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**23rd May 2007 International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
'Ensuring success in post-conflict reconstruction – tasks for peace-keepers and
those who follow them.'**

**United Nations Association Westminster
At RUSI Whitehall**

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In my brief talk I'll share with you lessons I have identified from my experiences and make a few practical recommendations for military and civilians. In 21st century post-conflict reconstruction we are all in a new ball-game.

I have 'boots on the ground' experience of post conflict reconstruction and peace-building operations in : *Aceh, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Kosovo*. I work on gender, developing democracy, civil society advocacy, media, women's participation in politics and elections, and human rights. I am also a journalist AND went to Bosnia as a journalist in 1993 on behalf of Cosmopolitan magazine.

Since 2001 I have conducted gender workshops at the Swedish Armed Forces International Centre (SWEDINT) for military, police and civilians on implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 - mainstreaming Gender into peace operations and Civil Military Cooperation CIMIC.

I have conducted workshops at NATO HQ in Brussels with an Afghan colleague for NATO Senior Civil Servants on Gender and culture in Afghanistan.

General Rupert Smith describes the changes taking place in in his book – 'The Utility of Force' – the art of war in the Modern World.

General Rupert Smith says we no longer live in a World War 2 world where there is a clear sequence in which war-fighting is followed by diplomacy followed by peace-building.

He says, all three – war-fighting , diplomacy and reconstruction are take place at the same time.

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What used to be called mission-creep has in effect become 'Mission'.

Within this new context the military role globally is increasingly interacting with civilians in conflict countries and over 50% of these civilians are women.

In these conflicts in which civilians are both targets and fighters in the front-line - a key to successful post conflict reconstruction and peace building is seeing women and men as equal partners throughout the process.

This was formally recognized by all our governments in October 2000 when UN Security Council committee chaired by UK Ambassador to the UN, Sir Jeremy Greenstock unanimously passed **UN Security Council Resolution 1325**.

UN SCR 1325 is the first resolution ever passed by the United Nations Security Council that specifically addresses the impact of war on women, and women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

UNSCR 1325 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.

UNSC 1325 calls on everyone involved in peace missions and peace operations : civilian, military and police to:

- *Increase representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict*
- *DDR - 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 dependants*
- *Implement international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts*
- *Mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and Mainstream a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations*
- *Provide specialised training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations*

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European Parliament Resolution

A similar Resolution to UNSCR 1325 was passed by the European Parliament in November 2000. A recommendation accompanying the EP Resolution calls for at least 40% women's representation in all levels of decision making in peace building and post conflict.¹

Since these two resolutions were passed Government Departments in a number of countries and International organisations have started to develop plans of action.

What is needed in order to implement these Resolutions is not rocket science:

1. Political commitment from the top
2. Gender training for all decision makers – military and civilian
3. 40/40 gender balance participation in decision making
4. Sufficient funding and resources to ensure gender perspective are included throughout all phases of post-conflict reconstruction.
5. Gender should be included as a component of evaluation and appraisals.

Gender training means training men and women to look at every process and policy, every decision and activity to examine how it meets the needs of each section of the community, male and female.

Gender mainstreaming is not just a question of appointing a few extra women or just appointing a Gender Advisor. Keywords are:

¹**European Parliament Resolution - Gender Aspects of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding**

A5-0308/2000

' Drawing on various declarations, conventions and resolutions, the European Parliament resolution considers the status of women in the context of armed conflict and makes several recommendations aimed at transforming the situation of women to one based on inclusion and recognition of the rights they hold and the contributions they continually make to peace processes globally. '

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‘representation’. ‘participation’, ‘access’, ‘distribution of resources’ (who benefits?), ‘human rights’ and , ‘women’s visibility and invisibility’, stereotypes, assumptions and perceptions.’

It means ensuring : at all levels participation by women as well as men and consultation with women as well as men in all planning, policy making, decision-making, appointments to senior posts – international and local;

It does not just mean ‘equal opportunities in the workplace.’

- gender balance in the appointment of interim national and municipal governments and on other decision-making entities.
- implementing human rights instruments such as UNSC 1325, CEDAW; the European Parliament Resolution on women and conflict
- ensuring fair access for women in distribution of money, property, food and resources, training opportunities
- protecting women in and around refugee camps from systematic rape and developing ways of protecting women from violence and of ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice

What do we mean by ‘Gender Training’

Gender should be integrated at every point of post conflict activities. – yes, internally in personnel policies, but also and crucially importantly in all operational planning, policies, literature, codes of conduct etc

As we all know, post-reconstruction is an incredibly complicated process which includes :

the pre mission planning phase, appointment of key personnel, policy-formulation, decision-making, allocation of funds, power, property, humanitarian aid and other

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resources, post-conflict reconstruction processes, democratisation processes, economic policy, social and political policy, legal framework and development of constitutions....

For a long time gender considerations were viewed as an optional bolt-on luxury extra 'if we have extra time or extra resources we'll fit it in.'

