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Engaging in Security

The Need for Women's Empowerment in the Dominican Security Sector

Jasmin Blessing, Louise Bjurström, Nicola Popovic

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Abstract

This case study of the Dominican Republic examines the police, military, judicial and penal systems, and civil society through a gender lens in order to assess the status of equal participation and gender equality in the security sector. The study analyses the Dominican security sector's progress in incorporating gender considerations into its work, in two areas: women's possibilities to participate in the work of each institution on the one hand and as beneficiaries of the services of the security sector on the other. Based upon an analysis of the information collected in the Dominican Republic, the case study concludes that the Dominican security sector has made progress in the creation of certain programmes and reforms; however, institutional barriers still block women's equal participation. All of the security institutions investigated in this study show tendencies towards the internal reproduction of traditional gender roles by hiring women into support positions and continuing to exclude them from traditionally 'male' positions. Further, gender issues continue to be marginalized and violence against women is not viewed as a key threat to public or national security. To address this, specific and cross-sectoral reforms and programmes are needed, such as the creation of joint working groups to ensure collaboration between institutions; defining clear areas of responsibility for each sector; and the establishment of a clear framework for accountability. Most importantly the development of a systematic sensitisation programme for police, military and the justice sector that deals with violence against women in a coordinated manner is needed in order to create a security sector responsive to the needs and capacities of men, women, boys and girls.

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Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CESA	El Cuerpo Especializado de Seguridad Aeroportuaria
CESEP	El Cuerpo Especializado de Seguridad Portuaria
CIPAF	Centro de Investigación para la Avance Femenina
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
DNCD	Dirección Nacional de Control de Drogas
DNI	Departamento Nacional de Investigaciones
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FLASCO	Facultad Latinoamérica de Ciencias Sociales
GBV	Gender-based violence
GNI	Gross National Income
IDHA	Instituto de Dignidad Humana
IDHSD	Instituto de Derechos Humanos Santo Domingo
INSTRAW	UN Int'l Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
INTEC	Instituto Technológico de Santo Domingo
ISSPOL	Instituto de Seguridad Social de la Policía Nacional
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SEM	Secretaría del Estado de la Mujer
SEPOLCAC	System of Police Statistics of Central America and the Caribbean
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1. Introduction

Perceptions of security and necessities for a secure environment differ between men, women, boys and girls. Violence, conflict, and general insecurity also affect men and women in different ways. For example, data suggests that while violence against men often occurs in public spaces, the household environment is less safe for women. Men are more regularly impacted by gun injuries, gang-related violence, street fights, and forced conscription, while threats to women's security most often include sexual violence, harassment, human trafficking and domestic violence.

Security sector institutions are at the forefront of addressing the security needs of a given population. These institutions are responsible for preventing and responding to the various threats and risks experienced by men, women, boys and girls. In spite of the fact that gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the largest global threats to physical security, the security sector continues to fall short in the effective prevention of and response to these crimes.

While security sector reform is wide-reaching, one particular area that can substantially increase the effectiveness of the work of security institutions is the mainstreaming of gender into all policies and practices of security institutions. Through such reform processes, security institutions can become more sustainable, democratic, and violence-free. Women's participation and gender-sensitive security programmes and policies can help to create representative, participatory and inclusive security sector institutions.

The history and context of the Latin American and Caribbean region (LAC) has created a low level of human security[1] and a high level of institutional distrust.[2] The long-standing dictatorships in many of the countries in the region meant that security actors were not only unable to protect the population from violence but were also often the perpetrators of human rights violations and discrimination. Remaining effects of this are present throughout the region and many security institutions have been undertaking ongoing democratization and other reform efforts.

The Dominican Republic faces unique challenges regarding establishing and promoting security institutions due to the country's historical, geographical and social context. The government of the Dominican Republic has signed and ratified several international treaties and conventions which obligate member states to ensure women's participation and gender mainstreaming in government policies and programmes. In order to meet these obligations, specific initiatives have been put in place to increase female participation and to place women's security issues on the agendas of the Dominican security institutions. Despite this, women (who represent approximately 50 per cent of the population) remain largely excluded from security institutions and decision-making processes and other significant challenges remain.

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1 United Nations Development Program, "Una Vida Libre de Violencia: es un Derecho Nuestro", (New York, UNDP, 2005) 35.
2 Rachel Neid, "From National Security to Citizen Security – Civil Society and the Evolution of Public Order Debates", (Canada: International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 1999) 1.

This paper aims to provide an understanding of the on-going process of security sector reform in the Dominican Republic in order to map out existing gender initiatives, what their impact has been, as well as the current challenges that exist (i.e. gender inequalities and gender stereotypes). The central aim of this study is to identify what a successful, transparent and inclusive security sector reform would constitute in the Dominican Republic and how women's empowerment can contribute to the development of a safe and secure Dominican Republic. More specifically, this study focuses on answering four questions:

1.   How is security defined in the Dominican Republic and how does this definition respond to gendered insecurities?

2.   What is meant by the security sector? What is the current make up of security sector institutions in the Dominican Republic? What is the rate of female participation?

3.   Have Dominican security sector institutions effectively established adequate programmes, policies and regulations and more importantly, to what extent have they successfully responded to gender-based violence?

4.   What actions, policies and programmes can be implemented to increase the participation of women and to incorporate gender perspectives into the provision of security?

On the basis of existing statistics, reports, and interviews with Dominican security sector actors, this study provides an overview and analysis of the current state of gender mainstreaming within five institutions within the Dominican security sector, which form the essential parts of the traditional state institution responsible for ensuring citizen security: the police, the military, the judicial and penal systems, and civil society.

This case study is divided into five sections. The first gives an introduction and describes the research methodology utilized. The second section provides the theoretical framework for the study by defining security and the security sector as well as by exploring the relevance of gender to these concepts. In the third section, the theoretical framework is applied to the context of the Dominican Republic by giving an overview of general threats the Dominican security sector faces and the specific threats to Dominican women's security. In addition, this section also takes a closer look at the Dominican security sector and its actors as well as the impact that this sector has on women's security to provide insight into the challenges that this sector is facing in providing equal and inclusive security. In the fourth section, a closer look is taken into the challenges and opportunities that women face in the police, military, justice and penal systems, and in civil society. The legal framework underlying the security sector is analyzed along with levels of women's participation and possibilities for advancement, gender training, and external and internal barriers. The case study ends with a discussion of the possibilities for cross-institutional cooperation and concluding remarks that summarize the findings of this analysis.

a.   Case study methodology

Though the security sector is comprised of a wide variety of actors, this case study only includes the five major security institutions. The police, military, justice system and penal system are examined because of their importance in the protection of women's security.

Civil society is included because of its role in monitoring the security sector, advocating for security sector reform and providing key services to victims of violence.

In order to conduct this analysis, a systematic collection of information was carried out under the classical principles of gender analysis. This included a review of the revision of policies, programmes and legislation, and a thorough collection of sex-disaggregated data.[3] The majority of the data used in this case study was gathered from government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) reports and through interviews with key actors because secondary academic resources on the Dominican security sector were scarce.[4] Information on policies, reforms and the situation of security for Dominican women was gathered through participation in conferences and a desk review of newspapers and available academic and NGO publications. On general issues of gender and security, government reports, legal documents, policy papers, journal articles, books, and other materials were reviewed. In addition, internet sources were used to gather specific information on the work of international NGOs and for special reports on relevant topics.

The largest obstacle to this research was the lack of reliable statistics and figures on issues of gender, particularly sex-disaggregated data, which are often compiled in an ad hoc and incomplete way. Conducting any type of gender research in the Dominican Republic is difficult due to a lack of systematization in gathering sex-disaggregated statistics, making much of the available information unreliable or even misleading. The statistics available are often department-specific and data on general tendencies or trends are often not available. Additionally, there is a general lack of transparency in terms of the gender policies and programmes of the penal system and the military, which makes information hard to come by and statistical sources inaccessible.

Further research and systematic data collection within the country are necessary to measure the impact of reform efforts and to identify strategies for future policies. The development of a systematic analysis of the multiple institutions linked to the security sector from a gender perspective is a key step which has been missing. Additionally, research initiatives relating to the police, armed forces, judicial sector, the penal system and civil society from a gender perspective are very limited. This report is an attempt to fill that gap.

2. Gender and the Security Sector: A Theoretical Background

Physical security, the freedom from violence and fear, is a basic human right, crucial for sustainable development, and a safe, peaceful environment. A low level of physical security infringes on the ability of individuals to earn a living and to actively participate in social and political processes. In countries where people have high perceptions of insecurity, individuals are less likely to take a productive role in economic growth, seek out government services and invest in their own futures. Over the last decade international aid workers, civil society organisations and governments have increasingly recognized the

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3 International Labor Organization, "The ABC of Women Worker's Rights and Gender Equality", (Geneva: International Labor Organization, 2000).
4 For a full list of interviews please see the bibliography.

ways that insecurity can undermine development. Countries such as Haiti and Colombia show the damaging effects that insecurity and armed violence may have on democratic processes, and economic and human development.

Since freedom from physical insecurity has been recognized as an essential prerequisite for sustainable human and economic development, ensuring physical security should be considered one of the most important functions of a state. Security should be accessible to all individuals without discrimination and should be open and transparent under the principles of democratic oversight. In reality, security is almost never a publicly governed area and is the area of policymaking that is generally the least participatory.[5] While security is largely not carried out in a participatory manner, there is a significant difference in the degree of participation between the sexes. The area of the security sector and the general role of providing safety remains almost exclusively a male domain.

a.   Defining security

One of the greatest challenges to creating an appropriate definition of security has been working out whom or what should be the recipient of security. In the past, security has been defined as the protection of a state and its borders from external enemies and threats, as well as from internal turmoil that threatens state security and law and order.[6] Since the mid-eighties and the end of the Cold War, the focus on security has shifted from the state to the individual. The shift in the understanding of what the state's role should be with respect to security has amplified and focused its responsibility on the people living within a state's borders. In this regard, two distinct concepts are important with respect to security: human security[7] and citizen security.[8]

The concept of human security has been developed under the paradigm of human development,[9] which emphasizes the necessity of the maximization of people's freedom, rights, liberties, options and opportunities in order to live a full, healthy and dignified life. The concept of human security is holistic and includes economic, health, environmental, personal and political security components.[10] Within this framework, a broad range of threats to human life and well-being are recognized, including the lack of access to education and health care as well as the traditional security threats of armed conflict, terrorism and organized crime. According to the 2003 *Human Security Now* report, the purpose of a human security approach is "to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment."[11]

Building upon the protection and ensuring of different freedoms, such as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to take actions on one's own behalf, the concept of human security offers two strategies: protection and empowerment.[12] These strategies are not limited to the security sector, but instead suggest linking different initiatives to promote sustainable peace and development. A focus on human needs does not signify a

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5 Nicole Ball et al., "Voice and accountability in the security sector", Paper 21 (Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2002). Available from
http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/issueareas/security/security_pdf/2002_Ball_et_al.pdf.
6 Human Security Centre, "Human Security Report 2005 – War and Peace in the 21st Century", (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
7 Commission on Human Security, "Human Security Now", (New York: Commission on Human Security, 2003).
8 United Nations Development Program, "Una Vida Libre de Violencia: es un Derecho Nuestro".
9 Commission on Human Security, "Human Security Now".
10 United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 1994 - New Dimensions of Human Security,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 24-25.
11 Commission on Human Security, "Human Security Now".
12 Commission on Human Security, "Human Security Now", 1.

