



Discussion Paper

Women, Peace, and Security

Independent Commission on Multilateralism

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Executive Summary

Over the past two decades, an abundance of legal and policy frameworks in the multilateral system have focused on women's security and empowerment. The international community has sought to address violence against women and women's full and equal participation since the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing. At the United Nations, the Security Council connected women's security with peace more broadly in the year 2000 when it placed "women and peace and security" on the international agenda with Resolution 1325. It has passed six more resolutions on the topic in the intervening years. The creation of UN Women in 2011 showed that gender equality is now recognized as a cross-cutting challenge in international affairs.

However, women continue to be poorly represented in formal peacemaking activities, and they suffer disproportionately from the indirect effects of conflict. International laws on conflict-related sexual violence are advancing, but patterns of behavior on the ground appear slow to change. While change undoubtedly requires concerted action at individual and societal levels, there are also gaps, challenges, and tensions in the multilateral approach that are creating obstacles to progress.

This paper outlines key debates in the field of women, peace, and security (section I) before exploring institutional challenges and opportunities (section II). Finally, the paper offers conclusions and observations that can serve as strategic entry points for action (section III) and recommendations for the multilateral system on operationalizing its policy commitments on women, peace, and security (section IV).

Progress in this area is something on which the credibility of the multilateral system itself depends. Even as the multilateral system—in particular the UN Security Council, which serves as the home of the women, peace and security agenda—continues to prioritize state security over human security, there is now compelling evidence that women's physical security and gender equality in society are associated with broader peace and stability in states. There is growing recognition that inclusive societies, which provide equal opportunity for all, are more likely to be peaceful and stable. Inclusion and inclusive development are increasingly seen as core elements of conflict prevention.

Today, many states are under stress to a great extent because of their exclusive nature and lack of legitimacy, both of which are in turn reflected in the state-based multilateral system. A multilateral system built on exclusive states and exclusive structures is not sustainable. Amid widespread calls for a return to the foundational principle of "we the people," states and the organizations that they create cannot ignore the priorities of half their populations.

The women, peace, and security agenda raises significant questions about the way that the multilateral system conceives of peace and security, and whose interests the system is prioritizing. These fundamental debates in turn influence the institutional gaps and challenges in implementing the agenda and accelerating progress for women and for peace.

These interrelated dilemmas offer **three general tasks ahead** for those looking to improve multilateral engagement on women, peace, and security:

1. **Reimagine traditional approaches to peace and security.** Advancing the women, peace, and security agenda may require a fundamental rethinking of the traditional approach to peace and security in the multilateral system—from conceptions of peace and security to the identification of key actors and the goals of peace processes.
2. **Achieve a unified, holistic, and coherent approach.** Improving women’s security and increasing women’s participation in managing and resolving conflict depends on multiple, related elements—from shifts in social norms to improvements in education and increased women’s representation in politics and policymaking.
3. **Build an inclusive and legitimate multilateral system.** The empowerment of women as equal citizens—and global citizens—could help to make the state-based multilateral system itself more legitimate, credible, and effective while also advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

Fifteen years after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the agenda is undergoing a global review of progress to date. The following six recommendations, described in detail in the paper, can provide strategic entry points for action:

1. **Promote leadership beyond multilateral norm-setting.**
2. **Concentrate on operationalizing the agenda in a coherent way.**
3. **Increase accountability for added efficiency and effectiveness.**
4. **Translate normative frameworks literally and culturally.**
5. **Engage and encourage male champions of equality.**
6. **Partner to develop applied tools.**

The potential of women can only be unlocked by addressing their fundamental needs—ensuring freedom from security threats and linking this agenda to their social and economic advancement. International actors can no longer separate peace and security from development, if participation and gender equality are to advance. This has been recognized in the Sustainable Development Goals, which include critical links to women’s empowerment.

As outlined above, the women, peace, and security agenda raises significant questions about the way the multilateral system conceives of peace and security. Such fundamental change in this realm requires high-level strategic engagement with key decision makers across the UN system, regional

organizations, and member states. It also calls for increased representation of women at decision-making levels in politics and foreign policy in general.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been a profound change in the way that the multilateral system addresses women's security. Widespread campaigns of sexual violence during conflicts in the 1990s, from Bosnia to Rwanda, prompted new investigations into conflict-related sexual violence and led to international recognition of rape as a deliberate strategy of war. As the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing identified women's security as a critical area of concern in both war- and peace-time, a variety of international and regional fora began to shine a spotlight on other forms of violence against women, previously obscured by the shadows of peace.¹ Indeed, violence against women is now understood as a global phenomenon—affecting one in three women around the world and crossing geographic, economic, and social divides.²

These developments have gone hand in hand with an abundance of legal and policy frameworks in the multilateral system focusing on women's security and empowerment. At the United Nations, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recognized gender-based violence as a form of discrimination in 1992, and since then states have used the UN General Assembly to issue numerous declarations on the need to eliminate violence against women in general and particular forms. The UN Security Council connected women's security with peace more broadly in the year 2000 when it placed “women and peace and security” on the international agenda with Resolution 1325. It has passed six more resolutions on the topic in the intervening years. The creation of UN Women in 2011 showed that gender equality is now recognized as a cross-cutting challenge in international affairs. It also demonstrated that the UN is capable of adapting to new needs and priorities through responsive institutional reform.

