which, in turn, have broader socio-political ramifications.

The resurgence of militarized ‘hard body’ masculinity during the Reagan-era in reaction both to a ‘crisis of masculinity’ and foreign policy setbacks as well as its reflection in popular culture is examined by Lynda E. Boose and Susan Jeffords.³¹ In the view of these authors, the ‘emasculating’ experience of

Viet Nam is compensated for in the Reagan/Bush years by a more aggressive foreign policy, mirrored by a cultural shift away from a perceived ‘softer’ masculinity of the late 1960s and 1970s (linked with a ‘defeatist’—read ‘unmasculine’—home front during the Viet Nam War) towards an aggressive masculinity. An indicator of this shift is seen in the male role models conveyed by action movies—the previous James Bond-style action hero with a small gun and relatively refined manners is replaced by John Rambo-style hyper-masculine heroes with ludicrously oversized weapons and muscles.

Notions of ‘warrior’ masculinity are visible in western mass culture. The urban warriors of today, such as the young, dynamic professionals of either sex, can get into the right mindset for their stock exchange battles by wearing military-style designer clothes and driving in luxury versions of military

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vehicles such as Land Rovers or Humvees. Similarly, the actual urban warriors of the world’s low-intensity conflicts often take their fashion cues from western mass culture. Correspondents reporting on conflicts and the staff of relief organizations, even when they are far removed from the actual fighting, are looking increasingly like combatants, wearing toned-down military style clothing, flak vests, helmets and driving oversized all-terrain vehicles. The militarized imagery and the use of military accessories

can be seen as manifestations of a militarized concept of masculinity, an aggressive hyper-individualism that is also dominant in the current neo-liberal discourse: a hyper-individualism, which ‘addresses challenges’ in the civilian world as ‘aggressively’ and ‘robustly’, to use the current peacekeeping jargon, as western intervention forces in Afghanistan, Iraq or Sierra Leone.³²

Violent masculinity

Militarized, violent enactments of masculinity can often be seen as a flight back to an extreme, imagined version of what men are ‘traditionally’ like, a reaction to insecurity posed by perceived threats to one’s masculinity. These neo-traditionalist responses are visible in many societies, and can be triggered by a range of perceived threats—fear of ‘western feminism’, or any other expressions of female independence, the disrupting of traditional social and economic patterns due to increased globalization or the opening of social spaces for non-traditional gender roles. The processes of constructing white militarized men through a culture of open disdain of blacks, civilians, women as well as the violent suppression of homosexuals and dissenters in the apartheid-era South African Defence Force—a reaction to the perceived internal and external threats to the apartheid regime—is a case in point, though an extreme one. Violent masculinity also involves the suppression of alternative, competing masculinities not only in others but in oneself as well. In South Africa, the armed forces went so far as to attempt to ‘cure’ suspected homosexual conscripts through hormonal therapies and electric shock.³³

Conflict situations tend to reinforce narrow views of masculinity—the men with weapons have the power, men are often expected by tradition to be either warriors and/or protectors, and failure to live up to these expectations leads to violence against those perceived to be in an even weaker position, e.g. in the domestic environment. The ‘masculinity’ of civilians is contested by male combatants, for example through the rape of the man, or else his partner, children or relatives who the unarmed male is unable to protect.³⁴

In post-conflict situations, men often reoccupy what new social spaces women were able to create in the conflict as part of a neo-traditionalist return to a ‘golden past’ when ‘men were men and knew what that meant’. Research suggests that in the post-conflict period women are relegated to

narrowly defined roles in society. Men who are labelled as being ‘deviant’ are also subjected to extreme forms of discipline or exclusion. Homophobia is not uncommon and the role of non-combatant males is belittled. The dominant war discourse, i.e. the way the war is subsequently portrayed in official history books, war monuments and the mainstream media, thus becomes one of fighting, unraped heterosexual males, heroic even in defeat. If there is no comprehensive weapons collection programme, it may well happen that wartime small arms are used in enforcing this neo-traditionalist rollback.³⁵

Boys will be boys?