"move away from the state," but rather it highlights the central role of the state in providing services necessary to prevent human insecurity. Strengthening the state's democratic institutions and the rule of law, while simultaneously providing the individual with suitable conditions for their personal and social development, are essential steps in achieving human security.[13]

Citizen security, which focuses on the perceptions of insecurities of people in a defined territory, addresses the threats to public, social, political, and economic order – including crime, violence and public fear. Differing from human security, citizen security has a more narrow focus, and includes issues such as mistrust in state institutions, democratic oversight and civil participation. The concept makes a distinction between providing physical security on the one hand, and creating a conducive environment for personal and economic development on the other. In the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, citizen security has played an important role in efforts to reform state institutions such as the police, military, judicial and penal institutions. Military coups, authoritarian regimes, human rights violations by security forces, and the lack of a clear separation of responsibilities between the military and the police have been the basis for the importance of a reform of security sector institutions in the region. In the Dominican Republic, current issues such as ongoing killings by security forces[14] cause further insecurities among the population and show the necessity of a comprehensive and inclusive reform of the country's security sector.

b.   The security sector and its new challenges

The armed forces, police, judiciary, border guards and other actors that have the mandate to protect the state and its citizens are commonly known as the security sector or security system. They are generally defined as actors "that have the authority, capacity and/or ability to order the use of force, or the threat of force, to protect the state and civilians."[15] The security sector not only includes military, police, intelligence, and prison guards, but also civil structures responsible for overseeing and monitoring such organisations, for example government oversight bodies, civil society, and institutions responsible for maintaining the rule of law such (i.e. justice and penal systems). The influence and areas of responsibility of these institutions may vary between countries and states and are delineated into various subgroups with different functions (see Box II.1.).

The first group is mandated to use force to ensure security. Traditional security institutions such as the military, official paramilitaries, police, border guards, customs authorities and intelligence services, as well as, gendarmeries, presidential guards, coast guards and local security units (such as national guards and militias), and international and regional forces (including peacekeeping missions) form part of this first group.

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13 German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), "German and Citizen Security" (Berlin: German Society for Technical Cooperation, 2005).
14 Amnesty International, "Amnesty International Report 2006", (London: Amnesty International, 2006).
15 David Barash and Charles Webel, *Peace and Conflict* Studies, (London, Sage Publications, 2002).

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The second group is responsible for the management and monitoring of the security sector. Government bodies such as national security advisory bodies, the legislature, ministries of defence, internal affairs, foreign affairs, financial management and parliament or congress, all make up the second group. Civil society and the media also play an important role in both setting the agenda and monitoring[16] of the security sector. Such actors can influence the doctrine, size, structure and deployment of different security forces.[17] The security system also consists of unofficial security sector actors, such as armed opposition groups or private security companies.

The third group of security sector actors, responsible for upholding the rule of law, includes the judicial and penal organs. Justice ministries, prisons, criminal investigation and prosecution services, human rights commissions and ombudsmen, customary and traditional justice systems, and international legal institutions carry out the functions of the third group.

The objective of a reform of the security sector is to create a "secure environment that is conducive to development, poverty reduction, good governance and, in particular, the growth of democratic states and institutions based on the rule of law."[18] The necessity of reforming the security institutions and organs has been recognized in various post-conflict, transitional, and developing countries. The entry points in these institutions and organs seem more accessible for reform processes than in developed, stable states. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the necessity of security reform in the latter.

Box. 2.1. Actors within the security sector

> 1. Groups with the authority and instruments to use force (e.g. militaries, police, intelligence services, border guards, customs authorities, gendarme);
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> 2. Institutions that monitor and manage the sector (e.g. government ministries, parliament, civil society)[19]
>
> 3. Structures responsible for maintaining the rule of law (e.g. the judiciary, the ministry of justice, penal system, human rights commissions, local and traditional justice mechanisms).

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Security System Reform and Governance", DAC Guidelines and Reference Series (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2005). Available from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/39/31785288.pdf

c.   Gender and the security sector

The aim of the security sector is to provide security for all citizens of a defined territory, protecting them from both external and internal threats. The ability of the security sector to achieve this goal depends on a state's capability to respond to different security

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16 The term has been defined by the UNDP as "a continuing function that aims primarily to provide managers and main stakeholders with regular feedback and early indications of progress or lack thereof in the achievement of intended results. Monitoring tracks the actual performance or situation against what was planned or expected according to pre-determined standards".

17 Nicole Ball, Tsjeard Bouta, and Luc Van de Goor, "Enhancing Democratic Governance of the Security Sector: An Institutional Assessment Framework", (The Hague: The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003) 54.

18 United Kingdom, Department for International Development, "Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform", (London, 2007).

19 Civil society refers to the arena separate from the government that participate in unforced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values.

threats. Because different groups and people may react to and be affected differently by security threats and have different security needs, the inclusion of gender issues in security sector policies and programmes helps to increase the security of men, women, girls and boys by providing a lens for disaggregating the impact of various threats. Simultaneously, it also helps to ensure compliance with international agreements that call for increasing women's participation and security. The main goal of a gender-sensitive SSR process is to ensure that different behaviours, insecurities and needs of women and men are considered, valued, and treated equally. Also, that men and women are given equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities.[20] To achieve such a goal, two strategies have often been employed: initiatives to mainstream gender issues into various policies and institutional frameworks and increasing the participation of women to ensure a gender-balance in decision-making positions.

Gender Mainstreaming

In his report entitled, *Coordination of the Policies and Activities of the Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System: Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System,* the United Nations Secretary-General defined gender mainstreaming as:

> The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.[21]

Rather than only creating specific and potentially marginalized policies and programmes on gender issues, gender mainstreaming calls for gender issues to be considered in all areas.[22] Concrete activities may include: gender training, female recruitment, involvement of civil society organisations such as women's groups, the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and the development of gender-sensitive indicators and monitoring tools.

In the context of security sector reform, gender mainstreaming can be an indispensable tool for enhancing the transparency, accountability, participatory nature, and equality of institutions. Gender mainstreaming can enhance the security sector's recognition that women's security needs are equal to men's. Further, such mainstreaming can help institutions take account of the gendered differences in experiences, needs, priorities and actions, and can help them ensure the full and equal participation of women in decision-

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20 International Labor Organization, "The ABC of Women Worker's Rights".
21 E/1997/66
22 Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Development Co-operation Directorate, "DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality", (Paris, OECD, 1998) 24. Available from: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/4/16/31572047.pdf

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making. Gender mainstreaming policies and practices also ensure that women's security needs are not seen as 'special' or as falling outside of regular security work.

Increasing Women's Participation

Because women are the main underrepresented group within security sector institutions, initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality strive to increase women's participation. An increasing number of international agreements emphasize the importance of women's participation in security. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), which calls on the United Nations, UN Member States and all parties to armed conflict to take into account gender issues and ensure women's participation in all phases of conflict prevention and management, is one that highlights the need for women's participation in the security sector.[23]

Increasing the participation of women in the security sector can help institutions deliver more efficient and professional services. Women often possess certain skills that are highly useful to security sector institutions. Research on increasing women's participation in policing has documented that in general, female officers:

- Are less likely to use excessive or deadly force or be involved in misconduct;
- Are more effective at defusing and de-escalating potentially violent situations;
- Receive more favourable evaluations and fewer citizen complaints;
- Report greater support for the principles of community policing.

Affirmative measures such as female recruitment should be directed at improving the representation of women at all institutional levels and including women in decision-making processes. Hence, highlighting the need to eliminate barriers that are currently hindering women from entering certain professions and institutions, and creating 'gender-friendly' environments that ensure that women can participate freely in the design and implementation of programmes, and policies.

Equal representation alone does not ensure the integration of a gender-sensitive perspective in security; being a woman does not automatically translate into being a proponent of gender mainstreaming. Increased female recruitment needs to go hand-in-hand with measures that integrate gender-sensitivity into the overall work environment of a given institution. Useful complementary initiatives could include gender training and zero-tolerance policies against discrimination. Approaching the integration of gender and increasing women's participation holistically can help to transform the dynamics of a reform process as well as the institutional culture within the security sector. Including women, both in terms of understanding security priorities, as well as in terms of participation, can help inform more effective responses to the full range of threats to public security. Furthermore, it can pave the way for women's full participation in social, economic and political activities. No easy formula exists on the ground for incorporating women and gender issues into the security sector.. Externally, barriers include gender stereotypes that portray women as weak, dependent victims and men as stronger, more active, protectors of women.[24] Internally, the structure, policies and organisational culture of the security sector

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23 Other relevant UN conventions and conferences include: the World Conference on Women (1995); the World Summit for Social Development (1995); the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994); the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women adopted by the UN General Assembly (1993); the Third World Conference on Women (1985); the Second World Conference on Women (1980); and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979).

24 Paul Higate, ed. *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (New York, Praeger Publishers, 2003).

institutions are often sexist; they both condone and perpetuate violence, excluding all those that do not fit culturally dominant models of masculinity.[25] Sexual harassment towards women, for example, can hinder women's ability to fulfill their job requirements. The prevalent male domination of the military and the police have perpetuated a uniquely 'male,' security sector, which limits women's involvement.[26]

The process of creating gender-equal security is complicated and difficult since inequalities often stem from long-standing traditions and cultures, which often neglect women's security. Because stereotypes of women and men are not associated with the same qualities and abilities across all cultures, every reform process will be dependent upon the regional and cultural setting in which it is undertaken. Contextualising security through individual case studies may be a helpful tool for understanding what works in different cultural contexts and can help to identify better solutions and 'best practices.'

3.   Gender, Security and the Security Sector in the Dominican Republic

Issues such as globalization and internal safety concerns have produced concepts of transnational, regional, local and interdependent security for which the state is no longer the exclusive actor.[27] Newly prioritized challenges such as internal armed conflict, drug trafficking, interpersonal violence and threats to personal safety may have been reasons for this change of agenda. In the Dominican Republic, colonization, the elimination of the vast majority of the indigenous population, and the slave trade into the country have had an enormous impact on the composition, collective identity and mentality of the people of the Caribbean island as well as on the country's conception of security. Additionally, Dominican society lived under the dictatorship of Trujillo and is affected by the ongoing influence of foreign countries, such as the Germany, Italy, Spain, and United States of America, among others. Tourism, international trade and migration also play a strong role in the perceptions of insecurities.[28] Because of the globalized nature of the security threats facing the Dominican Republic, it is important to look at transnational and regional security definitions to understand the country's security situation.

a.   Regional and national definitions of security

Overall, LAC countries have yet to incorporate a concept of inclusive human security into their security doctrines.[29] Most Latin American states continue to focus mainly on military security and border protection in the design of their security frameworks. Despite this, a more multidimensional security agenda, encompassing a focus on citizen security through

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25 United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, "Gender and Security Sector Reform: An Analytical Framework", (Santo Domingo, UN-INSTRAW, 2006) Available from http://www.un-instraw.org/en/instraw-publications/gender-peace-and-security/working-paper-on-gender-and-security-sector-reform/download.html.

26 For more on the theory of institutionalized male culture see Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense Out of International Politics* (1990); David Buchlinder, *Masculinities and Identities* (1994); and Higate (2003).

27 Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR), "Latin America and Caribbean Security Network Symposium", GFN Paper No. 66 (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2004).

28 United Nations Development Program, "Una Vida Libre de Violencia: es un Derecho Nuestro".

29 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Security System Reform and Governance".

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a broader array of political, social, economic, and environmental concerns, has gained greater prominence during the last few years. Because of this shift, some initial and hopeful attempts have been made to incorporate human security into the regional agenda.[30]

One major step forward in the expansion of the definition of security in the LAC region was the Declaration of Nuevo León which was signed by the Member States of the Organisation of American States (OAS) at the Special Conference on Security in Mexico 2003. The declarations states:

> In our Hemisphere, as democratic states committed to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the OAS, we reaffirm that the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings. Security is strengthened when we deepen its human dimension. Conditions for human security are improved through full respect for people's dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, as well as the promotion of social and economic development, social inclusion, and education and the fight against poverty, disease, and hunger.[31]

The Declaration of Nuevo León is a preliminary attempt to find a common language for security. However, since its articulation, the region has continuously fallen short of acting under this common definition; a factor that can be partially explained by the diversity of security threats facing the region.[32]

The process of finding a more nuanced and less militarized definition of security has been somewhat more successful among the Caribbean states. If national differences in perceived security threats hinder attempts at finding a common regional security agenda, it is precisely the opposite scenario that has enabled the Caribbean states to formulate common interests on a sub-regional level. Shared security threats such as the illicit trafficking of drugs, people and arms; migration, and transportation security have allowed the small island states to articulate common goals and to initiate cooperation. Due to the high dependency on tourism in the area, the sub-region has increased its collaboration to address non-traditional threats such as health (particularly HIV/AIDS), environmental issues, natural disasters, and the global economy.