However, multilateral policy advances and initiatives have struggled to realize progress for women in practice.³ Women continue to be poorly represented in formal peacemaking activities, and they suffer disproportionately from the indirect effects of conflict. International laws on conflict-related sexual violence are advancing, but patterns of behavior on the ground appear slow to change. Violence against women persists in developed as well as developing countries, and national action on domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape varies greatly by region. While change undoubtedly requires concerted action at individual and societal levels, there are also gaps, challenges, and tensions in the multilateral

¹ United Nations, “Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-5 September 1995,” New York, 1996. Not long before the Beijing Platform demanded more significant action from the international community on this issue, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recognized gender-based violence as a form of discrimination in 1992; the UN General Assembly issued a Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993; and the Organization of American States adopted the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in 1994.

² World Health Organization (WHO), “Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence,” Geneva, 2013.

³ The gaps and challenges listed in this paragraph and throughout the report are partly drawn from the data-driven review of 20 years of progress for women's security and stability by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Clinton Foundation, and Gates Foundation. For a summary, see Clinton Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, “No Ceilings: The Full Participation Report,” March 2015, chapter 2.

approach that are creating obstacles to progress. And progress in this area is something on which the credibility of the multilateral system itself—built on “we the people”—depends. As a starting point for discussion, this issue paper outlines some of the current debates in this area (section I) before exploring institutional challenges and opportunities (section II). Finally, the paper offers conclusions and observations that can serve as strategic entry points for action (section III) and recommendations for the multilateral system on operationalizing its policy commitments on women, peace, and security (section IV).

I. Current Debates in Women, Peace, and Security

Among other issues, current debates focus on (a) the place of women’s security in the multilateral system’s traditional conception of peace, (b) questions about efficacy and end goals in peacemaking, and (c) differing interpretations of “women” and “gender.”

(a) Women’s security challenges traditional concepts of peace and stability

Despite significant advances in multilateral action on conflict-related sexual violence, core elements of the women, peace, and security agenda remain at odds with the dominant conceptions of peace and security in the multilateral system, which typically treats peace as the absence of direct physical violence (“negative” peace). This is illustrated in the different ways that men and women experience insecurity. Men make up the majority of combatants during conflict and are more likely than women to die from war’s direct effects. Women are more likely to die from war’s indirect effects after conflict ends—from causes relating to the breakdown in social order, human rights abuses, economic devastation, and the spread of infectious diseases.⁴ Traditional understandings of peace and security fail to take these multidimensional threats to women’s physical security into account. And for the most part, the system continues to treat “conflict” and “postconflict” settings separately, based largely on the end of formal combat and the decline in the battle-related mortality rate.

Partly as a result of this approach, multilateral institutions have also tended to overlook domestic violence against women as a pervasive physical threat during conflict. Research shows that intimate-partner violence increases when conflict breaks out and is more prevalent than conflict-related sexual violence.⁵ Where domestic abuse is socially acceptable, combatants are likely to find it easier to

⁴ Thomas Pluempner and Eric Neumeyer, “The Unequal Burden of War: The Effect of Armed Conflict on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy,” *International Organisation* Vol. 60, No. 3, 2006; Kathleen Kuehnast, Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, Helga Hernes, *Women and War: Power and Protection in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 2011).

⁵ World Bank, *Global Monitoring Report: Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment*, Washington, DC, 2007; E Mooney, “The Concept of Internal Displacement and the Case for Internally Displaced Persons as a Category of Concern,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 3, pages 9–26; Heise and Garcia-Moreno, “Violence by intimate partners,” page 100; Jose V Gallegos and Italo A Gutierrez, “The Effect of Civil Conflict on Domestic Violence: The Case of Peru,” working paper, August 3, 2011, available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1904417>; Sarah Maguire, “Researching a Family Affair: Domestic Violence in FRY, Albania,” in Caroline Sweetman, ed. *Violence Against Women* (Oxford: Oxfam, 1998).

legitimize extreme acts of violence against women.⁶ Similarly, levels of rape and domestic violence remain extremely high in postconflict settings,⁷ as demobilized fighters confront transformed gender roles at home or the frustrations of unemployment, for example.

As such, the boundary between domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence is blurred. Conflict-related sexual violence may be understood as the extreme end of a continuum of gender-based discrimination. International actors seeking to end conflict-related sexual violence would likely also need to address the more hidden epidemic of domestic abuse and the root causes of violence against women. This demands a vision of “positive” peace—which connotes the absence of structural violence and the reinforcement of factors that sustain peaceful societies—and raises questions about how broad the scope of the women, peace, and security agenda should be.

Even as the multilateral system—in particular the UN Security Council, which serves as the home of the women, peace and security agenda—continues to prioritize state security over human security, there is now compelling evidence that women’s physical security and gender equality in society are also associated with broader peace and stability in states.⁸ While the causal direction remains unclear, quantitative analysis shows that women are more likely to face rape, domestic violence, and other physical threats in states with high rates of conflict, crime, and instability, and in those that have poor relations with their neighbors or with the international community.⁹ Similarly, states are less likely to be peaceful if their family laws favor men or gender discrimination is prevalent in practice, despite equality under the law.¹⁰

In addition, there is growing recognition that inclusive societies, which provide equal opportunity for all, are more likely to be peaceful and stable. Inclusion and inclusive development are increasingly seen as core elements of conflict prevention, as noted in the recent reports of the Advisory Group of Experts on the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.¹¹ There are calls to integrate inclusivity more fully into the work of the UN Security Council as well as other parts

⁶ See, for example, Jacqui True, *The Political Economy of Violence against Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Carol Cohn, ed., *Women and Wars* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013).

