

# Key International Policies and Legal Mechanisms: Women's Rights in the Context of Peace and Security

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In recent decades, issues relating to women's rights have gained a prominent place in the global policy-making arena. Women's rights in the context of peace and security issues, however, are a relatively new phenomenon. The discussion below provides a brief overview of major policy instruments, resolutions and commitments made by member states of the United Nations (UN) and regional inter-governmental organisations on issues specifically relating to women and decision-making in peace and security issues. It also highlights key steps taken by these institutions and remaining gaps in implementation.

## THE UN SYSTEM

The UN was established by governments in 1945 as a mechanism for international cooperation. Only nation states qualify as members of the UN, and as of 2004, membership totalled 191 countries. Headquartered in New York, the UN's main bodies are the General Assembly, to which each country sends a representative, and the Security Council, which consists of five permanent and 10 rotating member states. The resolutions of the Security Council are binding on UN members.

### 1. UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) is the most important commitment made by the global community with regard to women's participation in the maintenance of peace and security (see full text in appendix). As a Security Council resolution, it is also international law.<sup>1</sup>

Unanimously adopted in October 2000 by the UN's most powerful body, the resolution has officially endorsed the inclusion of civil society groups—notably women—in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements. The resolution spells out actions needed by all actors, including governments and the UN, to ensure the participation of women in peace processes and improve the protection of women in conflict zones.

The resolution calls upon the Council, the UN Secretary General, member states and all other parties

(i.e. non-state actors, militias, humanitarian agencies and civil society) to take action in four interrelated areas: 1) the participation of women in decision-making and peace processes; 2) integration of gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping; 3) the protection of women; and 4) gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems and programmes.

**Participation of Women in Decision-Making and Peace Processes:** The resolution urges member states to increase the “representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.”

It also “urges the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys...and to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.”

It calls on all actors to “support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and... involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements.” It also states that the Security Council should “ensure that its missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups.”

**Implications:** The call for more women provides new opportunities for senior and qualified women to

enter into positions hitherto dominated by men. However, the absence of actual quotas, benchmarks and timelines for the number of women in high-level positions is of concern. No mention is made of how “gender perspectives” will be incorporated into field operations. There is a danger that the key parties will take no substantial action. So, effective monitoring and evaluation by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies and governments are critical for the implementation of this recommendation.

**Gender Perspectives and Training in Peacekeeping:**

The resolution “urges member states to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts.” It requests “the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding.” It also states that the Council is willing to “incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations measures.”

**Implications:** This is a clear endorsement of gender training for peacekeepers and civilian personnel in peace support operations. However, without the commitment of governments to provide additional funds, these measures can be ignored or not implemented adequately. The British and Canadian governments are already initiating gender training for peacekeepers, thereby providing a platform and precedent for other countries to follow. (The online training course can be accessed at [www.genderandpeacekeeping.org](http://www.genderandpeacekeeping.org).)

**The Protection of Women:** The resolution calls on all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective, including:

- “during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post conflict reconstruction” and in the context of disarmament demobilisation and reintegration...”
- “the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.”

It also calls on all parties of armed conflict to:

- “protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;” and
- “respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design.”

Resolution 1325 also emphasises that all states have responsibility for putting an end to impunity and prosecuting those responsible for all war crimes, “including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls and in this regard stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions.”

**Implications:** All state and non-state actors in conflict can be held accountable for violations against women, and all have a responsibility to protect them. UN and humanitarian agencies providing relief to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)<sup>2</sup> can be held accountable for the lack of adequate protection of women and girls, and must ensure gender sensitivity in all their planning, programmes and implementation processes. But without an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism and incentives for compliance that draw on the concerns of the refugees and IDPs themselves, it is unlikely that the necessary changes will be made.

**Gender Mainstreaming in UN Reporting and Implementation Mechanisms:**

The Secretary General is responsible for providing progress reports on gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions and other related areas to the Security Council.