The region's close proximity to the United States strongly affects the Caribbean nations' security agendas. The nations' shared security interests have greatly affected how the Caribbean countries define and address their core security threats and needs. The result has been a more traditional understanding of security where hard security (military and police) is prioritised and where much less attention is given to non-traditional security threats that are common to the region, such as health problems, social inequality or gender-based violence.

Unlike most Latin American countries that have clearly defined security through laws or 'white papers,' the Dominican Republic has no legal framework defining security, which has led to confusion regarding the country's national security priorities. The concept is employed

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30 Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform, "Latin America and Caribbean Security Network Symposium".
31 Organization of American States, *Declaración of Nueva León*, (2005). Available from:
http://www.oas.org/documents/SpecialSummitMexico/DeclaracionLeon_spa.pdf
32 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Security Sector Reform and Governance".

haphazardly with a clear emphasis on the police and military to solve problems on the one hand, while attempting to create long-term development programmes for addressing the issues of poverty and HIV/AIDS on the other.

In 2005, the Dominican government passed a Plan for Democratic Security (Plan de Seguridad Democrática), which prioritizes traditional elements of professionalization of the security sector. The Plan includes directives to "re-establish the authority of the Dominican State through profound police reforms," "create a permanent presence of security forces in the cities and villages of the country," and "recuperate the people's confidence in this institution" (author's translation).[33] The Plan for Democratic Security defines the concept of citizen security by considering the obligation of the state to provide protection, and to respect and promote the rights and social guarantees of the citizens. The main aim of the Plan is to enhance the efficiency and operational effectiveness of the security forces, mainly focusing on the police.[34] In line with this objective, the government intends to enhance cross-institutional cooperation, as well as to encourage the participation of civil society in security matters.

The Plan for Democratic Security is an important step towards creating accountable and efficient security forces, but has been a disappointment in terms of the narrow view that it has taken on creating gender inclusive security. Although gender has been mainstreamed into programmes and elements of the plan, it is not included in the plan's overarching strategy of security. Instead, it is treated like a development and equality issue, instead of a priority that is essential for increased security. For instance, violence against women is never explicitly mentioned as a threat to security, or treated as such in the individual steps of the plan. In fact, many individuals interviewed for this report confirmed that while gender experts were included in the process of drafting the plan, this did not occur until late in the project, after priorities were set.[35] The result has been a plan for security which clearly recognizes that women and men have different security needs, but at the same time fails to formulate a gender-sensitive definition of security that recognizes gender-based violence as a priority for national security.

b.   Security challenges for the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic is characterized by a high degree of social and economic disparities which contributes to its insecure environment. The Gross National Income (GNI) is about half the world average and 28.6 per cent of the population is currently living under the poverty line.[36] Organised crime, high rates of gun ownership, urban street violence, increasing gang problems, domestic violence, and discrimination due to color, religion, sex and nationality are all frequent and persistent security problems in the Dominican Republic. This climate of human insecurity negatively impacts the daily lives of Dominicans.

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33 The plan was designed mainly by the Ministry of Interior and Police with the help of various experts from the United States.
34 Dominican Republic, Plan de Seguridad Democrática Republica Dominicana, (2005).
35 Interview with Yildalina Taten Brache, Directora Politicas Publicas, Santo Domingo, 22 November 2005.
36 World Bank, "Un Análisis de los Problemas de Género de la Republica Domincana, Haiti y Jamaica", Informe No.21866-ALC, (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2002).

Despite slight improvements in the last few years, rates of violence have increased and become more lethal. The Dominican Republic currently has a homicide rate of 16.6 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, which is over three times the world average.[37] Widespread gun ownership and usage is a serious security problem in the Dominican Republic. In 2005, there were 190,000 registered firearms and hundreds of thousands more unregistered guns throughout the country.[38] In addition, the Dominican Republic, along with many other small island states in the Caribbean, is experiencing regional and/or global threats to security, such as the trafficking of drugs, small arms, and people. The proliferation of illegal small arms threatens the ability of Caribbean states to meet their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As the World Bank (2007) notes, "high rates of crime and violence in the Caribbean are undermining growth, threatening human welfare, and impeding social development."[39] The deaths and injuries resulting from gun violence are having a profound impact on public health systems as well as creating social and economic problems for many Caribbean states.

A major factor in the surge of gun-related criminality is the trafficking of narcotics. Illicit drugs are shipped through the region from South America to North America and Europe and there is a linked return movement of illegal weapons from North America to several destinations in the Caribbean. Simultaneously, there has been an increase in the use of more powerful weapons, resulting in higher mortality levels. The Dominican Republic also suffers from non-traditional security threats such as: natural disasters, increasing rates of HIV/AIDS, traffic accidents, poverty, child prostitution, corruption, a serious energy shortage and widespread racism towards Haitians.[40]

c. Insecurities of Dominican Women

The proliferation of firearms, violence, natural disasters, traffic accidents, corruption, and an unstable economy are security problems that affect Dominicans irrespective of their sex and continue to negatively impact the security situation of the whole population. In addition to these issues, there are several additional prevalent gendered insecurities, such as domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, trafficking of women and forced prostitution. Security issues that affect both women and men, but have different gendered impacts, also exist. For example, 90% of homicide victims are men, making the risk of being exposed to lethal street violence much higher for men. However, the presence of a gun at home or in public spaces also escalates violence against women.[41]

Available statistics, though incomplete and not fully reliable, strongly indicate that violence against women is a serious security problem in the Dominican Republic. Based on reported cases of violence, a local women's health NGO, Profamilia, has calculated that 24.8 per cent of urban women, and 21.9 per cent of rural women have been exposed to physical violence at some point in their lives, although many more cases are

37 GTZ, "Gender and Citizen Security".

38 Peter Prengaman, "Dominican Republic Taking New Look at Culture of Guns", *The San Diego Herald,* 2 October 2005.

39 World Bank, "Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean", Report No. 37820, (Washington, World Bank and UNODC, 2007).

40 Human Rights Watch, "Dominican Republic: US Trade Pact Fails Pregnant Women: CAFTA Fails to Protect Pregnant Workers Against Rampant Job Discrimination", (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002). Available from: http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/04/21/domini8474.htm

41 For more information on gender and gun violence in the Caribbean region, please see Blessing, Jasmin, Henri Myrttinen, Nicola Popovic, and Nicole Stolze, "'Como te haces entender?': Gender and Gun Cultures in the Caribbean Context", UN-INSTRAW Working Paper Series (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, UN-INSTRAW, 2010). Available from www.un-instraw.org

thought to go unreported (see Table III.1.).[42] The same report showed that the aggressor in 75.7 per cent of the cases was the husband, ex-husband or another type of intimate partner.

According to the US Department of State, rape is a serious and underreported problem in the Dominican Republic.[43] Women victims often do not report cases of rape because of the fear of social stigma and the perception that the police and judiciary will fail to provide effective redress. In 2007, the Department of State further reported that the police were reluctant to handle rape cases and often encouraged victims to seek assistance from NGOs.[44] In addition, it was reported that domestic violence continued to be a widespread problem. A local NGO has estimated that 24 per cent of women between the ages 15 and 49 have been victims of physical abuse.[45]

The high rate of gun ownership in the country exacerbates the situation of domestic abuse by aggravating and escalating the consequences of both threats and actual perpetration of violence. Police general Daisy Liriano Paulino stated, "the presence of a gun in a situation of domestic violence clearly worsens the situation for the woman, and in this way gun ownership will also have dire effects on women's security."[46] If correct, the figures cited above indicate that domestic violence is highly prevalent and that the most insecure environment for a Dominican woman may be her own home.

**Table 3.1. Number of women exposed to physical violence
between 15-49 and their relationship with the aggressor**

Number of Women	% Age
Urban	24.8
Rural	21.9
Relationship to the Aggressor	
Husband	52.3
The mother	13.9
The father	10.3
Other partner	9.2
Ex-husband	19.4
Other non-partner	4.0

Source: Cáceres and Estévez "Violencia Conyugal en la República Dominicana: hurgando tras sus raíces"

The high incidence of domestic violence does not mean, however, that women are much safer in public spaces. Sexual harassment in the street and at the workplace is common in the Dominican Republic, as in many other Latin American countries where 'machismo' is a cultural framework for behavior for many men. Cat calls (or so called "*piropos*") and sexual

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42 Francisco Cáceres and Germania Estévez, "Violencia Conyugal en la Repúblic Dominicana: hurgando tras sus raíces", (Santo Domingo, Profamilia, 2004).
43 United States, Department of State, "2007 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices", 11 March 2008. Available from http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100637.htm
44 United States, Department of State, "2007 Dominican Republic Country Report".
45 United States, Department of State, "2007 Dominican Republic Country Report".
46 Interview with Mayor Generala, P.N. Daisy Liriano Paulino, Directora Central de la Policía Auxilar, Santo Domingo, 17 November 2005.

comments lower women's sense of security in the public space. It has even been shown that such practices directly limit women's movement in society and public spaces.[47] No accurate statistics exist on the frequency of such sexual harassment and violence; however, the Dominican Secretariat of the State for Women (Secretaría del Estado de la Mujer or SEM) reported there were more than 3,300 complaints of sexual abuse in 2002.[48] This figure is likely to be a very low representation of the actual frequency of sexual abuse since many instances are believed to go unreported.

In general, one major factor for the proliferation of gender-based violence against women is the impunity for violent acts against women and for violent crimes in general. Many violent and criminal acts against women continue because laws are not put into practice, the needs of women are not taken into account, and impunity exists due to an often biased approach of judiciary officials. On paper, Dominican law is hard on rapists, but because of the perception that the police and judiciary will fail to provide redress, victims are still thought not to report cases. Because no in-depth investigation has been carried out on this matter, the full scale of the problem remains unknown.

Trafficking and sex work are two other highly prevalent security issues in the Dominican Republic. The country is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. According to a July 2008 report by the US Department of State, a large number of Dominican women are trafficked for prostitution and sexual exploitation in Western Europe, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Haiti, and other Caribbean destinations. Additionally, a large number of women, boys, and girls are trafficked within the country for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.[49] While it is hard to give an exact number of trafficked individuals, rough estimates show that approximately 15,000 women were trafficked from Haiti and other countries into the Dominican Republic for sex work in 2005.[50]

No official statistics exist on the total number of female sex workers in the country; however, it is estimated that some 100,000 sex workers were active in the country in 2000, with an additional 100,000 Dominican women working outside of the country.[51] The U.S. State Department reported that up to 30,000 children and adolescents may have been involved in the sex industry in 2004 and around fifty to sixty Haitian children were trafficked into the Dominican Republic every week to work as prostitutes.[52] High HIV/AIDS rates among sex workers are a serious health problem and infection rates among the total population are estimated to range from 4.5 per cent in the eastern province of La Romana, to 12.4 per cent in the Southern province of Baní.[53]

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[47] Chaudoir, Stephanie R. and Diane M. Quinn, "Bystander Sexism in the Intergroup Context: The Impact of Cat-calls on Women's Reactions Towards Men", *Sex Roles* (March 2010).
48 Punishments for rape are harsh and the State may furthermore prosecute a suspect for rape even if the victim does not file charges. Penalties for rape are 10 to 15 years in prison (or 10 to 20 years in case of rape against a vulnerable person or under other egregious circumstances) and a fine of approximately $3,300 to $6,600 (100,000 to 200,000 pesos).
49 United States, Department of State, "2008 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices", 25 February 2009. Available from http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119157.htm
50 These investigations were made by the Centre for Integral Orientation and Investigation (COIN) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) through interviews with individuals and through extrapolation.
51 CEDAW/C/DOM/5
52 United States, Department of State, "2004 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices", 28 February 2005. Available from http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41758.htm
53 United Nations Agency on HIV AIDS, "Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS: Dominican Republic", (Geneva, UNAIDS, 2006). Available from
http://apps.who.int/globalatlas/predefinedReports/EFS2006/EFS_PDFs/EFS2006_DO.pdf

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Table 3.2. Security threats to Dominican Women and the number of women exposed.