One should be aware of the pitfall that by analysing and labelling certain models of male behaviour as ‘manly’ or ‘masculine’, we risk reinforcing the same violent models of males we seek to deconstruct by claiming that men are essentially violent ‘warriors’ and/or ‘protectors’ drawn to weapons. This shuts out alternative male models of behaviour—those that do not exhort violence—as being ‘unmanly’ and further perpetuates the notion that to be a man is to be inherently violent. Not all men are fascinated by weapons, not all men see carrying a gun as an integral part of masculinity. Conversely, women may be fascinated by weapons and certain types of handguns are marketed specifically for a female clientele—though one has to keep in mind that a primary motivation for women to arm themselves may be the fear of becoming a victim of sexualized violence, perpetuated mostly by males.³⁶ Depicting women as being essentially peaceful and men as essentially violent reinforces the hegemonic, patriarchal models of masculinity and femininity and simultaneously obscures many patterns of dominance and violence.

Depicting women as being essentially peaceful and men as essentially violent reinforces the hegemonic, patriarchal models of masculinity and femininity and simultaneously obscures many patterns of dominance and violence.

An example of this discussion is given by Adam Jones, who counters Susan Brownmiller’s ‘derisive comment’ on the Bosnian, Croatian and Slovenian wars of the early 1990s that ‘Balkan men have proved eager to fight and die for their particular subdivision of Slavic ethnicity’ by showing that most male fighters were not enthusiastic, hyper-masculine ethnic warriors, but rather often forcibly conscripted, at times confused and often desperate men caught up against their will in a lethal and brutal conflict.³⁷ While men were—almost exclusively—responsible for the rapes, murders, maiming and pillaging in the conflicts, men were also over-represented in the victim category as well—with the exception of rape victims, where male victims are virtually absent. This is in part due to the immense personal and extrapolated group stigma of male rape, which leads to severe underreporting.³⁸ Men were usually underrepresented as refugees, a sign that all sides singled out men of combat age to maintain their own side’s potential manpower, to send them to detention camps or to be executed. An extreme example of this was the Srebrenica massacre, in which over 6,500 Bosnian Muslims, almost exclusively men, were killed.

Another indication that masculine roles other than that of the warrior or the armed protector exist and are seen as desirable can be seen in statistics quoted by Wendy Cukier.³⁹ In South Africa, 44.9% of men interviewed in three high crime communities wanted to own firearms and in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 43% of male respondents would own a gun if it were legal. In both cases, the figures for females were lower, 34.4% and 31% respectively. This shows that while men are more likely to see guns as a source of security than women, a *majority* of the male respondents in areas with high gun densities and therefore corresponding ‘gun cultures’ and easy availability of arms still did not see it as desirable to own a gun, even if it were legal. The majority did not view a gun as an essential part of their masculine identity. The number of would-be gun owners is correspondingly smaller in societies with lower gun densities and lower crime rates.

Juvenile bravado, exaggerated machismo and 'locker room' talk with regard to weapons and war can also be seen as an effort to mask one's unease with trying to live up to the warrior role. The sexualized language Cohn described as well as the gendered references used to depict weapons and weapons systems thus become an effort to cover up the horrors of war and the lethal consequences of armed masculinity.

Disarming masculinities

While there is an undeniable and visible 'special relationship' between men and weapons, this is not simply a 'natural' consequence of being a man—nor do all men share this special relationship. While the relationship between men and weapons is often sexually charged, simply equating weapons with phallic extensions is too simple. 'Doing' masculinity with the help of a weapon is instead the visible manifestation of certain, violent and often militarized enactments of masculinity, which need to be analysed in their respective historical and cultural surroundings. These enactments, in turn, have far-reaching social and political consequences, be it on domestic violence or foreign policy. Violent models of masculinity often become hegemonic, with the weapon being used as both a symbol and a tool to demonstrate and enforce this hegemony against others, including competing masculinities. This is often the case in conflict and post-conflict situations but also in societies that are more or less openly violent. Moreover, militarized masculinity is often a backlash to perceived threats to male dominance and power.

