

Defence Reform and Gender

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There is strong recognition that security sector reform (SSR) should meet the different security needs of men, women, boys and girls. The integration of gender issues is also key to the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector, and to local ownership and legitimacy of SSR processes.

This Practice Note provides a short introduction to the benefits of integrating gender issues into defence reform, as well as practical information on doing so.

This Practice Note is based on a longer Tool, and both are part of the **Gender and SSR Toolkit**. Designed to provide an introduction to gender issues for SSR practitioners and policy-makers, the Toolkit includes 12 Tools with corresponding Practice Notes – see *More information*.

Why is gender important to defence reform?

Defence reform entails the transformation of the defence sector of a given state so that the institutions: are under civil control; abide by the principles of accountability and good governance; maintain an appropriate force in numbers; have representative composition; are trained and equipped to suit their strategic environment; and abide by international law, and thus contribute to national and international goals of peace and security.

Gender refers to the roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours and values that society ascribes to men and women. 'Gender' therefore refers to *learned* differences between men and women, while 'sex' refers to the *biological* differences between males and females. Gender roles vary widely within and across cultures, and can change over time. Gender refers not simply to women or men but also to the relationship between them.

The integration of gender into the defence sector involves bringing the experience, knowledge and interests of women and men into the process of *creating* policies and structures for national defence, *implementing* those policies (including through national and international operations) and *evaluating* the results. Integrating gender in defence reform processes is a means to:

Respond to different security needs within society

- Defence reform must effectively respond to the needs of all in society. People's respective security needs vary depending on factors such as sex, ethnicity, age, physical ability, sexual orientation, economic status, citizenship status and religion.
- Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant threat to human security worldwide. Men too are victims of GBV, in such forms as sex-selective massacres, rape and gang-related violence. Ensuring the protection of women, men, girls and boys both during and after a conflict should be a priority within any defence reform agenda.

Respond to the changing needs of the defence sector

- The nature of warfare has undergone far-reaching changes. Defence forces are, in many contexts, involved in complex peacekeeping and reconstruction missions which require skills such as communication, facilitation and cooperation with civilians. Diversity in force composition and gender mainstreaming in operations enables the defence sector to better perform the new tasks required of it (see Box 1).



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Box 1 Female peacekeepers can increase mission effectiveness because:

- Female military personnel are needed to perform body searches on women at roadblocks, airports, etc.
- Local men and women tend to see female peacekeepers as more approachable than male peacekeepers
- Female peacekeepers can more easily gather information from local women, providing valuable intelligence
- Both men and women who are victims of sexual abuse are more likely to disclose this to female peacekeepers
- Female peacekeepers provide positive role models for local women to join armed and security forces

- Members of the armed forces can be perpetrators of GBV against civilians as well as other members of the armed forces. An approach to human rights promotion that takes gender into account, for example through gender sensitivity training and the enforcement of codes of conduct, can strengthen prevention, comprehensive response and accountability.

Create representative defence forces and security organisations

- Women are under-represented in militaries, defence ministries and defence oversight bodies. Even without formal barriers, there are often ceilings to women's career advancement.
- The full integration of women into the armed forces maximises the military's ability to fulfil its role of protecting democratic societies, including the defence of core values such as citizenship and equality.

Strengthen democratic, civil oversight of the defence forces

- A key aspect of defence reform is increased civilian oversight. Including women and gender experts in defence oversight bodies can help to ensure that defence policies and programmes respond to the particular needs of men and women, boys and girls. Women's civil society organisations can bring a holistic understanding of security to civilian oversight processes.

Compliance with obligations under international laws and instruments

Taking the initiative to integrate gender issues into defence reform is not only a matter of operational effectiveness; it is also necessary to comply with international and regional laws, instruments and norms concerning security and gender. Key instruments include:

- *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)*
- *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)*

For more information, please see the Toolkit's Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments.

How can gender be integrated into defence reform?

Gender issues should be addressed throughout the political, institutional, economic and societal levels of defence reform.