Security threat	Number of women exposed
Poverty	App 1,280,000 women [a]
Trafficking	App. 15,000 women [b] 30,000 children and adolescents.
Sex work	Number of women unknown [c]
Domestic Violence	
Rape	App. 23.5 % of all women [d]
Sexual Harassment in the Workplace	3,300 women [e]
HIV/AIDS	40% of women in the free trade zones [f] 23,000 women [g]

Sources: [a]UNDP 2005, [b] The Centre for Integral Orientation and Investigation (COIN), [c]UNICEF, [d] Profamilia 2004, [e]SEM 2002, [f]The Dominican Labour Foundation, [g]UNAIDS 2004

Unequal distribution of power between the sexes lies at the heart of many of these public security issues. Social discrimination and clear patterns of gender inequality have contributed to the tacit acceptance of crimes committed against women. As in many other countries, women in the Dominican Republic have not enjoyed equal social and economic status with men. In many instances, women receive less pay than men in jobs of equal content and requiring equal skills. The average annual income for remunerated work is 3,125 United States dollars for women and 8,849 United States dollars for men.[54]

Recruitment policies and hiring practices present a substantial challenge to women's equal economic involvement. Some employers reportedly gave pregnancy tests to women before hiring them as part of a required medical examination. Although, it is illegal to discriminate based on such tests, union leaders reported that pregnant women were often not hired and that female employees who became pregnant were sometimes fired.

While the traditional image of the female role is slowly changing, many long-established gender stereotypes remain. Women are almost exclusively responsible for the household and male identities still revolve around their capacities as wage earners.[55] In fact, a recently conducted study shows that 54 per cent of Dominicans agree with the statement that the appropriate place for a woman is in the household. The same study rated the Dominican Republic as the highest among all surveyed Latin American countries in negative attitudes toward women who make money. In the same survey, 63 per cent of survey participants answered that a woman would almost certainly have problems if she earned more money than her husband.[56] Such stereotypes and beliefs carry over into women's participation in the security sector institutions, as will be seen below.

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54 United States, Department of State, "2007 Dominican Republic Country Report".
55 World Bank, "Un Análisis de los Problemas de Género de la República Dominicana, Haití y Jamaica".
56 Figures correspond to the answers given in the 2005 Latinobarómetro Poll, 56.

d. Actors in the Dominican Security Sector

Currently, the Dominican security sector is a complex web of state institutions and privately owned security companies, where roles, responsibilities, and mandates frequently overlap. From a narrow perspective, the Dominican security forces include the National Police, the National Department of Investigations (DNI), the National Drug Control Directorate (DNCD), the Airport Security Authority (CESA), Port Security Authority (CESEP), and the armed forces (army, air force, and navy).[57] Employing the broad definition of the security sector described above, the Dominican security sector also includes government officials with monitoring functions, intelligence services, the judicial and penal systems, a large network of private security companies, and civil society. The responsibilities of each institution within this network are not always clearly defined. Mapping out the activities and responsibilities of each security institution can be a complicated task.

A clear example of mandate overlap exists between the Dominican military and police forces. The mission of the military is to defend the independence and integrity of the Republic, to maintain public order, and to uphold the country's constitution and laws. It is also responsible for the protection of traffic, industry, commerce, persons, and property.[58] The latter areas of responsibility may result in an overlap with the mandate of the police force whose mission is to protect traffic, persons, commerce and property.[59] In this way, Dominican military activities often expand far beyond the traditional areas of military work and may include duties such as crowd control at demonstrations or rebuilding communities after natural disasters.[60]

It is not uncommon that military and police personnel are employed simultaneously by both public and private institutions. This means that state security personnel will sometimes collect a government salary while in fact devoting much of their professional time to private security firms.[61] Such practices unquestionably blur the boundaries between the military and the police as well as between the government and the private. At the same time, it reduces the number of security personnel on the street thereby reducing the security protections available to the population.

This phenomenon of "moonlighting," in combination with a severe lack of resources, has made the police disconcertingly under-staffed. Officially, there are 33,000 police officers serving a little over nine million people.[62] This situation, along with widespread corruption, police brutality, and a general distrust of the police has motivated many people to seek security from privately run security companies or from semi-private companies run in collaboration with the military. Private security firms appear to be playing an ever larger role in the Dominican Republic and are actors that the Dominican government will have to establish closer control over if they are to ensure that these companies do not become a security problem themselves.

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57 The police force is under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior and Police and the military under the Secretary of the Armed Forces. The DNI and the DNCD, which have personnel from both the police and military, report directly to the President.
58 Dominican Republic, Ley Orgánica de las Fuerzas Armadas 873 (1996). Available from
http://fuerzasarmadas.mil.do/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=qSp8yb7AW4E%3d&tabid=62&mid=388
59 Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform, "Latin America and Caribbean Security Network Symposium".
60 Interview, Teniente Coronel E.N. Leonte Raúl Read, Santo Domingo, 8 December 2005.
61 This phenomenon is commonly known within both the military and the police, but little has been done up to this point to prevent this drain in human and economic resources.
62 The actual number of police working in the private sector is unknown, but is large enough to seriously reduce the number of police in active duty.

Common amongst other Latin American and Caribbean security forces, the Dominican security sector has a history of brutal practices committed during the era of dictatorships and has been largely neglected since democratization. Severe corruption and confusion over the role of the security forces followed after the rule of Trujillo. The history of abuse, the lack of rule of law, and corruption has generated a high level of mistrust of the country's security institutions among the Dominican population.[63] According to a Latinobarómetro poll taken in 2004, many Dominicans believe that justice is more a matter of financial power than of objective investigation. In the poll, 49 per cent of Dominicans answered that the police can be paid off to avoid detention and 39 per cent responded that judges could be bribed. The lack of trust in the ability of the security sector to provide just and fair security has motivated many Dominicans to arm themselves in order to protect their property and physical security, leading to widespread gun ownership. The work of the security sector has been made more difficult by the general level of mistrust and insecurity. The situation has gone so far that police no longer respond to calls from certain areas, leaving whole neighborhoods' unsupervised and unpatrolled.[64]

e. Women and the Dominican security sector

Women are underrepresented in the Dominican security system and many issues that directly affect women and girls and marginalized men and boys are often neglected in reform processes. Additionally, there is a low rate of participation of women in the processes where decisions about peace and security are made and gender is largely missing from these processes in general. Although not affected in the same ways, problems of corruption and violence within the security sector affect both Dominican women and men.

Reports conducted by the Instituto Dominicano de Derechos Humanos (IDHSD) show that security provision is clearly a gendered matter in the Dominican security sector and that actions, or lack of actions, have different impacts on women and men. For example, while the IDHSD has found that men are more likely to be exposed to direct violence than women, women are more likely to suffer from sexual harassment, and verbal and sexual abuse.[65] For women, the security sector may be a direct threat to their security through instances of direct physical and sexual violence, but is even more likely to be an indirect threat to women through a failure to respond to and address women's security needs. Box III.1. gives an overview of how the different security institutions have directly or indirectly had a negative effect on women in the Dominican Republic.

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63 Interview with Jose Caballo, Participacion Ciudadadana, Santo Domingo, 11 November 2005.
64 Interview with Fernando Leonardo, Instituto de Derechos Humanos Santo Domingo, 2 November 2005;
interview with Marianela Carvajal Dias, Asistente de Investigación en CIPAF, 24 November 2005.
65 Instituto de Derechos Humanos Santo Domingo, "II Informe trimestral, repote de denuncias recibidas May – Julio", (Santo Domingo, IDHSD, 2005).

Table 3.3. Examples of gender specific abuse from the Dominican security sector

Threats to Dominican women and girls from the security sector			
Police	**Military**	**Justice system**	**Penal system**
Threats of or actual physical or sexual violence during detention or questioning Verbal abuse in the form of insults or dismissal of reports of abuse Necessity to pay bribes for the release of male relatives Commonplace dismissal of raped and abused women and failure to address and provide redress for cases of gender-based violence Illegal detention	Reports of physical and sexual abuse by military men Forced to perform sexual services as a form of punishment during training	Insensitive treatment of women in the courtroom, sometimes leading to "re-victimization" Failure to provide sufficient retribution for raped and abused women Lack of legal aid for abused women with fewer economic means. Failure to provide legal aid during the initial period of detention.	Forced to perform sexual favors to prison guards Forced to pay bribes for food or other basic necessities Corporal punishments Forced vaginal inspections Rape

Sources: Information adapted by Louise Bjurström on the basis of interviews and NGO reports

The poor human rights record of the security sector is an important contributing factor to why women tend not to report abuse and grievances to these institutions. A study conducted by the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) on where women who have been exposed to violence seek help shows that most women are more inclined to seek help from a family member or a friend than from the security sector. The study showed that 58 per cent of affected women did not seek help at all. Out of the women who did seek help, 44.4 per cent turned to friends or family for assistance, while only 15.9 per cent reported having sought help from the police or the justice system (see Table III.3). A number of factors, including the rumoured reluctance of the police to handle rape cases[66] and a general distrust of the police and justice system to handle cases professionally without further harming or endangering the victim through added assault, insult, or blame, can help to explain this low percentage.

Under international human rights law, states have the responsibility to prevent any sort of violence, including domestic violence, and to protect victims of violence. A high rate of domestic violence in a country can therefore be linked to the lack of policies and practices for addressing violence. In the Dominican Republic, even though measures for state institutions, such as the police, have been created, very few of these measures have been implemented. Security sector institutions tend to misjudge domestic violence as a private or family matter. The mentality of security personnel often limits their ability to deal with these cases by viewing them as outside of their competence.

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66 United States, Department of State, "2005 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices", 8 March 2006. Available from http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61725.htm

Table 3.4. % of women having experienced violence by pattern of seeking help and sources sought*
2004.

Place Sought for Help	%Age
Did not seek help	58.8
Own family	21.7
In-laws	6.5
Fiends/neighbors	15.7
Husband/boyfriend	0.5
Police	14.3
Lawyer/courts	1.6
Doctor/health centre	N/A
NGOs	0.3
Other organisations	3.4
Other	2.2

Source: Measure DHS, ORC Macro. 2004. Profiling
Domestic Violence, A multi-country study.
*respondents could specify multiple sources of help

4. Expanding Gender Entry Points: Challenges and opportunities

Since the Dominican security sector institutions often fail to address threats to women's security, an exploration of the security sector through a gender lens can help to identify what reform efforts these institutions need to take to ensure that they are gender responsive and can respond effectively to contemporary security threats. While some initiatives have already been undertaken, much more remains to be done. A critical step is to analyze policies and practices that have proven to be effective as well as to assess the existing gaps that may exist at institutional and inter-institutional levels. The following sections take a closer look at the Dominican police, military, and justice sectors, the penal system and civil society focusing on the following subjects: gender policies and laws, including gender mainstreaming initiatives; women's recruitment and participation; gender training; and sensitisation to gender-based violence. Each section ends with sector specific recommendations for addressing identified gaps. Despite the fact that gender mainstreaming is a relatively recent concept for the Dominican government and its sub-sectors, some positive achievements have already been attained.

a. The police

The Dominican police force has undertaken several ambitious initiatives in order to increase female participation and gender mainstreaming in its institutions. Women make up slightly more than eight per cent of the total police force in the Dominican Republic, most of which are stationed in the nation's capital Santo Domingo. This is the result of gradual changes, not proactive recruitment policies or programmes. One of the most important and notable changes within the police force has been the integration of a gender perspective into laws and policies. Gendered language was incorporated into the new policy law, *Ley Institucional de la Policía Nacional 96-04*. This law, which came into

effect in 2004, mandates that "women participate under equal conditions as men,"[67] that a "gender perspective is incorporated in all activities,"[68] and that "the infrastructure of the police force is adapted with this participation in mind."[69] As part of the 2004 law, a specific goal for equal representation has also been set at 25 per cent. Despite this, there has been little sign of efforts to reach this benchmark and there has been no new graduating class of female police officers since the law came into effect. Due to the recent nature of these reforms, it is hard to conduct a thorough assessment of their success.