Disarmament measures, along with the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, are often dealt with as technical 'numbers game'. A successful and sustainable process of disarmament, though, requires a gendered analysis of the situation, looking at how weapons, concepts of violence and notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' interact in the respective socio-cultural environment. The reduction in the number and strict control of weapons should be coupled with a 'demobilization' of the militarized, violent concepts of masculinity that would see a weapons collection process as 'emasculating'. One needs to work with the alternative unarmed, non-violent concepts of masculinity and femininity already existing in the society in question, further developing and opening possibilities for these and empowering them, thus laying the groundwork for a sustainable peace.

Notes

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4. Michael Messner, 1990, When Bodies are Weapons: Masculinity and Violence in Sport, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 25, no. 3, ICSS, Hamburg.
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9. Descriptions of the 'Kalashnikov Culture' in Bosnia-Herzegovina include Anthony Loyd, 1999, *My War Gone By, I Miss it So*, Anchor Press, London; in Pakistan, Martin Regg Cohn, 2001, Talking Tough on Guns in Pakistan, *The Toronto Star*, 11 April, the latter quoted in the *Small Arms Survey 2002* and available at <<http://www.worldpress.org/Americas/65.cfm>>.
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12. See for example David Hemenway, Tomoko Shinoda-Tagawa and Matthew Miller, 2002, Firearm Availability and Female Homicide Victimization Rates Among 25 Populous High-Income Countries, *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, vol. 57, pp. 100–104, available at <http://jamwa.amwa-doc.org/vol57/57_2_8.htm>, quoted in Farr and Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *op. cit.*; for Sudan, see El Jack, 2002, *op. cit.*
13. For male to male aggression, see Wendy Cukier, 2002, *Gendered Perspectives on Small Arms Proliferation and Misuse: Effects and Policies* in Farr and Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *op. cit.*; for Central American figures see William Godnick, Robert Muggah and Camilla Waszink, 2002, *Stray Bullets: The Impact of Small Arms Misuse in Central America*, Occasional Paper No. 5, Small Arms Survey, Geneva, available at <<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/OPapers/OPaper5CentralAmerica.pdf>>.
14. See for example Sharon Moyer and Peter J. Carrington, 1992, *Gun Availability And Firearms Suicide*, Working Document WD1993-3e, Department of Justice of Canada, Ottawa, available at <http://www.cfc-ccaf.gc.ca/en/research/publications/reports/1990-95/reports/suici_rpt.asp>.
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16. Helen Caldicott, 1984, *Missile Envy*, New York, Bantam Press.
17. Carol Cohn, 1987, Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals, *Signs: Journal of Woman in Culture and Society*, vol. 12, no. 4.
18. For US Marine Corps chant and distribution of condoms, see Goldstein, 2001, *op. cit.*; for South Africa, see Adèle Kirsten, 2002, *White Men with Weapons* in Farr and Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *op. cit.*
19. *The Death of a Ball-Turret Gunner*
From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.
20. Cohn, 1987, *op. cit.*; Goldstein, 2001, *op. cit.*
21. Messner, 1990, *op. cit.*
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29. Bourke, 1999, *op. cit.*
30. See, for example, Ronald Hyam, 1990, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience*, Manchester, Manchester University Press; or on militarized settler masculinity in South Africa, see Robert Morrell, 2001, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal 1880–1920*, Pretoria, University of South Africa Press.
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32. See, for example, Holert and Terkessidis, 2002, *op. cit.*
33. See, for example, Jacklyn Cock, 1991, *Colonels and Cadres: War and Gender in South Africa*, London, Oxford University Press; or Oliver Phillips, 2001, Conscripts in camp: making military men, *African Gender Institute Newsletter*, vol. 8 (July), available at <<http://web.uct.ac.za/org/agii/newslet/vol8/index.htm>>.
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35. For Uganda, see, for example, Dolan, 2002, *op. cit.*; for recent examples from Afghanistan, see Human Rights Watch, 2002, *We Want to Live as Humans—Repression of Women and Girls in Western Afghanistan*, available at <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/afghnwmn1202>>; from Iraq, see Human Rights Watch, 2003, *Climate of Fear: Sexual Violence and Abduction of Women and Girls in Baghdad*, available at <<http://hrw.org/reports/2003/iraq0703>>; for southern Africa, see Vanessa Farr, 2002, *Gendering Demilitarisation as a Peacebuilding Tool*, BICC Paper 20, Bonn, Bonn International Centre for Conversion, available at <<http://www.bicc.de/general/paper20/paper20.pdf>>; and on the use of small arms in gendered post-conflict violence, see Vanessa Farr, 2002, A Gendered Analysis of International Agreements on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in Farr and Gebre-Wold (eds), 2002, *op. cit.*
36. On the manipulation of these fears by means of advertisement by the arms industry, see for example Vanessa Farr, 2003, *Men, Women and Guns—Understanding how Gender Ideologies Support Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation*, in BICC, *Conversion Survey 2003*, Bonn, BICC.
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The Gender Action Plan of the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs

Agnès MARCAILLOU

All departments of the United Nations have been mandated to make every effort to integrate gender perspectives into all of their policies and programmes. In carrying out these mandates, the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) has a double challenge, which is really a single goal: facilitating progress on disarmament through the incorporation of a gender perspective in all of its substantive tasks. This article discusses one of the measures the department has undertaken to meet this challenge.

With its re-establishment as a department in 1998, DDA began the process of incorporating a gender perspective in all of its substantive areas of work. The first steps to that end were taken when the department invited the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and her colleagues to brief the DDA staff on all aspects of the question and, in particular, to explain the meaning of the term 'gender mainstreaming' within the context of disarmament.

The collaboration between the Office of the Special Adviser and DDA led to the preparation and publication of *Gender Perspectives on Disarmament: Briefing Notes* in 2001.¹ These were six short, thematic briefing papers, covering such topics as gender perspectives on weapons of mass destruction, small arms, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). The *Briefing Notes* described the important connections between gender and disarmament in an accessible way and presented a non-conventional perspective on the complex and politically sensitive fields of security, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. While the disarmament issues remained the same, looking at their gender dimensions cast them in a new light and, the department felt, could help to suggest effective and sustainable solutions to peace and security issues.

The DDA Gender Action Plan (hereafter Action Plan) is an outgrowth of the *Briefing Notes* and other DDA efforts to integrate gender perspectives in the global process of disarmament, as well as to integrate disarmament into contemporary efforts on behalf of gender equality. The Action Plan owes its existence to an extensive corpus of mandates, legislative and non-legislative, including internal United Nations policies. These include the 1999 DDA Vision Statement² that affirmed DDA's commitment to advance equal opportunities for men and women while promoting gender perspectives on disarmament, the recommendation of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services³ that the department should consider developing a forward-oriented plan of action on gender and disarmament, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security,⁴ and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.⁵

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The Gender Action Plan

The Action Plan is a concrete working tool, covering the period of April 2003 to December 2005, describing both DDA's vision concerning gender mainstreaming in the work of the department, as well as real steps to achieve that vision. Over a four-month period, two consultants facilitated the drafting of the plan,⁶ undertaking extensive consultations with DDA staff members to generate a common understanding of the plan's purpose and goals. As part of the competency development programme for DDA, the United Nations Office for Human Resources Management bore the cost of producing the Action Plan in order to promote an active and visible policy on mainstreaming a gender perspective in the work of the department.

Throughout the process of creating this unique strategy, the consultants explored with DDA staff how and why gender perspectives were relevant to their work. This resulted in the identification of practical steps to be taken relating both to the substantive areas of work (such as small arms or weapons

of mass destruction) and to common methods of work (such as organizing panels or public outreach activities). The Action Plan sets out the next phase in DDA's activities to explore the overlap, relevance and potential synergy between efforts to promote disarmament and gender equality. The Gender Action

The Gender Action Plan is, in short, the articulation of a practical approach to the theoretical concept of mainstreaming gender in the department's substantive tasks.

