

Good Morning,

Thank you all for joining me today and welcome on this International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. I'm delighted to be speaking about women in UN policing, an issue which is near and dear to my heart. And thank you also to the UN Association of the UK and RUSI for inviting me, and to Colonel Nigel Stafford for chairing this session. I have just completed my time as Police Adviser for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, so I am in the unique position of being able to reflect on the changes I saw occur in UN Policing over the past five years.

When I took over as the UN's Top Cop, my first goal was to make the UN Police the most professional international police service possible, by standardising, training, guidance etc. However, one cannot be a modern, professional police organization without encouraging equal participation of women and men.

It's been thirteen years since the Security Council adopted resolution 1325, a landmark document which recognized that women must have a place at the table when negotiating for peace and rebuilding conflict-torn countries. (It is still not the case in too many conflicts)

The Global Effort to increase female police officers has been extremely important to increasing the quality of the UN Police. When we launched this campaign in 2009, we set the goal of reaching 20 per cent female officers by 2014. I constantly refused to call it campaign as that for me indicates something temporary and short-term. Effort is what we need here! We have only one more year to reach this goal. While we have increased our numbers in the past three and a half years, currently we remain at only 10

per cent female officers. 20 per cent was chosen as the figures most police organisations in the world are at.

Much more should be done.

I can give you a litany of reasons that we need women serving in our police services. First, the police should represent the communities they serve. What community is 90% male?

Second, sexual and gender based violence is grossly underreported. When a woman does have the courage to report, investigators must take great care to avoid re-traumatizing the victim. Many women feel more comfortable speaking with other women about these crimes.

And very often the perpetrator is a man in uniform.

For this reason, having female officers available is very crucial, especially as conflict and post-conflict societies often suffer disproportionately from sexual violence.

Third, imagine if you live in a very traditional society, where strangers of the opposite gender are not allowed to speak with each other. If you have only male officers, you are effectively eliminating the chance that a woman in an IDP camp is going to report an SGBV crime – or **any** crime for that matter.

In addition to these reasons, women police fill a strong symbolic role, as role-models. For example, the all-female Indian brigade deployed in Liberia inspired Liberian women themselves to pursue careers in the local police force. Similarly, in Darfur, local women

began to demand permission to drive after seeing women peacekeepers drive their own vehicles.

I would not discount the power of the image of a woman in a blue beret, especially for the regions where we serve, places where women often do not have the same rights or status as men.

But even in non-conflict states, women in policing still have to break the “brass ceiling.” Hiring a woman chief of police in a large jurisdiction still makes headlines. Here in the UK, or where I come from – Sweden, women are still lagging behind men in command staff positions.

Facebook’s Sheryl Sandberg has recently received a great deal of attention about her call to “Lean In.” We may be a hundred years past the original fight for women’s suffrage and forty years past the women’s liberation movement of the 70s, but even today gender parity still remains elusive, especially in board rooms, parliaments, and situation rooms all over the world.

When discussing the reasons why there aren’t more women in policing, you will often hear someone point to the fact that law enforcement is a physical job. To some extent that’s true, but chasing down criminals, breaking up fights, restraining an unruly detainee – that’s a small fraction of the job.

Police force vs. police service. The small changes are the biggest. Changing mind-set.

Police work done well requires more brains than muscle. It's about communication and problem solving – not to mention report writing. Television shows and movies, for some reason, never seem to show all the report writing we police have to do!

And why don't any of the hero's join UN peacekeeping!!

Both research and personal experience tells us that women rely less on physical force and more on communication during confrontations. (of course there are exceptions). This means that women are more likely to de-escalate potentially violent situations, and less likely to use force than their male counterparts.

In a peacekeeping context, women serving with the UN Police are doing all kinds of jobs. In Afghanistan, one of the UN's community policing advisers is working on a project to increase the number of women in the Afghan National Police. In UNMISS, three female UNPOLs have been teaching basic English skills to South Sudanese Police Women. In Haiti, an all-Female Formed Police Unit are patrolling an IDP camp and providing a rapid response to medical emergencies.

However, the women of the UN Police are not just serving in gender-specific roles. They are doing the same job as their male colleagues – whether that's working as the Chief of Staff to the UN Police Commissioner in Haiti, handling public information and communications for the police component in the Ivory Coast, or planning border security in Libya.

The UNA-UK has made “a safer world” one of its three key policy areas. The promotion of women in police peacekeeping is critical to making a safer world possible for all those

affected by conflict. I am always looking for more ideas on how to attract women to peacekeeping. This is a great opportunity to hear from you about how we could improve the number of women serving abroad in our peacekeeping missions.

I hope that the bond between the UN Police and the United Kingdom will grow stronger in the years to come. As we look forward to new missions in Mali and perhaps Syria, as well as changing missions in Somalia and the DRC, I know that the need will be great. The UK has always been an international leader in community policing, and it would be so beneficial to have that expertise within the ranks of the UN Police. I know that we will have some time later in this session for Q&A, so I do hope you we can engage in a thoughtful discussion on how the UK can strengthen the role of women in police peacekeeping.

Thank you, again, most sincerely for having me here today.