Available statistics show that women working in the National Police have less access than men to management positions and higher ranks. According to internal sources, promotions seem to be based more on a person's sex than on criteria such as education, seniority, or job performance. This cannot be explained as an issue of lacking qualifications since women and men receive the same police training.[70] Table IV.1. offers a comprehensive overview of the ranks held by the 2,693 women currently hired by the National Police, clearly showing that women are predominantly represented in the lower ranks as 'cabo' or 'raso,' which are the positions that require only a basic training of six months. Women are significantly underrepresented in the ranks that are given to those who complete the full four-year training, such as cadets or higher, and although police training has been open to women for many years, few women have chosen to complete the full four-year training.

Several factors exist which can help to explain this glass ceiling. For one, although the selection criteria are not gender discriminating per se, those responsible for making the selection may still favour men over women and therefore exclude women from entering into the police training. One indication that the low numbers were not due to lack of applicants but due to discrimination during the selection process was the immediate rise in the number of female participants when the 25 per cent goal came into effect.[71] Additionally, women may feel that going through a longer training might not pay off due to existing internal discrimination which will ultimately hinder them from pursuing a successful career. The rule against marriage during the four-year police training may also be a barrier to female participation as the common marrying age for many women overlaps with the age when women would potentially enter into police training.[72]

Sexist institutional patterns can be observed that keep women from attaining certain positions. For instance, there is a clear tendency to reproduce traditional gender roles within the police sector, mainly through the assignment of women to posts that are traditionally considered feminine, such as administration and support services.[73] It is still rare to see a woman patrolling the streets in the Dominican Republic and women police that do carry out such duties are predominantly assigned to areas that are already considered safe, such as the tourist section in Santo Domingo.[74] This tendency has two main results: first, it decreases the contact between female officers and civilian women making the visible side of the police almost exclusively male; second, it reinforces

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67 Dominican Republic, Ley Institucional de la Policía Nacional 96-04, art.33, par.I (2004). Available from: http://www.suprema.gov.do/novedades/sentencias/wleyes.htm
68 Ley Institucional de la Policía Nacional 96-04, art.33, par III.
69 Ley Institucional de la Policía Nacional 96-04, art.33, par II.
70 Interview with Mayor Generala, P.N. Daisy Liriano Paulino, 2005.
71 Ley Institucional de la Policía Nacional 96-04.
72 Interview with Mayor Generala, P.N. Daisy Liriano Paulino, 2005.
73 Interview with Mayor Generala, P.N. Daisy Liriano Paulino, 2005.
74 Ibid.

already existing inequalities by assigning women to roles that hold less value and status, thereby further undermining possibilities for women to advance within police forces.

Table 4.1. Women personnel by rank in the Policía Nacional 2005.

RANK	WOMEN	TOTAL	% TOTAL
MAYOR GENERAL	1	6	16.7
GENERAL	0	39	0.0
CORONEL	15	210	6.6
TTE. CONRONEL	18	235	7.6
MAYOR	55	460	11.9
CAPITAN P.N.	99	820	12.0
PRIMER TTE.	130	2840	4.6
2DO.TTE. P.N.	139	2766	5.0
CADETE	51	132	38.6
ASP. A CADETE	30	181	16.6
SGTO. MAYOR P.N.	265	4020	6.6
SGTO. P.N.	430	5389	8.0
CABO, P.N.	522	4682	11.1
RASO, P.N.	761	8390	9.1
ASIMILADO 3TA.CAT	74	234	31.6
ASIMILADO 4TA. CAT	78	275	28.4
ASIMILADO 5TA. CAT	187	553	33.8
ASIMILADO HONOR	78	2343	3.3
SUBTOTAL	**2693**	**32172**	**8.4**
WOMEN IN TOP 5 RANKS	**89**	**750**	**11.8**
WOMEN IN TOP 2 RANKS	**1**	**45**	**2**

Source: Elaborated by Louise Bjurström for UN-INSTRAW from statistics provided by the Policía Nacional

There are a number of other institutional and socio-cultural barriers that hinder women's equal participation in the police force. For example, the lack of childcare may be a significant obstacle to women's ability to pursue a career in the police force. As women are traditionally burdened with full responsibility for childcare, pursuing a professional career may be a choice between family responsibilities and work. A police salary for a low-level officer is currently a little over 4,000 Dominican pesos (approximately 120 United States dollars) a month, which is not nearly enough to cover the cost of day care outside of the family. This makes women completely reliant on help from a partner or family member. Since a substantial number of female police officers are single mothers, they often receive little if any economic or domestic support from a spouse or other partner.[75]

Another barrier hindering equal participation may include Dominican society's view of women as the weaker sex, a view which makes it unsuitable for them to patrol dangerous areas. As mentioned earlier, police work is often high risk due to the current climate of insecurity and violence. Because the police force offers little protection in case of accidents and few resources for protection in the field, such as patrol cars and bullet-proof vests, it may be difficult for a single mother to make the decision to accept patrolling duty. In such cases, the police force must improve its practices and prioritize

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75 Ibid.

its spending so that the safety of police officers can be guaranteed, thereby improving the safety of the country's citizens.

The Dominican police force has set three new priorities: institutionalisation, professionalisation and respect for human rights.[76] The Plan for Democratic Security prioritises the creation of a modern and citizen-oriented police force. One of the key strategies for achieving this objective has been educating the police on issues of human rights and gender. Training has been organised by the police itself and in collaboration with various NGOs, training institutions and the Secretariat for Women (SEM). Training has generally been given using a top-down approach, where the training of higher ranked officers is assumed to adequately mainstream gender and human rights awareness into the training, programmes and activities of lower ranked personnel. Although no official count has been made regarding the number of officers that have undergone such training, Major General Liriano Paulino, who has personally overseen many of the programmes, estimates that about 2,000 of the country's police officers have undergone gender training, leaving approximately 90 per cent of the police force untrained.[77] Courses are generally given irregularly and without standardised content, making it difficult to evaluate the quality of the training and the type of information that the police officers have received. At the time of this research, gender training had not been incorporated into the basic curricula for police education and there were no clear plans for creating standardised training for new recruits.

Along with the current efforts to provide gender training, in 2001 the police created a special institute for self-evaluation called the Institute of Human Dignity (Instituto de Dignidad Humano). The purpose of the Institute is to ensure that the "practices and aptitudes of the police are oriented towards the effective protection of human rights"[78] and to monitor human rights abuses committed by members of the National Police. The Institute, however, has had severe credibility problems since its creation due to its reputation for ineffectiveness and failure to investigate reported cases of police abuse. The newspaper *Listín Diario* reported that out of forty denunciations that the Institute received during the first two quarters of 2005 (among which were allegations of corruption, gender-based violence and abuse), only two had been investigated.[79] Such tendencies to dismiss human rights abuses indicate that there is still an air of impunity for human rights violations committed by the police which lowers people's trust in the institution.[80]

Centres that focus on violence against women have been opened and staffed with gender-sensitive personnel. The public prosecutor's office set up a specialized Violence Prevention and Attention Unit, which has 13 satellite offices around Santo Domingo. At these offices, victims of violence can file criminal complaints, obtain free legal counsel, and receive psychological and medical attention. Police were instructed to forward all domestic violence and sexual assault cases to these offices. Each office has professional psychologists on staff to counsel victims of violence and to assess the threat of impending danger associated with a complaint. These offices have the authority to issue temporary restraining orders immediately after receiving complaints. These offices are also supposed to have

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76 Information available on the Policía Nacional Website: http://www.policianacional.gov.do
77 Interview with Mayor Generala, P.N. Daisy Liriano Paulino, 2005.
78 Information available on
http://www.seap.gob.do/consulta/Manual/Instituciones%5CInstituto%20de%20Dignidad%20Humana%20de%20la%20Policia%20Nacional.html
79 Listín Diario, "Acusan a PN de no atender denuncias sobre violaciones", 29 September 2005.
80 For example, Police Colonel Francisco Beras Santos, who was accused in 2002 of torture and sexual violation of a woman in his police station, was ultimately released for lack of evidence.

resources for assisting women survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault on site without having to redirect them through a multitude of institutions. Such resources include giving police protection, medical treatment and legal aid.[81] The number of complaints received by the Violence Prevention and Attention Unit increased in 2007, which may reflect growing awareness of the resources available to victims. Despite this, however, few cases went to trial. As of October 2007, the Unit received 9,950 cases of gender violence, of which 8,596 were against women. Of these, the Unit dismissed 227, sent 3,831 into mediation, prosecuted 710, had 4,127 under investigation, and dropped charges in 1,055.[82]

The creation and work of the Violence Prevention and Attention Unit are commendable, but still raise a red flag in terms of training for the remaining police personnel and the separation of women's security issues from other police tasks. The focus on having specifically trained personnel in the Violence Prevention and Attention Unit overlooks the need for all police to receive training on how to respond to violence against women and may ultimately undermine such efforts. The establishment of special centres to deal with violence against women also indicates that these problems are treated as separate from other types of security problems and that they are not considered in other aspects of police work. Though the Unit may be an effective measure to address aspects of women's security needs, such isolation goes against the tenets of gender mainstreaming. In order to be an effective initiative, it should also be combined with comprehensive training on violence against women for all police personnel to ensure that women can enter into any police station and receive equal and respectful treatment and aid.

Recommendations

The National Police is experiencing difficulties in improving its human rights record. The efforts that have been made for improvement have often been ad-hoc and uncoordinated and are not part of a comprehensive, detailed long-term plan. Internal and external barriers for female participation still exist. In this context, initiatives need to be set up to address sexual discrimination, harassment and violence. While ambitious goals have been set, an internal assessment is necessary to determine the next steps and to direct efforts towards existing gaps. In order to address the obstacles to equal participation and gender mainstreaming that have been identified, the following measures are preliminarily recommended:

- Include a gender unit in the National Police. There must be recognition within the National Police that taking away legal obstacles is not enough to achieve a gender equal environment. Men and women face different problems at work and therefore need different types of assistance.[83] Such support could also begin to investigate the possibilities providing social services, such as childcare allowances for single mothers.

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82 United States, Department of State, "2007 Dominican Republic Country Report".
83 Inspiration for the creation of such an office can be taken from the National Police of Panama which has developed a new Office of Workers Welfare, which aims to provide services to men and women police officers and their families.

- Create inter-agency working groups (working with the health and judicial sectors) in order to comprehensively respond to issues such as gender-based violence.
- Create an internal and external ombudsman and reporting mechanisms for female police and female civilians with independent investigators, where complaints and concerns can be submitted for review.
- Develop a set curriculum for gender training and establish mandatory gender training within police academies and for all police staff. The training should be extensive, for instance, eight hour sessions each on sexual harassment, responding to domestic violence and sexual assault, and trafficking.
- Create and enforce a zero-tolerance policy on violence against women and human rights abuses committed by police forces.
- Support the development of a women police officer association.
- Create promotion campaigns and specific recruitment initiatives and policies to attract more women to serve in the police force, especially at the higher levels. Include added incentives for women such as subsidized childcare.
- Remove regulations that forbid marriage during police training.
- Improve and systemize collection of statistical data to include sex-disaggregated information. Statistic resources must be made complete, trustworthy and easily accessible to ensure transparency within the police force and to provide sufficient bases for future reforms.
- Create a yearly review process to monitor the implementation of gender reforms.

b. The military

While the national police has undergone reform in the last few years, reform in the military has been less far-reaching. The Dominican military is generally considered to be less of a direct threat to citizens than the police, and the institution has been able to improve its tarnished reputation from the Trujillo era. Women have officially been able to participate in military activities since the 1970s, but it is not until recently that they have participated in significant numbers and reached higher positions.