⁷ See, for example, International Red Cross, “Report on Violence against Women from 1998–2003”, Kigali: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, 2004, cited in True, *The Political Economy of Violence*, page 149.

⁸ Valerie Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). On gender equality, see also, Mary Caprioli, “Primed for violence: the role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict,” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 49, No. 2, 2005, pages 161–178; Erik Melander, “Gender equality and intrastate armed conflict,” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 49 No. 4, 2005, pages 695–714; Institute for Economics and Peace, “Pillars of Peace: Understanding the Key Attitudes and Institutions that Underpin Peaceful Societies,” 2013, page 31.

⁹ Hudson et al, *Sex and World Peace*.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See “The Challenge of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture,” June 29, 2015, and “Uniting our Strengths for Peace – Politics, People, and Partnerships: Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations,” June 16, 2015.

of the UN system and regional organizations.¹² Indeed, many states are under stress to a great extent because of their exclusive nature and concomitant lack of legitimacy, both of which are in turn reflected in the state-based multilateral system. The empowerment of women as equal citizens—and global citizens—could therefore help to make the state-based multilateral system itself more legitimate, credible, and effective while also advancing the women, peace and security agenda.

Further, new global challenges continue to emerge that were not at the forefront of the peace and security agenda when Resolution 1325 was adopted. Climate change is one such issue, and its impacts are not gender neutral. Evidence suggests that while women are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, they are not fully involved in disaster risk management programs and often receive fewer relief benefits.¹³ From food and water scarcity to climate-related displacement, women are critical agents for early warning and recovery and mitigating risks.

Since the year 2000, international attention has also turned to terrorism and violent extremism. Women in affected communities face the increased security threat of extremism and the negative impacts of increasingly securitized responses. Women are often at the forefront of preventing and countering extremism, yet they are often overlooked in CVE programs. However, more actors are beginning to recognize that the inclusion of women in the design and implementation of CVE programs is critical to their success. For example, in Morocco and Algeria, government-supported programs engage women religious leaders, and train them to identify and counter extremist beliefs.¹⁴

The women, peace, and security agenda can serve as a thread that unites today's emerging threats and diverse challenges. These are key human security issues for the multilateral system, and the women, peace, and security agenda must continue to adapt to take these new realities into account.

(b) Women's participation calls the goals of peacemaking into question

In addition to calling for the protection of women from violence, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 created a global framework for increasing women's participation in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict, and called for "increased representation of women at all decision-making levels." However, progress has been difficult to realize in practice, particularly in the realm of high-level peacemaking. In formal peace processes between 1992 and 2011, women made up just 9% of negotiating delegations and 2% of chief mediators.¹⁵ Why is there such a gap between rhetoric and reality? A number of debates are hindering progress on this front.

¹² For example, the UN Security Council will hold an open debate on inclusive development for international peace and security in January 2015, under the presidency of Chile.

¹³ E Enarson and P G Dhar Chakrabarti, *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives*, 2009, page 307.

¹⁴ "Morocco trains female spiritual guides to fight extremism and empower women," PBS News Hour, May 20, 2015.

¹⁵ Based on a UN survey of women's participation in 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011. See UN Women, "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence," October 2012, page 3.

Traditionally, peace processes have sought to bring the belligerents—who are rarely women—to the negotiating table. These parties do not usually want to share power, and multilateral mediators and decision-makers often find it difficult to create the space for new constituencies. Nonstate armed groups, which had previously been excluded, were brought into peace processes in the 1990s, partly because of an increasing body of research on the effects of their inclusion. Although women’s participation in peacemaking can be seen as a right—as half of a society’s population, women have a right to be represented in these decision-making processes that will affect their lives—peacemakers remain divided on the efficacy of their participation.

Many multilateral actors argue that models for inclusive and sustainable settlements are lacking; that time pressures associated with ending the violence do not allow for such a comprehensive approach; and that questions remain about the links between citizen engagement, the durability of peace, and the functioning of the state over time. Yet a growing body of research shows that when women participate meaningfully, the likelihood of a peace agreement being reached increases significantly and the chances that it will be implemented are much higher.¹⁶ In addition, women who participate in peace processes often broaden the set of issues at the negotiating table to address the root causes of conflict, as well as addressing women’s needs and priorities.¹⁷ By incorporating development and human rights as well as security issues in negotiations, they frequently unify these three pillars of the United Nations in their approach.

While some may simply be unaware of the evidence surrounding women’s impact, it is also clear that a deeper resistance to women’s participation is at play. Indeed, women’s participation is one element in a larger dilemma surrounding the legitimacy and efficacy of peace processes as they are currently structured. As demands for democracy, accountability, and meaningful representation grow in societies around the world, citizen participation and local buy-in are increasingly acknowledged as fundamental elements of effective peacebuilding.¹⁸ Yet as countries emerge from conflict, peacebuilding priorities are often determined behind closed doors, in political settlements led by national and international elites that frequently fail to incorporate local knowledge and public expectations in the decision-making process. For instance, women play prominent roles in local mediation in Syria, negotiating humanitarian access and ceasefires at the community level, but they were largely excluded from formal peace talks convened in Geneva in early 2014.¹⁹ For some mediators and power brokers, opening the door to more constituencies—and particularly women, as a traditionally marginalized but heterogeneous group—calls the time-honored mechanism for peacemaking itself into question.