Integrating gender into the political level of defence reform

- Ensure that women and men with gender expertise and representatives of government ministries responsible for issues of women's rights, gender and youth are part of defence review bodies.
- Build the gender capacity of defence review bodies through training, briefings on gender and security issues, mentoring programmes, etc.
- Build the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs), including women's organisations, on defence policy issues and security sector oversight. Establish mechanisms to increase their participation in defence reform processes.
- Stimulate debate on a national vision of defence and security through:
 - Consultations with civil society, including urban and rural women's organisations
 - Parliamentary hearings and open debates
 - Engagement with the media

Case Study 1 Increasing the recruitment, retention and deployment of women in the Hungarian armed forces ¹

Hungary successfully raised the participation of women in its armed forces from 4.3% in 2005 to 17.56% in 2006. Since combat positions were opened to women in 1996, women are able to occupy any position within the Hungarian armed forces. Hungary's strategies to increase recruitment, retention and deployment of women include:

- Military Service Law that upholds the equal rights of men and women and guarantees non-discriminatory promotion based on professional skill, experience, performance and service time.
- An Equal Opportunity Team and Equal Opportunity Plan within human resources.
- A Committee on Women of the Hungarian Defence Forces, established in 2003 to ensure equal opportunities for men and women. The Committee conducts research and holds meetings with servicewomen to gather experiences, from which they prepare analyses of the status of gender equality, including problems and recommendations for change.
- A network of women's focal points established at unit level.
- Steps to improve resting and hygienic conditions in the units.

Ghana regularly contributes troops to UN missions and has integrated UN rules governing standards of behaviour for armed forces in peace operations into its national code of conduct:

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse – *The following must be avoided:*

- Any exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex
- Any type of sexual activities with children (persons under the age of 18 years)
- Any other form of humiliation, degrading or exploitative behaviour
- Any sexual favour in exchange for assistance ...
- Any type of sexual misconduct that damages the image, credibility, impartiality or integrity of the forces that deployed you.

Male/Female Relationship – *Healthy and professional interaction between males and females to be encouraged. No immoral relationship to be encouraged among troops.*

Rules for Code of Conduct – *Do not engage in immoral acts of sexual, physical or psychological abuse or exploitation. Respect and regards [sic] the human rights of all.*

Integrating gender into the institutional level of defence reform

- Actively recruit women into defence structures and ensure that women are represented in defence decision-making bodies. Review and amend policies that restrict the participation of women and men, including the restriction of women from combat roles or from rising to the highest ranks (see Case Study 1).
- Implement family-friendly policies – e.g. adequate maternity and paternity leave and the provision of nursing and day care facilities.
- Ensure military education and training addresses cultural sensitivity, civic responsibility, human rights and gender-responsiveness.
- Develop, enforce and monitor codes of conduct for defence force personnel that prohibit sexual discrimination, harassment and exploitation and abuse (see Case Study 2).

Integrating gender into the economic level of defence reform

- Conduct gender analysis of defence budgets to improve the transparency, accountability and public financial management of the defence sector (see Box 2).
- Build the capacity of parliamentarians and civil society to conduct gender analysis of defence budgets.

Box 2

Questions to ask as part of a gender analysis of defence budgets:

- Do general allocations equally provide for the security of women, men, boys and girls?
- Does the budget specify funds for women, men, girls or boys? (e.g. funds to recruit more women; for maternity and paternity leave; for men's and women's health services)
- Does the budget specify gender-related activities, inputs and costs? (e.g. of gender awareness and sensitisation training)

Integrating gender into the societal level of defence reform

- Portray women within the defence forces in the media to highlight the added value that women bring to defence, and change how society views defence institutions.
- Reach out to CSOs, including women's organisations, working on peace and security issues, in order to gain insight, intelligence and establish avenues of collaboration.

Also available in Tool 3...

- Tips on how to integrate gender into a defence review process
- Ways in which parliamentarians can monitor defence reform
- Tips on increasing female recruitment and retention
- Examples of how gender issues have been addressed in defence reform from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, Fiji, Latin America, South Africa and Sweden

Post-conflict challenges and opportunities

Defence reform is an important aspect of post-conflict stabilisation. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants is in many cases an urgent priority. Since women are both participants in and victims of any conflict, it is important that their particular needs and roles are addressed and their full participation ensured from the onset of the peace process and throughout DDR and SSR.