In 2003, the total number of women in the armed forces was 6,445, making up between 10 to 12 per cent of the total military personnel. Out of these women, over 40 per cent were active in the national army, while the remaining 60 per cent were divided between the navy and the air force.

Unlike the police, the armed forces have no mandate or specific initiatives to increase women's participation, but have simply allowed women to enlist without making any changes to the institutional infrastructure. This has led to a military that presents many internal and external barriers to female participation. While some symbolic promotions have been made, women are still predominantly relegated to support services such as cooks or secretaries.

In 1996, the Armed Forces Law 873 came into effect, which mandates that recruitment to the armed forces should be voluntary in times of peace and compulsory only in times of war or other serious threats to the peace.[84] The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination against women or any other group and can therefore not be seen as a legal guarantee or promotion for female participation. As far as could be found during this investigation, no other official or unofficial directives against discrimination of women

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84 Dominican Republic, Ley Orgánica de las Fuerzas Armadas 873, Art. 30.

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exist and unlike the police, the military has no goal for raising participation of women in the future.[85]

Though the rate of female participation in the Dominican armed forces is high compared to other Latin American militaries, this participation does not translate into a high number of women on active military duty. Similar to the police force, the military has a tendency to reflect traditional gender roles within the institution. The majority of women within the military typically hold traditionally 'feminine' positions such as administration, cooking, or in the medical field. Women may enter the military either as officials and/or as enlisted personnel (found under the label 'in line' in table 4.2.) or as professionals and/or 'assimilated,' where a woman will participate as a civilian but work under the military structure. Out of the 2,865 women listed in table IV.3., only 1,719 were officials 'in line' while the rest were professional civilians. Entering the military as a civilian requires no special military training and is the way that the majority of women enter into the armed forces.[86]

Table 4.2. Women active in the military divided by area of profession, 2003

AREA OF PROFESSION	WOMEN
"In Line" (active military duty)	1719
Medical Department	479
Engineer	19
Licensed Work	179
Technical Department (including cooking staff, students, office workers etc.)	426
Music Department	
	43

Source: Elaborated by Louise Bjurström from statistics provided by Centro de Cómputos E.N.

Table 4.3. shows the number of women in the military according to rank. The Table shows that the majority of women are found in the lowest ranks with a few women in the middle and very few women in the top ranks. The military has performed several efforts to incorporate women into higher ranks by allowing them to climb rank faster in order to place them in higher positions. Because of this, all three military divisions (army, navy, and air force) now have one woman serving in the rank of general. Women at these levels are still so rare that a ladies room has yet to be installed at military headquarters. While women holding high-ranking positions are something to be praised, these statistics may be misleading since a higher rank does not automatically mean that they can command a unit. In fact, very few women participate in field military practices and to date no women have participated in military missions abroad. While three women were initially meant to join the group of two hundred soldiers sent to Iraq, these women were recalled at the last minute due to what was officially labelled "personal problems."[87] Unofficial sources maintain, however, that it was a matter of resources, since the

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85 Interview, Teniente Coronel E.N. Leonte Raúl Read Ruiz.
86 Ibid.
87 Interview, Teniente Coronel E.N. Leonte Raúl Read Ruiz.

Dominican army was unwilling to pay for the extra service facilities (toilets, etc.) that would be demanded if women were to join the team.

Table 4.3. Number of women in commanding position, 2003

RANK	WOMEN
GENERAL OF BRIGADE	2
COLONEL	13
COLONEL LIEUTENANT	13
MAYOR	31
CAPTAIN	60
FIRST LIEUTENANT	123
SECOND LIEUTENANT	292
CADETS	37
SERGEANT MAYOR	87
SERGEANT	7
"CABO"	459
MUSIC	578
RASO	34
ENLISTED	1037
"ASSIMILATED"	86
TOTAL	2865

**Source: Elaborated by Louise Bjurström from statistics
provided by Centro de Cómputos E.N.**

Many traditional gender stereotypes remain within the military and affect military policy with regards to women. Research was unable to find any special investigations, directives or initiatives that have been taken to improve the institutional climate in relation to women. No regulations on childbearing, nursing, or maternity leave have been incorporated into military regulations and military training remains unchanged.[88] Cases of sexual harassment are confirmed to exist within the institution, but the military has opted to deal with the problem through an informal internal process where the woman may make a denunciation to her supervisor. There is no internal ombudsman or set process for women within the military and information on sexual harassment is not included in the existing gender training.[89] One military man in charge of gender training expressed his opinion on the matter saying that "Dominicans do not feel the same way about sexual harassment as the rest of the world…Dominican women feel disappointed if they return home at the end of the day without having been called beautiful or sexy."[90]

To date, gender and human rights training for military personnel has not been prioritized. Gender training is not a part of the basic curricula for military training, but is instead given on an ad-hoc basis through occasional classes or seminars.[91] The military has created an internal military training facility, The Military Institute of Human Rights, which has trained thousands of personnel within the armed forces and the DNCD (Direccion Nacional de Control de Drogas), and offers a diploma course on human rights.[92] The

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88 Available education for the military is available at the following institutions: Instituto de Altos Estudios para la Seguridad y Defensa (IADESEN)-Master in National Security and Defense; Instituto Militar de Estudios Estratégicos (IMES)-Coures in Strategic Studies; Instituto de Estudios Geopolíticos De las Fuerzas Armadas (IESFA)-Postgrad or Diploma in Geopolitical Studies; and Instituto Militar de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Internacional Humanitario-Postgrad or Diploma in Human Rights. See Jaime Covarrubias García, "Atlas Comparativo de la Defensa en América Latina", (Buenos Aires, RESDAL, 2005).
89 Interview, Teniente Coronel E.N. Leonte Raúl Read Ruiz.
90 Information received during visit to National Military headquarters, 2005.
91 Interview, Teniente Coronel E.N. Leonte Raúl Read Ruiz.
92 Jaime Covarrubias García, "Atlast Comparativo de la Defensa en América Latina".

current priority is to train top-ranking personnel with the assumption that they will then convey the information to lower ranking personnel.

Recommendations

In order to come to terms with existing inequalities, special efforts need to be made to address remaining obstacles including the lack of gender policy, sexist institutional attitudes, and socio-cultural gender stereotypes. Specific recommendations include:

- Integrate laws that regulate maternity leave and post-partum care in the Law of the Armed Forces, Law 873*.*
- Revise military law so that it prohibits discrimination based on sex, mainstreams gender issues and uses gender-inclusive language.
- Set specific goals for female participation, such as the 25 per cent goal set by the police.
- Create and enforce a zero-tolerance policy on violence against women and human rights abuses.
- Integrate gender issues into the basic military curriculum in order to ensure that all future military personnel will be sensitized to these issues.
- Provide mandatory special training for guards patrolling the border and provide them with information on trafficking and how to properly address it.
- Upgrade all administration and training facilities so that these are adapted to women (showers, toilets, etc.)
- Promote a gender-friendly working environment, gender responsive tasks and gender sensitive attitudes within the troops and especially in the commanding ranks.
- Create a yearly review process to monitor the implementation of gender reforms.

c. The judicial system

The Dominican judiciary includes a 16-member Supreme Court; appeals courts; courts of first instance; and justices of the peace. There are also specialized courts that handle tax, labour, land, and juvenile matters. The Supreme Court is responsible for naming all lower court judges according to criteria defined by law. The 2003 Code for Minors outlines the judicial system for criminal cases involving juveniles and family disputes. Until recently, military and police tribunals enjoyed exclusive jurisdiction over cases involving members of the security forces, although some cases have lately been referred to civilian criminal courts.

The judicial sector stands out as the most gender balanced of all Dominican security sector institutions because of the relatively equal participation of men and women. The Dominican court system currently has 237 female judges out of a total of 550 judges and on average women make up close to one-third of the judges in most types of courts (see Table IV.4.). Women are represented at all levels and are steadily increasing their presence in the legal system. Because no legal barriers exist to hinder women from entering into the judicial system, many of those interviewed for this case study stated

that achieving equal participation was more a matter of time than of reforming laws and regulations.[93]

Table 4.4. Number of judges by sex and jurisdiction, October 2005

Type of court	Women	Men	%
Supreme court	5	11	31
App	17	33	34
1st instance	12	24	33
Collegial Tribunals	22	11	67
Institutional Judge	15	28	33
Civil chambers, court of appeals	14	31	31
Civil Chambers 1st instant	14	25	36
Court of Appeals, multiple jurisdiction	5	9	36
Justice 1st instant, multiple jurisdiction	2	6	25
Labour Court	7	24	23
Justice of Labour	15	7	68
Court of Appeals for Adolescents	10	5	67
Tribunal for Execution of Sanctions against Adolescents	2	0	100
Tribunal for Execution of the Penal Sentence	1	9	10
Tribunals for Adolescents, penal courts	4	2	67
Tribunals for Adolescents, civil courts	6	0	100
Tribunals for Adolescents, multiple jurisdiction	9	3	75
Superior Land Tribunal	5	7	42
Land Tribunal Original Jurisdiction	15	16	48
Tribunal	3	2	60
Justice of Peace	34	50	40
Justice of Peace, Municipal Issues	6	2	75
Special Justice of Peace in Transit	14	8	64
Total	**237**	**313**	**550**

Source: Elaborated by Louise Bjurström from statistics from el Departamento Niñez. Adolescencia y Familia División Mujer y Familia. (Author's translation)

Despite their high representation in the judicial system as a whole, Table 4.4. shows that women are more highly represented in lower level courts and that their representation is lower in higher level courts. This breakdown also shows that women's participation in the judiciary system tends to reproduce traditional gender roles by employing women in jurisdictions where they are predominantly active in stereotypically "female" areas, such as in family and adolescent courts. In fact, in some of these courts, women make up 100 per cent of the judges. While the number of women holding these positions is laudable, the over-representation of women in these specific areas does not help to create more gender balanced or gender-sensitive security institutions. Instead, men are under-represented in these traditionally "female" areas, though such matters affect them as well and women remain marginalised since they are only assigned to positions that reflect and reinforce a stereotype.

It is difficult to point to specific institutional barriers that keep women from participating equally in the justice sector, particularly in the higher level courts. Women in the justice sector undoubtedly face the same obstacles from Dominican society that women do throughout the security sector. One significant difference is that labour regulations for the justice sector fall under general state laws and not under specific institutional regulations. The labour code (Código de Trabajo) includes more comprehensive benefits for women and families, including maternity leave, and provisions regarding nursing and

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93 Interview, Marianela Carvajal Dias; interview, Jose Caballo; and interview, Illuminada Gonzales Disla, Directora del Departamento Niños, Adolescencia y Familia, 29 November 2005.

day care. Under this code, women are allowed to leave their place of work for half an hour each day in order to nurse a child, a time regulation that has been highly criticised for the fact that it does not give adequate time.[94]

Alongside programmes that work to sensitise legal personnel on gender issues, other preliminary measures have been taken to address discrimination.[95] For instance, there was an initial attempt to create a human rights ombudsman's office in 2004. This ombudsman is supposed to have authority over public sector problems involving human rights, the environment, women's issues, youth issues, and consumer protection and could handle cases of gender-based discrimination. Decree 39-03 affirms the establishment of a "defensor del pueblo" (ombudsman), but as of March 2009, the selection of this ombudsman was still pending.[96] This initiative holds some hope for creating a more just system, but it has yet to come into effect.[97] The establishment of an ombudsman could help to address and remedy the dismissive way that cases of violence against women are often handled by the justice system.