But

Gender should be considered at every phase of activities:

- Emergency and security
- synchronisation of the civil military effort
- support for institutions and the rule of law
- DDR
- support for the reconstruction of the economy and infrastructure
- support for DPRE returns
- support for the democratisation process
- support for elections
- governance,
- media
- social and economic well-being,
- justice and reconciliation.

Why bother? It's a matter of aiming for mission success.

Peace Operation goals and objectives are more likely to be achieved by the full inclusion of women – international and local. And by viewing every phase of post conflict reconstruction as through viewed through gender spectacles.

Why needed ?

Current situation – There are parallel universes

In past conflict situations there has been a constant self-defeating mismatch between the formal and informal sectors.

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Military leaders , diplomats political leaders, warlords, religious leaders operate in a fairly formal hierarchical structure.

Hierarchy/Ranks are a block to participation by women –

Senior Military, Politicians and Diplomats tend to mainly have contact with counterparts of the same rank. This excludes women community leaders. They have often had no training in how to identify and include a wider range of stakeholders.

BUT the majority of women leaders and female experts are found in the informal structures – NGO leaders, community groups, Head Teachers...

Anyone involved in peace-building and post conflict reconstruction especially CIMIC will need to understand how to reach out and build bridges with women in the formal and informal sector so that women and men work in partnership in decision-making .

DDR ACEH

Last June I was invited by IOM Post-conflict Reintegration

Programme (PCRPP), in Aceh and to make recommendations for future actions and strategies.

I made a 3-week visit to Aceh

I was asked to focus mainly on Gender within the IOM reintegration programme for former combatants and amnesty prisoners, but at the same time to take a broader look at the wider context in which IOM was operating.

In addition I was asked to provide a rationale for inclusion of women former combatants in the PCRPP plus to answer the following questions:

- 1. How would IOM Reintegration Programme locate women combatants?*
- 2. How could IOM deliver assistance to female former combatants within time and the other parameters of the programme?*

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The (IOM) objective to integrate a gender perspective throughout the Aceh Reintegration programme was in line with

both UNSCR1325 and the EP Resolution recognise that women are a vital element in restoring human security and should be fully involved from the start at all levels in any DDR process.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

Paragraph 13 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 dependants.”

European Parliament resolution on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution (2000/2025(INI))

Paragraph 20B states: “ensure that both women and men benefit from reconstruction initiatives, specifically that female ex-combatants are not excluded or made worse off from demobilisation programs”

Key points:

- DDR planners failed to acknowledge the existence of women combatants. The traditional approach for DDR programmes focussed exclusively on weapons-carrying young men.

The main reason given by DDR planners for excluding women has been the received wisdom passed on by decision-makers from one conflict to the next that DDR programmes are supposed to improve security by disarming and disbursing – demobilising combatants and providing them with sufficient assistance to keep these potentially disruptive elements ‘off the street’. This reasoning was often tinged with a cringing attitude to ‘custom and tradition’ however much these elements infringed indigenous women’s international human rights.

Female ex-combatants are not usually regarded as being as much of a threat to peace as their male counterparts, probably because of this women have been ignored and made invisible.

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In addition DDR social objectives were viewed as ‘longer term development issues’.

This narrow approach to DDR may have been because the personnel most heavily involved in planning and initial implementation of DDR operations have frequently come from military backgrounds who were given the objective to stop the conflict (pacification) and then quit the scene.

Mission creep vs Development

Anything concerning medium and longer-term sustainable development, nation-building or democracy-building was known by the derogatory term ‘mission creep’.

In the context of modern conflicts this is an extremely short-sighted view. It is almost an axiom that *‘all conflict contains the seed of future conflicts’*.

It is gradually becoming recognised that policies which allow quick-fix DDR to stand in isolation may be a significant cause of the endemic and repetitive conflicts in so many regions of the globe.

- Lack of hypothecated/targeted funding has been one reason for exclusion of women from DDR programmes.
- After an armed conflict female combatants have difficulties proving their contribution in the conflict. Women are frequently dependent on men, such as their male Commanders, to speak on their behalf in order to confirm their veteran status.
- Once the conflict is over, women themselves sometimes do not reveal their roles as combatants for fear of being stigmatised.

3. Women Associated with Armed Forces (WAFs) in Aceh

Key points:

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- WAFFs in GAM in Aceh were medics, cooks, intelligence gatherers, heads of household, awareness-raising for the cause and providing logistics plus 800-1000 women fulfilled weapon-carrying roles.

The UN Peacekeeping Operations Gender Resource Package states:
“By overlooking those who do not fit the category of a ‘male, able-bodied combatant’, i.e. women ex-combatants, DDR activities are not only less efficient but run the risk of reinforcing existing gender inequalities in local communities and exacerbating economic hardship for women and girls participating in armed groups and forces. Some of them may have unresolved trauma due to violence experienced during the conflict. Such conditions are fertile ground for re-recruitment into armed groups and forces; together with the presence of small arms, these factors undermine the peace-building potential of DDR processes.”¹

Referring to UNSC 1325 Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said:
“Women, as peace and consensus builders, as holders of knowledge in their communities, as members of the communities that receive demobilized combatants and as former combatants themselves, possess particular insights and skills that are relevant to DDR, as well as needing particular provisions, services and outputs from DDR.”