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While DDA readily acknowledges that much remains to be learned and numerous issues are yet unexplored, it hopes that this plan establishes a solid basis for future work by fostering a deeper understanding of the substantive issues and the creation and identification of additional practical opportunities for gender mainstreaming in disarmament.

Overview of the plan

Before tackling the practical steps the department should take in relation to gender mainstreaming, the consultants addressed how the inclusion of a gender perspective would improve the disarmament process. In their view, to understand better how the mainstreaming of gender perspectives could further disarmament goals, it was necessary to examine the social and political context in which disarmament is relevant, primarily in armed conflict (including the pre- and post-conflict phases) as well as in policy and decision-making about weapons development, production, deployment, use, limitation and elimination.

Gender analysis begins with people, their experiences and their lives, rather than with notions of state security. Perceptions of security and decisions about weapons—whether to develop, acquire, keep, turn in or destroy them—do not take place in a vacuum but in a multi-dimensional context with political, economic, social and human components.

Unsurprisingly, the decisions of men and women about weapons have gender dimensions. Better appreciation of how gender plays into notions of security and perceptions of weapons can help clarify the challenges to and opportunities for disarmament. Thus understanding the relationships between gender and security, and between gender and weapons, can assist in furthering the goals of disarmament.

The Action Plan begins with a presentation of its mandates, definitions of gender mainstreaming and gender balance for the purposes of the plan, and suggestions concerning mechanisms for reporting on and monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan.⁷

While the Action Plan does not set out authoritative definitions, the concepts of 'gender mainstreaming' and 'gender balance' are discussed for clarification purposes. Although there are links between these two concepts, the plan's focus is on gender mainstreaming in the substantive areas of work of the department and not on gender balance, which would refer to the numbers of women and men in various positions throughout the department and the extent to which they have equal opportunities.

The overall goal of the Action Plan is to facilitate progress on disarmament. DDA could strengthen disarmament dialogue and action through the incorporation of a gender perspective in its day-to-day work. A primary assumption behind the plan is that disarmament—both generally and in specific initiatives—can be supported and reinforced through the integration of gender insights into disarmament debates, decision-making and actions, and through more equitable participation by women in decision-making. Thus a crucial element of DDA's work in this area would be to identify potential synergies and opportunities to support simultaneously effective disarmament and greater gender equality.

The challenge, therefore, is to relate the broad objectives of gender mainstreaming to the specific work of DDA. To do so, the Action Plan identifies four sub-goals:

- Explore the linkages between the promotion of greater gender equality and disarmament;
- Strengthen DDA's internal capacity to ensure the ongoing incorporation of gender perspectives in its work;
- Undertake outreach and advocacy on the importance of including gender perspectives in disarmament discussions; and
- Support equitable participation in disarmament discussions, with an emphasis on bringing in new constituencies and involving gender equality advocates in disarmament discussions.

In order to provide a starting point for gender mainstreaming for each branch of DDA and its three regional centres, the consultants conducted two rounds of extensive discussions and interviews with all staff. This resulted in a branch-by-branch list of initiatives, divided into three categories:

- the *work to date* of each branch on gender equality issues;
- *themes* that each branch is currently working on where a gender perspective is particularly relevant; and
- *specific entry points or activities* that the branches and regional centres have identified as feasible and possible.

The resulting lists are the concrete gender mainstreaming activities the branches and regional centres have agreed to undertake. It is not a list of potential initiatives, but rather an outline of agreed commitments—it includes only activities that a branch or centre has identified as feasible, given its resources and work plan for the three years covered by the Action Plan. The number of entry points varies from branch to branch given their different mandates and potential to work with gender perspectives.