Many organisations working on women's issues as well as the International Labour Organisation for the Caribbean have highlighted the general lack of understanding of gender-based violence in the Dominican courts. "Re-victimization" of female victims in the courtroom is a common problem as women are often forced to relive traumatic events through insensitive questioning, and are sometimes even blamed for the crimes committed against them.[98] The law 24-97 of the penal code defines gender-based violence under Dominican criminal law and protects women from domestic and sexual violence. Nonetheless, convictions for rape and domestic violence in Dominican courts are rare (see Table 4.5.), and only 44 per cent of 2,345 denunciations made in 2003 continued on to receive a definite sentence. Out of these only 28 per cent received a convicting sentence (10 per cent). Such figures indicate that the likelihood of women having their case heard in court is low, and that there is an even lower probability of the perpetrator being sentenced. To address this, in 2007 the Secretary of Women (SEM) in coalition with women's organisations has proposed a revision of the penal code to include concepts such as femicide and new laws on sexual violence.[99] Any legal changes would have to be followed by a review and revision of practices relating to women in the courtroom.

Many women have trouble reaching the courtroom at all. While laws exist to assist women (including Law 24-97 aimed at protecting the family against domestic and family violence), there is little knowledge about the existence and application of these laws. Additionally, female poverty is a serious problem in both urban and rural areas of the Dominican Republic and access to economic means often determines the possibility of seeking justice. Poverty poses serious challenges to women's access to the legal system. The closest court can be a half a day's travel and a week's salary away for women who

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94 Dominican Republic, Código de Trabajo de la República Dominicana (Ley No. 16-92), (1999). Available from http://www.set.gov.do/descargas/download/cod001.pdf
95 Notable projects include Partners for the Americas Gender Training for Lawyers on trafficking and gender violence through organization such as Partners of the Americas.
96 Dominican Republic, Decreto 39-03, (16 January 2003), Parágrafo VI.
97 Interview, Marianela Carvajal Dias.
98 Interview, Illuminada Gonzales Disla.
99 CEDAW/PSWG/2004/II/CRP.2/add.1, 21 April 2004.

reside in rural areas and many women are unable to bear the cost of travel. The situation is further exacerbated in cases involving witnesses[100] because the Dominican court system offers no remuneration to witnesses who appear in court. This means that those who wish to testify have to bear the cost of lost income and travel themselves, which is often impossible for someone living in poverty.

Table 4.5. Number of denunciations of violations against law 24-97 on domestic violence against women that was heard in court and received a convicting sentence. 2003.

Denunciations	Reported cases	Definitive sentences	Persons convicted
January	158	13	10
February	162	58	32
March	229	354	12
April	183	88	22
May	209	86	17
June	169	41	6
July	295	51	22
August	167	69	34
September	181	60	30
October	224	79	19
November	253	75	26
December	115	62	15
TOTAL	**2.345**	**1.036**	**246**

Source: Suprema Corte de Justicia. Dirección de Planificación y Proyectos. División de Estadísticas Judiciales

There is a general lack of trust in the court system. The result is a situation where many women do not have access to and are excluded as beneficiaries of the legal system. In response to this, SEM and several NGOs have set up centres that offer free legal counseling for women in many rural areas. This is only a partial solution, however, because the problem requires the cooperation of several state institutions in order to find an effective solution.

In the Dominican Republic, gender training has been offered to judges and other individuals working in higher level courts on domestic violence. In addition, a capacity-building manual, *Notes for an Equal Jurisprudence* (Notas para la Jurisprudencia hacia la Igualdad), has been distributed to justices of the peace, which has been used for their basic training.[101] Most of the gender training that has been offered is in the form of seminars or classes and there is no information available on the number of personnel that have undergone gender training or if there have been any measurable results of the training. Gender training is generally not part of the standard curricula for legal education in the Dominican Republic. Therefore, recently graduated law students are still poorly equipped to deal effectively with violence against women or gender-based crimes once they enter their professional careers. More comprehensive gender training needs to be a key priority for the justice sector so that personnel can respond sensitively and effectively to the security needs of civilian women.

Recommendations

It is clear that the justice system has made some progress in incorporating more women into its institutions and initiating gender training for its personnel. However, there are still

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100 Illuminada Gonzalez, "La violación sexual en la region Nordeste de la República Dominicana: Respuesta de la administración de justicia, 1998-2000″, (Santo Domingo, Centro de Estudios de Género, Intec., 2005).
101 CEDAW/PSWG/2004/II/CRP.2/add.1, 21 April 2004.

outstanding problems. Identified structural and institutional problems will have to be addressed in order to create a more just system. The following actions are initial recommendations:

- Provide specially designed gender training for judges and other personnel addressing the issues of re-victimization, gender-based violence, and power relations between the sexes.
- Include gender training as a compulsorily part of basic legal training.
- Create an open and honest debate on the gender stereotypes that still remain in the court system among judges and practicing lawyers.
- Push for the selection of a representative for the office of ombudsman that was created under the 2004 law.
- Provide compensation for travel and lost income for witnesses who appear in court.
- Expand programmes for the decentralization of legal aid to address problems of travel and compensation for lost work for female victims (possibly in cooperation with NGOs active in the area).

d. The penal system

The Dominican penal system has an international reputation for human rights abuses, mismanagement and disorganisation. Organisations such as Amnesty International and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have condemned the inhumane conditions of Dominican prisons.[102] The Dominican penal system incarcerates an estimated 15,000 prisoners, out of which 4 per cent of those incarcerated every year, or about 600 individuals, are women, every year. Most of the women incarcerated are convicted for drug possession. Female inmates are separated from male inmates and about half of the female inmates are held in the women-only Najayo prison.[103] Where women are housed in the same prison as men, conditions in female prison wings have been reported to be better than those in male prison wings, but sexual violence, forced prostitution and other types of abuse is still common and living conditions remain far from ideal. Accusations of forced sexual relations with male guards are common, but these accusations have not been prosecuted or internally investigated.[104]

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners establishes that members of the prison staff should work exclusively as civil servants without outside interest or employment in private firms.[105] The national army and police are effectively in control of Dominican prisons.[106] The vast majority of prisons are secured by the national army and a large number of the prisons are located in army fortresses and police barracks.[107] The director of each prison is usually a civilian warden appointed at the recommendation of the chief prosecuting judge of the Republic. The second official at each

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102 Interamerican Commission on Human Rights, "Information on the State of Human Rights in the Dominican Republic", (Washington, DC, Interamerican Commission on Human Rights, 2002).
103 United States, Department of State, "2004 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices".
104 Interview, Fernando Leonardo.
105 United Nations, Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, (New York, United Nations, May 1977).
106 Ibid.
107 United States, Department of State, "2004 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices".

prison is an officer in charge of security, designated by a military or police institution.[108] This means that while general decisions concerning the prison are made by a professional prison warden, all decisions concerning security are made by either the military or the police.

Because most personnel working in the penal system are members of either the military or the police, the obstacles that plague women's participation and gender mainstreaming in these institutions heavily impact the institutional culture of the penal system. Addressing women's involvement and integrating a gender perspective into these institutions would therefore also have a positive impact on the penal system. Additional measures are needed to improve the knowledge of the prison guards in relation to their duties.

At the time of this research, there was no available information on the number of women working in the penal system and estimates were difficult due to the rotating work schedule of prison guards. Even those interviewed with close contact to the penal system had little information concerning the number of women working in this sector. An initial step for increasing women's participation would be to establish statistical information on the number of prisoners, the number of female guards and the ratio between them. This data would help to establish a baseline to assess the current situation and needs for reform.

In line with efforts to professionalise the security sector, training and capacity-building programmes on human rights for prison guards have already been initiated, though it is unclear how comprehensive these efforts have been since no official information exists on the exact number of prison guards that have undergone this training. Early attempts have been made to professionalise this sector in accordance with international agreements as well as recommendations from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. For example, the government inaugurated the National Penitentiary School in Santo Domingo in August of 2004. The School gives a half-year training which covers human rights and non-violent restraint methods and graduates are expected to serve as career prison guards and as prison administrators.[109] The number of female participants in this programme is unknown.

Recommendations

The disorganisation of the Dominican penal system makes gender mainstreaming efforts difficult since providing security is less a question of prioritising and addressing women's security issues, but of addressing the absence of security across the board. Women, as well as men, suffer from a lack of protection in prison. Due to the close relationship between the penal system and the military and police, many of the recommendations that were given for these sectors also apply to the penal system. Additional sector-specific recommendations include:

- Establish an internal code of conduct to address violations by prison personnel. Investigate and try reported allegations of forced prostitution, rape and other types of sexual violence by prison guards. Accused guards should be immediately suspended and other disciplinary measures should be taken.
- Frequent inspections should be made by an independent monitoring body until a thorough revision and training has been completed of all prison guards, in order to ensure that prisoners are given food and protection without having to perform 'special services.'

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108 Interamerican Commission on Human Rights, "Information on the State of Human Rights in the Dominican Republic".
109 United States, Department of State, "2004 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices".

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- All prison guards should be given human rights training and special training on gender-based violence.
- Female prison guards should work with female prisoners in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners.
- Goals should be set for the inclusion of women in the National Penitentiary School to ensure the existence of well-educated female career prison guards.
- Thorough vetting processes should be put into place for all future prison guards to ensure that former criminals or those who committed human rights abuses are not holding these important posts.
- Education programmes for inmates should be expanded to include information on gender-based violence prevention. Successful programmes should be made available to inmates outside of the Najayo prison.

e. Civil society

Civil society oversight is vital for a transparent, accountable and democratic security sector. The involvement of civil society in security sector management and reform is critical to increasing the sector's public accountability. Civil society organisations can provide constructive feedback and criticism. Additionally, women's civil society organisations can serve as a bridge between local communities and policy makers. This can help to communicate the security needs of the population to policy makers and can help to raise awareness of SSR in communities.

The Dominican Republic has a fairly vibrant civil society, including several women's organisations. A study conducted in 2004 shows that 17.6 per cent of the population actively participates in some type of non-political activity, or voluntary participation outside of government politics. This is one of the highest rates in the Latin American region, though the population's involvement in party politics is quite low.[110] Unfortunately, the integration of civil society organisations into public policy development processes and the relations between governmental institutions and civil society still need to be improved. While civil society organisations need to be independent from the government, this does not mean that the government can neglect its role in collaborating with civil society and increasing its transparency.

The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association and the government generally do not interfere with this right. The law also provides for freedom of speech and there is generally no censorship of the media from the government's side.[111] Eight national newspapers and numerous privately owned radio and television stations which broadcast media expressing a wide spectrum of political views exist in the Dominican Republic. From a gender perspective, however, media coverage hosts few experts or reporters with gender knowledge.

A permanent civilian board working on advising and monitoring security work or women's issues does not exist, but SEM states that NGOs and other groups are regularly consulted in

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110 Cooperacion Latinobarómetro, "Informe Latinobarómetro 2005, 1995-2005".
111 United States, Department of State, "2005 Dominican Republic Country Report Human Rights Practices".

the drafting of new laws and policies. Several NGOs confirmed this fact.[112] Numerous NGOs are working on women's health and rights issues, many of which focus on domestic violence. The concentration on domestic violence has led to a partial neglect of other important areas such as violence against women in the non-domestic sphere. A potential explanation for this trend may be the allocation of 65 per cent of the budget of the Secretariat for Women in 2004 to address issues of domestic violence, focusing mainly on domestic violence.[113] None of the women's organisations that were active during the time of this study specialized in women's and the security sector, or had it as a specific area of work. Despite this, the Institute of Human Rights Santo Domingo (IDHSD) and the Dominican Human Rights Institute are the two independent monitoring institutions that collect data on police activity and abuse, which also includes sex-disaggregated information.