Opportunities for the integration of gender issues

- Broad-based consultation, including women's organisations, on defence and SSR help to establish national consensus on priorities for reform.
- Male 'gender advocates' within the military and in other positions of influence can be powerful partners for change.

- Vetting processes for new national armies benefit from consulting with women's groups and women ex-combatants, who can often provide information on perpetrators of human rights violations.

In DDR processes:

- Gender experts should be involved in planning, implementation and assessment.
- All DDR staff should receive training on gender issues so that they are able to plan, implement and assess programmes in a gender-responsive manner.
- Sex-disaggregated data must be collected and used to develop a clear picture of all ex-combatants, dependents and others associated with armed groups.
- Women's organisations should receive information about the technical and procedural aspects of DDR, so they can help ensure that women participate in decision-making and understand their entitlements.
- Initiatives can be taken to recruit female ex-combatants into the defence forces.

? Questions for defence reform

Gender can be integrated into defence reform in order to increase its effectiveness. Key questions to ask as part of assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes include:

- Has there been consultation to ensure that the defence reform agenda reflects the concerns of women and marginalised men? Have CSOs been included in defence review processes?
- Are there initiatives to build the gender capacity of defence review bodies, parliamentarians and CSOs engaged in defence oversight, such as gender training and briefings on gender and security issues?
- Have targets been set and mechanisms put in place to increase the recruitment, retention and advancement of women within defence structures including the armed forces and ministry of defence?
- Are there concrete measures, including codes of conduct, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, to prevent, respond and sanction sexual harassment and human rights violations by defence personnel?
- Have gender issues been integrated into the standard training for all levels of defence personnel? Is training in gender-awareness and sexual exploitation and abuse mandatory for all personnel? Are men involved in delivering the training? How well resourced is the training?
- Is the protection of women, men, boys and girls against all forms of GBV both during and after a conflict a priority within the defence reform agenda?
- Has gender analysis of the defence budget been undertaken?

More information

Resources

Anderlini, S.N. with Conaway, C.P. – *Negotiating the Transition to Democracy and Transforming the Security Sector: The Vital Contributions of South African Women*, 2004.

Committee on Women in the NATO Forces – *CWINF Guidance for NATO Gender Mainstreaming*, 2007.

DPKO – *Gender Resource Package*, 2004.

UN-INSTRAW – *Securing Equality, Engendering Peace: A Guide to Policy and Planning on Women, Peace and Security (UN SCR 1325)*, 2006.

UNIFEM – *Getting it Right, Doing it Right: Gender and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration*, 2004.

Organisations

ACCORD – www.accord.org.za

DCAF – www.dcaf.ch

Institute for Security Studies – www.issafrica.org/

Siyanda: Mainstreaming Gender Equality – www.siyanda.org

UN-INSTRAW – www.un-instraw.org

Gender and SSR Toolkit

1. Security Sector Reform and Gender
 2. Police Reform and Gender
 3. Defence Reform and Gender
 4. Justice Reform and Gender
 5. Penal Reform and Gender
 6. Border Management and Gender
 7. Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
 8. National Security Policy-Making and Gender
 9. Civil Society Oversight of the Security Sector and Gender
 10. Private Military and Security Companies and Gender
 11. SSR Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation and Gender
 12. Gender Training for Security Sector Personnel
- Annex on International and Regional Laws and Instruments

Each of these Tools and Practice Notes are available from: www.dcaf.ch, www.un-instraw.org and www.osce.org/odhr.

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¹ Committee on Women in the NATO Forces and the Women's Research & Education Institute, 'Percentages of Female Soldiers in NATO Countries' Armed Forces'; Committee on Women in the NATO Forces, 'Percentages of Military Service Women in 2006', and 'Hungarian National Report for 2006'.

² Extract from presentation by Klutsey, E.A. (Col.) on the Code of Conduct of Ghana, presented at the Preparatory Meeting on the Draft West African Code of Conduct for the Armed and Security Forces, Oct. 2005, pp. 24-26, http://www.dcaf.ch/awg/ev_accra_051024_presentation_Klutsey.pdf