¹⁶ Marie O’Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, “Reimagining Peacemaking: Women’s Roles in Peace Processes,” New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015.

¹⁷ Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, *Women Building Peace* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007).

¹⁸ Thania Paffenholz, ed., *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010).

¹⁹ See Hibaaq Osman, “Where are the Syrian women at the Geneva peace talks?” *The Guardian*, January 23, 2014, and Kristen Williams, “10 Ways Syrian Women are Building Peace and Democracy,” Institute for Inclusive Security, February 21, 2014.

This raises a related quandary about whether the aim of a peace process should be to end violence or to create peace. Those who prioritize stabilization often think that the violent parties are the only legitimate participants, making women's participation less likely. On the other hand, if the goal of a peace process is to build peace, then it makes sense that individuals and groups who seek to build peace and who represent the diversity of the citizenry participate. Associated debates surround models for participation (e.g., should there be separate but linked fora for ending the violence versus building the peace?) and the relevance of traditional peace processes in light of the changing nature of conflict, the proliferation of mediation organizations, and the limited space afforded to multilateral mediators.

(c) Who are the women? Where are the men?

It is now widely agreed that women experience conflict and violence in different ways than men, and that their experiences are not adequately acknowledged and reflected in traditional international approaches to peace and conflict. However, when it comes to women's participation, a tension frequently arises about grouping women under one banner. Critics argue that women also take up arms during conflict and can act as spoilers during peace processes. In addition, many women may not consider their gender as their dominant identity—they may feel better represented by their tribe, nationality, political affiliation, or some other identity marker. Nor will women necessarily articulate priorities and needs that are shared among women or distinct from men's.

On the other hand, supporters of the agenda recognize that women play a variety of roles during conflicts and represent diverse viewpoints and constituencies, just as men do. Still, they remain the minority of combatants and a marginalized and often discriminated group in society—particularly in conflict-affected contexts. Proponents of the women, peace and security agenda see the need for women's participation in its own right, as well as the importance of integrating gender-sensitive approaches to conflict and peace—which can be carried out by women or men.

In parallel, there are increasing calls for a shift in emphasis from “women” to “gender” in peace and security, and a new focus on the roles that men and masculinities play in creating conflict and building peace. For example, while men are the majority of perpetrators of violence in war and in peace-time, they also make up the majority of victims in both contexts. And research shows that male identities—particularly men's interpretation of society's expectations of them—interact with other factors to explain why men are more likely to perpetrate violence or become combatants.²⁰

As knowledge about men's experiences and the motivators of violence improves, it is clear that policies for addressing violence and conflict need to account for the role that notions of masculinity play and the way that men's experiences impact cycles of violence and peace. This partly explains the impetus behind “gender mainstreaming”—incorporating the different implications for women and men into policymaking. Yet there are divergent perspectives on whether “women” or “gender” should take

²⁰ Joseph Vess, Gary Barker, Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, and Alexa Hassink, “The Other Side of Gender: Men as Critical Agents of Change,” United States Institute of Peace, December 2013.

priority. And promoting both has led to some confusion among policymakers between “women” and “gender,” in some instances weakening the impact of both.

II. Institutional Challenges

The current debates and dilemmas in the area of women, peace, and security raise challenges at the institutional level in terms of (a) accountability and political will, (b) the limited involvement of men and society at large, and (c) the fragmented approach to implementation.

(a) Normative advances lack accountability and political will

The multilateral system, and the UN system in particular, has made great strides in advancing the normative framework for women, peace, and security. In addition to seven resolutions on the subject and multiple thematic debates at the UN Security Council, regional organizations have made numerous commitments to increase gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding policies. In 2014, for example, the African Union launched a five-year gender, peace, and security program to develop and implement mechanisms that increase women’s participation. The program aims to accelerate the implementation of existing legal and policy commitments, and develop new strategies to address women’s exclusion and “engender a new peace and security discourse” on the continent.²¹

However, there have been challenges in holding states and multilateral actors accountable for their commitments. Just 50 countries had developed national action plans to implement Resolution 1325 by mid-2015, and some argue that a focus on such technical mechanisms gives states the opportunity to sign up and do nothing. While multilateral frameworks provide a valuable foundation for collective action, a technical approach alone is unlikely to see the implementation of the women, peace, and security agenda in practice. In addition to increasing the accountability of states and multilateral organizations to uphold their commitments, there needs to be a strategic and political push to accelerate progress.

This may require searching for additional fora to promote the agenda, and to elevate it above the politics of the Security Council. While the attention of the permanent members of the Council has been critical to advance the normative framework on women, peace, and security, the engagement of a broader set of member states and governments is necessary for progress on the ground. And to realize the potential of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the agenda needs to be driven by diverse multilateral commitments, national policies, civil society strategies, and local community groups.

