WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY (WPS) IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Peace and security can only be achieved and sustained if all members of society are equal in terms of opportunities, protection, access to resources and services and participation in decision making.

■ **Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security:** This landmark[1] resolution addressed, for the first time, the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It recognized the under valued and under utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding and highlighted the importance of women's equal and full participation, as active agents in peace and security. Eight subsequent resolutions[2] were further adopted to strengthen the implementation of WPS mandates. Strategic reviews[3] have also contributed further to the strengthening of the implementation and in addressing gaps. Collectively these resolutions and recommendations provide UN Peackeeping Operations with a framework for implementing and monitoring the WPS agenda.

■ **Gender equality contributes to lasting peace.** Research shows that women and men experience, engage in and are affected by violent armed conflict differently and have a different understanding of peace. Recognizing and integrating these differences in peacekeeping operations can mitigate the threat to peace and security.

Participation of women in decision-making

■ **Supporting women's full participation.** Peace and security continues to be seen as a male domain, ignoring women's contributions. Despite the varied roles of women, ranging from care givers, to weavers of social cohesion, to combatants, they continue to be excluded. Contributions from women across diverse backgrounds should be engaged to inform decisions and strategies on peacekeeping. When women and women's priorities are placed at the center of peace processes and decision making, the results are more likely to be equitable and contribute to sustainable peace.

■ **Structural barriers impede women's participation in decision-making.** Gender norms frequently expose women to protection risks including personal safety and security. Peacekeeping operations need to recognize this and establish mechanisms and strategies across the peace and conflict continuum that address the structural barriers which marginalise women from peace and security related decision making.

1   Since its founding, the UN has worked to prevent, mitigate and resolve violent conflict
2   1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013) 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015) and 2467 (2019)
3   Global Study of 1325, High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations

United Nations
Peacekeeping

Women's role in prevention and conflict resolution

- **Gendered conflict analysis leads to informed prevention and response strategies.** Developing and integrating gender-responsive conflict analysis that recognizes gender drivers and gendered impact of conflict into all planning assumptions will strengthen preventative efforts and mitigate risks of relapse to conflict.

- **Early warning mechanisms.** Established mechanisms for information gathering should incorporate specific and targeted gendered early warning indicators. Targeted outreach to communities particularly women is indispensable because of their central role in community life. Systematic and regular information about and from women, needs to be integrated into early warning mechanisms to enable appropriate response from peacekeepers.

Protection is priority to peacekeeping

- **Protection of women and girls in conflict settings is the baseline of peacekeeping.** The full range of violations and abuses of women's human rights, and the differentiated impacts of conflict on women are well documented. Risks and prevalence of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is one of the biggest obstacles to women's safety and security in all peacekeeping settings. In conflict contexts the power inequalities that contribute to SGBV are manifested in various forms including as Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), which is used as a tactic of war. A holistic approach should be adopted to address SGBV and CRSV to ensure that survivors have safe, dignified and equal access to protection and justice.

Accountability and investment in WPS

- **Sustaining peace after conflict can be lengthy and costly** yet evidence suggests that undue haste and a narrow focus on cessation of hostilities rather than addressing root causes that include gender dynamics are significant factors for relapse.

- **Commitment of senior leadership** in ensuring accountability of WPS is critical. Developing SMART indicators that capture the goals and targets of WPS in peacekeeping will ensure specific results are achieved across the operations.

- **Strategic Partnerships** are key to delivering and making use of the comparative advantages across the wide spectrum of stakeholders, this includes within the UN system and external such as the Members States and women civil society organisations at local, national , regional and global levels

- **Increased resources** are needed to address shortfalls in financing the different activities to achieve and sustain peace. Demonstrated accountability, political will and attitudinal change are all important elements for advancing the WPS agenda. All peace operations must reflect the values that they promote.