**Omissions:** As a first step, 1325 offers a great deal. But, there are gaps and weaknesses that must be addressed.

- To allow for effective implementation, it is essential that the mandates of all peacekeeping and peace support operations routinely require the protection of women and consultation with them when designing humanitarian programmes.
- It is important that senior gender advisors who have decision-making powers are sent on field operations and fact-finding missions.

- The development of gender-specific information and the collection of gender-disaggregated data to enable a better understanding of the impacts of conflict on women and men, is essential for effective planning of all peace support operations. This is not mentioned in the resolution.
- There is no overt mention of effective accountability mechanisms and disciplinary actions for peacekeepers who violate and exploit refugees, IDPs and local populations.
- There is no call for the development of mechanisms that would enable senior staff at UN headquarters to hear the voices, concerns and opinions of the recipients/beneficiaries of the peace support, relief and rehabilitation operations, so that these operations could be improved from headquarters to the field level.

Within the UN system, the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI) are leading efforts to implement 1325. The **NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security**<sup>3</sup> is also dedicated to advocating for the implementation of the resolution broadly. Status updates and translations of 1325 in other languages can be found at [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org).

### Using 1325

Women peace activists worldwide are using 1325 as a tool for raising awareness about women's experiences of conflict and for holding local authorities and governments accountable. In 2003, a resolution drafted along the lines of 1325 was introduced in the **US** Congress. In **Israel**, Knesset members have introduced a bill based on 1325 as a means of raising awareness about the issue of women's participation in peace and security issues. In **Sri Lanka**, women peace activists are running workshops on "taking 1325 to the village"—introducing the resolution to local women and informing them of their rights under international law. In **Fiji** in 2003, the local Women, Peace and Security Committee demanded that the national defence review process acknowledge the role of women in peace and security issues and successfully advocated for the inclusion of the Minister for Gender Affairs on the National Security Council.

## 2. THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

CEDAW (1979) has provided women with a framework to structure their own national debates and advocacy related to attaining the goal of gender equality (see appendix for the full text). Ratified by 177 (out of 188) countries, it was the first legally binding international convention to set out principles on the rights of women in all fields.<sup>4</sup> Countries that have ratified it have an obligation to implement CEDAW. It prohibits discrimination, seeks to eradicate it in all areas of women's lives<sup>5</sup> and prescribes the measures needed to ensure that women worldwide are able to enjoy their rights.<sup>6</sup> CEDAW covers both public and private acts of violence and sets out recommendations for states to address violence against women, including legal protection, prevention and reporting.<sup>7</sup>

CEDAW's call for increasing women's participation in decision-making processes has been used by national and local governments, as well as regional inter-governmental organisations.

The CEDAW **Optional Protocol** came into force in 1999. By 2004, 75 states had signed the protocol, of which 64 had ratified it. The Optional Protocol strengthens enforcement and compliance with the convention. It allows non-state actors—individuals or organisations—to submit written claims of violations of rights directly to the Committee that monitors CEDAW compliance. This is known as the communications procedure. Second, it gives the Committee a mandate to investigate violations of CEDAW in countries that are signatories to the Protocol.

## 3. BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

At the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, a **Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA)** was produced by member states that highlighted twelve critical areas of concern regarding women. The BPFA is not a binding document, but since its conclusions were reached through consensus and states are signatories to it, signatories do have a commitment to fulfil their obligations.

**Chapter E on Women and Armed Conflict** states that the "full participation [of women] in decision-making,

conflict prevention and resolution and all other peace initiatives [is] essential to the realisation of lasting peace.”<sup>8</sup> The key recommendations for governments regarding women and armed conflict in the BPFA are:

- Recommendation E.1: Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.
- Recommendation E.2: Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.
- Recommendation E.3: Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.
- Recommendation E.4: Promote women’s contribution to fostering a culture of peace.
- Recommendation E.5: Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.
- Recommendation E.6: Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.<sup>9</sup>
- ensure women’s full participation at all levels and stages of decision-making relating to conflict prevention, resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post conflict recovery;
- provide gender-sensitive training to all actors in peacekeeping missions;
- support national efforts to promote education and training for women including leadership, advocacy and conflict resolution skills;
- develop gender-sensitive strategies in humanitarian crises resulting from conflicts;
- involve refugees and displaced women in the design and management of humanitarian activities so they derive equal benefits to men;
- mainstream gender perspectives into national immigration and asylum policies, including recognising gender-related persecution and violence when considering grounds for granting refugee or asylum status;
- seek to ensure the full participation of women in the promotion of peace, in particular through the full implementation of the UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme; and
- explore new ways of generating resources for peace and development through reduction of excessive military expenditure and trade and investment in arms production and acquisition.