The branches' commitments and activities are clustered under the sub-goals described above. Examples of activities that can support the achievement of each are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of activities to support gender mainstreaming sub-goals

| Overall goal | Facilitate progress on disarmament (through the incorporation of gender perspectives) |
|--|---|
| Sub-goals | Examples of activities that will support the achievement of the sub-goals |
| Explore the linkages between the promotion of greater gender equality and disarmament | Hold panels with an explicit focus on gender dimensions of weapons of mass destruction, small arms, etc. Engage in dialogue with researchers and gender equality advocates who are working on disarmament issues. Support discussion and research of gender-disarmament linkages. |
| Strengthen DDA's internal capacity to ensure the ongoing incorporation of gender perspectives in its work | Ensure regular reporting on progress, obstacles and lessons learned during the implementation of the Action Plan. Use and adapt the checklists provided in Chapter 4. Encourage staff attendance at panels and other discussions that offer opportunities to explore gender-disarmament linkages. |
| Undertake outreach and advocacy on the importance of including gender perspectives in disarmament discussions | Incorporate gender perspectives in regular briefings to Member States. Use DDA's web site to highlight gender-disarmament linkages and research on gender perspectives in disarmament. Raise gender perspectives in other UN disarmament forums (such as CASA). |
| Support equitable participation in disarmament discussions (with an emphasis on bringing in new constituencies and involving gender equality advocates in disarmament discussions) | Bring disarmament issues to gender equality advocates. Develop rosters of female experts. Provide media briefings to the 'women's press' on disarmament topics. Over the longer term, strengthen the capacity of women to participate in disarmament discussions. |

The final section of the Action Plan presents checklists for the department's use as reminders of gender mainstreaming opportunities and rationales. The one-page checklists are organized by activity and would be used and possibly modified by each branch in its ongoing work. The lists were designed to prompt thinking on gender issues as the staff performs various tasks, such as organizing a panel (for example, is the panel a venue to distribute DDA publications on gender and disarmament?), conducting a fact-finding mission (does the mission's schedule include meetings with representatives of women's organizations?), hiring consultants (is there an overall gender balance among the consultants hired by the branch?), formulation of project proposals (has thought been given to how and why gender perspectives might be relevant to the intended results of the project?), etc. They are not exhaustive lists of issues to consider, rather they are meant to be used as tools to raise possibilities and generate ideas, thereby helping DDA staff to consider a full range of issues and actions that can support the mainstreaming of gender perspectives.

While the emphasis of the Action Plan is on pragmatic steps and concrete activities, the consultants noted that these would be more meaningful if those who carried them out had an appreciation of the underlying theory and logic. Two annexes were added to address this need. The first explores some of the crosscutting themes within gender and disarmament, in an attempt to identify how attention to gender roles and perspectives can further the goals of disarmament. The second annex assists in the process of identifying where, how and why gender perspectives are relevant in the current mandate and work of the department by highlighting several issues of convergence between disarmament and

gender perspectives. Similar to the 2001 *Briefing Notes*, it identifies key gender dimensions in areas of work in which the department is engaged, such as weapons of mass destruction, DDR, small arms and light weapons, landmines, outreach to civil society, disarmament and development, and disarmament education.

Conclusion

Vision without action achieves nothing.
Action without vision just passes the time.
Vision with action can change the world.
Nelson Mandela

In launching the Action Plan at a panel discussion in April 2003 entitled 'Making Disarmament More Effective: Men and Women Working Together', then Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Jayantha Dhanapala stressed that the Action Plan was 'intended to strengthen, consolidate, inform and guide the department's work on disarmament into the future.' The emphasis, he said, would be on the word 'action'. DDA staff members bear the responsibility for implementation of the Action Plan and for ensuring that they use it as a tool to assist them in incorporating a gender perspective in their daily activities.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Action Plan is incorporated in individual staff members' annual work plans reviewed by supervisors and managers as part of the UN's Performance Appraisal System, as well as in the annual work plans of every branch and regional centre. Each branch and centre was also requested to report on gender mainstreaming issues in their monthly activity reports.

DDA staff members bear the responsibility for implementation of the Action Plan and for ensuring that they use it as a tool to assist them in incorporating a gender perspective in their daily activities.

In addition, DDA is currently conducting an internal survey to evaluate both the substance of the action plan and the participatory process used to develop it. In 2004, DDA will carry out an overall assessment of the Action Plan with a view to revising and improving the next version of the plan, due in 2006. The assessment will study the results achieved, activities carried out, lessons learned, obstacles and potential future strategies.