Education and training on gender issues is absent from curricula in the public education system. Gender is not a topic on the national educational agenda and it is therefore not mandatory to include it in the curriculum. Since the educational system plays a vital role in providing the tools necessary for a vibrant and informed public debate, the lack of information on gender issues in schools adds to the lack of a general public knowledge on issues of gender equality. Raising awareness on these issues through basic education is a key step in the efforts of creating a more gender-equal society. A positive step in this direction is the creation of a new gender research centre at Instituto Technológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC), which has been partly sponsored by the Dominican government. Being the only existing national institute to conduct gender research in the country, this centre plays a vital role in the development of gender research in the country. The Institute has set ambitious goals to provide comprehensive gender training for both students and security personnel. The Institute's resources remain limited in terms of available literature, which hinders the possibility for effective information exchange between researchers. An additional obstacle to gender research is the lack of sex-disaggregated statistics in the Dominican Republic, which must be resolved if gender research is to be made reliable and more comprehensive.

Recommendations

With the exception of the hindrance that insecurity puts on open and free assembly, the Dominican Republic maintains the democratic values of free assembly and freedom of the press, which have paved the way for a vibrant civil society. However, to improve the monitoring function of civil society in relation to the security sector and to encourage debate on gender issues within the Dominican society in general and the security sector in particular, the following recommendations are made:

- Women's rights should be included in the country's general education plan to encourage awareness and activism on gender issues among the general population. Such training and awareness-raising activities could be an initial step in sparking a debate on gender equality and 'machismo' culture.
- Courses should be developed for journalists and NGOs on gender issues in general and on gender and the security sector in particular to encourage increased coverage and monitoring of these issues.
- The government should create open access to information regarding the security sector to facilitate and encourage public monitoring and supervision.

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112 Interview, Yildalina Taten Brache.
113 Dominican Republic, Secretary of State of the Woman, "Objetivos del Milenio evaluación de las Necesidades se la República Dominicana", (Santo Domingo, 2005).

- Mechanisms should be established for citizens to liaise and give input to security sector decision-making such as a civilian monitoring/oversight board.
- Resources should continue to be developed for gender research and resources should be allocated for the collection of gender-related data.
- Public awareness and debate on gender issues should be encouraged and supported by national information campaigns, debates, and cultural events.

5. Inter-Institutional Collaboration: challenges and recommendations

While institution-specific reforms will be necessary to address the particular problems that each sector is facing, a comprehensive analysis of the security sector is still needed to address cross-institutional issues that require a holistic effort from different actors in the security sector. Because security issues facing the Dominican population are cross-cutting, a cross-institutional reform and response is necessary to comprehensively address these issues. For example, domestic violence can be both addressed by the Ministry of Interior and police forces, and through awareness raising in schools, specific training in the health sector, and within the justice sector, in order to ensure appropriate access to justice. Approaching the design and development of programmes and policies in this way gives recognition to the fact that security is never provided through the work of one institution alone, but that it is a collaborative effort that is best achieved by cooperation between all public institutions. Cross-institutional collaboration is also important in order to identify gaps in policies and practices that may occur in the transfer of a case from one institution to the next. It is also central to the process of fostering inter-institutional dialogue on gender and security issues and approaches; implementing coherent institutional change; and mainstreaming gender into security policies across the board.[114]

A fundamental issue that must be addressed to all actors in the security sector is the fact that gender-based violence and the security of women, men, boys and girls is not fully incorporated into the national security agenda. The protection of women's and their overall security is treated as a separate problem that needs special institutions and commitments for effective handling. Gendered understandings of security and gender analysis need to be mainstreamed throughout the work of all security sector institutions if this perspective is to change.

Before beginning a reform process, there needs to be an analysis undertaken that assesses female and male perceptions of security and the different needs and capacities of actors in the security sector. An inclusive and participatory approach to such an assessment would help to create an open, accountable and participative sector that works to ensure the security of women, men, girls and boys.

Areas for possible coordinated and collaborative efforts include: training and capacity-building of personnel on gender issues; design and implementation of gendered public security and violence prevention campaigns; design of operative plans for gender

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114 United Kingdom, Department for International Development, "Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform".

mainstreaming; and formulation of a comprehensive definition of gender-inclusive security that can be incorporated into the overall security agenda.

Increased training and capacity development initiatives are effective ways to prevent and transform gender-based discrimination and gender stereotypes; to contribute to the prevention of and response to violence against women; and to create a security sector that is more responsive to and respectful of the human rights of the population, including the rights of women. While different sectors face specific challenges, it is nevertheless important that training is coordinated to facilitate inter-institutional communication. Furthermore, such coordination can ensure that there are not missing elements from trainings for different sectors. For example, one area that was found to be uniformly missing from the institutional training programmes of the security sector is the issue of sexual harassment.

Table 5.1. Obstacles for women as actors and participants in the Dominican security sector

Women as participants/actors			
Police	**Military**	**Penal system**	**Civil society**
Perceptions of insecurity. That women's personal security will not be sufficiently protected. Barriers to balance domestic life and professional career. Low wages which are insufficient to support a family. Reproduction of gender roles that place women in supportive services. Denied access to benefits/ lack of basic provisions that will allow women to participate on equal grounds as men, such as day care. Lingering perceptions of women's vulnerability and role in society. Failure to investigate complaints of rape and domestic violence.	Lack of women in higher positions to ensure that the interests of female personnel at lower levels are provided for. Reproduction of gender roles on an institutional level that place women in supportive jobs such as secretaries, cooks and medical personnel. Lingering perceptions of women's vulnerability and role in society that prevent them from participating in traditional military activities. Lack of structural and policy reforms, as well as changes in personnel practices such as recruitment, resentment and promotion to embed a systematic approach to the participation of women.	No set goals for female participation in penitentiary education. Barriers for female recruitment due to the perception that the prison culture would be "too hard" for a woman to handle. Lack of mechanisms and procedures to balance the representation of men and women. Lack of women's representation in policy making. Lack of policies to ensure women's inclusion, equal status and participation.	Lack of general education on human rights and women's rights which hinders the public discussion. Not enough resources and facilities to conduct viable gender research, including resources to gather gender-related, sex-disaggregated statistics.

Source: UN-INSTRAW 2009

Research did not uncover any legal barriers that hinder women's entry into and participation in the security sector institutions included in this case study. Furthermore, interviews with members of the security sector showed that there seems to be a high level of political will behind increasing the attention given to gender issues and the incorporation of women into security sector institutions. The main problems appeared on an institutional and policy level, where women continue to face great obstacles in entering and staying in these traditionally

masculine organisations. It is generally not recognized that these institutions have been built around men and that this patriarchal institutional culture leaves no place for women to participate on an equal level. Important initiatives have been taken to ensure the participation of women in different sectors, but additional steps need to be taken to ensure that there is a gender equal environment where individuals can participate freely, regardless of sex. In evaluating the success of programmes, it is therefore important to not only look at the number of women who participate, but also at the positions they hold, the roles they play within the institutions. This can help to recognize and subsequently address women holding more traditionally "female" positions as well as sexual discrimination and harassment. An additional level of analysis is the impact that increased female representation has on Dominican society and on the people affected by security policies, institutions and measures. Gender-sensitive security-related impact assessments would be an important contribution for further reform initiatives.

Box. 5.2. Obstacles for women as beneficiaries to the Dominican security sector

Women and girls as beneficiaries				
Police	**Military**	**Judicial system**	**Penal system**	**Civil society**
Police are still perceived as authoritative and unapproachable. Corruption allows perpetrators to pay for disposal of proof and creates serious problems of confidence and trust. Lack of sensitivity to security problems of women/problems of machismo. Women are not seen as an essential part of the police.	Lack of understanding of the situation of trafficked women, which impacts the effective handling of these cases. Chauvinist working environment that prevents women from approaching the military.	Lack of resources to be able to access the system. Lack of knowledge about legal rights, corruption, fear of testifying Lack of understanding and sensitivity of violence against women, especially in cases of non-domestic violence Cannot press charges due to the lack of funds. No gender aspects incorporated in legal education.	Corruption Lack of education of prison guards and a general lack of respect for inmates. Discrepancy between laws and practical application.	A narrow focus that fails to address a broader spectrum of gender issues Lack of transparency into security institutions.

Source: UN-INSTRAW 2009

Women still do not have equal access to certain services in the security sector, such as police attention and legal retribution for violent acts committed against them (see Table 5.2). This is due to logistical barriers, institutional prejudices and a general sense of distrust in the security sector. To improve this record, internal review and reform needs to be initiated, and inter-departmental and inter-institutional cooperation needs to be expanded. Increasing the efficient collaboration and coordination between various security sectors could catalyse more inter-institutional initiatives to improve the security situation of women

in the Dominican Republic. There are already many resources in place to support and implement successful gender-sensitive, inter-institutional security programmes. For example, the mandate of SEM could easily be expanded to oversee a security reform programme and to monitor the progress of gender-specific programmes.

Gender sensitization and female participation needs to be approached both from the stand point of challenges of each security sector institution and from a collaborative perspective where various security sector institutions cooperate in order to effectively improve women's involvement.

6.   Conclusion and Recommendations

Women are underrepresented in the Dominican security system and many issues that directly affect women and girls are neglected in reform processes. Additionally, there is a low rate of participation of women in the decision-making processes. For women, the security sector may be a direct threat to their security through instances of direct physical and sexual violence, but is even more likely to be an indirect threat through the failure to respond to and address women's security needs. Each sector has gender-specific challenges to face in reform processes. Nevertheless, there are broad strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations that apply to all the security sectors.

Strong points in reform efforts include:

•   Efforts to increase female participation and to mainstream gender into policies and practices;
•   The creation of offices and programmes to address violence against women;
•   The provision of gender training as well as more general human rights training for some staff members; and
•   Improved civil society oversight and involvement of civil society in security sector management and reform.

Areas for improvement include:

•   The need for a change in the institutional environments so that they are conducive to women's participation, including through gender-sensitive recruitment policies and incentives;
•   Making management positions and positions of higher rank available to women;
•   Systematising gender training for members of the security forces and using a standardized curricula for such training;
•   The need for a reconceptualization of women's issues and violence against women in the realm of security so that such issues are considered an integral part of security work;
•   The absence of accessible and updated data on gender in security sector institutions, particularly sex-disaggregated data.

An additional challenge is that the Dominican Republic generally lacks research on gender, women and security issues and more specifically on gender issues in the security sector. Increasing research on engendering the security sector and reform processes would contribute to a better understanding of the roles played by women in security, summarizing experiences and lessons learned and aiding the development of more effective remedies to gender-based violence and the threats facing women in general. As this study is only an initial look at the Dominican security sector from a gendered perspective, it also helps to identify areas for potential research. These include:

- The effects of completed training programmes on the attitudes and institutional practices of the security sector;
- Cultural barriers and attitudes that keep women from participating not only in the security sector, but in all areas of society. Such a study could include investigations on stereotypes, practices, gender roles, etc;
- Existing good practices of gendered reforms of the security sector.

Recommendations

Recommendations to address challenges within security sector reform processes in the Dominican Republic include the following:

- Create clear responsibilities for each sector to facilitate training, increase transparency and promote delineation of responsibility in each sector;
- Establish protocols, contact points and joint working groups to ensure collaboration through a multi-sector approach, particularly around the issues of violence against women and other gender issues;
- Classify violence against women as a national security threat;
- Provide specific recommendations on gender issues in future plans for national security**;**
- Prioritize creation of systematic sensitization programmes for the police, military and the justice sectors that deal with violence against women in a coordinated manner.
- Mandate gender training within basic training and education for the entire security sector and develop such training in a consultative, cooperative, inter-institutional manner;
- Create mechanisms to systematize the collection of gender related data and statistics as well as monitoring, evaluation and research initiatives that will support and direct reforms.
- Initiate and complete in-depth institutional gender assessments (including institution specific gender audits and gendered impact assessments) addressing all the institutions charged with providing security.

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