- Achenese women acted as human shields, protecting men who had gone into hiding and refusing to reveal their whereabouts even when tortured and raped.
- Male colleagues in GAM have effectively written women out of the independence struggle now the conflict has finished.

Inclusion of women in Aceh in the DDR programme

Key points:

- Inclusion of women in DDR packages is still mostly uncharted territory.
- Suggested criteria for who should be eligible as DDR beneficiaries:
- Suggested criteria (based on for who should be eligible as DDR beneficiaries:

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- 1: If a woman or girl possesses any type of weapon
- 2: If the use of weapons was an important part of her function during the conflict
- 3: If a woman or girl had any experience of using weapons or she underwent any training in the use of weapons
- 4: If a woman or girl performed essential support functions within the group during the conflict (e.g. cook, porter, intelligence gatherer, medic, sex worker)
- 5: If she is socially and economically dependant on ex-combatants

Recommendations

To staff working on reintegration of individuals:

1. provide opportunities for WAFFs to participate in design, planning and implementation of their Reintegration Programme
2. avoid stereotyping - take measures to ensure women have access to better paid employment in previously all-male preserves
3. build on competencies and the skills many women developed in the conflict
4. provide information based on a labour market assessment of employment and business opportunities
5. organise access to finance, information, computers, e-mails and internet for budding female entrepreneurs
6. provide women with business training and marketing advice

Conflict widows

In Aceh the only category of women that appeared to have any recognition were Conflict Widows.

Conflict widows may eventually receive a maximum of half the total financial benefits that will be paid to individual combatants.

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In terms of peace-building and stability it may be a dubious strategy to give widows only 50% of the amount of assistance provided to combatants. If conflict widows do not have sufficient resources to educate and care for their children the next generation may grow up as marginalised individuals with simmering causes for resentment and future destabilisation.

Specific problems women's NGOs and women Leaders meet:

Lack of access to people in power.

The role of women as mediators in trying to access communication between warring groups are often ignored in official peace mediating initiatives and in post-conflict reconstruction processes and consultations.

Women continue to be excluded from negotiations, treaty-making, post conflict reconstruction planning and policy-making, economic recovery opportunities, and even from the democratisation process itself.

Nearly seven years after the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security little has changed. While the resolution calls for greater involvement of women in conflict resolution and peace-making efforts, women continue to be marginalized within the United Nations and in post-conflict decision-making processes.

Examples: Aceh, Sri Lanka, Israel/Palestine/ Kosovo

Eg: Kosovo

In current talks on the Status of Kosovo, despite repeated lobbying by women across the Balkans, President Martti Ahtisaari, UN Secretary General Envoy in Charge of the Negotiations on the

Future Status of Kosovo and his Contact Group colleagues from UK, France, Germany, Italy and the United States are midwives to delivery of all-male talks on the future of Kosovo.

Kosova Women's Network. represents more than eighty women's organizations of all ethnic groups from throughout

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Kosova. KWN issued the following statement on 8th March 2006 :

“Although the United Nations governs Kosova, it has failed to involve women in decision-making. Notably, despite advocacy efforts on behalf of the Kosova Women’s Network and its many local and international partners, not a single woman was included in the UN-brokered negotiation process for Kosova’s final political status.

In 2006, much of our energy as a network was focused on advocating for UNSCR 1325 to be implemented and thus for women to be included in Kosova’s final status negotiations. Our network joined forces with partners in Kosova and the region to make women’s voices heard during this important process.”

(Since 2001. Local activists took the initiative to compile a report after the United Nations Mission in Kosova “overlooked or disregarded local initiatives toward the resolution’s implementation in its reports to the United Nations.” The report attempted to “fill any voids in information.” The Kosova Women’s Network will continue to monitor UNSCR 1325 implementation in cooperation with its member organizations and regional partners in 2007.

To sum up with recommendations end my talk –

1. UN and member states should ensure there is a Gender balance of at least 40% women and at least 40% men on teams for peace mediation and negotiations; appointment of interim local and national governments and other decision-making bodies.
2. All men and women involved in peace building should have to have at least 3 days gender training at some point in their career.
3. Gender should be a component of career appraisal and programme, project and policy evaluations.

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4. Include a Gender perspective in all planning and policies.
5. Allocate sufficient funding and resources to ensure gender perspective are included throughout all phases of post-conflict reconstruction.

To UK Government:

Appoint an Ambassador for Women in the Foreign Office – as in Norway

To the Ministry of Defence:

Set up Gender force – as in Sweden and Netherlands

Appoint Gender coaches for Senior Military Officers as in Sweden/Norway

So why bother to include women?’ To conclude my talk I’ll answer that question with the following quote:

Former British military officer Mark Knight was partly responsible for the DDR programme in Sierra Leone and until this month responsible for the IOM Aceh programme for the Reintegration of former combatants and amnesty prisoners.

I heard him say to his team:

“The short-term objective is stabilisation, but if we want to achieve long-term peace and long-term stabilisation we must include women as partners in the process.”

End