(b) Male champions and civil society partners have been overlooked

²¹ “African Union launches five-year Gender Peace and Security Programme 2015-2020,” African Union Commission Peace and Security Department, June 2, 2014.

To a great extent, the women, peace, and security agenda in the multilateral system emerged from the global women's movement and was primarily (though not exclusively) driven by women. Despite the relationship between women's security and peace writ large, and the need for a fundamental shift in social norms, until recently the participation of men has been overlooked. Given the power that men wield in the multilateral system and across societies, men who champion the women, peace, and security agenda can become influential agents of change. Their buy-in is vital for the success of the agenda. It needs to be communicated more clearly—by multilateral organizations, research institutes, and advocacy groups—that women's security is in men's own interest if they seek more peaceful, stable societies. UN Women's #HeForShe campaign, which asks men to take a stand for gender equality, reflects this strategic approach.

The societal shifts needed to realize women's security and peace in practice also suggest that the multilateral system needs to engage more with society at large to accelerate progress. Change is required in families and communities as well as at the policy level. As evidenced by the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, social movements for gender equality and women's empowerment can create significant momentum for policymaking and programming on the women, peace, and security agenda within the multilateral system while also contributing to a wider shift in norms that may reach broader constituencies. In fact, research shows that strong women's movements are more important for reducing violence against women than a country's wealth or women's representation in politics, and that women's participation in peace processes is more likely to be achieved when women's groups mobilize strongly within a country.²² For multilateral actors, these groups can be a source of innovative and creative approaches for effectively implementing the agenda in a way that makes sense in the local context and vernacular. They also play a crucial role in holding elites accountable for implementing their multilateral commitments.

(c) A fragmented approach to implementation

Improved research into violence against women has led to a better understanding of the factors that influence it. At the societal level, violence against women appears most prevalent where violence more broadly is socially acceptable; in societies that exhibit broader gender inequalities; and in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.²³ At the individual level, key risk factors for perpetrators and victims include low levels of education, poverty, exposure to maltreatment as children, attitudes that are accepting of violence, and excessive use of alcohol.²⁴ These findings present clear entry points for the multilateral system to improve women's security in both peace and conflict contexts— and yet another reason to

²² Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, "The Civic Origins of Progressive Change: Combating Violence Against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005," *American Political Science Review* 106, No. 3 (August 2012); O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin, and Paffenholz, "Reimagining Peacemaking."

²³ Rachel Jewkes, "Intimate partner violence: causes and prevention," *The Lancet* Vol. 359, No. 9315, 2002, pages 1423-1429; World Bank, *World Development Report 2012: Gender and Development*, Washington, DC, 2012, page 367; Jeni Klugman and Lucia Hanmer, "Expanding Women's Agency: Where Do We Stand?" *Feminist Economics* (forthcoming), cited in "No Ceilings," pp. 22–23.

²⁴ WHO and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, "Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: taking action and generating evidence," Geneva, 2010.

link these efforts to sustainable development.²⁵ They also reflect domains in which various parts of the multilateral system are already active, making the system well placed to intervene on the multiple levels required.

Yet, the women, peace, and security agenda has largely been siloed in the UN Security Council, which has resulted in three key challenges to a coherent and effective approach:

1. a focus on women's security in conflict settings that fails to recognize the continuum of violence that women face across peace and conflict contexts;
2. a "securitization" of women's rights and gender equality that uses the tools of militarism and coercion to guide international action on what is a complex social problem;²⁶ and
3. a false dichotomy between the women, peace, and security agenda on the one hand and women's economic empowerment and sustainable development on the other.

UN Women plays a key role in mainstreaming gender concerns across the UN system. Created as part of a previous UN reform agenda, it unified the work of previously distinct segments of the UN system that focused on women's empowerment.²⁷ It has made considerable strides toward uniting the multilateral approach, teaming up with the Secretary-General and multiple UN offices on a variety of initiatives such as UNiTE to End Violence Against Women. It is also reaching far beyond the UN system to involve men across societies with innovative campaigns like #HeForShe, as noted above, and Planet 50/50.

Nonetheless, the UN system continues to struggle when it comes to linking the women, peace, and security agenda to gender equality more broadly and the necessary shifts in social and economic spheres. This results in a fragmented approach in which different parts of the system are working on different elements relating to the agenda, without connecting the dots and drawing synergies for implementation. Many senior management and staff throughout the system remain unaware or do not fully understand the relevance of women, peace, and security in their field of work. A lack of coherence among UN departments and agencies as well as regional organizations working on women's issues has also posed challenges in terms of gathering data; measuring change; and agreeing on end goals for women's security and empowerment.

III. Conclusions and Observations

The women, peace, and security agenda raises significant questions about the way that the multilateral system conceives of peace and security, and whose interests the system is prioritizing. These

²⁵ There is now overwhelming evidence now shows that women's participation in the economy also fuels economic growth. See, for example, World Bank, *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity*, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2014); Trish Tierney, ed., *Women in the Global Economy: Leading Social Change* (New York: Institute of International Education, 2013).

²⁶ Natalie Florea Hudson, "Securitizing Women's Rights and Gender Equality," *Journal of Human Rights* 8, No. 1 (Jan–March 2009): 53–70.