The department released a public version containing excerpts from the Action Plan,⁸ not only because of the interest that was generated by the preparation of such a plan—the first of its kind in the United Nations Secretariat—but also because it welcomed the opportunity to share some of DDA's gender strategies and ideas, to provide material for reflection in the ongoing challenge to identify ways and means of working simultaneously for disarmament and gender equality. Although the Action Plan's primary audience is the DDA staff, the department hopes that the experience of creating such a plan and the lessons learned during its implementation will benefit other United Nations departments and agencies as they undertake their own gender mainstreaming activities.

Notes

1. Available on the page <<http://disarmament.un.org/gender.htm>>.
2. See <<http://disarmament.un.org/dda-vision.htm>>.

3. Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, *Inspection of programme management and administrative practices in the Department for Disarmament Affairs*, United Nations document A/56/817 of 12 February 2002, p. 17.
4. Security Council resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000, available at <http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf>.
5. See the complete text of the Platform for Action at <<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/e5dplw.htm#three>>.
6. The two consultants facilitating the drafting of the Action Plan were Merav Datan and Beth Woroniuk.
7. The plan contains four chapters and two annexes. Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the underlying themes relating to gender and disarmament. Chapter 2 introduces and elaborates on the goals and sub-goals of the Action Plan. Chapter 3 provides the elements of the plan for each of the department's branches, including work to date, areas of work where a gender perspective is particularly relevant, and concrete entry points organized by the Action Plan's sub-goals. Chapter 4 presents checklists for the department's use as ongoing reminders of gender mainstreaming opportunities and rationales. Annex I explores gender and disarmament themes in greater depth, and Annex II looks at some of the concrete linkages between disarmament and gender.
8. See <<http://disarmament.un.org/gender/gmap.pdf>>.

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compiled by Dustin CATHCART

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Project working to place the issues of women, peace and security firmly onto the international agenda; site includes case studies on women's experiences in peace-building, and publications such as *Mainstreaming Gender in Peacebuilding: A Framework for Action*.
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A searchable bibliography of writing on men, masculinities, gender and sexualities.
- PeaceWomen <http://www.peacewomen.org>
The PeaceWomen Project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom monitors and works toward rapid and full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
- UNIFEM <http://www.unifem.org>
UNIFEM provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security; includes description of activities and projects, as well as a variety of publications.
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 Public version of the department's Gender Action Plan to mainstream gender issues in the work of the department.

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<http://www.undp.org/gender/tools.htm>
 Links to training tools and educational modules concerning gender mainstreaming.

UNESCO, *Gender Mainstreaming*
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 Highlights UNESCO's efforts to integrate gender equality issues and perspectives throughout its programmes.

Women Watch
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UNIDIR FOCUS

Capacity-Building for Reporting on the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

States participating at the 2001 UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted the UN Programme of Action (PoA) to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. They also agreed to report on an annual basis to monitor the progress made in implementing the PoA.

Because of the wide scope of the PoA and the limited resources available to many states, it was noted that assistance in producing these implementation reports would be needed. UNIDIR, the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, with the support of the governments of Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, initiated a project to help developing countries with reporting on implementation. Geneva-based Small Arms Survey was appointed as technical consultant to the project. A total of eighteen countries participated in the first (pilot) phase, with the objective of getting them to produce implementation reports by the first biennial meeting, held in July 2003.

An assistance package with reporting guidelines was developed for the pilot phase of the project. Participating countries were divided into three groups, each receiving a different level of assistance: the first group received only the assistance package; the second group had access to a 'help line' in addition to the assistance package; and the third group received the package as well as field support.

The ten-week first phase resulted in significant quantitative and qualitative results. All three levels of assistance proved to have a significant role in enhancing the reporting.

Based on the positive feedback received from both assisted countries and the funders, it was decided that the project would be expanded and extended for at least for two additional years. During this second phase, the needs of states will be reassessed and more countries will be offered assistance, with the goal of substantively increasing the number of countries that report and ultimately strengthening the implementation of the PoA by the next biennial meeting (2005).