#### 4. BEIJING +5

In June 2000, a Special Session of the UN General Assembly was convened for the Beijing +5 Review. The aim of the five-year review was to highlight achievements and areas of progress vis-à-vis the Beijing Platform for Action. It was also to note existing obstacles and emerging challenges and identify concrete steps for action to implement the BPFA. Similar to the BPFA, the “Outcomes” document from the review is not binding, but by signing it, member states have officially committed themselves to taking action and can be held accountable.

**Key Developments:** With regard to conflict resolution and peacebuilding specifically, states at Beijing +5 agreed to:

#### THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

The Commonwealth is an association of 53 countries worldwide.<sup>10</sup> It has three inter-governmental organisations: the Secretariat, the Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning. The **Commonwealth Secretariat** is the main agency, facilitating interactions and consultation among member states and governments.

The Secretariat has a **Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality 2005–15**. The document reflects the Commonwealth’s principles and values and incorporates its responses to the differential impacts of global changes and challenges on women and men, girls and boys. The PoA works towards the attainment of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** and gender equality as expressed in the

1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2000 Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document.

In its PoA, the Commonwealth recognises that poverty eradication, the protection and promotion of human rights, the strengthening of democracy and gender equality are intrinsically interrelated. The PoA therefore takes a rights-based approach to all the critical areas it addresses and is grounded in the framework of international and regional human rights conventions and other instruments.<sup>11</sup> Four critical areas are prioritised:

- gender, democracy, peace and conflict;
- gender, human rights and law;
- gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment; and
- gender and HIV/AIDS.

Within these critical areas, the Commonwealth aims to build on and deepen the gender mainstreaming approach introduced in the 1995 PoA and its 2000 Update. Specifically, it aims to address the continuing challenges of gender-based violence and the achievement of women's full participation in leadership and decision-making.

The Commonwealth has made a clear commitment to women's full participation in democracy and in peace processes. The Fifth Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs recommended a target of no less than 30 percent of women in decision-making in the political, public and private sectors by 2005 in 1996.<sup>12</sup> The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh endorsed this target in 1997.

In 2000, the Sixth Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs recommended that the Commonwealth take action, in collaboration with other international organisations and civil society, to include women at all levels of peacebuilding, peacekeeping, conflict prevention, mediation and resolution and post conflict reconciliation and reconstruction activities. While there have been some achievements, the challenge remains to:

- demonstrate the impact of women's contribution to democracy, peace and conflict in member countries;
- promote accountability for international legal instruments that governments have signed and agreed to;
- bring national legislation with international standards as tools for promoting equality;
- encourage political parties to adopt the 30 percent target for women candidates; and
- mainstream gender equality at all stages of the peace process.

## G-8

The G-8 comprises the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom. The European Union also participates in G-8 summits. G-8 leaders meet annually to discuss key international social, economic and political issues. In addition to the yearly leadership summits, meetings are also held at the ministerial level.

At the G-8 July 2001 meeting in Rome, Italy, the **"Summary of Conclusions of the G-8 Foreign Ministers: Women and Conflict Prevention"** was issued. Building on several former resolutions including the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" and Resolution 1325, the G-8 noted that they "will seize the opportunity to set an example for the international community"<sup>13</sup> with regard to the participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution and post conflict peacebuilding. In particular, the G-8:

- emphasises the importance of the systemic inclusion of women;
- "encourages the participation of all actors of civil society, including women's organisations in conflict prevention and conflict resolution;"<sup>14</sup>
- calls for special attention to the needs of female ex-combatants;
- urges gender sensitivity in training materials for peace support operations, including military, civilian police and humanitarian personnel;