²⁷ These were the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

fundamental debates in turn influence the institutional gaps and challenges in implementing the agenda and accelerating progress for women and for peace. These interrelated dilemmas and challenges offer **three general tasks ahead** for those looking to improve multilateral engagement on this issue:

- (1) Reimagine traditional approaches to peace and security.** Advancing the women, peace, and security agenda may require a fundamental rethinking of the traditional approach to peace and security in the multilateral system—from conceptions of peace and security to the identification of key actors and the goals of peace processes. For progress in women’s security *and* states’ security, it may be necessary to shift the focus to a more holistic understanding of peace that goes beyond the absence of war and integrates the perceptions and priorities of those affected by peacemaking and peacekeeping who have previously been excluded.
- (2) Achieve a unified, holistic, and coherent approach.** Improving women’s security and increasing women’s participation in managing and resolving conflict depends on multiple, related elements—from shifts in social norms to improvements in education and increased women’s representation in politics and policymaking. Yet, women, peace, and security initiatives within multilateral institutions often struggle to incorporate this bigger picture and connect to other initiatives seeking to bring about these changes. If the agenda remains fragmented and siloed, continues to be limited to a largely technical approach, and fails to engage sufficiently with men and movements outside the multilateral sphere, progress is likely to stall.

In this respect, the post-2015 development framework and its **Sustainable Development Goals** present a significant opportunity. The inclusion of a target on eliminating all forms of violence against women within the goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well a goal on “peaceful and inclusive societies,” could serve to unify national and international efforts to improve women’s security and send a clear signal that gender equality matters for peace as well as development.²⁸

- (3) Build an inclusive and legitimate multilateral system.** Although international frameworks have advanced, the evidence linking gender equality and peace remains poorly understood among policymakers and society at large. Amid many acknowledgements that empowering women is good for societies, the specific impact that this has on promoting and sustaining peaceful societies remains under-explored. At the same time, there is little consensus on the best way to advance women’s participation in policymaking and peacemaking.

A multilateral system built on exclusive states and exclusive structures is unlikely to overcome these challenges; moreover, as a system it is not sustainable. Amid widespread calls for a return to the foundational principle of “we the peoples,” states and the organizations that they create cannot ignore the priorities of half their populations. Women’s empowerment and gender

²⁸ See UN General Assembly, “Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals,” UN Doc. A/68/970, August 12, 2014.

equality more broadly are necessary for a credible, legitimate, and effective multilateral system. Multilateral actors should evaluate whether the perspectives of people in conflict-affected communities are routinely consulted and taken into account; they should continually re-examine their understanding and operational definitions of ownership and inclusivity in mediation, peace processes, and peacebuilding initiatives.

The year 2015 represents the anniversaries of two significant milestones in global initiatives for women's security and peace in society: the Platform for Action in Beijing in 1995 and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000. The increase in awareness and understanding of the need for women's empowerment, the nature of violence against women, and the links between inclusivity and development over the last two decades, offer a unique moment to begin to tackle this global challenge with accelerated momentum and more strategic interventions at the multilateral level.

Indeed, to mark the fifteenth anniversary of Resolution 1325 in October 2015, a **Global Study** on implementation efforts around the world will be launched, examining progress and remaining challenges for the women, peace, and security agenda. The study will provide a much-needed, in-depth analysis of implementation measures, as well as a basis for renewed efforts to fully realize the potential of Resolution 1325 and successive resolutions. At the same time, governments will come together for a Security Council debate and **high-level review** of women, peace, and security on October 13, 2015, to take stock of progress and renew their commitments to implementation.

Looking ahead, there is a growing call for the United Nations to elect a woman as its next secretary-general – labeled the #She4SG campaign on social media.²⁹ The government of Colombia is leading the charge, calling on member states to put forward female candidates. On September 11, 2015, a General Assembly resolution on transparency and inclusiveness in the secretary-general selection process invited member states to present women as candidates. Many advocates believe that the United Nations should lead by example, and that after eight male secretaries general, it is time for a woman to lead. It's possible that a female leader in the UN Secretariat could bolster the multilateral system's legitimacy and its approach to women's participation in all areas of the United Nations' work.

IV. Recommendations

As this critical moment of reflection and renewed commitments to women, peace, and security approaches, the following **six recommendations** offer strategic entry points for achieving overdue progress:

- (1) Promote leadership beyond multilateral norm-setting:** In practice, resistance to implementing the women, peace, and security agenda within states and multilateral organizations is only partly explained by rational debates. Much of the resistance relates to who holds power and a

²⁹ See, for example, Editorial Board, "The Push for a Woman to Run the U.N.," *The New York Times*, August 22, 2015, and "General Assembly Adopts Historic Resolution on Improving Sec Gen Selection Process, 1 for 7 Billion Campaign, September 14, 2015, available at <http://www.1for7billion.org/news/2015/9/14/general-assembly-adopts-historic-resolution-on-improving-sec-gen-selection>.

reluctance to share it; this could be mitigated by a committed leadership and enlightened interpretation of social norms and values. A political push, as well as technical tools, is needed to accompany the normative advance. With progressive leadership, the issue can be moved beyond a normative framework to real implementation. And implementation should not only be measured through indicators and ‘box-ticking’ exercises, but rather through evidence of broader societal transformation.