The project will also analyse all the national implementation reports submitted to date, which will help in the preparation for the 2005 meeting and for the First Review Conference in 2006. Analysis of

In each issue of *Disarmament Forum*, UNIDIR Focus highlights one activity of the Institute, outlining the project's methodology, recent developments in the research or its outcomes. UNIDIR Focus will also describe a new UNIDIR publication. You can find summaries and contact information for all of the Institute's present and past activities, as well as sample chapters of publications and ordering information, online at <<http://www.unidir.org>>.

the reports will both increase transparency and cooperation in the fight against the illicit trade, as well as assist the donor community to identify possible assistance projects.

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Internal Conflict and Regional Security in South Asia: Approaches, Perspectives and Policies

South Asia is one of the most diverse and populous regions of the world. It is also a region that is rife with armed conflict, both internal and external. In all, these conflicts have seriously hindered the social, political and economic life of the region. Tragically, many of these conflicts have proved extremely resistant to resolution efforts and have continued without abatement for decades.

In 2001, UNIDIR hosted four research fellows from South Asia: each from a different country (India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and each from a different academic discipline. This book is the result of their six-month collaboration on the issue of the impact of internal conflicts on regional security in South Asia.

Internal Conflict and Regional Security in South Asia: Approaches, Perspectives and Policies examines the quandary of internal conflict in South Asia. Such conflicts are exceedingly difficult to address because they are typically highly complex and reflect the failure of existing institutions to mitigate differences among various segments of society. The protagonists are often heterogeneous, their motivations amorphous and foreign parties may also be involved. Oppression, hardship, displacement and the creation of vested interests in violence only add to and deepen already existing cleavages. Finally, the scope for mediation in internal conflicts by well-meaning international actors is generally far lower than in the case of external conflict.

Conflict management entails the process of bringing these various segments into agreed institutional settings wherein authentic discussion of grievances can take place. The authors propose the formation of Peace Commissions at the national, sub-national and regional levels that could work in a similar fashion to human rights commissions and assist the people who would otherwise resort to violent conflict.

Internal Conflict and Regional Security in South Asia: Approaches, Perspectives and Policies

S. Dahal, H. Gazdar, S. Keethaponcalan & P. Murthy

UNIDIR, 2003

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Destroying Surplus Weapons: An Assessment of Experience in South Africa and Lesotho

Small arms are the scourge of Africa. They find their way into various parts of the continent, raising levels of fear and violence. They move from countries that experience conflict and war to other countries that are at peace but where there is a market for them. One of the key features for these small weapons is the ease with which they can be bought and sold at low cost. The increased level of firearms-related crime has become untenable for African security forces and requires clear government action.

In the period following the end of apartheid, the South African government quickly learned—the hard way—how weapons that had previously been used in conflict situations could become the tools of choice of violent criminals. Its response was to first understand the depth and scope of the problem and then to act nationally, regionally and internationally. Since 1995, South Africa and Mozambique have cooperated in finding and destroying arms left over from Mozambique's long and bloody civil war. In addition, South Africa has destroyed thousands of domestically seized illicit weapons, established controls on government stockpiles, reviewed and revised its domestic firearms legislation, and assisted Lesotho in the destruction of its surplus small arms and light weapons.

Produced jointly by the Small Arms Survey and UNIDIR, *Destroying Surplus Weapons: An Assessment of Experiences in South Africa and Lesotho* reviews and evaluates the experiences of South Africa and Lesotho with the disposal of surplus weapons and the management of small arms stocks. The aim of the book is to highlight the lessons learned from South Africa and Lesotho, and thereby encourage other governments to carry out similar programmes if they have not already begun to do so. The destruction of surplus weapons is cost-effective and can benefit societies in terms of security, development and economics. In particular the body of experience from Mozambique, Lesotho and South Africa has practical relevance for other countries in Africa.

Destroying Surplus Weapons: An Assessment of Experience in South Africa and Lesotho

Sarah Meek & Noel Stott

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