- encourages the appointment of more women to national and international posts including Special Representatives of the Secretary General, Special Envoys, Resident Coordinators and other operational positions; and
- “commits to the integration... of gender perspectives and the participation of women in the development, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes.”<sup>15</sup>

## ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

The OECD has thirty member countries including all major bilateral donors and works with governments and civil society in seventy countries worldwide. Its members are committed to democratic governance and market economy. “The organisation produces internationally agreed instruments, decisions and recommendations to promote rules of the game in areas where multilateral agreement is necessary for individual countries to make progress in a globalised economy.”<sup>16</sup> The **Development Assistance Committee (DAC)** has 23 members, and is the main body within the OECD that addresses development issues.<sup>17</sup> The Committee adopts policy guidance and issues guidelines for its members in their conduct of development cooperation work. In 1997, the OECD/DAC issued **Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation**.<sup>18</sup> The Guidelines explicitly recognise that women “play special roles as bridging partners in dialogue, peace negotiations, reconstruction and rehabilitation strategies and contribute their special experience and perceptions to peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.”

Referencing the Beijing PFA, the Guidelines also state:

Women should be assured equal opportunities to participate in peace fora and activities. Agencies also need to focus on developing efficient strategies and approaches to empower and encourage them to play more assertive roles in shaping a peaceful and viable future for their country through exercises in confidence-building; leadership; negotiation skills, etc.

These principles are further reinforced in the 2001

**DAC Guidelines on Helping Prevent Violent Conflict**<sup>19</sup> with recommendations to OECD members that they:

- “Actively engage women, men and youth in peacebuilding and policy-making processes. All actors need to take better account of the pervasive linkages between gender differences and violent conflicts and their prevention and resolution.
- Reinforce local capacities to influence public policy, and tackle social and political exclusion.”<sup>20</sup>

While the recommendations are not binding, they do state the agreed position of major donors vis-à-vis conflict issues and the role of women. These statements should be reflected in the programmatic work of OECD/DAC members in conflict prevention, resolution and post conflict reconstruction.

## ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has 55 member states from Europe, Central Asia and North America. It is active in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation. The OSCE prides itself in taking a comprehensive approach to security, addressing a wide range of issues including arms control, preventive diplomacy, confidence-building and security measures, human rights, democratisation, election monitoring and economic and environmental security. All states have equal status and decisions are based on consensus.

The organisation headquarters are in Vienna, Austria, and more than 20 missions and field activities are located in Southeastern Europe, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. They work “on the ground” to facilitate political processes, prevent or settle conflicts and promote civil society and the rule of law.

**The OSCE Gender Action Plan:** The OSCE participating states officially “recognise that equality of women and men and the protection and promotion of the human rights of women are essential to sustainable democracy and to security and stability in the OSCE

region.”<sup>21</sup> On June 1, 2000, the OSCE’s Gender Action Plan was officially approved by member states. The plan addresses the following issues:

- *Gender balance and equality for men and women within the OSCE’s structure*, including:
  - the creation of equal opportunities for women;
  - the appointment of gender specialists in the Secretariat and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR); and
  - the provision of gender training for all personnel.
- *Equality for men and women in participating OSCE states*, including:
  - coordination with the international community and local NGOs in developing and implementing gender projects;
  - analysis of data on the status of women; and
  - ensuring that the protection and promotion of human rights, including those of women, form an integral part of the work of the OSCE through the **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)**. Areas of activity include:
    - increasing women’s access to political and public life, and helping NGOs and women political leaders develop effective coalitions and networks;
    - enabling women to participate actively in conflict resolution and management;
    - supporting the development and implementation of legal frameworks for equality and non-discrimination and protection of the human rights of women;
    - assisting persons affected by gender-related violence in conflict and post conflict situations;
    - raising awareness and international cooperation in issues relating to the trafficking in women;
    - encouraging the **High Commissioner on National Minorities** to pay special attention to the status of women belonging to national minorities;
    - supporting efforts by the **Parliamentary Assembly** to promote gender equality in political processes; and

- encouraging the Representative on Freedom of the Media to increase women’s participation in media throughout the OSCE area and to be alert to instances of discrimination against women.