The context for the Independent Commission on Multilateralism as a whole is that today’s multilateral tools no longer fit current problems. At the same time, the UN has entry points to take a holistic approach to peace and gender equality. Responses and programs should be linked up at headquarters, but even more importantly—and more challenging—in peace operations, in peacebuilding initiatives, in development programs, and across the multilateral system’s responses to the effects of violence and insecurity on ordinary people.

- (2) Concentrate on operationalizing the agenda in a coherent way:** The United Nations and its member states can locate synergies with the recent reports of the **High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations** and the **Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture**—toward breaking the women, peace, and security agenda out of its silo, by integrating it across development, humanitarian action, and peace and security agendas at large. The emerging recommendations from the Global Study on Resolution 1325 highlight the following priorities: consistent implementation by the Security Council, strengthening the gender architecture of the UN system, removing obstacles and incentivizing greater participation of women in peace and security, and increasing financing and accountability for women, peace, and security commitments. As noted above, women, peace, and security issues can be strategically linked to the sustainable development goals as well as the **2016 World Humanitarian Summit** process—both key opportunities to elevate the debate on women, peace, and security.

Proponents of women, peace, and security have advocated for a “field first” approach, in parallel to the call of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations call for a people-centered approach. Still, there is a need for UN departments to work together to address implementation and encourage member states to take the lead—by translating international norms into domestic legislation and policies. Member states of the UN, for their part, can advocate for coherence in the UN system and push for reforms that break down institutional silos. Across the world, critical operationalization lies on the ground, and a key issue for the UN is how to empower the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) with the capacity to implement these commitments in their mission. There should be a delegation of authority from headquarters to field operations, alongside the increased appointment of women SRSGs and special envoys.

- (3) Efficiency and effectiveness require increased accountability:** At UN headquarters and in their reporting to the Security Council, SRSGs still rarely report on women, peace, and security or gender issues. Accountability for women’s participation and broader social inclusion relates to

the legitimacy of the UN system as a whole, from headquarters to the community-level. If the system is built on exclusivity, its irrelevance will be underscored.

In addition to increased accountability for implementation of standing commitments, multilateral planning must assess possible unintended consequences of proposed programs on women and gender equality. When women are upheld as champions of equality in their countries, they may receive additional resources and support. However, they may also be put at risk, with negative impacts for their personal security. In other cases, post-conflict funding, reparations programs, or demobilization packages leave women out entirely. This systematic exclusion of women from post-conflict recovery programs overlooks the diverse and potentially important roles they play in conflict and peacebuilding, as outlined above. Where these programmatic errors have negative consequences, the UN and multilateral actors should be accountable and seek to repair damage to women leaders and women's organizations.

- (4) Translate normative frameworks literally and culturally:** From skilled civil servants in capitals around the world to religious leaders in traditional communities, many people still do not understand the 1325 agenda or the actions it requires. There is a need to translate the women, peace, and security agenda into something comprehensible, and to recognize the importance of strategic communication and messaging to create momentum.

By translating the policies and practices of the women, peace, and security agenda into accessible resources in many languages, a broader subset of global society can be reached. Further, by re-interpreting the agenda according to local customs or through the lens of religious norms, community leaders can harness the potential of the women, peace, and security framework in their work for progressive change.

- (5) Engage and encourage male champions of equality:** As noted above, in many societies, the principal actors in bringing change on gender equality will be men—who continue to hold the majority of positions in policymaking and the public sector worldwide. The problem of masculinity as it is classically articulated cuts across regions and cultures. More research is needed that examines masculinity to ask, how can we change the psychologies and change mindsets about an equitable space for women?

- (6) Partner to develop applied tools:** Greater synergies can be drawn from connecting bottom-up and top-down efforts and uniting men and women in the search for gender equality, through practical tools. For example, **gender-sensitive context analysis** can help multilateral actors to identify leaders at the grassroots level and in other walks of life, in order to support them as catalysts for change. Ideally, such tools can be participatory, bringing together diverse local actors to contribute knowledge and analysis. That approach, pursued already by some large peace and humanitarian NGOs, can be a peacebuilding initiative in itself—as it models political inclusion and a democratic process.

The practical tool of joint context and conflict analysis by various divisions of the UN, NGOs, and the private sector could map not only sources of violence and risk, but also peaceful actors and sources of resilience. Within the UN, there is great potential for analysis and planning for peace operations or peacebuilding that draws on UN Women's extensive networks of women peace actors in conflict countries. At the moment, the rich local knowledge that could be collected in UN field programs is overlooked, and often not reported to mission leadership in-country or peacebuilding offices at headquarters—which leaves out information on the negative impacts of conflict on women and the critical roles they are playing to make and build peace.

As outlined above, the women, peace, and security agenda raises significant questions about the way that the multilateral system conceives of peace and security. Such fundamental change in this realm requires high-level strategic engagement with key decision makers across the UN system, regional organizations, and member states. It also calls for increased representation of women at decision-making levels in politics and foreign policy in general. If women's voices are still in such a minority in the UN Security Council and in national parliaments, how can the dominant narrative on peace and security reflect women's perceptions of threats and priorities for peace?