The Gender Action Plan states that in field operations, a gender dimension should be included in the planning of programmes and the appointment of staff. Women in **Kosovo, Bosnia, Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan** can draw attention to these policies and engage with the OSCE. Field operations should appoint gender specialists as focal points to support and supplement the work of the ODIHR. In large missions, a gender coordinator should be appointed. The work of these specialists would include:

- monitoring and assisting the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and projects within the OSCE;
- identifying potential projects relevant to the advancement of women, cooperating with the ODIHR and other OSCE activities and supporting women’s NGOs to develop related programmes; and
- paying particular attention to the situation of women in conflict and post conflict areas and ensuring inclusion of gender and women’s human rights issues in the reports of missions and field activities.

### Using the OSCE Gender Action Plan

The Gender Unit in Warsaw, Poland, has a number of projects through missions or in partnership with local NGOs in different countries, including:

- legal clinics for women, providing free advice, education and awareness-raising on legal rights including inheritance and property rights (**Tajikistan**);
- police training of local police in issues relating to domestic violence and trafficking of women (**Kosovo, Albania, Tajikistan**);
- women’s rights and empowerment (**Armenia**);
- women’s leadership (**Azerbaijan**);
- preventing violence (**Azerbaijan**);
- coalition-building for NGOs (**Georgia**);
- political empowerment and leadership (**Kazakhstan**);
- networking (**Kyrgyzstan**); and
- regional advocacy and coalition-building (**Central Asia**).

## AFRICAN UNION (AU)

### 1. THE SIRTE DECLARATION

This declaration by African Heads of States, issued in 1999, set in motion the creation of the AU. The Declaration was adopted in Lome, Togo, in 2000 and came into force in 2001. As a continental organisation, the AU focuses on the promotion of peace, security and stability. It seeks to promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the 2001 **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights**.

The AU Commission functions as the secretariat of the union. It is the only regional body that has an equal number of men and women commissioners. This development originated during the 2002 launch of the AU when African women succeeded in securing a commitment of equal representation of women and men in the **Durban Declaration**. Within the Commission there is also a **Women, Gender and Development Directorate** with a mandate to oversee women's empowerment efforts and gender mainstreaming in development programmes. Also in 2002, a **Special Unit in the Office of the Chairperson of the Commission** was established with a mandate to coordinate all activities and programmes within the Commission that are related to gender.<sup>22</sup>

In June 2004, the AU, the **Gender Directorate**, and the NGO **Femmes Afrique Solidarité** collaborated on the organisation of a pre-Summit Meeting on Gender. This meeting brought together civil society organisations, academics and government representatives to discuss gender issues affecting African women and to draft a **Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender in the African Union**. This declaration can be found on the AU's website: <http://www.african-union.org>.

### 2. NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD)

NEPAD was conceived as a key strategy for Africa's development and renewal. In the NEPAD framework document and in the follow-up document, the **Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance** (June 2002), specific references are made regarding the need for the promotion of women and the integration of gender

issues in all aspects of the plan for sustainable development. Below is a summary of the key points.

- *Supporting women*—African countries propose:
  - promoting the role of women in all activities as a long-term objective for achieving sustainable development in Africa in the twenty-first century [point 67];
  - promoting the role of women in social and economic development, including by [point 49]:
    - reinforcing their capacity in the domains of education and training;
    - developing revenue-generating activities by facilitating access to credit; and
    - assuring their participation in the political and economic life of African countries;
  - establishing a gender task team to ensure that the specific issues faced by poor women are addressed in the poverty reduction strategies of NEPAD;
  - undertaking actions to advance the cause of human rights in Africa generally and, specifically, to end the moral shame exemplified by the plight of the vulnerable, including women, in conflict situations in Africa [point 10]; and
  - ensuring, as a binding obligation on governments, that women have every opportunity to contribute on terms of full equality to the political and socioeconomic development in African countries [point 11].
- *Promoting peace and security*—African countries propose:
  - promoting long-term conditions for development and security by addressing the political and social vulnerabilities on which conflict is premised [point 73];
  - building the capacity of existing African regional and subregional institutions in four key areas [point 74]:
    - prevention, management and resolution of conflict;
    - peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement;

- post conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction; and
- combating the illicit proliferation of small arms, light weapons and landmines;
- encouraging individual African states to make all efforts to find a lasting solution to existing conflicts, to strengthen their internal security and to promote peace among the countries [point 77]; and
- undertaking a process of targeted capacity-building initiatives, focusing on [point 83]:
  - administrative and civil services;
  - strengthening parliamentary oversight;
  - promoting participatory decision-making;
  - adopting effective measures to combat corruption and embezzlement; and
  - undertaking judicial reforms.

### 3. SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

SADC is made up of 14 member states. SADC's main objective is liberating people in the Southern African region from poverty. Another key objective is the promotion of peace and security. HIV/AIDS<sup>23</sup> is highlighted as a major threat to achieving this objective and is therefore accorded priority in SADC's health programmes.

SADC has an **Organ on Defense, Politics and Security Co-operation** that is responsible for promoting peace and security in the region and is engaged in regional peacekeeping. SADC thus maintains a sustainable brigade-sized peacekeeping force.<sup>24</sup>

Among the priorities of the SADC Secretariat is gender mainstreaming in SADC programmes and activities. A **Department of Strategic Planning, Gender and Development Policy Harmonisation** was established to strengthen the Secretariat in executing these functions. Additionally, a gender mainstreaming framework was created in 1998 and consists of a Committee of Ministers responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs, a regional Advisory Committee including government and NGO representatives, Gender Focal Points and a Gender Unit at the Secretariat. The Committee seeks to strengthen lobbying and advocacy strategies on gender

mainstreaming at both the national and regional levels. SADC also has a Directorate of Social and Human Development and Special Programmes that focuses on gender issues and the promotion and harmonisation of policies and gender development of strategies and programmes. The **SADC Gender Declaration (1997)** calls for a minimum of 30 percent women in decision-making posts in member states by 2005.<sup>25</sup> As a means of monitoring progress, SADC has established a gender unit at its Secretariat and launched the *Gender Monitor*, a magazine to report on gender-mainstreaming activities in development programmes across the region.

### THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament is the European Union's elected assembly. It has 626 members elected directly by citizens of member states. Each state has a specified number of seats. The parliament's resolution on **The Participation of Women in Peaceful Conflict Resolution** was adopted in November 2000. It refers to the lack of effective international protection and judicial mechanisms available to women victims of war and armed conflict. These deficiencies include:

- the lack of specific references within existing legal frameworks that are meant to protect women from all forms of sexual violence in conflict situations;
- the vague wording of declarations regarding the protection of refugee and IDP women;
- the reality of the situation for women in refugee camps, of raped women in war and rape as a weapon of war, including the resulting stigma and discrimination;
- protection against sexual slavery, especially that of young girls, the needs of girl soldiers and the abusive history of some peacekeepers on some UN missions as contributing factors to the increase in child prostitution and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases; and
- the fact that only two European Union member states had ratified the International Criminal Court at the time the resolution was passed.

This opening statement (Preamble) of the resolution highlights a number of developments in the

international community. It builds on the fact that the rights, priorities and interests of women are frequently ignored and that women are marginalised from negotiation processes. It also notes that donor attention during demobilisation<sup>26</sup> of military forces generally focuses on men. The resolution notes that the increased presence of women in peace support operations has resulted in improved relations with local communities, although this increase has only been numerically significant since the 1990s. Similarly, women's peace initiatives across conflict lines are often undertaken at great risk in areas of extreme violence.

The resolution itself makes a series of recommendations categorised into three areas:

**The Protection of War-Affected Populations:** This section condemns rape, sexual slavery and all forms of sexual violence and misconduct. It calls upon member states to ratify and update the wording of the **Geneva Convention on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflict** and to increase funding for health, counselling and witness protection services to victims of rape and sexual violations.

The resolution also includes a call for gender-sensitive training on peace and security initiatives and training on gender aspects of conflict resolution. It calls for the use of local gender expertise and research on gender-based violence during and after conflicts. It also highlights the need for the integration of a gender perspective in the planning of refugee camps.