The potential of women can only be unlocked by addressing fundamental needs—ensuring their freedom from security threats and linking this agenda to their social and economic development. International actors can no longer separate peace and security from development, if participation and gender equality are to advance. The multilateral system must create measures, processes, and opportunities for women to participate equally, and have accountability mechanisms to ensure progressive implementation. These aspirations and goals have struggled because there is not enough room conceptually for women to revisit the dominant paradigm for peace and security; indeed, this tends to be carried out by officials in the global North. Unless peace and security is redefined and integrated with the agendas of gender equality and broader participation, it will continue to be depicted in negative as opposed to positive terms, as the absence of war instead of the development of stable and prosperous societies. This is the key conceptual shift needed to lay the foundation for overcoming the obstacles that have slowed the implementation of the women, peace, and security agenda.

Annotated Bibliography

I. UN Security Council Resolutions on Women and Peace and Security

The UN Security Council has adopted seven resolutions focusing on women and peace and security since the year 2000. Three resolutions have addressed the broad women and peace and security agenda—across participation, protection, and prevention—and its implementation. Four have focused explicitly on conflict-related sexual violence. The most recent resolution is the first since 1325 to focus in particular on women’s contributions to peacemaking.

Resolution	Focus	Year
1325	Acknowledges a link between women’s experiences of conflict and the maintenance of international peace and security; urges women’s leadership and equal participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding; requires gender mainstreaming for peace operations.	2000
1820	First resolution to recognize conflict-related sexual violence as a tactic of war; requires a response through peacekeeping, justice, services and peace negotiations; emphasizes the need to increase women’s roles in decision-making on conflict prevention and resolution.	2008
1888	Strengthens tools to implement 1820, calling on the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative on sexual violence in conflict; expresses concern regarding the lack of female mediators.	2009
1889	Calls for further strengthening of women’s participation in peace processes and the postconflict period, as well as the development of indicators, monitoring and reporting to measure progress on Resolution 1325.	2009
1960	Provides an accountability system for sexual violence in conflict, including by listing perpetrators; calls on the Secretary-General to establish monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements for sexual violence; encourages efforts to increase the participation of women in formal peace processes.	2010
2106	Provides operational guidance on addressing sexual violence and calls for the further deployment of Women Protection Advisers; calls on all actors to combat impunity for crimes of sexual violence in conflict.	2013
2122	Calls on all parties to peace talks to facilitate equal and full participation of women in decision-making; aims to increase women’s participation in peacemaking by increasing resources and improving information on women in conflict zones; acknowledged the critical contributions of women’s civil society organizations to conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.	2013

II. UN General Assembly Resolutions on Violence Against Women

A number of General Assembly resolutions since the early 1990s have focused on violence against women in different forms. The assembly's 1993 resolution on the elimination of violence against women followed the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's *General Recommendation no. 19 on Violence Against Women* in 1992. The UN's "Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-5 September 1995" also set the agenda for many of the specific issue areas addressed by the General Assembly in the years that followed.

Resolution	Title	Year
48/104	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women	1993
54/133	Traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls	1999
58/147	Elimination of domestic violence against women	2004
59/165	Elimination of crimes against women and girls committed in the name of honour	2004
62/132	Violence against women migrant workers	2007

III. Literature

A variety of academic volumes offer a valuable overview of theories, histories, and practices surrounding women, war, and peace, including Carol Cohn's *Women and Wars* (Polity Press, 2013) and Jacqui True's *The Political Economy of Violence against Women* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Statistical studies have explored the relationship between gender inequality and war, or gender equality and peace. In their 2012 book *Sex and World Peace*, Valerie Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad Emmett show that women's physical security and gender equality in society are correlated with broader peace and stability in states (Columbia University Press). Earlier, in 2005, Mary Caprioli established the role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict in her article "Primed for violence" in *International Studies Quarterly* (vol. 49, no. 2). In the same year, Erik Melander demonstrated that more equal societies, measured either in terms of female representation in parliament or the ratio of female-to-male higher education attainment, are associated with lower levels of intrastate armed conflict in his article "Gender equality and intrastate armed conflict" in *International Studies Quarterly* (vol. 49, no. 4).

A number of publications also explore women's roles in building peace and gender sensitivity in peace processes. Sanam Naraghi Anderlini's 2007 book *Women Building Peace: What They Do, Why It Matters* (Lynne Rienner) explores women's contributions in a plethora of peace and security processes around the world and traces the evolution of international policies in this arena. In 2010, Christine Bell and Catherine O'Rourke explored the impact of Resolution 1325 on peace processes by tracing gender equality and women's rights in peace agreements in "Peace Agreements or 'Pieces of Paper'?" *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* (vol. 59, no. 4).

Different organizations have also produced valuable short reports on these issues. UN Women's 2012 report "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence," provided much-needed figures on women's participation in peace processes. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue further examined women's rights and gender in peace agreements in their 2012 report "From Clause to Effect." In 2013, the International Peace Institute offered an overview of women's roles in high-level conflict mediation in the report "Women in Conflict Mediation: Why It Matters." In 2015, IPI published "Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes," which drew from an initial draft of this issues paper and Thania Paffenholz's research at the Graduate Institute in Geneva. Also in 2015, the Clinton Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided a data-driven overview of global progress on women's empowerment since 1995 in "No Ceilings: The Full Participation Report," which included a chapter dedicated to "ensuring security."

Finally, books exploring women's role in fueling economic growth by creating stable societies include Trish Tierney's *Women in the Global Economy: Leading Social Change* (Institute of International Education, 2013) and the World Bank's *Voice and Agency: Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity* (2014).