**International Efforts to Prevent and Solve Armed Conflicts:** The resolution stresses that current conflicts demand the increased use of non-military methods of crisis management and, accordingly, calls on member states and the European Commission to take action by recruiting more women into diplomatic services. It requests the nomination of more women to international diplomatic assignments and senior positions within the UN and an increased percentage of women in delegations to national, regional and international meetings concerned with peace and security. It suggests that there should be a quota of at least 40 percent of women in all areas. These women should hold posts in reconciliation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peacebuilding and

conflict prevention. In reconstruction efforts, it states that gender analysis should be integrated into the planning and practice of external interventions and that the establishment of a national machinery for gender equality within governments should be promoted through a Ministry of Women's Affairs, a Gender Desk or an Office of the Status of Women.

**Community-Based Participation in the Prevention and Resolution of Armed Conflicts:** It is widely recognised that women play a crucial role in the rebuilding of societies after conflict. To prevent their marginalisation, the resolution stresses the importance of local involvement and ownership of the peace and reconciliation process. The resolution calls on member states and the European Commission to support the creation and strengthening of NGOs. They should also ensure that the warring factions incorporate civil society representatives—50 percent of whom should be women—into their negotiation teams. They should promote public debate in post conflict regions on gender-based abuses to ensure that both men and women benefit from external reconstruction initiatives in the process. They should also ensure that the specific rehabilitation needs of girl soldiers are addressed.<sup>27</sup>

The resolution, although not binding, can influence European policies and programmes in the area of conflict.

## ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

The OAS brings together countries in the western hemisphere. It is the region's primary forum for dialogue and cooperation. As part of the structure of the OAS, the **Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)** has taken the lead on the advancement of women. The CIM was formed in 1928 with a mandate "to ensure [the] recognition of the civil and political rights of women."<sup>28</sup> It continues to play an important role in advocating women's participation in governance structures in the region. In February 1998, the CIM prioritised this issue with particular emphasis on the transformation of member states' political cultures, the stereotypical gender-based images in the media and education. Increasingly, it

has become focused on issues of women, peace and security, having held a videoconference with the chair of the Hemispheric Security Committee and women peacebuilders from throughout the region in July 2003.

In November 2002, the **Fifth Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas** met in Santiago, Chile, and produced a declaration that noted their:

...satisfaction for advances in the incorporation of women to the armed forces and security forces in the Hemisphere's states, thereby allowing for a growing degree of equal opportunities...Likewise, we value the holding of the first "Seminar on the Role of Women in Peacekeeping Operations," ...in response to the mandate in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 31, 2000.<sup>29</sup>

In October 2003, the **Declaration on Security in the Americas** was signed in Mexico City by the foreign ministers of the hemisphere and included the following:

The states of the Hemisphere reaffirm the importance of enhancing the participation of women in all efforts to promote peace and security, the need to increase women's decision-making role at all levels in relation to conflict prevention, management, and resolution and to integrate a gender perspective in all policies, programs, and activities of all inter-American organs, agencies, entities, conferences, and processes that deal with matters of hemispheric security.<sup>30</sup>

While neither of these statements is binding, they do represent a strong commitment on the part of OAS member states. Language from each of these declarations has been used in subsequent documents to reiterate the role of women in hemispheric security, and NGOs regularly call upon these documents for advocacy purposes. Civil society and others are currently working toward a General Assembly resolution that would incorporate this language to further strengthen the commitment of OAS member states to the issue of women, peace and security.

## SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATION (SAARC)

SAARC is made up of seven South Asian States: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

SAARC signed a **Framework Agreement with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific** in February 1994 to provide for cooperation on developmental issues such as the prevention of drug trafficking, poverty alleviation and human resource development.<sup>31</sup>

In 1990, SAARC initiated its **Social Agenda**, which includes a focus on social issues such as the eradication of poverty and the development of women and children. The decade 2001–2010 has been designated the SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child. SAARC is particularly concerned with the trafficking of women and children and has developed a regional **Convention on the Prevention of Trafficking on Women and Children**. This Convention includes mechanisms for the prosecution of persons involved in trafficking under national laws. It also provides for assistance in investigations and for the orderly repatriation of victims of trafficking.<sup>32</sup>

## OTHER REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

As of 2004, other regional organisations such as the **Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN)** and the **League of Arab States** had not issued resolutions or declarations regarding women's participation in issues of peace and security. ASEAN, comprising ten member states, including a number of post conflict countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, has made economic development a priority. Among members of the League of Arab States, Egypt has taken a leading role in promoting issues of women's peace and security, particularly through the **Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Initiative**. The League itself, however, has not adopted any related policies.

## ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian States
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CIM	Inter-American Commission of Women
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OAS	Organization of American States
PoA	Plan of Action
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

## ENDNOTES

1. However, it is worth noting that there are no mechanisms currently developed to enforce states' compliance.
2. The acronym IDP is used interchangeably to describe "internally displaced persons" and "internally displaced people."
3. In 2004, members of the Working Group were: International Alert, the Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children, the Hague Appeal for Peace, the International Women's Tribune Center, Femme Afrique Solidarité, Women's Actions for New Directions, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Women's Division and General Board of the Global Division of the United Methodist Church.
4. See <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm>>.
5. Mazurana, Dyan E. and Susan R. McKay. *Women and Peacebuilding*. Montreal: International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 1999. 66-69.
6. See <[www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/)>.
7. See General Recommendation 19, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 11th Sess., Agenda Item 7 at Sect. 25, CEDAW/C/1992/L.1/Add.15, 1992.
8. Fourth World Conference on Women, *The Platform for Action; Global Framework, Article 23*. New York: United Nations, 1996, at <[www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#framework](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#framework)>.
9. Ibid.
10. These countries are former British Colonies. For more information see <<http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=20596>>.
11. See chapter on human rights.
12. *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015*. Nadi, Fiji: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2004. 28 September 2004 <[http://www.beta.fiji.gov.fj/uploads/POA\\_final\\_2\\_June\\_042.pdf](http://www.beta.fiji.gov.fj/uploads/POA_final_2_June_042.pdf)>.
13. *Summary and Conclusions of the G8 Foreign Ministers: Women and Conflict Prevention*, Rome, July 2001 27 September 2004 <<http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/G8ForeignMinistersStatement.pdf>>.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. OECD, 27 September 2004 <[http://www.oecd.org/about/0,2337,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/about/0,2337,en_2649_201185_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)>
17. See chapter on Social and Economic Reconstruction for information on OECD/DAC members.
18. *OECD/DAC Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation*. 27 September 2004 <<http://www.jha.ac/Ref/r017.pdf>>.
19. *Executive Summary, DAC Guidelines Helping Prevent Conflict*. 27 September 2004 <[http://www.oecd.org/document/45/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_34567\\_1886125\\_119820\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/45/0,2340,en_2649_34567_1886125_119820_1_1_1,00.html)>
20. Ibid.
21. See <<http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/OSCEGenderActionPlan.pdf>>.
22. Dupree, Lila, and Kemi Ogunsanya. *Mainstreaming Women into NEPAD: In-Visible Progress? Unpublished article, Women Waging Peace: Washington DC, 2002.*
23. See chapter on HIV/AIDS.
24. See <[www.africa.upenn.edu](http://www.africa.upenn.edu)>.
25. See <[www.ilo.org/public/english](http://www.ilo.org/public/english)>.
26. See chapter on DDR.
27. See <<http://www.peacewomen.org/resources>>.
28. See <[www.oas.org/cim/English/About.htm](http://www.oas.org/cim/English/About.htm)> for more details.
29. *V Conference of Ministers of Defense of Americas Declaration of Santiago, Chile*. <<http://maria.webpg.net/Archivo/d0000197.htm>>.
30. *Declaration on Security in the Americas* <[http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/DeclaracionSecurity\\_102803.asp](http://www.oas.org/documents/eng/DeclaracionSecurity_102803.asp)>.
31. See <[www.saarc-sec.org](http://www.saarc-sec.org)>.
32. See <[www.indianembassy.org/South\\_Asia/SAARC](http://www.indianembassy.org/South_Asia/SAARC)>.